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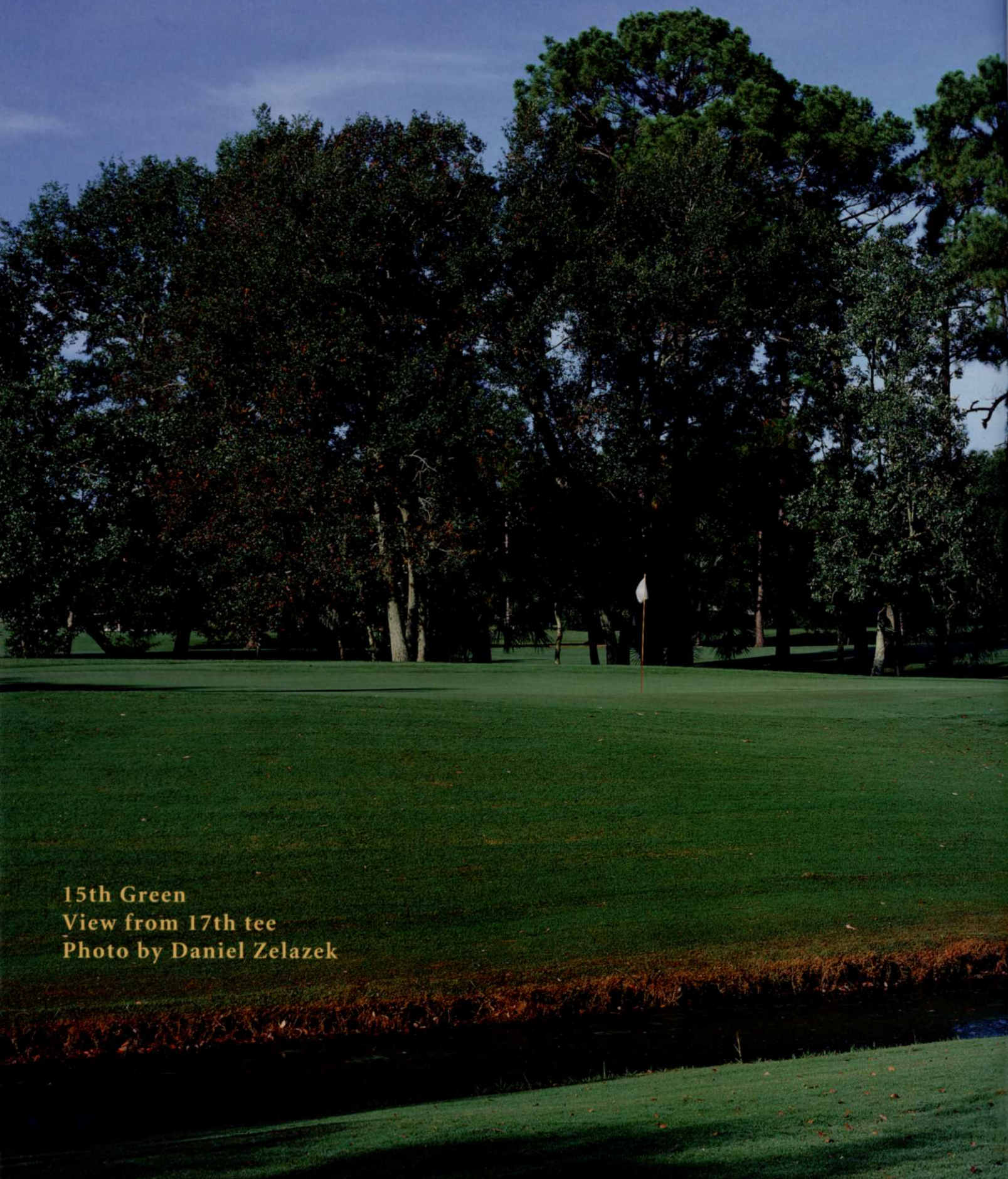


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15th Green
View from 17th tee
Photo by Daniel Zelazek



Winter Pines Golf Club...

The People's Choice!

BY JOEL D. JACKSON, CGCS

The Winter Pines Golf Club averages 80,000 to 90,000 rounds of golf a year! Those kinds of numbers bring to mind muni courses with hardscrabble turf and often neglected amendments. Not Winter Pines.

Located one block west of State Road 436 on the east side of the city of Winter Park, the club has evolved over the years into a popular and well maintained facility. Under the visionary ownership and operation of the McMillin family and the professional stewardship of new FGCSA President, Joe Ondo, CGCS, sweeping changes and subtle improvements have been introduced over the years to keep providing a profitable and pleasing product to the golfing public.

The club opened in 1968 and was originally a par-62 layout. Never long but always challenging, the course is ideally suited for senior golfers, young golfers and beginning golfers of all ages. Even the good players looking for a venue to hone their approach game find Winter Pines a test of skill.

"The first tee time is officially 6:30 a.m. this time of year, but they'll tee it up as soon as they can see," said



The flash barely lights up this group of "dew sweepers," and they are the second group off! Photo by Joel Jackson.

Joe. Using a flash attachment, I took a picture of what I thought was the first group off the tee. Wrong! It was the second group.

The first group was already approach-

ing the third tee in the slowly brightening dawn as we rode the course..

"These are our regulars. These guys have been teeing it up every day, six days a week ever since I've been here," said

Joe. There's a lot of golf to be played and there's usually 294 more folks behind them on the busy days.

Like so many golf course sites in Florida, much of Winter Pines was de-

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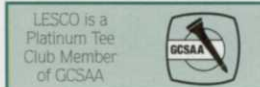
Every LESCO Stores-on-Wheels is operated by a trained turf professional who has a vested interest in the success of your course. Our turf specialists and regional agronomists appreciate the challenges you face and are fully prepared to offer turf

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veloped on mucky land not suitable for other building. In 1977, however, one parcel of the land containing holes 4 through 8 was sold for real estate development. A new set of holes was designed and built on some of the remaining low-land portions of the property.

“No one seems to recall who did the original design, and I couldn’t find a name in any of the files,” said Joe. “Bud Timbrook and Gardner Dickinson are on record as doing the new holes.”

This redesign allowed the course to be lengthened and the par increased to its present 67 giving patrons a couple more holes to unleash a long tee shot. Two years later, Joe Ondo would arrive to begin his role in the continuing transformation of Winter Pines.

With a staff of only eight including himself to groom the course, Joe Ondo

Reflections of the 2nd hole as seen from the green. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

Florida Club Course Designer Dick Gray Uses Georgia Grass On His Greens.

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Tall trees shadow the 5th green at sunrise. Note the newly planted cypress tree along the lake bank. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

is a prototype working superintendent. He can be found on a greens mower, fairway unit or rough mower when weather puts the mowing schedule behind, or when the ranks are thinned by illness or vacation. He is often the cup setter when the crew is busy verticutting or fertilizing the course.

He works hand in hand with owner Ed McMillin on projects like concrete cart path pouring, and he is the final shaper when greens and tees are rebuilt.

Joe's staff contains a blend of young and experienced alike.

Veterans Steve Brown, Bob Keeth and Bob Farrington provide a core of de-

pendable workers to anchor the team.

"I first met Bob Keeth when he was the superintendent of Rosemont Golf Course and I was a student on the Lake City summer bus tour," said Joe. "Bob lives just down the street and after he left Rosemont he came by one day looking for a job. He's been here 18 years."

Brown has been mowing and going at Winter Pines for 18 years also along with Keeth. Farrington is the senior crew member with 21 years of service to Winter Pines, and he doubles as the irrigation and spray technician.

Equipment longevity is also a matter of pride.

"We have a 1979 Toro HTM fairway mower that is still going strong," said Joe. "Having mature responsible operators helps make the equipment last longer."

Joe is no stranger to caring for the equipment as he has taken his turn grinding reels in his role as a hands-on superintendent. Grinding is a talent he learned while in the Lake City Golf Operations program.

With a small crew and big ambitions, Winter Pines has found a way to success-

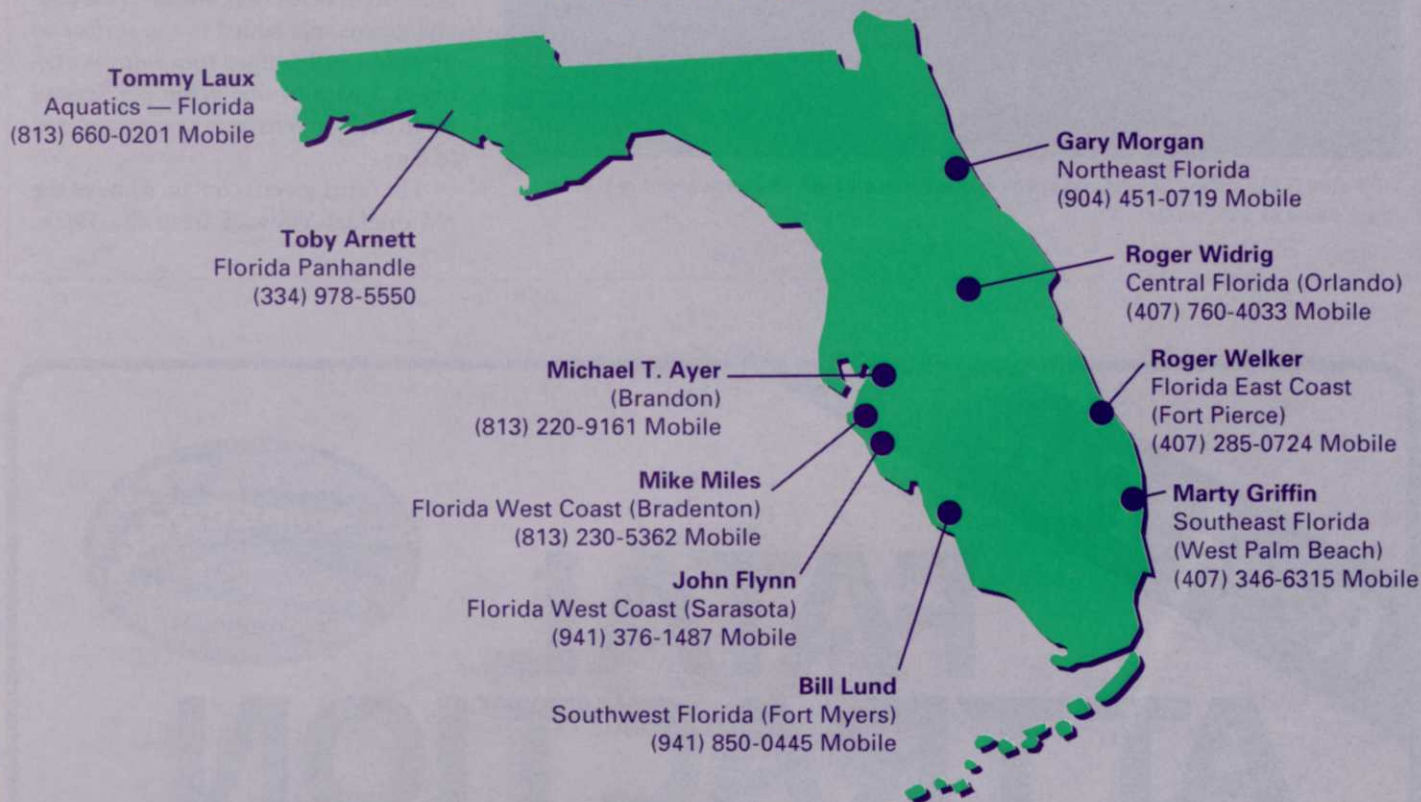
Major renovations/projects

Starting in 1981 to 1987, added automatic irrigation system to holes #1 and #9 through #18 and the driving range. We did all the work in house. We kept the quick coupler system running while we did the renovation. Most holes now have double row coverage with Griswold controllers and valves. We did 1 to 2 holes per year as time and money permitted. We added on to the new system after the new #4 through #8 holes were built. In 1985, we took on effluent water from the city of Winter Park after they installed a 10-inch main line to the middle of the course. Over 2 miles of drainage lines have been installed in the last 18 years to keep the course open as much as possible. Constructed and poured over 6,000 linear feet of concrete cart paths to either replace old asphalt at greens and tees or to extend paths so they ended in dry areas to lessen damage by cart traffic. All this work was done by the owner and our crew. Rebuilt greens #2 through #7 and both practice greens one hole a year to replace contaminated Tifgreen 328 or Tifdwarf surfaces. All work done in house except for fumigation.



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1979 Toro HTM fairway mower and operator Bob Keeth are both 18-year veterans of Winter Pines. Photo by Joel Jackson.

fully accomplish its desired improvements. By doing things in-house, slowly and deliberately, one step at a time, they have shown their customers how they are making things better while keeping 99 percent of the golf course in play at all times.

Perhaps one of the biggest undertakings was to re-grass eight of the greens that were still planted in Tifgreen 328. All are push-up style construction with no under drains.


While it was impractical and cost prohibitive to core out the muck-based greens, the sod was stripped, herringbone drain fields were added to the base and greens mix added to the surface to provide a well drained root zone. Working at a pace of one green per season, seven of the greens have been completed to date.

The other greens contain some of the old original Tifdwarf from the 1960s.

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The


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