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*Occurs when stresses such as Rhizoctonia and Pythium species combine with heat, traffic and other factors. This results in reduced turfgrass vigor.



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Paul Frank: The Wilderness Man

BY MIKE MONGOVEN, CGCS

A short visit to the Wilderness Country Club is all it takes to discover what Paul Frank values. An adjective to describe this most important factor would be "wilderness."

He lived the New York State Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program long before there was such a thing. Starting in Paul's office and continuing across the property of Wilderness Country Club, are many examples of naturally-occurring beauty. These range from deer, alli-

Paul is a quarter-century member of the GCSAA, a former Florida Turfgrass Association Director and was a founding member of the Everglades Chapter.

gators, turkeys, rattlesnakes, eagles, bobcats, woodpeckers and chuckaluske chickens. When a person is in this environment, it is hard to imagine that some people actually believe that golf courses are a detriment to the environment.

Paul has lived his entire life on the property that is now the Wilderness Country Club. When he was born in Naples in 1934, it was a booming metropolis of 768 people, and that was all of Collier County. Mosquito control in those days consisted of holes dug in the swampy woods so that they would retain water through the entire dry season. The minnows that survived would then take care of the mosquito larva.

Paul was the original golf course superintendent of the second golf course in Collier County, the Hole in the Wall Golf Club. When he and his father built Wil-

President's Award Winners : 1995

Mike Barger
Paul Frank
Billy Wright



Paul Frank

derness, there was a standing order with the construction crew that no tree would be removed unless absolutely necessary.

Paul is a quarter-century member of the GCSAA, a former Florida Turfgrass Association Director and was a founding member of the Everglades Chapter. Asked about the early days of the Everglades, Paul remembers how close-knit the mem-

'Guys are too often motivated to put their jobs in jeopardy by trying to satisfy a small percentage of their membership,'

bers were. "Everyone was always ready to help," he said. "Our code of ethics was one that we all truly cared about and we had respect for one another."

Paul cites two things as his greatest accomplishments. First is his pride in building a beautiful golf course where others can really enjoy nature. Second is his discovery and propagation of PF-11, an off-type bermudagrass he found in one of his Tifgreen putting surfaces. The

When Paul and his father built Wilderness, there was a standing order with the construction crew that not a single tree be removed unless it was deemed absolutely necessary.

grass has many positive attributes.

His greatest concern about the golf business is the trend of golf course superintendents to get hero complexes. "Guys are too often motivated to put their jobs in jeopardy by trying to satisfy a small percentage of their membership," Frank said. "This process often damages the health of the turf, as well as the job security of the golf course superintendent."

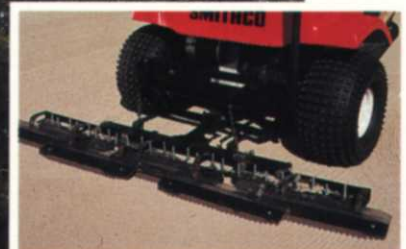
Friends and colleagues praise Frank for his commitment and professionalism. As Clint Smallridge, CGCS, sums up, "Paul is just a terrific guy. He shoots from the hip and talks from the heart."

Paul Frank is a living example of what is good about the golf course business. He has set a high standard we should all strive to emulate.

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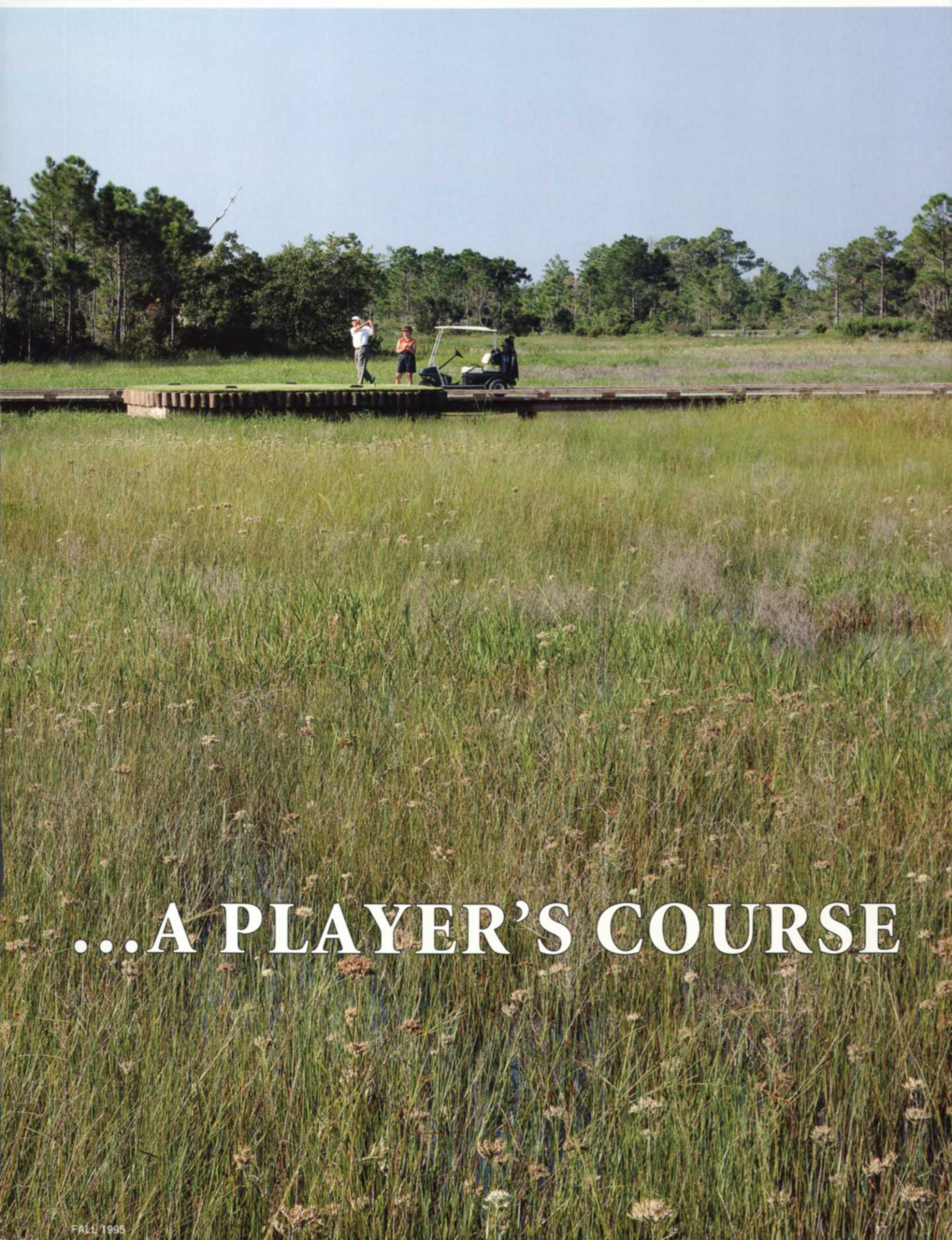
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THE MEDALIST GOLF CLUB



...A PLAYER'S COURSE

THE MEDALIST GOLF CLUB

Risk, reward, shot selection, course management and creativity required

BY JOEL D. JACKSON, CGCS

GOLF COURSE PHOTOGRAPHY

BY DAN ZELAZEK

'No artificial signage or accessories. Small cut up branches for tee markers. Simple split log benches at the tees. No concrete. No asphalt. All natural.'

Photo on previous two pages:

The Medalist Golf Club

Hobe Sound

Hole #9

Photo by Dan Zelazek

"This is a player's course. The highest member handicap I've seen is a 15," says Greg Plotner, CGCS. It is quintessential target golf created in this pristine setting by Pete Dye and Greg Norman. Risk. Reward. Shot selection, course management and creativity required. The seven acres of Tifdwarf approaches and greens surrounds inviting all sorts of bump-and-run and pitch-and-run shots. Caddies are available.

The Medalist Golf Club holes wind back and forth like emerald ribbons through the sandy pine woods of Hobe Sound. Forty acres of turf nestled strategically among the palmettos and scrub oaks. The unique scent of wild rosemary thickets giving the visitor a gourmet's "taste" of the course to complement the sights and feel.

No artificial signage or accessories. Small cut up branches for tee markers. Simple split log benches at the tees. No concrete. No asphalt. All natural. The crushed shell paths, leading from the greens to the next tees, stop at the fairways. The subtle rolling and undulating fairways rising and falling, twisting and turning through the trees and around the marshes. There are no roughs. Native grasses, deer moss, wildflowers and aquatic plants punctuate the natural areas and marshes with texture and color contrasts. Stacked sod wall bunker faces offer a unique feature seldom seen on a Florida golf course.

There are many unique things about The Medalist and that suits Superintendent Greg Plotner just fine.

"Your work is never really done on a golf course, but after nine years at Tampa Palms, I'm enjoying the construction phases of this project," Greg said.

"It's not often one gets to help create and leave his mark upon the land. I really

like it."

Greg gives his wife, Nadene, and son, David, a lot of credit for his being at The Medalist.

"This move is a tremendous opportunity for me at this time. But to take advantage of it, I needed the support of my family," he said. "Like so many others, we were a two-career family with an active teenage son. We talked about the pros and con's, and they backed me 100% to make the move. I can't tell you how proud and grateful I am for their unselfish support."

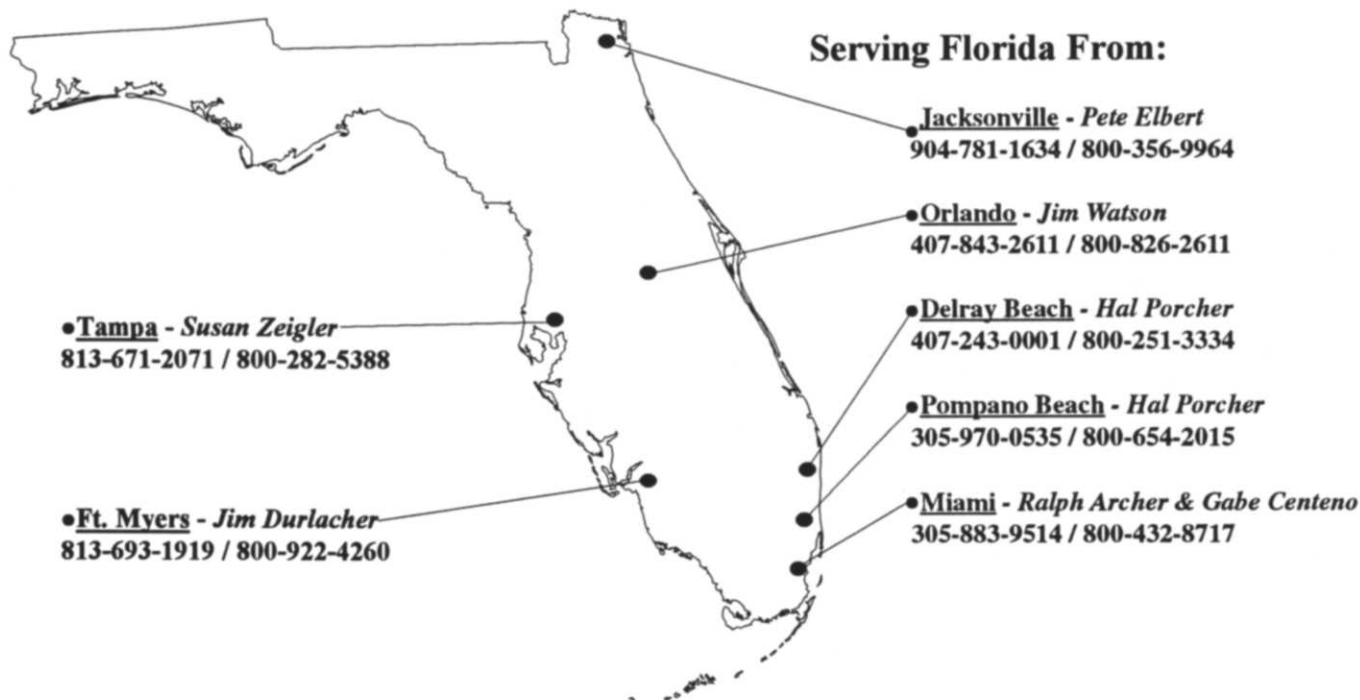
Greg's plate is full as he takes on the task of finishing the construction and grow-in of The Medalist, and at the same time assumes the presidency of the FGCSA. Another unique aspect of this story is the recent entry of Greg's boss, Greg Norman, into the turfgrass industry by starting the Greg Norman Turf Company.

Norman has shown a keen interest in working with the FTGA and in becoming very involved in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. It is always refreshing and heartening to find out that you have a proven golf champion that is interested in the finer points of turfgrass management. We welcome Greg Norman into the fraternity of turf professionals and we appreciate his support.

My visit to The Medalist was on the Friday after Tropical Storm Jerry drifted nonchalantly across the state. If you looked west you could still see the backside of the slow moving system, purple-gray with rain. In fact, I drove down from Orlando through bands of overcast and rain.

It wasn't until I passed Vero Beach that I caught a glimpse of a sunrise trying to break through the leaden sky. We are once again approaching record rainfalls

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Above, Hole #4. An emerald target in a sea of sand.

Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

*Hole #6.
Nestled among the
pines and palmettos.*



Photo by Daniel Zelazek