

SKYVIEW AT TERRA VISTA

## The Hills are Alive with Golf Courses

*By Joel Jackson, CGCS*

The Seven Rivers Chapter nominated the Skyview Course for the winter 2007 cover story, but to tell the full story is to recognize that Skyview is just the newest of three courses built at the Villages of Citrus Hills and, according to superintendent David Hoggard, yet another course may be on the way in the not-too-distant future.

The Villages of Citrus Hills are located on approximately 18 square miles of rolling, sandy hills about 10 miles east of the Gulf of Mexico at Crystal River. Those hills of oaks and pine woods will contain 6,000 housing units – including single family homes and condominiums – when completely built out. Most of the residents are still seasonal – retirees taking refuge from the cold north

winters – but each year more and more become year-round residents. One very famous resident was baseball Hall-of-Famer Ted Williams.

Hoggard says the Village of Citrus Hills is more than just a place to live. The company overseeing the development employs more than 400 workers who do much of the on-site construction, maintenance and service work. Hoggard also



*Hole No. 13, 181- yard, par 3. There are 40 acres of native sand “waste” bunkers on the course. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

says that President and General Manager Stephen Tamposi keeps his hands on the operation and is heavily involved with the entire project from soup to nuts; he can be seen checking out the site daily, making sure work is progressing according to plan and ensuring quality control for the project.

There are currently three golf courses in the Citrus Hills complex. The Meadows opened in 1982, the Oaks in 1985 and Skyview opened nine holes in 1999 and the second nine in 2001, and 22 years ago, a young but well-grounded David Hoggard took over the Meadows Course and helped build the Oaks course with in-house staff.

In 1999, Terry LaGree and the Barbaron Company designed and built two holes on the Skyview Course, the lots sold out immediately and soon seven more holes were built and once again the property sold out. Main-

taining 36 holes of golf nearby and then having two more distant holes to maintain became a challenge of timing and access and it didn't get much easier adding the seven more holes. Finally in 2001, a new maintenance complex accompanied the final nine holes and a dedicated crew took over the routine maintenance.

Assistant Superintendent Tony Rotundo has 20 employees on the Meadows and Oaks courses to maintain approximately 200 acres of property on those 36 holes. Over at Skyview Assistant Superintendent Gary Carter, also has 210 acres of golf course including 40 acres of native areas consisting of native sand and grasses. Consequently he also has 20 employees to help groom the property.

Hoggard is based at the Skyview maintenance complex, but he covers the entire property every day helping

to walk and ride the courses to keep tabs on pest outbreaks, turf quality and playing conditions.

Hoggard firmly believes that “drier is better” and therefore he employs a rigorous moisture monitoring program daily by checking soil moisture levels with a moisture probe and a superintendent's best friend – a pocket knife. To make his point Hoggard cut out a wedge-shaped plug on the 10th green to compare the actual appearance and feel of the soil in the root zone compared to the readings he had on the moisture meter. He applies liquid and dry wetting agents as needed to maintain proper moisture levels on the greens.

Another information source that Hoggard relies on is the comments from engaged members playing the golf courses. He said, “I like to hear the questions and comments from the members. They can help me find out

## COURSE FACTS



*Skyview Maintenance Staff*

### Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club

**Location:** Hernando

**Ownership:** Villages of Citrus Hills. Playing Policy: Semi-private

**Number of Holes:** 54 – Meadows 5,885 yds, par 70; Oaks 6,325 yds, par 70; Skyview 7,142 yds, par 72

**Designed & Constructed by:** Meadows and Oaks – Phil Freil, Sr. opened 1982 & 1985; construction in-house by Richard Mann and David Hoggard. Skyview – Terry Lagree and Barbaron Company. Opened nine holes in 1999 and second nine in 2001.

**Management Team:** Steve Tamposi, president and general manager; Anthony Lambert, club manager; Tim Driscoll, green chairman, Meadow & Oaks; Bob Gardner, green chairman, Skyview; Peter Summers, director of golf; Steve Fisher, golf professional; David Hoggard, golf course superintendent.

**Property:** Total acres, 720; 410 under maintenance (100 acres each Meadows and Oaks, 210 acres Skyview).



*Meadows and Oaks Staff*

**Greens:** Tifdwarf; avg size: Meadows 5,000, Oaks 6,500, Skyview 7,000 sq.ft.; HOC: Meadows & Oaks .140 - .180”; Skyview .100-.170; green speeds: Meadows & Oaks 7-9; Skyview 7-10. All greens are overseeded with *Poa trivialis* @ 15 lbs/1000 sq ft.

**Tees, Fairways and Roughs all courses:** Tifway 419 hybrid bermudagrass; area: Meadows & Oaks 2.5 acres; Skyview 5.0 acres; HOC: avg .5; overseeded with perennial ryegrass.

**Fairways:** Meadows & Oaks 30 acres; Skyview 60 acres; HOC: .625 on Meadows & Oaks; Skyview .400 - .500; overseeding: 300 lbs/acre on Meadows & Skyview courses.

**Roughs:** Meadows & Oaks 20 acres; Skyview 70 acres; HOC all roughs and slopes: 2.0.

**Bunkers:** Meadows 36, Oaks 36, Skyview 75; sand type 37M. Combination of hand and machine raking

**Waste or Native Areas:** Skyview has 40 acres of native sand. The Oaks has 5 acres of sand and pine straw and the Meadows has some pine straw beds around trees.

**Lakes:** 11 lakes covering 35 acres on the 54 holes.

## Superintendent Facts

### David Hoggard

**Membership:** Class A Member GC-SAA

**From:** Windsor, NC. Grew up in Lakeland

**Family:** Wife Robin; Son Joshua (18) and daughter Jessica (16)

**Education:** A.S. Golf Course Operations, Lake City Community College (Class of 1984)

**Employment and Mentors:** 1978-82 Crew member, Carpenters Home G&CC, Lee Pearson; 1982 OJT Student, Countryside C.C., John Luper; 1983 OJT student Grenelefe G&RC, Paul Hickman; 1981-84 weekend crew, Bartow G.C., Lee Pearson; 1982-84 work study student, LCCC Maintenance Complex, Ed Combest; 1984 to present superintendent Citrus Hills G&CC.

**Professional Affiliations:** 25-year member of the GCSAA. Seven Rivers GCSA – served in all offices on the board, president in 1995-97. Member of the Florida Turfgrass Association.

**Memorable moments:** The births of my kids. Hunting trips with my son. Coaching our Little League team to the state championships. Making a hole-in-one on a par 4 hole.

**Hobbies:** Golf, fishing, hunting, tennis, scuba diving, water and snow skiing and camping.



*David Hoggard cuts out turf plugs daily to check turf roots. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

what is most important to them and just maybe they saw something or had a question about something we missed.” Hoggard says he considers most of the comments as constructive criticism and most are given in that spirit.

I had the opportunity to observe Hoggard interacting and getting feedback from Green Chairman Bob Gardner and committee member Joe Glaser as they putted on the 10th green of the Skyview course during the Tamposi-Nash Cup tournament. Later, Director

of Golf Peter Summers explained that, throughout the year, players compete in qualifying tournaments on men’s day and the top two point-getters are selected as respective captains of the Tamposi and Nash teams. Then they go down the list of the next 18 top point winners and finally each captain gets two at-large picks and the two 12-man teams square off in a Ryder Cup-style competition of best ball and alternate shot formats.

Just one way a club can build cama-

raderie among members.

The development of advisory green committees on all the courses has given Hoggard another way to communicate besides on-course conversations. Making presentations to these committees makes him plan and organize his programs, practices and schedules in a way that all can be on the same page. Hoggard admits that in the hustle and bustle of maintaining 400 acres of golf course, he sometimes takes for granted what everyone knows or understands about course maintenance.

Hoggard said, “I think I do a real good job of communicating with our assistants and crews, but having these committees active helps me to better communicate up the chain of command too.”

Hoggard reports to Peter Summers, director of golf and head golf professional, who has been at Citrus Hills for 18 years. Hoggard says it has been a good working relationship, “Peter understands the golf side and I represent the turf side. He knows we need to maintain the turf to give the members good conditions, so we work together.”

Hoggard meets with Summers weekly and the green committees monthly. He also meets with or radios his assistants each morning for daily updates and directions. Each assistant meets with his crew at the start of the day and more formal meetings are held as needed. Hoggard says, “We all have one goal and that is to always provide the best product within our budget. I try to do that by leading by example, being organized and prepared and being professional at all times.”

Hoggard learned his professional values from a couple of his golf mentors. “I started working on the Carpenters Home Golf Course in Lakeland when I was 13 years old. I knew then that this was what I wanted to do. Lee Pearson, manager of Carpenters Home was very supportive and suggested that I attend Lake City to get my formal education in the business. I did one OJT summer at Carpenters Home and the other with the legendary Paul Hickman back in the glory days of the Grenelefe Resort.”



*Oaks, pines and bunkers accent the 543-yard, par-5 14th hole. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

“But I can also recall in my early teens when Jack Harrell, Sr. was on the road calling on clients and he would help me calibrate my sprayers and set up maintenance programs. And perhaps one of the best mentors I had when I was starting out on my own was Jeff Hayden. Jeff was a leader in the industry both as an active superintendent and a very involved vendor when he went to work for Golf Ventures. Jeff was the one who always said to be successful you needed to surround yourself with good people.”

Hoggard had an interesting take on that subject which we explored a lot in the last issue with Matt Taylor at the Royal Poinciana Club in Naples. Hoggard says, “Besides having good people you need to be a good person back. It is a two-way street and creates a good work atmosphere, but you also need to



*Director of Golf and Head Pro Peter Summers, left, with Superintendent David Hoggard on the clubhouse veranda overlooking the 18th hole. Photo by Joel Jackson.*



*A large, native-grass stormwater retention area separates the tee and green on the 208-yard, par 3, 5th hole. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

be around good people on and off the golf course to have a positive outlook in general. We can't always choose the people we have to work with, but we can choose how we treat each other."

"Sometimes you have to apply pressure to crew members at times to get things done on time or to correct poor quality work, but you can't be that way with people every day. It just won't work. We all have a solid nucleus of workers on the crew we can count on. These folks don't need detailed instructions, they just need to know the results you expect and then you must step back and let them use their experience and creativity to get it done. New staffers need more training and sometimes retraining until they get it down right."

Over on the Meadows and Oaks Course, Hoggard cited some of the key

folks helping Tony Rotundo: equipment technicians Gary Littlejohn and David Hutchinson; pest control technicians Bill McGowan and Mike Wadsworth; irrigation technician David Kohn and 16-year veteran equipment operator Chuck McCray.

Rotundo was a Lake City graduate and came to Citrus Hills from IGM when his only option was to move to New Jersey to take a course. He went over to Lake City to look at job postings and set up three interviews in one day. When he and David hit it off and David made him an offer, he took the job. Rotundo even got married on the 18th green of the Meadows Course.

Key staff members helping Gary Carter on the Skyview Course are equipment technicians Joe Frontel and Steve Blackwelder; pest control techni-

cians Paul Atherton, James Coxyaw and Kim Tressler; irrigation technician Alan Christman and long time equipment operators Wally Bridge and P. J. Wolters. Carter is a retired serviceman and learned his craft while working his way up on several courses in the area. When the Skyview Course opened up, Carter joined the team and Hoggard is tickled to have them both on board.

There is a sense of family about the whole company and the mutual respect and support among the employees across the board has made Hoggard feel welcome and proud to be part of the successful team at the Villages. Hoggard is big on family values personally so it has been a great fit for him and for the community. Hoggard says of his goals, "My goal is to continue my career as the best husband, father, son and



Hard-working assistant superintendents Tony Rotundo, left, and Gary Carter.  
Photo by Joel Jackson.

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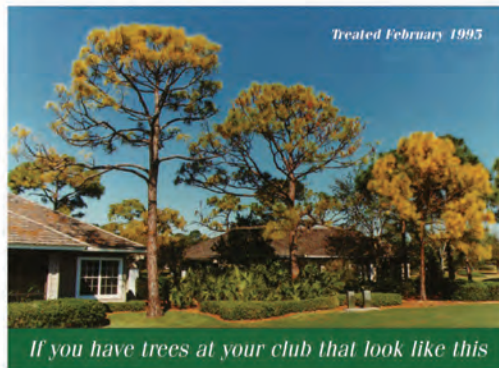
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## Fun Facts



*The Meter Man. Dave Hoggard with his favorite tool, a moisture meter. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

### Dave's Data:

**Vehicle:** Ford F350 , 4x4

**Last good movie I saw:** RV with Robin Williams

**I stay home to watch:** Gator Football

**The book I've been reading:** Cabela's hard-back catalogue

**Favorite meal:** Fish

**Prized possessions:** My family

**Personal heroes:** My dad

**Nobody knows that I:** Can ride a unicycle

**I'm better than anyone else when it comes to:** Winning

**The one thing I can't stand:** Golfers not repairing their ball marks

**If I could change one thing about myself:** I'd lose 25 pounds

**Most humbling experience:** The sudden death of my friend Jeff Hayden

**The words that best describe me:** A good listener, organized

**My dream foursome would be:** My dad, my son, Phil Mickelson and me

**My best fish story:** Scuba diving with an 800 lb. Goliath Grouper

**My best golf shot:** Double eagle (hole in one) on a par-four hole.

**If I could do it over:** I'd take the same road

superintendent that I can be.”

He gets his pleasure from friends and others, especially his kids, on hunting, fishing and SCUBA diving trips. Although he admits sometimes watching his kids is entertainment enough as

he teaches them to stalk fish and read signs in the woods and move in on a deer. One of Hoggard's biggest stress relievers is to take a family vacation during deer hunting season in South Dakota on an 8,500-acre ranch owned

by his wife's family.

Reporting to work every day at Citrus Hills might not be the same as a ranch in South Dakota, but with a wildlife inventory that includes deer, turkey, coyotes, bobcats, fox, wild hogs, raccoons, opossum, armadillos gopher tortoise, skunk, snakes, bald eagles, red shouldered hawks, blue birds, plover, dove, quail, egrets, herons, mocking-birds, cardinals and crows – what's not to like?

Even in this utopian atmosphere of course there are some challenges in managing high expectations for the golf turf. Hoggard says the number-one issue is traffic control during the heavy-play season and requires daily attention so the turf doesn't get worn out in highly used access areas. To help the turf withstand the wear, Hoggard will aerify six to eight times a year to reduce the damaging compaction. As at many courses, ball mark and divot repairs can also be an issue during periods of heavy play.

A close second in terms of potential damage is stress from nematode activity. With the phase-out of Nematicur – a chemical nematicide – in May of 2007, Hoggard and others hope that other fast-acting products will be available soon to provide quick knockdown and suppression. Bio controls are a great concept and a potential way of the future, but they aren't as reliable as some of the old standby products. Hoggard has used Curfew with decent results but the distance limitations (100 feet from nearest structures) prevent treatment on some critical areas. So far Skyview has only shown a few mole cricket hot spots and has not required any treatments, but Hoggard feels it will be only a matter of time.

Hoggard says that Citrus Hills was one of the sites that were used for Dr. Howard Frank's release of red-eyed flies and parasitic nematodes as potential bio-controls for controlling turf damaging nematode populations.


Another less intrusive but highly important challenge has been to create and maintain consistent playing conditions among all three courses on property. Given the age difference of over 20 years, which meant new versus older



grasses and changes in design and construction technology, Hoggard was happy to see the recent design and renovation improvements on the Meadows and Oaks courses.

He said, "We re-grassed the Meadows greens, converting them from Tifgreen 328 to Classic TifDwarf and basically had full coverage in five weeks. We also renovated all the bunkers on the Meadows and did the greenside bunkers and installed new pond liner on the Oaks course. We also relocated the irrigation main line and began a shade-management program. Hoggard said, "I can remember planting all the oak trees on the Oaks course they were 1-2-inch saplings and now 20 years later they have 6-foot-wide trunks and I can see where the growth has changed some shot values and, of course, the larger shade footprint is now affecting some turf areas."

The other component for consistency among the courses is the routine maintenance program. While there are slight height-of-cut variations among the three courses, the cultural practices are mostly the same. The greens are aerified four times a year and the tees and fairways twice a year. The greens are verticut and topdressed four to six times a year, and deep verticutting (Matt-a-way) is done twice a year. Pest control applications are done as needed on a spot-treatment program based on monitoring and scouting for weed, insect and disease activity. Hoggard is



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*Close-up of the par-5, 10th hole showing the hardwood forest that borders the course.  
Photo by Daniel Zelazek*

also a big fan of using Primo, especially during the summer on fairways to keep the turf dense and reduce the amount of clippings.

Hoggard says that there has been a lot more play in 2006. In order to get more players out for the preferred morning tee times on the Skyview Course, they are running 1- & 10-tee starts on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays they have shotgun starts. “This limits some of the detail work we can do ahead of play as the crew is scattered around the course on primary set up and mowing and grooming duties. We try to work back in play, but we try to do as little disturbance as possible. Over at the Meadows we have six shotguns a week and the Oaks also has the 1- and 10-tee start program. It

limits some of the things we can do, but the bottom line is we are here for the members.”

One last story: Twenty-one years ago on December 7, 1985 Hoggard was playing with his father in a hole-in-one tournament on the Meadows Course. There were very luxurious prizes on all the par-3 holes, a new home, a trip to Europe, a new car, etc. Well, wouldn’t you know it – on the first hole, a 308-yard, downhill, par 4, all you can see is the top of the flagpole from the tee. Hoggard’s drive did the impossible and went in the cup. Hoggard says two ladies sitting in the rough went nuts and he thought someone on a nearby hole had done something spectacular. When they got to the green of course the story unfolded, but this wasn’t a big-prize hole.

All any other hole-in-one made on

the course did that day was earn the player a paid registration in a national Hole in One Tournament. Hoggard, only one year into his first head superintendent’s job, didn’t have the means for air fare and hotel to the tournament. This is where the whole “one big happy family” spirit of Citrus Hills is evident. The members organized a Send-Hoggard-to-Houston tournament to raise the needed funds.

From his comments about the history and vision of the whole project and his admiration for his dedicated staff and co-workers to the happy residents and to his fellow Seven River colleagues who are dear friends and golf and fishing buddies, you can tell Hoggard is living his dream job.