

Jim Elwing, Tennis Courts Supervisor

“I pride myself on having the best clay tennis courts in the Southeastern United States”

Jim Elwing’s title is tennis courts supervisor but the scope of his job is much broader. Yes, he and his six-person team take care of The Landings Club’s 31 clay courts, the largest number at any private club in the U.S. That means watering them twice daily, brushing them during the day, and cleaning the three miles of tape, or lines, embedded in the clay twice a day.

He and his crew also are responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of 11 pickleball courts (soon to be 15), eight bocce courts, two platform tennis courts, and the croquet lawn at the Marshwood Clubhouse.

“Our daily challenge is to have all the facilities what we like to say is ‘member ready,’ by 8:15 every morning,” Elwing says. “The umbrellas up, the chairs in, no garbage, the wind screens up, the courts clean of any debris and I hope members appreciate it.”

The tennis courts are made of a substance called Har-Tru, which is a mixture of crushed granite and gypsum. Over time, the gypsum breaks down and the clay blows away. They have to be resurfaced twice a year, which means laying down 40 tons of material.

“The courts are beautiful and I pride myself on having the best clay courts in the Southeastern U.S.,” he says.

Elwing, 64, grew up outside of Milwaukee and has been playing tennis or involved in the tennis business his entire life—as a professional tennis player, a coach, and a club operator in Atlanta, Boston, and Cleveland. Along the way, he’s worked with players who have reached the pinnacle of the sport. He was hired at The Landings five years ago, relocating from running the Cleveland Racket Club in the suburb of Pepper Pike, Ohio.

He says the job has become much bigger due to the growth of The Landings membership and the expansion of amenities. The number of pickleball courts has more than doubled. The Club had only a couple bocce courts and now it has eight, which get heavy use from the 600 members who participate in the bocce league as well as casual players. Those courts also require maintenance and resurfacing. Twelve cubic yards of shells will be added soon. “We work hard on them and take a lot of pride in keeping them beautiful,” he says.



In addition to the work on the courts, Elwing's staff is responsible for arranging more than 300 chairs, supplying towels, and keeping 30 five-gallon water coolers full and cups available. "We try to do bigger projects but we can't forget about the small stuff, too," he says.

He and his wife, Linda, live on Wilmington Island. When he's not working, he likes to go shelling, a hobby he took up only after moving here. He started collecting shells on Tybee Island but has since discovered prime spots from South Carolina all the way down to Florida. "It's a great hobby and something I couldn't do in Wisconsin."

By Rick Colvin, a member whose career as a journalist included 12 years with the Los Angeles Times.