

## Short notice

> Joe Hubbard, CGCS, and the maintenance crew at The Old Course at Broken Sound prepared to host the Allianz Championship for the first time

Soon after the mega-spotlight shone on Miami for the Super Bowl on Feb. 4, a smaller spotlight shone on the area. This one for golf.

Nearby Boca Raton, and more specifically, The Old Course at Broken Sound, played host to the Allianz Championship and its ancillary events Feb. 5-11. In addition to the tournament, the event featured the Drive for Wives ProAm, which groups pros

with NASCAR drivers, owners and amateur players.

Like preparing for the Super Bowl, director of golf maintenance Joe Hubbard, CGCS, started preparing for the golf event well in advance. But he didn't exactly have as much advance notice as grounds crew at Dolphin Stadium likely had. In fact, Hubbard didn't even have as much time to plan as those getting ready for this tournament




Eight hurricanes blew through the area and left the course with 2,000 fewer trees.

usually do. Last year, the event was held in Iowa in July. This year it was relocated to Florida, and the date was moved up a few months.

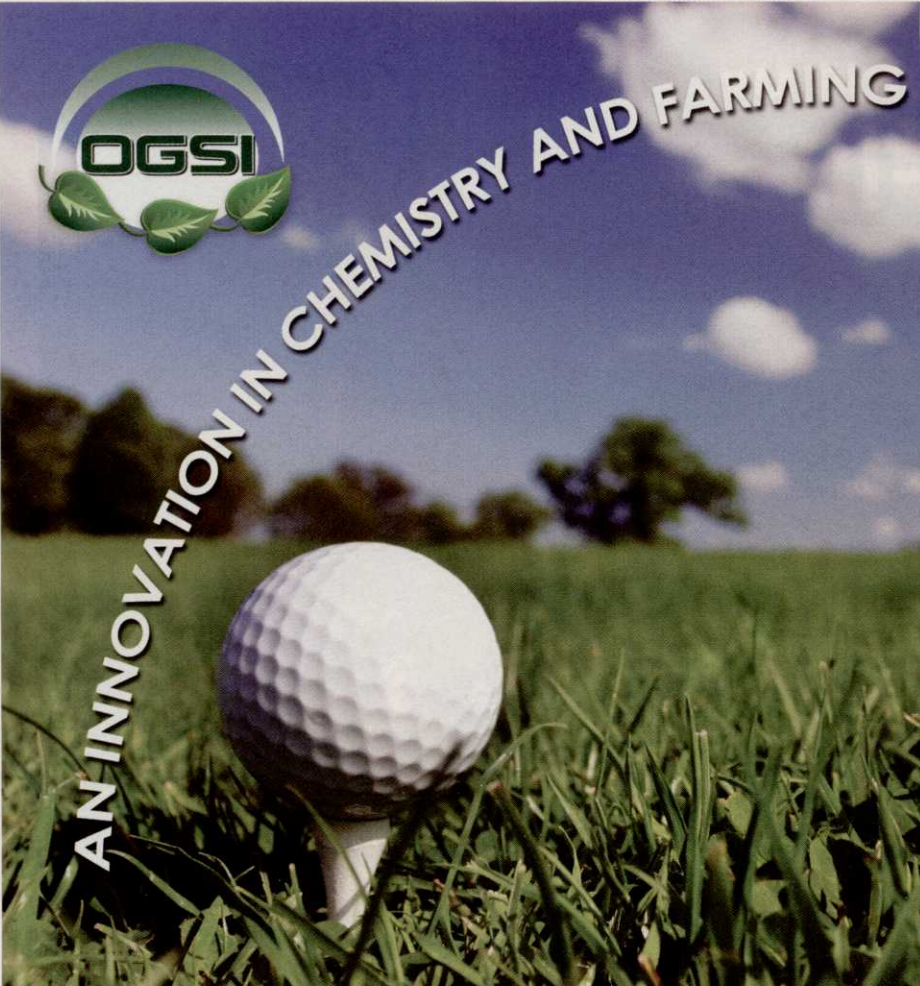
Yet Hubbard believed he and the course were ready. Besides, it wasn't his first time hosting an event of this caliber. He has had


practice with state and amateur tournaments at previous jobs during his 35-plus years in the industry, 23 of those as a golf course superintendent.

Hubbard started at the 18-hole Broken Sound in August 2004, just before hurricanes Ivan and Charlie and a year before Katrina



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and Wilma blew through. Eight hurricanes later, the course is left with 2,000 fewer trees than it had when Hubbard started.

The losses, which especially hit holes 3 and 15, include several 100-year-old oak trees and black olive trees. The course is still impacted.

"A lot of palm trees either splintered and died or are dying now," Hubbard says.

Some of the dying trees remain on the course for woodpeckers and raptors because the course has been entered for consideration in the Audubon International Cooperative Sanctuary Program for golf courses, he says. The crew is gradually replanting the lost trees, most of them na-

tive to Florida.

"Of course, you can't find 100-foot trees to replace the lost trees," Hubbard says. "If you're young now, by the time you retire, the trees will be back up to where they were."

The missing trees slightly altered the look of the Joe Lee-designed course, which was renovated by Gene Bates Golf Design and reopened in 2003. The course now feels like a links-style layout, more like something one would find in North Carolina, Hubbard says.

Other unique aspects of the course are its unique-looking bunkers and the fact that it's not lined with homes, which seems to be the norm for golf courses in

the region.

But like many other courses in the South, The Old Course consists of Bermudagrass. Hubbard and his crew have been working to get it tournament ready, which takes some extra work this time of year. The turf isn't in the best condition because of the cooler weather and increased traffic, so the crew is applying more fertilizer. Additionally, pine straw has been added to native areas to enhance them.

The preliminary weather report looked promising a few weeks before the tournament, but one never knows, Hubbard says.

"Last year at that time, it was 38 degrees with 35-mile-per-hour

winds," he says.

After the Allianz Championship and its ancillary events end, the crew will remain busy, maintaining the course at tournament conditions for the media and the club's members for a day. Then they'll maintain the course at its usual condition until May, when rounds decline. Hubbard says he'll get a chance to breathe then.

But it won't be long before the process starts all over again. The club will host the tournament for at least three years.

"I told the crew to learn from any mistakes this year, apply them next year, and still have fun and take it all in," Hubbard says. "Not a lot of people can say they worked a tour event."—HW



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