



## **Matthew Jones, Senior Golf Course Superintendent** **“We have wonderful, wonderful members who are understanding and very supportive”**

Growing up, Matthew Jones lived on his family’s farm, helping raise cattle, goats, and pigs and growing cotton and corn in a little Alabama town called Sylacauga, an hour south of Birmingham. He also played golf.

When he turned 16, Jones began working at the nearby FarmLinks Golf Club at Pursell Farms, perennially rated as one of the best courses in Alabama, and played free golf. His goal was to become a golf professional. But the owner of the course suggested a different path that would combine his love of golf with his interest in farming: golf course agronomy.

Jones enrolled at Auburn to pursue that career. While in school, he worked at the Auburn University Club on the grounds staff and had internships at Pinehurst during the restoration of the famed No. 2 course and then returned to Auburn for a final year to work with a professor researching turf grass. After that, he came to The Landings, starting out 10 years ago as a second assistant superintendent on the Marshwood and Magnolia courses then becoming Superintendent of the Deer Creek course in 2015. In 2021, he was named Senior Golf Course Superintendent for the Palmetto and Terrapin Point golf courses.

“The membership worked with us on a lot of things we’ve needed over the past decade and I think everyone can tell it’s paying dividends,” Jones says. “We have wonderful, wonderful members who are understanding and very supportive, for which we are grateful.”

Now, he says, the biggest challenges Landings superintendents face are ones facing all businesses: changes in the labor market and inflation. “There’s so many factors out of our hands, we’re being forced to think out of the box and get creative.”

“We’re trying different ways of recruiting people, trying to figure out where the labor force is going and what they are looking for,” he says. He and other superintendent work closely with vendors to project price increases on essentials such as fertilizer over the next six to 12 months. “We have to figure out where we can get the biggest bang for the buck without sacrificing the quality of the golf courses.”





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Life outside of work has its own challenges, Jones, 32, and his wife, Claire, who works in human resources for JCB North America, have two sons: Holden, 4, and Jameson, 7 months. They live in Richmond Hill. At home, Jones likes to cook, grilling and smoking and also trying new dishes. “I’ll try anything if it looks good,” he says.

Those responsibilities limit his golf to about once a month. But he does get out on the golf courses every day: making sure they look good, even if he doesn’t have much time to swing a club.

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