

The Post and Courier

Two-Minute Drill with Ocean Course superintendent Jeff Stone

Sunday, February 5, 2012

You are six months out from the PGA Championship. What are your thoughts?

"I really like the winter we're having. I hope it stays warm and the warming trend continues. It's just going to expedite the (grass) growing process and filling in of areas we need to have filled in. The warmer it is, the better off we are."

What will you be doing over the next six months to prepare for the PGA Championship?

"We've already got all the fairway lines established for the golf course. We're working on a few of the waste areas where Kerry Haigh of the PGA of America has had us focus on as far as playability. We should have those projects pretty much finished up by March."

What happens after that?

"Once we get into the growing season, more toward April, May, June, we'll focus on getting the greens firmed up. We need to make sure they're good and healthy because when we go into the tournament we're really going to stress them out. We want to make sure we have a good stand of grass going into the tournament. We're going to focus on the health of the greens. We have been focusing on a lot of projects now as far as getting infrastructure in, water lines for hospitality tents, things like that. We've been doing that in-house. We're about to finish up those, so it's going to be kind of nice."

"What's your biggest fear, something that's out of your control?"

"My biggest fear is for the tournament to not have any wind. The wind really protects the golf course from scoring (too low). The players are so good today, if we don't have wind out here they can be really aggressive. As far as agronomics and getting the golf course set up for the tournament, we have a pretty good team and have been working together for the past 2 1/2 years. So we've dotted all the I's and crossed all the T's, we feel. We feel we're on the way to a good tournament."

JEFF STONE:

Age: 45

Hometown: Daytona Beach, Fla.

College: Lake City Community College, with honors

Job Experience: 1988-89, internship, Kiawah Island Golf Resort. 1990-92, superintendent, Marsh Point-Kiawah Island Golf Resort. 1992-2003, superintendent, Turtle Point-Kiawah Island Golf

Resort; 2003-present, superintendent, Ocean Course-Kiawah Island Golf Resort.

Ocean Course honors: No. 25 in Golf Digest's 100 Greatest U.S. Golf Courses; No. 4 on Best Public Courses; named Toughest Course in America by Golf Digest; No. 27 in Golf Magazine's Top 100 Golf Courses in the U.S.; No. 45 in Golf Magazine's Top 100 Golf Courses in the World; a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary by Audubon Sanctuary System

How many championship events have you worked at Kiawah?

"I've been at Kiawah since 1989, so pretty much all the championships that Kiawah has had since the Ryder Cup I've been a part of. All the World Cups, the Shell's Wonderful World of Golf, the Senior PGA, the Club Professional Championship. Honestly, I've lost track of how many I've been part of."

What's going to be the most fun part of hosting the PGA Championship?

"Actually, it's just the everyday process of getting ready for a tournament like that. A lot of people talk and say I bet you can't wait until it's over. I look at it a little bit different. I cherish every minute that I get to prepare for something like this. It's once in a lifetime, so I just enjoy each and every day I have and look forward to having a successful tournament."

Copyright © 1995 - 2012 Evening Post Publishing Co..