



ROYAL POINCIANA GOLF CLUB

## Difference Between Interest and Commitment

*By Joel Jackson, CGCS*

Located east of Goodlette-Frank Road in Naples, the Royal Poinciana Golf Club has spent nearly four decades perfecting an operating system that relies on having the right people doing the right jobs. As superintendent Matt Taylor, CGCS put it, “When you are interested in something, you may only do it when it is convenient. When you are com-

mitted to something, you don’t make excuses; you only strive for results.”

I found out quickly while visiting Royal Poinciana this past spring, that Taylor has a clear vision of what he wants to accomplish and how to go about it. I was very interested in his perspectives on balancing work, family and volunteer association

work since I thought he must be nuts to be the vice president of the Florida GCSA and the President of the Florida Turfgrass Association at the same time. Taylor’s answer was simple, but not without substance.

When I asked him how he was managing to oversee a golf club the same time juggle family and volunteer service he simply said,



(Text continues on Page 24)

## Course Facts



Royal Poinciana Golf Maintenance Staff

### Royal Poinciana Golf Club

**Location:** Naples

**Ownership:** Member owned.

**Playing Policy:** Private

**Number of Holes:** 36 – *Cypress:* 6,536 yards, Par 72, Rating/Slope: 71.9/126; *Pines:* 6,465 yards, Par 72, Rating/Slope: 72/129

**Designed & Constructed by:** Dave Wallace.

Opened: 1969

**Redesigns and Major Renovations:** Arthur Hills (1994 – present)

**Management Team:** *Club Manager:* Rod Kolesnik; *Club President:* Robert Nichols; *Green Chairman:* John Campbell; *Director of Golf Operations:* Jim Tureskis; *Head Golf Professional:* Bil Bergsma; *Director of Golf Course Operations:* Matt Taylor, CGCS

**Property:** Total acres - 360. Under maintenance - 231. 110 per 18 holes, 5 each of bahiagrass and St. Augustinegrass, 1

acre Tifway 419 clubhouse grounds. No overseeding.

**Greens:** Champion; Avg. 5,000 sq. ft. HOC .100 - .125 in.;

**Green speeds:** Winter 10.5+, Summer 9.0 – 10.0.

**Tees:** Cypress – TifEagle; HOC .180 - .225 in. Pines

– Mixed bermuda varieties; HOC .375 - .425 in.

**Fairways:** Cypress – Certified Tifway 419; HOC .500 in; 32 acres. Pines – GN-1 Bermuda; HOC .500 in. 33 acres.

**Roughs:** Cypress – Certified Tifway 419 (53 acres); Pines – Ormond variety (60 acres). HOC both courses .75 in. summer – 1.5 in. winter.

**Bunkers:** Cypress (49) & Pines (57). Sand type - 37M. Hand-rake Cypress greenside bunkers. All other bunkers machine-raked.

**Waste or Native Areas:** 52 acres. Pine straw, 20 acres cord-grass and other native grass beds, 4 acres of marshes.

**Irrigation Source:** City of Naples reclaimed water. PSI pump stations. 3,500 sprinklers. Toro Osmac and Network 8000 control systems.



**A Turf Manager's job is never done ---**

**Put Us On Your Team**

**(800) 340-3888**

[www.aerificationplus.com](http://www.aerificationplus.com)



# Shade Trees, Fresh Divots & Thousands of Footsteps...



**#1** Rated #1 for  
Shade Tolerance

**#1** Rated #1 for  
Divot Recovery\*

**#1** Rated #1 for  
Wear Tolerance

## *Celebration Bermudagrass.* *The better solution for common issues.*

There are no bullet-proof turfgrasses, nor perfect ones. But Celebration™ Bermudagrass comes pretty close. Celebration brings striking blue-green color and enhanced playability to your course; and it:

- ★ Has rapid lateral growth, which quickly repairs damages
- ★ Has greater shade tolerance than other bermudagrasses\*
- ★ Is rated #1 for wear tolerance\*
- ★ Needs less water and mowing

For more information, including where to buy, contact us at 843.849.1288, or visit [celebrationforflorida.com](http://celebrationforflorida.com).

\*Celebration has been rated #1 for wear tolerance in a N.C. State University study; ranked #1 for shade tolerance in a Clemson University study; rated #1 vegetatively propagated bermudagrass for divot recovery in a University of Arkansas study. Visit [sodsolutions.com/research/index.shtml](http://sodsolutions.com/research/index.shtml) for more information.



Celebration Bermudagrass is a joint release of the Turfgrass Producers of Texas, Florida Sod Growers Cooperative and Sod Solutions, Inc.







## 57 Varieties

*A few of the 57 bunkers on the Pines Course. With underlying rock formations bunker drainage and consistency can be a challenge. Hole No. 2, 400 yard, par 4. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

“You have to surround yourself with good people.” I know that’s a timeworn management cliché, but Taylor has followed it to a tee and is reaping the rewards. Taylor’s words reminded me of one of Walt Disney’s motivational slogans, “You can design and build the finest theme park in the world, but it takes people to run it.”

We hadn’t gone far into the interview before he began extolling the virtues of his people. Many of them apparently think Taylor must be the real deal, because they have changed jobs to remain part of his team and have worked for him for six to ten-plus years. Taylor confessed, “Those who know me can attest that our administrative assistant, Jean Mears, is the glue that holds our operation together.” Mears

had worked with Taylor at Bonita Bay East in the 1990s. She re-enlisted with her old boss for another tour of duty in 2001.

The story was similar for the other key staff members: Scott Hornish, superintendent, Pines Course; Charles Montgomery, assistant superintendent, Cypress Course; second assistants Richard Lash (Pines) and Kirsten Conover (Cypress). While Conover is a relative newbie at one and a half years, she has an M.S. in biology and heads the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

Finding the right people for the right jobs, it never fails to be the best formula for success.

Then there’s Kenneth McCalister, the IPM/landscape supervisor, and Noel

Chandler, the equipment manager, and Rex Laffin who concentrates on the green- and tee-mower maintenance. Laffin has been with Taylor since 1994. Another veteran is Hector Hernandez who worked with Taylor at Collier Reserve installing irrigation during construction back in 1995. He also rejoined Taylor in 2001.

Taylor turned down three job offers when he was ready to graduate from assistant at Collier’s Reserve to his first head superintendent position, because they just weren’t the right fit for his goals and vision.

Taylor’s vision was not the result of an overnight revelation or moment of clarity. He regrets not pounding the books more in high school, so his grades prevented him from waltzing



# Super Facts



## Matt Taylor, CGCS

**From:** Alexandria, Va. Moved to Naples in 1972

**Family:** Wife Tracy; Daughter Allison (17); Sons Jordan (13) and Ashton (6)

**Education:** AS Golf Course Operations & AA Business, Lake City Community College.

**Employment:** 1993-1996 assist. supt. Colliers Reserve, Naples; 1996-2000 director golf course operations/East courses, Bonita Bay Club, Naples; 2000-present director of golf operations Royal Poinciana Golf Club, Naples.

**Professional Affiliations:** Member of EGCSA, FGCSA, GCSAA, FTGA, USGA. Currently vice president FGCSA and president of FTGA. Past president EGCSA 2001-02; EGCSA board of directors since 1997.

**Awards:** 1999 GCSAA Environmental Steward Award Private Courses - Bonita Bay East.

**Hobbies:** Coaching my daughter's softball teams and my sons' baseball teams. Hunting, fishing, riding four-wheelers. Spending time with the family.

When your passion is turf,  
your mowers should be Kubota.



### New F Series

Your course deserves the best, most efficient turf equipment. Kubota's new F Series front-mount mowers give you power, traction and versatility with high-performance diesel engines, Auto-Assist 4-WD in forward and reverse, and implement options for year-round use.



### ZD Pro Series

Fuel efficiency is more important than ever, and ZD Pro zero-turn mowers feature fuel-efficient 21, 25 or 28 HP diesel engines. You won't sacrifice performance and durability for efficiency, because the ZD Pro has a durable shaft drive PTO and a heavy 7-gauge steel fabricated mower deck with hydraulic lift. It's the best way to maintain your course and your budget.

FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION OR A PRODUCT DEMO,  
SEE ONE OF THESE AUTHORIZED KUBOTA DEALERS NEAR YOU.

#### Deland

Triple D Equipment  
2820 Firehouse Road  
(386) 734-2119  
tripledd@cfl.rr.com

#### Kissimmee

Five Star Tractor & Equipment  
1750 E. Irlow Bronson Hwy.  
(407) 847-8895

#### Fort Myers

Creel Tractor Company  
3771 Palm Beach Blvd.  
(239) 694-2185 / (800) 282-7949  
ext. 218

#### MacClenny

MacClenny Equipment &  
Tractor Sales  
5463 Woodlawn Cemetery Road  
(904) 259-4277

#### Homestead

Richards Tractors & Implements  
1995 N.E. 8th Street  
(305) 247-8711

#### Ocala

Bobcat & Kubota of Ocala  
5211 W. Silver Springs Blvd.  
(352) 622-9155

**Kubota**  
EVERYTHING YOU VALUE

Kubota Tractor Corporation Markets a  
Full Line of Tractors and Construction  
Equipment Through a Nationwide Network  
of Over 1,000 Authorized Dealers.

©Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2006







## Harmony with Location

*With native trees like cypress, pines and palms in the background on and native rock used for lake bank stabilization Royal Poinciana reflects its harmony with its location. Cypress Hole No. 7, 500 yard, par 5. Note owl stand at far right. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

*First, show up early. Work hard and get the job done right the first time. No complaining or whining. Second, do not tell people how good you are. They will figure it out on their own.*

into the University of Florida. Funny how his parents were right after all, he says.

But he did dabble part time in landscape work and after a brief flirtation with the Culinary Institute in Hyde Park, NY, Taylor did have a revelation when he started figuring out those nighttime and weekend work schedules. That didn't seem like a good fit with raising a family, so he went to work instead for Wayne Griffith at Green Way Landscaping in Naples.

As Taylor recalls, "I owe a lot to Wayne for showing me how to work hard and get the job done no matter what obstacles get in the way. He has remained a good friend to this day.

"While working on landscape at Im-

perial Lakes I met the superintendent, Jerry Redden, and my interest in golf course work was born. After working for Jerry for a couple of years I enrolled in the Lake City program. Upon graduation I started working for Tim Hiers, CGCS at Collier's Reserve. Tim's reputation as a consummate professional is well known. His attention to detail, organization and pursuit of education and always doing the right thing were not lost on me. I learned a lot about dealing with people and the environmental side of our business from him.

"I learned as much from J. Mark Black, CGCS about turf management, course detailing and overall operations management from him. It's not easy working for someone who strives for





# GREENS TEAM

## *The Thatch-Away® SUPA-SYSTEM®*

"We use the Thatch-Away SUPA-SYSTEM units in the Spring and Fall in conjunction with our True-Surface Vibratory Greens Rollers twice per week all season long. We are able to remove the extra thatch and grain from our greens while still achieving excellent greens speeds."

~ Rick Wahl, CGCS / Belleaire Country Club, FL



## The TRUE-SURFACE® Vibratory Greens Rolling System

"The True-Surface Vibratory rollers mounted on a triplex are much faster & simpler than the riding type roller and do a better job because of the vibration."

~ Mark Jarrell, CGCS / Palm Beach National Golf & Country Club, FL

"Great tool in trying to accomplish faster green speeds without jeopardizing turf health because of low mowing heights."

~ Kevin Goolsby, CGCS / Indian Bayou Golf Club, FL



# Tampa Bay Turf Management

**SOUTHEAST**  
Tom Phillips (561) 719-6265

**NORTHEAST & CENTRAL**  
Carl Bronson (727) 638-5858

**SOUTHWEST**  
Jim Lawson (239) 633-6398

**NORTHWEST**  
Frank Cook (727) 235-3637

**TAMPA REGION**  
Terry Brawley (727) 638-3481





## Fun Facts



*Raking bunkers might not necessarily be “fun,” but taking care of business helps Matt Taylor find the time to have fun with his family and friends. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

**1. Vehicle:** Ford F250

**2. Last good movie I saw:** Failure to Launch

**3. I stay home to watch:** House

**4. The book I’ve been reading:** Books? I have a hard time keeping up with trade magazines

**5. Favorite meal:** Soft shell crab

**6. Favorite performers:** Lynyrd Skynyrd, John Anderson

**7. Prized possessions:** 1981 Jeep CJ-5

**8. Personal Heroes:** Dr. Ahmad Salmon (See #15) and Jeff Hood, my first assistant at Bonita Bay East. How he survived me, I do not know. Thanks for still talking to me.

**9. Nobody knows that I:** Am very self conscious

**10. I’m better than anyone else when it comes to:** Seeing the big picture

**11. I’d give anything to meet:** Steve Spurrier

**12. My fantasy is:** Retire early to the islands

**13. The one thing I can’t stand:** Narrow-minded people who are not willing to change

**14. If I could change one thing about myself:** Be a better communicator

**15. Most humbling experience:** When we found out my second son had cancer at age three months.

**16. The words that best describe me:** Honest, committed, dedicated and funny.

**17. My dream foursome would be:** Steve Spurrier, Ted Nugent, John Anderson and me

**18. If I could do it over:** I would have attended UF for Civil Engineering

perfection sometimes, but I would not change that time for anything. What both of these gentlemen have meant to my career, words here cannot adequately describe.

“We are the sum total of our experiences and I would be remiss if I did not salute the following people who also contributed to my growth and development: Tom Burrows, Roy Bates, Steve Durand, Jan Beljan, Robert Bittner, Charlie Campbell, John Teller, Bill Gamble, David Graham and Charlie McMullen.”

Taylor said his work philosophy evolved from lessons learned from those mentors and others. He said, “First, show up early. Work hard and get the job done right the first time. No complaining or whining. Second, do not tell people how good you are. They will figure it out on their own. When managing people in our business you must be firm but fair and always stick to what you know is right.

“My advice to those seeking a profession in greenkeeping is that you must always remember that at the end of the day, no matter what happens at your operation good or bad, you will be held accountable and responsible. Personally, I recommend that you find a balance among work, family and your life needs. Enjoy your children while they are young. They grow up way too fast and the next thing you know they are applying for college.”

Beyond the teamwork of his key staffers Taylor also works on getting recognition and rewards for the entire crew. Whenever Taylor gets an “Atta Boy” note or comment on course conditions or project work, he posts them on the crew bulletin board. He also uses product purchase points to acquire prizes for giveaways at crew parties which include a big Christmas party and an annual bowling party. Then there’s the Pepsi Party from the drink machine proceeds. The Royal Poinciana membership also shows their appreciation by approving bonuses at Christmas and Easter.

Taylor knows that communication to his staff is important to get the necessary tasks done, but he also knows that



---

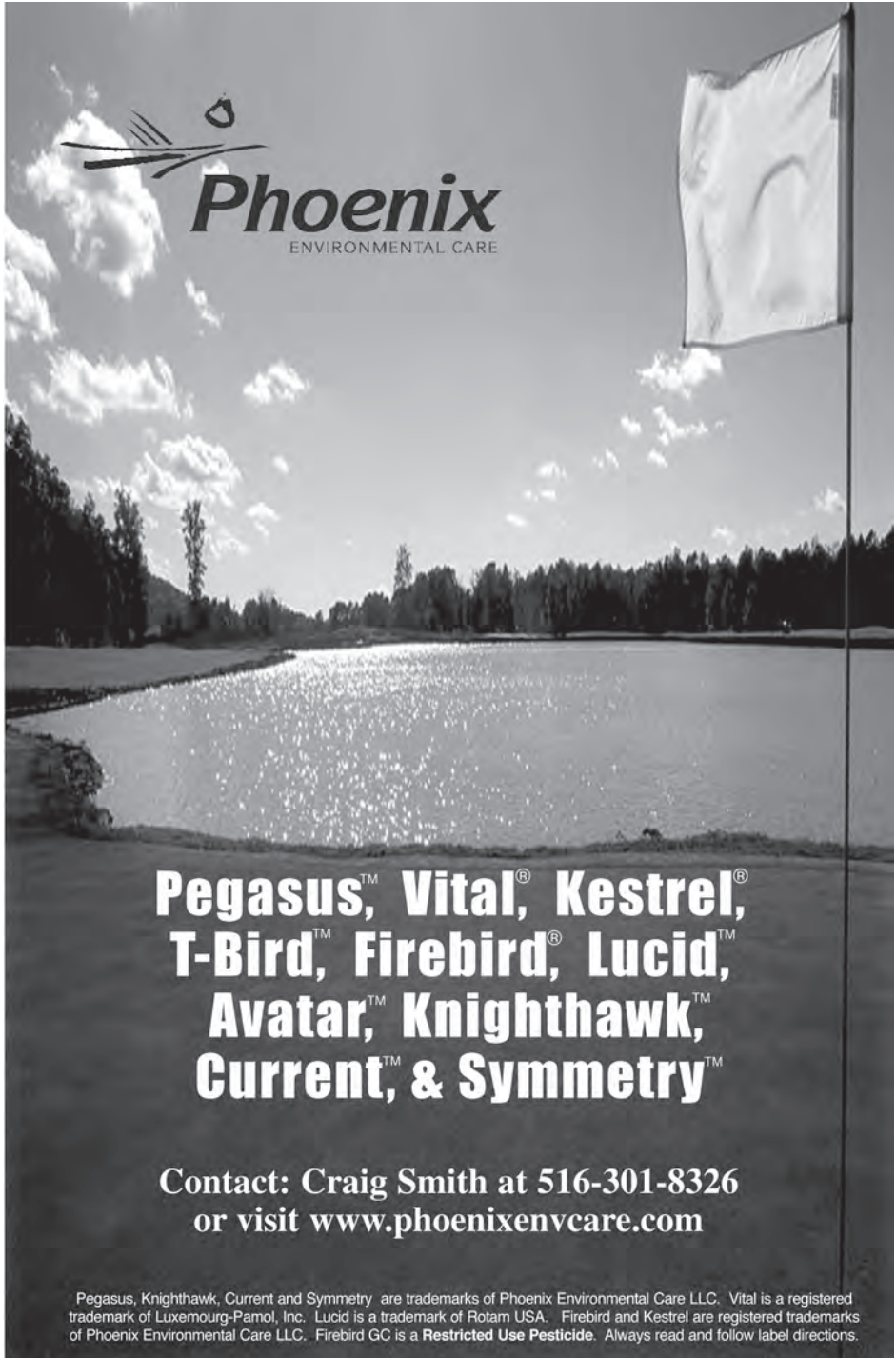

*You see so much more at 2-3 miles per hour. Plus the exercise is good for my health and reducing stress. Most any course can look good at 15-20 mph from a golf cart.*

---

he must communicate up the chain of command and to the membership. So besides the five-minute maintenance-management mini-meeting each morning before daily job assignments, Taylor attends weekly manager meetings where pertinent information is compiled into a report for the club officials.

Taylor meets weekly on Mondays during the golf season with his green chairman in what they call "Quality Time with Your Greenkeeper." They review course conditions, maintenance schedules, financials, project progress and planning. Taylor says he generally has some oral or e-mail contact daily. It may be only a few minutes, but it ensures a comfort level on what's happening on the course.

Taylor added, "I have had the good fortune of having two excellent chair-



**Pegasus<sup>™</sup>, Vital<sup>®</sup>, Kestrel<sup>®</sup>,  
T-Bird<sup>™</sup>, Firebird<sup>®</sup>, Lucid<sup>™</sup>,  
Avatar<sup>™</sup>, Knighthawk<sup>™</sup>,  
Current<sup>™</sup>, & Symmetry<sup>™</sup>**

**Contact: Craig Smith at 516-301-8326  
or visit [www.phoenixenvcare.com](http://www.phoenixenvcare.com)**

Pegasus, Knighthawk, Current and Symmetry are trademarks of Phoenix Environmental Care LLC. Vital is a registered trademark of Luxemourg-Pamol, Inc. Lucid is a trademark of Rotam USA. Firebird and Kestrel are registered trademarks of Phoenix Environmental Care LLC. Firebird GC is a Restricted Use Pesticide. Always read and follow label directions.

## **Tifton Physical Soil Testing Laboratory, Inc.**

Accredited by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA)

### **Specializing in:**

- Testing All Materials for USGA Golf Green Construction.
- Developing Putting Green Rootzone Mixtures that meet USGA Specifications.
- Recommending Topdressing and Bunker (Trap) Sands that meet USGA Specifications.
- Developing Sportsturf Rootzone Mixes with Optimum Physical Properties for Athletic Fields.

1412 Murray Avenue  
Tifton, Georgia 31794



[www.tiftonsoillab.com](http://www.tiftonsoillab.com)

T. Powell Gaines  
(229) 382-7292





**TAS Visit**

*USGA Agronomist John Foy (kneeling) checks green root zone during his annual Turf Advisory Service visit to Royal Poinciana. Green Chairman John Campbell (standing far right) and Matt Taylor (far left) and the rest of the senior maintenance staff listen to Foy's comments. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

# South Florida Grassing, Inc

Over 40 Years in the Grassing Industry

**TifEagle**

**SeaIsle<sup>1</sup>**  
*Certified Seashore Paspalum*

**Supreme**

**Sod, Sprigs and Rolls available**

- Our grass is grown in Hobe Sound on gassed, sand-based soil
- Installation, Hydro-mulching, grassing and mulching also available

**Tifway 419**

**TifSport**

**Registered  
Tifdwarf**

**Certified Producer**  
Southern Seed  
Certification Association

**(772) 546-4191**

**Fax (772) 546-3482**

**800-483-4279**