

SUPER FOCUS



Palmer Maples

# Maples' life-long journey a family affair

By MARK LESLIE

**H**is list of credentials is long and illustrious. But you'd never know it by speaking to the man.

Palmer Maples Jr. loves to simply work the turf, perfecting playing conditions at Summit Chase Country Club in Snellville, Ga.

"The job still holds excitement to me because no matter what level you reach, there's always another step up. It could be your time management of your crew,

or the training you give them. Even though you don't have more money or equipment, it's the use of the money and men — that's the challenge: to get the most and the best course for the members," Maples said.

Like others in his famous golfing family, Maples' achievements and honors are many and varied.

- A 1958 graduate of the University of Georgia, he worked during his undergraduate years with Dr. Glen Burton, who developed

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Tifgreen 328, 127 and 419 Bermudagrasses at Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College in Tifton, Ga., and Dr. Marvin Ferguson, who operated experimental plots at Texas A&M.

- He was one of the country's first 10 certified golf course superintendents.

- Georgia GCSA named him 1971 Superintendent of the Year.

- He served on the U.S. Golf Association Green Section Committee for 15 years.

- He was elected to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America board of directors in 1970 and served as secretary/treasurer and vice president.

- In 1975 he became the first Southern-born superintendent to be elected GCSAA president.

- He was the GCSAA director of education from 1976-1981.

- Last January the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame presented him an Award of Appreciation for his contributions to the golf industry and being "a role model for aspiring superintendents."

The 60-year-old Maples may have to build a new wall to hang his citations, but he long ago reached the goal to which he aspired from the time he was a teen.

"I've been working on golf courses since I was 12," Maples said. "My goal at the age of 14 was to be a superintendent. I saw Dad [Palmer Maples Sr., Pinehurst's golf professional for many years] work from light-thirty to dark-thirty. I worked in the golf shop, the bar and grill, everywhere, and wanted more to work on the course than behind the counter.

"I liked being outside, working the soil, seeing it grow, working on the grass, riding the mowers, learning how to fix them."

When his family moved from Pinehurst and returned to visit his great-uncle Frank Maples, Pinehurst's superintendent for 48 years, Palmer would split his time working on the course and his uncle's farm.

Deciding at an early age what he would do with his life was a "tremendous advantage," Maples said, "because I had a goal and knew what I needed to learn."

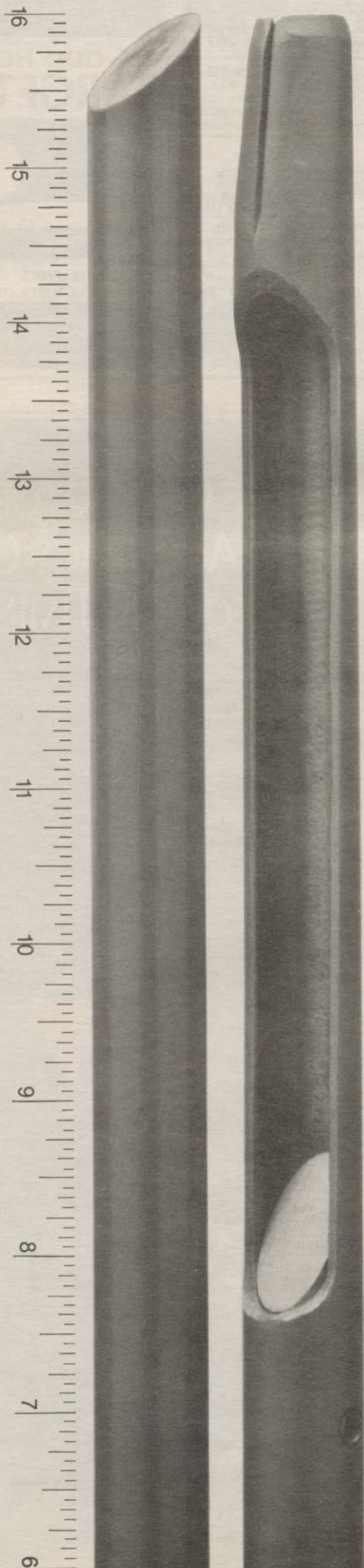
Tutoring under Burton and Ferguson gave Maples the knowledge he needed so that when he went to Charlotte (N.C.) Country Club as an assistant, he helped "gas out" the old greens and plant Tifgreen 328, a major improvement of the late-1950s — "like going from Bermuda to bent."

Named Charlotte CC's superintendent upon graduating in 1959, Maples oversaw installation of a complete new irrigation system in 1964. A year later, Robert Trent Jones Sr. changed 15 greens and tees and fairway bunkering to prepare for planting bentgrass and getting the course ready to host the U.S. Amateur championship.

Maples left Charlotte CC in December 1969, worked seven years at The Standard Club in Atlanta, took charge as GCSAA director of education for nearly five years, and joined Summit Chase in 1981.

"One thing has been a basic for all the good things that have happened to me," he said. "That is to trust in the Lord... He always works things out."

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## BELIEVE IT OR NOT

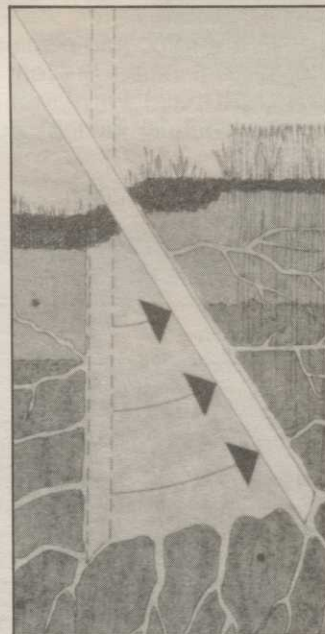
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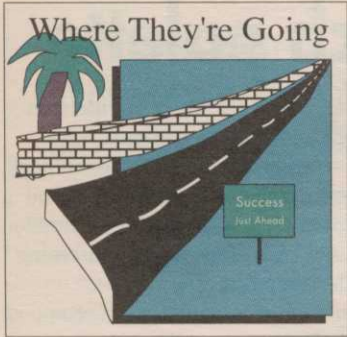
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**Jack Archer**, the man behind the greens at Marcus Pointe Golf Club in Pensacola, Fla., has accepted the head superintendent's position at TimberCreek, a residential golf community under construction in

Baldwin County, Ala. Ground was broken at TimberCreek in May 1992, and the 18-hole course is scheduled to open in the fall of 1993. "They're taking their time and trying not to rush the construction," Archer said. "It's going to be a great facility and I'm looking forward to getting in on the project early."

When it comes to changing scenery, **John Farley** doesn't mess around. "I'm going to Guam," he writes. Farley recently left Bidwell Park Golf Course, an 18-hole facility in Chico, Calif., for Guam's Leo Palace Country Club, where he will be assistant superintendent.

**Russ Krok** replaced Farley as head superintendent at Bidwell Park.

**Gary Grigg**, a member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America board of directors, is now at Naples (Fla.) National Golf Club. Grigg was formerly superintendent at Genoa Lakes Golf Club in Genoa, Nev.

**Darren J. Davis** has been named superintendent at the Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples, Fla. Davis, a Penn State grad, had previously been assistant superintendent at The Loxahatchee Club in Jupiter,

Fla., and a spray technician at Augusta National and Golden Eagle Country Club in Tallahassee. Olde Florida, a Rees Jones design, is scheduled to open for play in mid-1993.



Darren Davis

Personnel changes in the state of Georgia are coming fast and furious. **Michael Hammonds** has joined Newnan Country Club in Newnan under head superintendent

**Jim Miller**. Meanwhile, **Andy Troutner** has been named assistant superintendent under **Steven Sellen** at River's Edge Golf Course in Fayetteville. Finally, **Matt Jones**, head super at the new Stone Creek Golf Club in Valdosta, has hired two new assistants, **Bryan Griffin** and **Ivey Dyal**.

Drop us a line! — We're not kidding! *Golf Course News* wants to know where your careers have taken you. If you're changing jobs, send the details (and maybe a photo) to *Golf Course News*, P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096.

## Palmer Maples

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Over that time, he has seen immense changes in the expertise of superintendents and the tools at their disposal.

He particularly pointed to improved chemicals, an array of much-advanced machinery, and a wide selection of grasses that are more tolerant to drought, heat, cold and wear.

"The education of superintendents has grown a lot," he said. "When I came in in the late '50s, maybe one-third had a college education. Through the '60s and '70s more universities started offering training. Today, maybe four-fifths have an education."

The availability of chemicals, he said, has had the greatest impact "raising the level of maintenance at every course."

"We used to have 2,4-D for weed control. That was all," he said. "But, now you have all the post- and pre-emergent chemicals, and you can just about select any one particular grass you'd like to clean out of another. One of the improvements that brought bentgrass to the South was controlling the diseases."

Advancement of equipment, particularly the riding greensmower, was another breakthrough, Palmer said.

Suddenly, one man could cut all the greens in the time it used to take four men. You could use less men on the course, or use those men for additional maintenance procedures.

"We have many, many more tools at our disposal."

Maples had two suggestions for would-be superintendents:

- Know as much about how the turfgrass plant grows as you can.
- Have patience — with people, with equipment, with the organization you're working for.

"The superintendent has to realize that he's working with nature. He has to grow it. He can't go out, put up 2-by-4s and sheet rock and paint it. He has to put seed in the ground, have it come up, mow it, treat it tenderly.

"And in due time it will be a good turf to play golf on. For the owner who says, 'Let's get that grass out there now, we want to open now,' you're going to have to have patience."

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OVERSEEDING												
<b>SOUTHERN ZONE</b>												
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