

St. Augustine golf courses gear up for GCSAA championship

By JOEL JOYNER

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will hold its 52nd championship event here as 720 superintendents from around the world compete at six area golf courses. Sponsored by the Toro Co. for the eighth consecutive year, the championship will lead off the GCSAA annual conference and trade show in Orlando, Feb. 3-10.

Following practice rounds, the individual championship and four ball championship will take place Feb. 4-5. The six courses scheduled to host the event are: The Slammer & The Squire at World Golf Village; The King and The Bear at World



John Jenkins

Golf Village; Matanzas Woods Golf Club at Palm Coast Resort; Cypress Knoll Golf Club at Palm Coast Resort; Grand Haven Golf Club; and The Golf Club at South Hampton.

Mitch Clodfelter, superintendent at Cowans Ford Country Club in Stanley, N.C., won his first GCSAA championship last year in San Antonio, squeezing out a one stroke victory over Sam Williamson, superintendent at Ojai Valley Inn & Spa.

THE SLAMMER & THE SQUIRE

Named after golf legends and course design consultants Sam Snead and Gene Sarazen, The Slammer & The Squire's 6,939-yard, par 72 layout was designed by Bobby Weed. Superintendent Steve LaFrance intends to have the course "at its best when the guys come to town."

The short game will be the key to playing the course. "The course has very generous fairways. The short game will be the issue here as far as scoring well," said LaFrance. "The greens and chipping areas both have a lot of undulation."

"As far as maintenance on the greens, it will depend on the weather," he continued. "If we get any hard freezes, that alone will speed up the greens. You never really know what kind of weather to expect here in early



Bruce Stevens

February. It could be freezing or it could be 70 degrees. We'll attempt to have the greens running at 10 feet plus on the Stimp meter."

There will be plenty of birdie opportunities if the ball is kept in play, according to LaFrance. "The last four holes on the layout are the most challenging, but again the short game will need to be the focus," he said. "We have some strong finishing holes here."

THE KING AND THE BEAR

Designed by Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus, The King and The Bear stretches to 7,279 yards from the championship tees. The 18-hole course offers two distinct nine holes. The front nine provides a links-style layout while the back nine offers a more traditional tree-lined course.

In November 2001, LaFrance also took over responsibilities for the maintenance operation at The King and The Bear. His assistant, Chris McCranie, was sent over to implement the maintenance program based

on The Slammer & The Squire operation.

"This is a newer course so there will be some differences in the programs, but for the most part they'll be the same. We'll have the same mowing heights, fertility program and tournament preparations found at The Slammer & The Squire," said McCranie.

As far as playing the course, the wind may have a strong impact. "The winds prevail out of the North to Northeast," said McCranie. "The number two and number three holes are both monsters and are set dead into the wind."

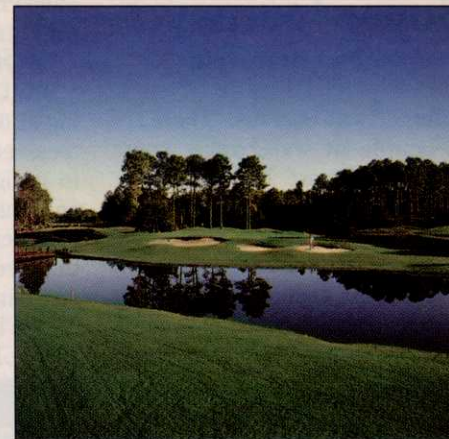
"The second hole is a long par 4, the entire course is fairly long," explained McCranie. "Three is a long par 3. With the wind blowing it's a two iron or even a three wood or driver for many players from the back tees. Superintendents should bring their long iron game and driver to play this course, that's for certain."

MATANZAS WOODS GOLF CLUB

Fred Kleinfelder is the director of golf course maintenance for the Matanzas Woods and Cypress Knoll golf clubs at the Palm Coast Resort. The layouts require two different games in order to play them both well.

"Matanzas is a little over 6,900 yards from the back," said Kleinfelder. "It's open, long and a big course. Cypress is around 6,600 yards from the back but it's pretty tight with small greens and narrow fairways. You'll need your driver at Matanzas whereas they'll probably be a lot of two irons off the tees at Cypress Knoll."

Matanzas' superintendent Bruce Stevens



A view of the Matanzas Woods Golf Club

was brought over from Cypress Knoll following wildfires that damaged the front nine at the course in 1998. "The wildfires wiped out the front nine, all the trees, bathrooms, water cooler stations, part of the pro shop and some of the maintenance equipment that was left outside," said Stevens. "We're doing hardwood plantings all the time and we've relandscaped a lot of the areas."

About 80 percent of the greens are undulating, according to Stevens. "They are fair and ample, and I think we'll Stimp meter them at nine and a half or 10 feet which will be challenging enough for the event."

The Jefferson Davis Waterway and lakes throughout the course help devise the strategy needed to play the layout. "There are water features all over the course that the superintendents will have to play over and

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GCSAA sets up in Orlando

ORLANDO, Fla. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's 73rd International Golf Course Conference and Show visits Orlando next month, Feb. 3-10, to wrap up a yearlong celebration of the GCSAA's 75th anniversary. With attendance surpassing 20,000 each of the past five years, the event is the world's largest golf course management conference and trade show. Some of the highlights scheduled for the event include:

- The 2002 GCSAA Golf Championship, sponsored by the Toro Co., Feb. 4-5, will be held at six St. Augustine area golf courses;

- Former Dallas Cowboys coach Jimmy Johnson presents the keynote address during the Opening Session Feb. 6 at 6:30 p.m. The event is sponsored by United Horticulture Supply.

- A Golf General Session, 9:00 a.m., Feb. 7, features a presentation by former middle linebacker for the Chicago Bears, Mike Singletary. The association also will present the President's Award for Environmental Stewardship and the GCSAA/Golf Digest's 2001 Environmental Lead-

ers in Golf Awards. A Career Development General Session: Thriving in Today's Employment Environment will be held at 2:00 p.m. and moderated by talk show host and golf historian Peter Kessler.

- The President's Reception and Dinner Show, 6:00 p.m. Feb. 8, will be highlighted by the honoring of the GCSAA's highest honor, the Old Tom Morris Award, to former St. Andrews Links superintendent Walter Woods, Esq. A concert by the Jacksonville, Fla.-based band .38 Special also will be held.

The event is held in partnership with the Bayer Corp.

- GCSAA members will vote for three officers and two directors from a selection of eight candidates at the annual meeting, Feb. 8.

- More than 120 conference and educational seminars will be conducted and more than 70 hours of workshop sessions and forums will take place during the event. The seminar program is sponsored by Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products.

- The trade show, involving more than 750 exhibitors, will take place Feb. 7-9.



CMAA convenes for 75th World Conference and Expo in San Antonio

SAN ANTONIO — The Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) will hold its 75th Annual World Conference on Club Management and 25th Annual Exposition here at the San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter and the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, Feb. 3-7.

The international conference brings together club industry professionals for

five days of education sessions, social events, and the largest trade show in the club industry. Some highlights for the event include:

- Two pre-conference golf tournaments will be hosted here at the Quarry Golf Club and Canyon Springs Golf Club Feb. 2.

- More than 100 educational sessions, including eight pre-conference workshops, covering everything from culinary instruction to environmental issues and leadership.

- The 25th Annual Exposition at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, Feb. 3-4, is expected to be the largest in the association's history with more than 580 booths.

- A Club Tour event, Feb. 4, will take

members and guests via motorcoach to visit three San Antonio clubs. The tour features the Dominion Country Club, Oak Hills Country Club and the San Antonio Country Club.

- Former First Lady Barbara Bush will be the keynote speaker at the Opening Business Session, Feb. 4.

- World-class blind adventurer Erik

Weihenmayer will speak at the Closing Business Session, Feb. 7. He was the first blind man in history to reach the summit of the world's highest mountain — Mount Everest.

- The closing event will be a return to the "Roaring 20s." A visit to 1927, reliving CMAA's first formal dinner dance, in the middle of Prohibition in America will be recreated at the

CMAA speakeasy held at The Blue Parrot Club. Bath Tub Gin Tootsy will offer champagne, beads, flapper feathered bands and boas to the ladies and Fedoras to the men while Al Sturchio's Orchestra presents the music of Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington and "Jelly Roll" Morton.



Barbara Bush will be the keynote speaker at the Opening Business Session.