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CORAL OAKS GOLF CLUB

Location: Cape Coral, Florida
Ownership: City of Cape Coral
Playing policy: Public; 63,000 avg rounds per year
No. of holes: 18 holes, 6,623 yards, par 72, 135/72.3 slope/rating
Designed by Arthur Hills, constructed by Ryan Incorporated Eastern
Opened: 1988
Management Team: Club Manager & Head Golf Professional Allen Manguson; Director of Parks & Recreation Steve Pohlman; Assistant Golf Professional Fred Cook; Pro Shop Manager Stan Geer; Food & Beverage Manager Doreen Ferrara and Course Superintendent Jim Foster, CGCS.
Major projects: Extensive tree canopy and root pruning and cart path improvements.
Acreage under maintenance: 82
Total property acres: 124
Greens: 2.7 acres, avg 5,500 sq.ft., TifEagle. HOC .120, no overseeding. Green speed goal: 10-plus
Tees: 3.5 acres. Celebration. HOC .5 inches; overseeding par 3s only. rye blend @ 300 lbs/acre.



Coral Oaks Golf Club Maintenance Staff

Fairways and Roughs: Fwys 27 acres, Roughs 50 acres, Tifway 419, HOC .5 in. on fwys and 1.5 in. on roughs; overseeding rye blend @ 300 lbs/acre.
Bunkers: 37. Sand type: GASH G-angle. Raked with Toro 3040 w/spring rake attachment.
Waterways/Lakes/Ponds: Total 10, covering 17.3 acres. Maintained by outside contractor.
Irrigation: source: Surface water (Azza canal). Pumping system: PSI Flowtronics. Irrigation; Control System:

Rainbird Stratus II. 567 heads.
Staff: 10 full time including superintendent. 40 hrs ST per week with 1.5 hours OT. No part time employees.
Key employees: Assistant Superintendent Dennis Nelson, Equipment Tech Ted Trantina, Pest Control Tech Jerry McKay, Irrigation Tech John Young; admin assistance from Sharon Smith in the clubhouse.
Communications: Weekly crew and staff meetings. Golf Advisory Board meetings quarterly. Monthly e-mail newsletter articles.

Foster has a staff of 10 including himself, to groom the course daily and perform those routine and seasonal cultural chores like aerifying, verticutting, top dressing and fertilizing.

“I definitely fall into the category of ‘working superintendent,’” Foster says,

“and I will be on the daily schedule for set-up service, cutting cups or mowing greens on any given day. When you pull out the equipment technician, pest control operator and irrigation technician performing their specialized functions, there are only six or seven

people to groom the course ahead of play each day. When you do the math, each person must care for about 15 acres of golf course per day.”

This past year Foster contracted out the greens aerification, while doing the tees and fairways in-house.

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Don't forget to fill your divots on the 168-yard, par-3 6th tee. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

"We try to do a thorough greens aeration three times per year and the tees, fairways and roughs twice per year," he explained. "By using a contractor they can bring in a whole raft of equipment and personnel and get the job done on a closed day set aside for the project.

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SUPERINTENDENT FACTS

JIM FOSTER, CGCS

Originally From: Des Moines, Iowa

Family: Two sons: Zack (32) and Kyle (25). Currently dating Schellee.

Education: Turf certificate from University of Massachusetts in 1984

Employment: May 2005-present, Superintendent Coral Oaks GC; 1995-2005, Superintendent with Valley Crest at various sites in Michigan and Florida; 1990-95 Grow-in superintendent Autumn Ridge GC, Ft. Wayne, IN; 1985-95 superintendent Lake James GC, Angola, IN.

Professional Affiliations & Offices

Held: Member & current president of the Calusa GCSA. 25-year member of the GCSAA. CGCS since 1992. Past board member of the Hoosier Trufgrass Assn.

Work philosophy and advice: Know your property and the conditions. Nothing worse than having someone else point out a problem. I make it a point to ask our golfers how the course is treating them and thank them for coming out.

Goals & Accomplishments: I earned my CGCS in 1992 and have been active ever since. I have been involved in two complete grow-ins. Probably the best times of my career. Nothing more rewarding than to see everything come together.

Hobbies & Interests: I play drums and enjoy going to natural history museums.



Jim Foster, CGCS. Photo by Joel Jackson.

“While the contractor is doing the greens, we will maximize the maintenance by aerifying tees, fairways and roughs or we might be applying fertilizer and/or Curfew while the course is closed. To complete our aerifications and verticutting programs

we will work on the tees, fairways and roughs a few holes at a time ahead of play so we can punch the holes and then clean up before the golfers get there.”

Coral Oaks installed TifEagle greens back in 2001 and Foster does a light verticut biweekly from April to October

to manage the thatch growth. In keeping with recommended golf course nutrient best management practices, Foster annually applies around 8-10 lbs. of nitrogen to the greens and 3.5-4 lbs. to the fairways and roughs.

With lots of traffic on the course thinning out some areas and inviting weeds to encroach, Foster tries to make 2-3 pre-emergent herbicide applications: Ronstar in February, Barricade in May and sometimes Echelon in August.

“For insect pests like mole crickets and nematodes, we try to alternate yearly applications of Chipco Choice and Curfew,” Foster said. “Then we scout and monitor for activity and make spot treatments as needed.”

Foster holds weekly staff meetings to keep his crew on point and he also attends quarterly Golf Advisory Board meetings. The advisory board is made up of Foster, the presidents of the Men’s and Women’s Golf Associations, citizens who are usually golfers, a city council member and the director of Park & Recreation, who acts as liaison between the city and the course.

Foster writes a monthly article for the club’s email newsletter.

“I focus on what’s happening on the course,” he said, “what the players are seeing out there and what we are doing to address it. Also, the newsletter is a good way to educate the golfers about what, why and when we do certain things like overseeding, aerifying, etc.”

His “hot topic” at the time I visited in early April was dealing with *Poa annua* (annual bluegrass) plants on the course.

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Coming off the worst winter in more than 50 years, the normal conditions for overseeding and establishment of the ryegrass were out the window. The cold, wet winter didn't help the overseeding establish and sent the bermudagrass into dormancy. Later when the weather went from winter to summer in just a few weeks, the more heat- and drought-sensitive *Poa annua* started checking out rapidly and turning brown. The consolation was that once the warm weather kicked, in the bermudagrass began to fill in.

During our ride through of the course, Foster pointed out a bald eagle that had adopted one of the course's two osprey nesting poles as its own new home. I was able to take several photos of the eagle as it took off and landed several times putting on a nice show for the camera. In a follow-up e-mail, Foster said the eagles produced two fledglings. One fell out of the nest and was injured. The Clinic for the Restoration of



From 13th green looking back to No. 12. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.



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Vehicle: 2001 Toyota Tacoma
The last good movie I saw: The remake of The Taking of Pelham 123
I stay home to watch: Music concerts and shows on the Discovery Channel.
Favorite meal: Ribeye steak rare with sauteed mushrooms, baked potato and veggies
Prized possessions: My health
Favorite performer: Frank Zappa
Personal heroes: My father and anyone that has served in the military
Nobody knows that I: Used to weigh 150 lbs and 50 of that was hair
I'm better than anyone else when it comes to: Not losing my cool
If I could do it over: I wouldn't change a thing
I'd give anything to meet: Old Tom Morris
My fantasy is: To sit on the top of the pyramid of Ghiza
The one thing I can't stand: Is people trying to snow you
The words that best describe me: Centered
My dream foursome would be: Alice Cooper, Graham Nash & Steven Sills
My best fish story: Who has time to fish?



And the beat goes on.



A bald eagle commandeered one of the two osprey nesting poles on the course. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Wildlife (CROW) located on Sanibel Island was contacted and they picked up the eaglet and are nursing it back to health. Foster also said that CROW rehabs about 4,000 critters a year.

The critter count at Coral Oaks includes bountiful birdlife from the perching songbirds to waterfowl and wading birds. The lakes and ponds are also home to the usual suspects like alligators and turtles and smaller amphibians and reptiles. Furry critters tend to be of the smaller variety like squirrels, raccoons, possum and an occasional fox.

Foster hails from the heartland of the USA, Des Moines, Iowa.

He is a second generation superintendent following in the

footsteps of his dad, Dale Foster, whose career spanned 54 years. Foster might eclipse that record. He said, "I started in the business when I was eight years old. I knew from an early age that this was the career path for me. Being around the business for so many years I've had the opportunity to know many superintendents. However, it took me years to get a first name. I wasn't known as Jim, but rather as Dale's little boy."

How did Foster's career path get from Iowa to Florida?

"It was pretty simple," he said, "We moved to Indiana when I was in junior high school. I worked on golf courses in the area and one of my superintendents was a UMass,

Stockbridge School graduate and highly recommended their program, so that's where I went to college. After school I worked in Indiana and Michigan and after I took a job with Valley Crest and I did some work in Florida. The rest, as they say, is history.

"I've always been a working superintendent. Sometimes my crew will ask me why I get out there and do what I do. I simply ask them, 'Why should you guys have all the fun?'"

The other folks having fun seemed to be the golfers smiling and hailing Jim as we rode the course that April day. He seemed to know them all by name which seemed amazing to me for a course doing 63,000 rounds a year. There must be a lot of regulars, which would seem to definitely make Coral Oaks the people's choic.

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Giving turf painting a good name!

By Kyle D. Sweet, CGCS

Today's golf course superintendent has many talents and wears many hats. Striving to provide great course conditioning is the number-one goal day after day, and often there isn't much time left after that. But if you can find a little time and want to have a whole lot of fun, here's an idea to give your golfers a little extra flair out there.

Whether watching football, baseball or the races, you will see incredible displays of turf painting each and every weekend. Bringing that attraction to your course is not difficult and, with a few easy steps, you can do it with excellent results.

First, you will need the desired design electronically produced on your computer. Use an LED projector to project that image onto a material on which you can easily create a stencil. 1/8-inch white hardboard works well



A putting green slope is an excellent location for a turf painting. Photo by Kyle Sweet.

for the stencil and is much easier to work with than plywood.

Fasten the board to the wall or to a stepladder to get it up to a good working height. Once projected on the board, carefully trace the design with a

pencil or crayon. Fastening the board tightly will be very important to this process so your tracing is as accurate as possible.

Once the entire desired design is traced, the design must be cut out. This is the most tedious part of the entire process and a good cutting tool is a must. A small pneumatic hacksaw will do an excellent job of cutting through the hardboard with great detail. Once the design is cut out and removed from the wall or easel, it must be stored flat on the floor or secure against a wall.

Once the hard work is done, you can get out and do the painting. Picking a good, visible site where everyone can enjoy and appreciate your work is a must. Putting green walkups are a great spot as well as the first tee. The shorter the turf the better for getting good detail when painting turf. The stencil must be placed on a flat surface or an even slope so the design can be properly lined up. To get the best results, press

Turf paints come in many colors, but if you can't find the color you need in a turf paint, you can paint the desired area with a turf paint first and then go over it with an over-the-counter spray paint without injury to the grass



Kyle Sweet, CGCS cuts out the stencil for the Sanctuary Logo. Photo by Fred Fulford.

the stencil tightly to the ground and begin painting the desired design area.

Turf paints come in many colors, but if you can't find the color you need in a turf paint, you can paint the desired area with a turf paint first and then go over it with an over-the-counter spray paint without injury to the grass. Practicing the painting process will pay off when it comes to the final project and will help you determine the best processes to get your desired results.

Store the stencil and paints in a safe place. Hopefully you will be able to use them again and again for events at your club and provide that something extra that everyone appreciates.

Good luck and have fun!



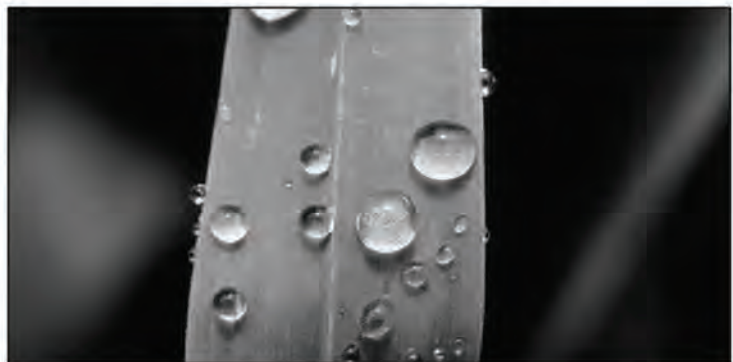
*Give fundraising tournaments some extra flair with turf painting.
Photo by Kyle Sweet.*



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Equipment on display at South Florida Expo Demo Day. Photo by Joel Jackson.

New, Used, or Leased?

Stretching the Budget to Meet Rising Expectations in a Tanking Economy

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

We pick Hands On topics over a year out so we can provide our advertisers an opportunity to showcase a product or service in an issue with a related story in the Hands On section. Little did we know then how the economy might bite into capital equipment budgets and affect purchasing decisions for a couple of years.

While budgets might be reined in, it appears that golfer expectations have not. Golfers seem to have a disconnect between spending levels and quality levels in grooming. It shouldn't take a rocket scientist to know that old, worn-out equipment will be less reliable in producing demanded results. I love the

quote by Kurt Kuebler at the Everglades Spring Symposium this past April, "No club ever cut its way to prosperity!"

You can choose to delay spending on equipment, but there will be a price to pay for those decisions.

Be that as it may, wear and tear goes on and equipment gets to a point where it's cheaper to purchase something than to keep pouring repair dollars into it. So what are people doing and how are they keeping their fleets operational to meet expectations in the face of restricted spending?

The most obvious options are buying new, buying used or leasing. Only four superintendents volunteered answers to our Hands On survey on the topic, but in researching articles and reading their responses, we can get a sense of the current trend and hopefully gain some useful ideas.

We've all heard about leasing programs, but I didn't really think about customizing the package to cover the high-use items like mowers and

purchasing other items that are used more seasonally, thus having longer life spans.

Speaking of life spans, have you ever had the conversation with a member who also belongs to a club "Up North" and who brags on how long their equipment lasts, like 10 years plus-plus? They never stop to think about those long winter months they are down here playing golf, while their course is closed and the equipment sits idle or gets rebuilt every year or so. Life spans for mowers in Florida are three to five years, since those engines and reels are humming almost daily, year after year.

The mowers may be mowing at that furious pace, but the dollars aren't there right now for most clubs to stay on those ideal capital equipment replacement programs. Here's what's happening at the four clubs in the survey.

1. Three out of four are not planning any purchases this year and one is renewing a complete lease package. One of the three does have some leeway if