

Ormond renovation produces much bigger and better greens

By JOHN PRICE

DESTREHAN, La. — The members at Ormond Country Club have a lot to be proud of lately.

The private 18-hole country club located just west of the New Orleans International Airport recently re-opened after undergoing major renovations.

While many of the holes have changed, the biggest change was done to the greens, which are now bigger, bear Tif-Dwarf grasses (compared to small push-up greens the facility had since being built in 1979) and have brand new irrigation.

Not only were Ormond's hundreds of members supportive in their golf course being shut down from January 2007 to September 2007, but many of them pitched in by helping out any way they could.

"From early on in this project, I was struck by the support of the membership as a whole," said Nathan Crace of Watermark Golf, who did the re-design at Ormond. "We had an informational meeting with the members during the design phase and 100 or so showed up to ask questions. I never heard one negative word from any member during the entire process. That's the type of membership support that makes a project like this so successful."

Director of Golf Greg Core, who took over his current position in the middle of the construction, was impressed with the 40 or so members that dedicated their time and effort to help with the renovation of the club.

"It's personally unbelievable," said Core, who is a New Orleans native and played at Southeastern from 1979-1983. "We had about 40 different volunteers, including my wife (Martha) helping out. I think that was extremely important. I'm glad my wife did not like Colorado and wanted to move back down here."

The subdivision that surrounds Ormond is the largest one in the New Orleans metro areas, but the facility has members all over the Metro area. The course improvements cost \$1.8 million, which does not include in-house labor. Another \$1.7 million was spent on the clubhouse, which included outside areas like pool improvements.

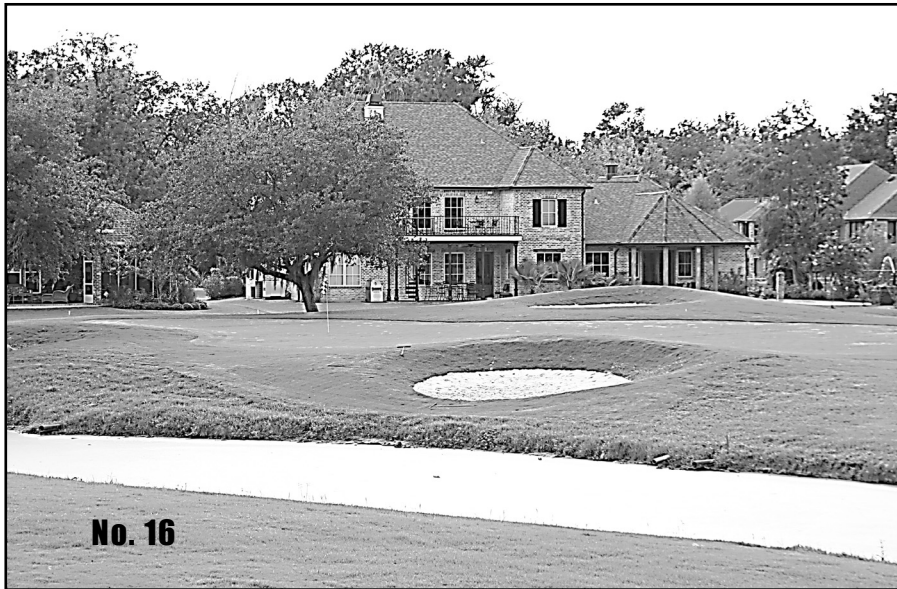
"We could have not recovered without the help of the members, the volunteer board, our General Manager Jim Deal and St. Charles Parish President Albert Laque, who committed parish resources during the closing to make improvements to the drainage

for the residents of Ormond," said Ormond Club President Dave Caraway. "Personally, I have never been involved in a project of this nature and found it to be challenging and rewarding to witness Ormond being transformed into a new course that we are sure will delight and challenge golfers in the area."

All of the lakes (including one new one constructed during the renovation) are connected and owned by St. Charles Parish.

The greens, which Core said should become some of the best in the state once they fully grow in, now average just less than 6,500 square feet per hole, which is about 40 percent bigger. Also, the old greens were round, while the new ones have more movements and vary in shape.

The new course will be just under 6,700 yards and feature water that comes into play on



all but one hole. There are 29 new bunkers on the course and about 20-25 trees were removed during the renovations.

One of which is sure to be a favorite hole on the back nine is No. 11, which is completely new.

"It plays short most of the time and before the shots tended to ricochet off the green, but now the green is so big and the putts are true," said Randy Hampton, who is the director of the 11-person Ormond Country Club board.

Core's favorite hole is No. 2, a par-3 that features a green that is about 120 yards long and has no greenside bunkers.

"It's challenging from all five tee locations," said Core, who was President of the Gulf States PGA for three terms. "The green is a 2-2.5 club difference and adding to that are the tough undulations on the green."

Also on the front nine are a collection of two holes (Nos. 5 and 6) that in Crace's words 'give Ormond its own little Amen Corner.' The holes are the only two side by side (the rest are flanked by houses) and the sixth is the last par-3 on the front. The green on No. 9, which is closest to the clubhouse was moved to make way for a longer driving range, which is expected to open soon. All of the par-3 tee boxes were laser leveled and there are more forward and women's tees now on the course.

The finishing hole features the Hale Boggs Bridge that crosses the Mississippi River in nearby Luling in the background.

Ormond is currently having a special membership drive featuring a \$1,500 initiation fee and membership dues of \$150 per month. For more information, call (985) 764-6868.