

# Ormond Country Club in Destrehan, La., set for large renovation project

One of the first courses to reopen in the Greater New Orleans area after Hurricane Katrina devastated the city in 2005 — Ormond Country Club in Destrehan — is preparing to undertake a large scale renovation project, which will greatly improve the playability of the course.

According to Watermark Golf/Nathan Crace Design's principal architect, Nathan Crace, the main focus of the project will be the complete renovation of the course's 18 green complexes and the practice green.

"Ormond has always been a great bargain for the members," Crace said. "But as the popularity of the course grew in recent years, there was a need for the club to investigate some serious renovation work to keep up with the new demand."

Katrina came on-shore on Aug. 29, 2005 and changed the face of the Gulf Coast and the Greater New Orleans area in a way no one could have imagined. Located west of New Orleans (immediately west of the International Airport), the course actually sustained primarily wind-related damage to trees instead of the flooding seen throughout the city of New Orleans.

However, as a result of the storm, the club expedited plans for renovations as the Ormond community surrounding the course began to grow with families forced to relocate from middle-to upper-class areas of New Orleans affected by the flood waters in the aftermath of the hurricane.

"The after effects of the storm moved up the studies the club already had under way," Crace said. "The end result was that the improvements the renovation committee felt were needed before the storm were plainly evident to everyone involved after the storm — and the number one priority was greens renovation."

That was where things took an interesting twist. Ormond is home to an old set of Purr-Wick greens — a method of construction primarily utilized in the Southwest where wooden compartments were built inside a green, then lined with a plastic liner, and filled with soil to create a perched water table within the green cavity.

"One of the problems with a Purr-Wick green is the wood used for construction of the compartments inside the green," explains Crace. "As the wood decays, you usually see the development of Fairy Ring, a disease resulting from the fungi feeding on the decaying organic matter in the soil. The release of nitrogen by these fungi results in lush green arcs and circle-shaped patterns in the turf, usually accompanied by mushrooms. Another problem is that the compartments fail over time and the soil in the greens turns into a mucky soup deep in the green profile, causing a multitude of problems with the quality of turf above."

Crace says that Ormond superintendent John Brady and his staff have done a wonderful job to keep turf on the greens, let alone keep the greens playable, considering what was inside the greens. Crace had surmised prior to recent soil samples being taken that the soil within the existing green profiles could be used for nothing more than the sub-base of the new mounding around the green complexes — if it could be dried out enough. Soil samples taken in the summer of 2006 proved that point to be true.

The new greens at Ormond will be significantly larger, averaging 5,600 square feet each and each complex will be completely renovated. The existing complexes will be completely demolished and new 'California' greens, bunkers, and irrigation will

be installed. In addition, the green for the ninth hole and the practice green will be relocated to make room for expanding the club's existing driving range.

In a related matter, the lakes that run through the golf course are actually owned and controlled by the parish for flood control because the thousands of homes in the Ormond community drain into the lakes to a parish pump station that pumps the water from storms over the surrounding ring levee. The parish had been planning for years to dig out some of the

lakes and install new culverts and bridges in place of the older, undersized steel pipes existing now in order to create more storage capacity and speed up the flow of water from the community through the golf course to the pumps. Once again, Katrina's lessons expedited those plans as well. Since the course would have to be shut down during the parish's work on the lakes, the decision was made by the club to schedule the construction of the course renovations with the work the parish would be performing on the lake system.

"That will work well for the membership," Crace said. "Instead of closing the course once for lake renovation work and then again the following year for the greens renovations, the course will only be closed for the spring and summer of 2007 and should be ready to play by Labor Day of 2007."

Construction is set to begin in January of 2007. For more information about the work at Ormond Country Club or Watermark Golf/Nathan Crace Design, you can visit their website at [www.watermarkgolf.com](http://www.watermarkgolf.com).

There is also a link on Ormond Country Club's website about the renovations ([www.ormondcc.com](http://www.ormondcc.com)).

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## Ormond Country Club