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## SUPERINTENDENT FACTS

## Jim Rowland, Class A Golf Course Superintendent

**Originally from:** Dublin, GA.

**Personal:** Wife Kem and two sons, J. Roy (18) and Chris (15). My dad is a retired physician who also served as a state representative and a U. S. congressman for 12 years, and mom takes care of dad.

**Education:** BS in Agronomy from the University of Georgia, 1978

**Employment:** 1984-present, Superintendent Lake Wales Country Club; 1980-83 Superintendent Ravines Golf Club, Middleburg, FL; 1979-80 Assistant Superintendent Willow Lakes G.C. Jacksonville; 1978-79 Assistant Superintendent Sea Island G.C., St. Simons, GA.

**Professional Affiliations:** Member of the GCSAA and Ridge GCSA. 4th Degree Black Belt member of Victory Tae Kwan Do Chung Do Dwan.

**Goals & Accomplishments:** Keep doing what I do and make sure my sons have the best opportunities in life. Continue my study and advancement in Tae Kwan Do – it's great for mental and physical conditioning.

**Work philosophy and advice:** Work hard. Be hands on. Interact with your crew. Work with them. Listen to them. Don't put work ahead of your family. Take your time. Don't make hasty decisions on work or life.

**Memorable moments:** Traveling to Bloomington, IL to test for my 4th Degree Black Belt and performing my forms and sparring requirements for Grandmaster Park from Korea.

**Hobbies & community involvement:** I love to play golf (Jim's a single-digit handicapper). The whole family is involved in Tae Kwan Do. We are members of the First United Methodist Church



*Master Golf Professional and General Manager Bob Forward and Jim Rowland, Class A superintendent form a winning team at the Lake Wales Country Club. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

**Rowland says that he is fortunate that his owner understands the challenges posed by Mother Nature**

one not so good.

Rowland said, "We can get a 3-inch rain and be ready for play in 30 minutes or less." The bunkers seldom need any drain lines as the native sand percolates rapidly.

Then there is the matter of retention. The ponds on the course are lined in order to retain water and irrigation must be managed to insure proper moisture levels are maintained throughout the course.

The course relies on a deep well for irrigation water. Trying to manage turf during these drought conditions,

Rowland says that he is fortunate that his owner understands the challenges posed by Mother Nature since they have been in the citrus business forever.

A sandy, well-drained soil profile also means a potential haven for nematodes and mole crickets.

Currently Rowland applies Curfew on 10 to 15 acres each year including the greens and then tees, fairways and roughs as needed. Chronic areas are often given a little extra fertilizer to help outgrow any potential weak spots. Mole cricket control is accomplished by making Top Choice applications



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*Resident villas and early morning shadows highlight the first hole at the Lake Wales Country Club. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

**Straightforward,  
good basic programs,  
but what makes  
them really work  
efficiently are the  
relationships from  
top to bottom**

and following up by spot-treating any lingering or returning hot spots. In fact, spot-treating pests and weeds is the preferred method of pest control on the course.

Cultural and fertility programs are the staple of good turf management and Rowland uses the consulting services of the legendary turf guru Ralph White to make sure he doesn't stray from the tried-and-true basics. Rowland aerifies the greens four times a year, pulling cores twice and using solid needle-quad tines in the heavier-play winter season for less surface disruption. The tees are aerified twice and the fairways once each year.

The greens and tees are fertilized monthly at approximately 1 lb of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet, which is the recommended annual rate for greens in the region. The fairways are

fertilized four times a year and the roughs twice, also at the same rate. The greens and tees are also spiked biweekly and verticut as needed.

Since the club is located in a more rural central Florida area, which is prone to colder temperatures, TifDwarf was the turf of choice during the most recent renovation of the greens in order to facilitate winter overseeding. Also, with a staff of only 13 for 120 acres, this variety is also less demanding in terms of frequent brushing, verti-grooming and light topdressing demanded by the denser, thatch-producing ultradwarf varieties. Some turf managers might call this turf choice – “right plant, right place.”

Those are the nuts and bolts of the turf maintenance at Lake Wales. Straightforward, good basic programs, but what makes it really work efficiently



**'Jim is somebody special. He has an amazing ability to maintain the course in great shape in a cost-effective manner with a crew two-thirds the size of most comparable golf clubs. He's a hard worker who is out there working alongside his crew doing whatever it takes to get the job done.'**

**Bob Forward  
PGA Master Professional**

is the relationships from top to bottom among the ownership, management and staff.

Rowland truly appreciates the loyalty, longevity, morale and teamwork of his small staff which has seven members including himself with more than 10 years with the club. I think it's the first time I ever listed all the employees as key members of the staff in the Course Facts box. He said, "I am extremely blessed to have such a great group of longtime employees. They are really good at what they do."

Bob Forward, the club's general manager and master golf professional, is a real "Charlie Hustle" type of guy. When he's not taking care of the members, or organizing golf outings for local groups, or serving as the chairman of the U.S. Senior Open Section tournament, he finds time to



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*Palms and oak trees surround the green on the Par 5, 558 yard, 13th hole. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

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ride the course in a cart with a spray tank to spot spray weeds. He knows a small staff can't cover all the bases all the time on the 120-acre property, so he pitches in whenever he can.

When I was touring the course with Jim, Forward came up and was asking about how long it took for the herbicide to work and how many days he should wait for the weeds to turn color so he could make a follow-up ride to check for any weeds he might have missed. He also had some comments about Jim as a partner in the club management team.

Forward said, "Jim is somebody special. He has an amazing ability to maintain the course in great shape in a cost-effective manner with a crew two-thirds the size of most comparable golf clubs. He's a hard worker who is out there working alongside his crew doing whatever it takes to get the job done.

"We are proud of our course and our whole operation. We annually host the Ben Hill Griffin Invitational which is the largest event in Polk County, and we have also hosted the NAIA small-college regional championships including the Webber College Invitational, the U.S. Senior Sectional, the Senior Mid Am, and the Florida

Junior Tournament. Our members really get behind these events and even provide food, fill divots and cheer the kids along." In return, the club is member oriented; it's all about service to our members"

Rowland returned the compliment, "Bob generates more play for our golf course during the slower summer season through his golf and business contacts than anyone I know. Obviously, you are seeing him out here today spot spraying goosegrass in his spare time to help the cause. The bottom line is we both like what we do and we're passionate about the game and the golf course."

I asked Rowland how he got into the business. He responded, "I have been playing golf since I was 9 years old. In high school I worked at the Dublin CC. The summer before college I worked at the Sea Palm course on St. Simons Island, and I continued playing golf in college and my summer work at the Dublin CC. Finally, I abandoned my history major and decided to be an agronomist.

Along the way Rowland had some profound mentors for guidance. He said, "My dad was a big influence. He always told me that you had to work hard to achieve things in life. For some

**While keeping up with the new products and techniques, Ralph (White) and I still believe that mastering the agronomic basics is the key to having healthy turfgrass.**

it comes easier than others. It didn't come easy for me. I always had to work harder, but I had help.

"G.C. Horn showed me the cultural practices needed to maintain good turf. Ralph White taught me that some of the best superintendents are the ones who are hands-on: mowing greens and changing cups. Ralph still consults with our course twice a year in the spring and fall. While keeping up with the new products and techniques, Ralph and I still believe that mastering the agronomic basics is the key to having healthy turfgrass."

I also asked Rowland about his



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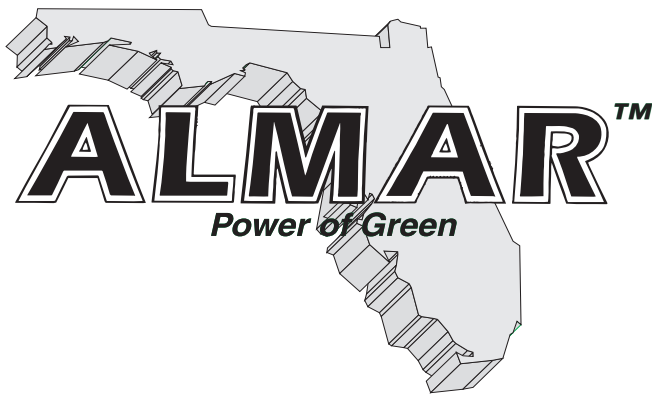
**FUN FACTS**

**Fun Facts from Jim Rowland, a Black Belt Master**

- 1. **Vehicle:** 2000 Ford F-150 company truck
- 2. **I stay home to watch:** The American Idol
- 3. **Favorite meal:** Fried pork chops with rice, gravy and baked beans
- 4. **Favorite performers:** The Doobie Brothers
- 5. **Prized possessions:** 4th Degree (Master) Black Belt
- 6. **Personal Heroes:** My mother and father for 62 years of marriage
- 7. **Nobody knows that I:** Have had a pacemaker since 1990.
- 8. **If I could do it over:** I would have studied more in college
- 9. **The thing that I can't stand:** People who lie and steal.
- 10. **My most humbling experience:** Watching my son J. Roy win the gold medal in sparring at Cedar Rapids, Iowa at the Tae Kwan Do Junior Olympics.
- 11. **Words that best describe me:** Laid back, thoughtful, deliberate, decision-maker.



*Don't step on Superman's cape and don't mess around with "them". The black-belted Rowland family from the left: J. Roy (3rd degree), Kem (2nd degree), Chris (3rd degree) and Jim (4th degree).*



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local Ridge Chapter and the value of being a member. He responded, "I think chapter meetings and events are a great way for all of us to communicate with each other on the problems we face and the new products and methods that are out there. I know that Paul Hickman, Bobby Ellis and Alan Puckett and others have helped me over the years. You always learn something if you just take the time to participate."

Rowland became a very capable golfer, sporting a 1 handicap a few years ago. He said due to family obligations, all the course renovations and lack of playing time, his handicap has ballooned to a 6 or 8. But he has found a way to stay mentally sharp and in good physical shape. He practices Tae Kwon Do (TKD).

In fact it is a pursuit for the whole family to enjoy together. While Jim is a 4th-degree black belt master, his wife Kem is a 2nd degree and sons J. Roy and Chris are both hold 3rd degrees. Tae



*A view of the 17th green with the 10th hole in the background. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

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Kwon Do has provided the family with some very memorable moments.

Rowland said, "We were introduced to TKD at a Cub Scout meeting. J. Roy took a liking to it and we became TKD parents shuttling him to practice five days a week. He began serious training in 1996 in competitive TKD which requires mastering Forms (required movements) and Sparring (hand to hand combat). In 1999 at the AAU Junior Olympics in Cedar Rapids, Iowa he took sixth place in Forms out of a field of 2000 competitors, but the highlight of my life so far as a proud dad was when he won the Gold medal in Sparring."

"I also took up competitive TKD up until 2002 when I won a gold medal in sparring and a silver medal in forms at a state tournament. But my most anxious and nerve-wracking experience in TKD was last April when I flew to Bloomington, Illinois to test for my 4th degree black belt and being judged by



*The native sand bunkers on the par-4, 6th hole and the rest of the course drains so well that play can resume in 30 minutes after a heavy rain. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*



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