



NICOLAS GARIBAY, DOA

Innovating agronomy, elevating aesthetics, and fostering future leaders

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INTRODUCING
NICOLAS GARIBAY
Director of Agronomy

From the fields of Michigan to the fairways of Florida, my journey has been shaped by a deep-rooted passion for the land and a commitment to excellence in golf course management. Growing up in a family of agricultural workers, I developed a strong work ethic and an appreciation for the natural environment. These early experiences laid the foundation for a career dedicated to both the science and artistry of agronomy.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of working with some of the most prestigious golf courses in Florida, where I have implemented innovative agronomic practices and led teams to achieve exceptional results. My approach to golf course management is both strategic and hands-on, blending sustainable turfgrass practices with a focus on operational efficiency and aesthetics. Whether managing multi-million-dollar renovations or fine-tuning day-to-day operations, I have consistently delivered premier playing conditions while fostering a collaborative work environment.

Leadership and staff development have been central themes throughout my career. I believe that the success of any course is directly tied to the growth and engagement of its team. By mentoring assistants and empowering staff, I have cultivated environments where individuals thrive, and teams excel.

This commitment to professional development not only enhances the course's performance but also contributes to the broader growth of the industry.

Innovation and sustainability are at the heart of my agronomic philosophy. From water conservation initiatives to integrating technology for precise turf management, I am dedicated to advancing practices that benefit both the environment and the golfing community. My experience spans diverse projects, from re-grassing and course renovations to developing comprehensive budgeting and forecasting programs that align with club goals.

This portfolio offers a glimpse into the milestones and achievements that have defined my career in golf course management. It highlights not only the technical skills and leadership qualities I've honed over the years but also the values and vision that continue to drive my work. Thank you for taking the time to explore this journey—I look forward to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead in this ever-evolving field.

NICOLAS GARIBAY PORTFOLIO

ROOTED IN VALUES

The Man Behind The Turf

My passion for agronomy and golf course management is deeply rooted in my upbringing. Growing up in a family of agricultural workers, I learned the value of hard work, perseverance, and dedication from a young age. My earliest memories are of walking the fields with my parents, observing their tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to providing for our family. These experiences instilled in me not only a respect for the land but also an understanding of the patience and care required to nurture growth—whether it's crops in a field or turf on a golf course. As I transitioned from picking fruit in Michigan to leading teams at some of Florida's top golf courses, these core values have remained my guiding principles, shaping every aspect of my professional journey.

Family is at the heart of everything I do. My wife, Miriam, and our children, Nicolas Edwin, Yoseleen, and Amarayah, are my biggest supporters and motivators. Their unwavering belief in me has fueled my drive to succeed and continually improve. The lessons I've learned from my family's resilience and unity are the same principles I apply in my professional life—building strong, supportive teams that work together towards a common goal. I am passionate about mentoring others, fostering a collaborative work environment, and pushing the boundaries of what's possible in golf course management. Whether it's on the course or at home, I strive to create environments where people feel valued, supported, and inspired to reach their fullest potential.



NICOLAS GARIBAY PORTFOLIO

5 FROM ROOTS TO ROUGH

Values That Endure

Integrity

Staying true to my principles, ensuring honesty and transparency in all aspects of work and life.



Dedication

Committing fully to every project and responsibility, no matter how big or small.



Leadership

Empowering others through mentorship, guidance, and leading by example.



Innovation

Continuously seeking creative solutions and embracing new technologies to improve performance and sustainability.



Resilience

Overcoming challenges with determination, always learning from setbacks to grow stronger.

"A man's character isn't just built on what he achieves, but on the values he holds when no one is watching."

ANONYMOUS

NICOLAS GARIBAY PORTFOLIO



TURF, TENACITY, & TRIUMPH

A Career in Motion

Every course has its challenges—unexpected weather, turf diseases, budget constraints—but I’ve always seen these obstacles as opportunities to improve. My career has been shaped by the mindset that there’s always something new to learn, always another level to reach. I thrive on innovation, whether it’s implementing new agronomic strategies, mentoring my team, or refining my leadership skills. I believe that growth isn’t just about experience—it’s about pushing boundaries and never settling for “good enough.”

Being recognized as one of the Top 50 Assistant Superintendents in the nation through the Green Start Academy was a defining moment, but it was just the beginning. Completing the Syngenta Business Institute at Wake Forest University helped me sharpen my leadership and business skills, and each new role I’ve taken has pushed me to think bigger, work smarter, and challenge myself in new ways. I don’t just want to maintain golf courses—I want to transform them.

More than anything, I believe in the power of mentorship and development. My goal has always been to build strong teams, to teach and guide others the way I was once guided, and to ensure that the people who work alongside me have every opportunity to succeed. I don’t just want my team to be great at their jobs—I want them to become leaders in their own right.

For me, success isn’t measured by titles or accolades but by the impact I leave behind. Whether it’s improving course conditions, enhancing member satisfaction, or helping the next generation of superintendents grow, I want my work to speak for itself. This industry is always evolving, and I intend to keep evolving with it.

Success in this industry isn’t about standing still—it’s about continuous learning, adapting, and striving for more. Every certification, every milestone, and every leadership role has been a stepping stone toward a greater goal: elevating the game, improving the course, and developing the next generation of leaders. The journey ahead is just as important as the achievements so far, and each experience has shaped the superintendent I am today.

The following timeline highlights some key moments, certifications, and accomplishments that have defined my career and reinforced my commitment to excellence in golf course management.

2006

Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at Hawk's Nest Golf Club in Vero Beach, Florida

2012

Class A Member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

2014

Principles of Turfgrass Management at the University of Georgia

2014

Earned OSHA Training for Hazardous Materials Level 2 Certification

2014-2015

Served as Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at PGA Golf Club, Port Saint Lucie, Florida

2018

Placed among the Top 50 Assistant Superintendents Nationwide and entered the Green Start Academy Program

2018-2021

Golf Course Superintendent at Jacaranda West Country Club in Venice, Florida

2021

Nominated to Syngenta Business Institute at Wake Forest University

2021

Golf Course Superintendent at The Club at Ibis, West Palm Beach, Florida.

2022

Earned Florida Golf Course Best Management Practices Certification

2022

Earned Florida Commercial Turf and Ornamental Pesticide License

2023

Featured in Golf Course Industry Magazine, highlighting his career journey from farm work to golf course management.

2025

Named Director of Agronomy – Suntime Country Club



TEEING UP LEADERSHIP

Navigating the Fairways of Management

When it comes to leadership, I approach my role much like a seasoned golfer navigating a championship course. Each decision is a calculated swing, each challenge a unique hole with its own set of hazards and opportunities. My leadership style, shaped by years of hands-on experience and personal growth, reflects a blend of strategic foresight and adaptable management—qualities that not only drive success but also inspire those around me to elevate their game.

I am dedicated to creating a team-driven environment where individuals feel empowered to grow and excel. My focus is on developing a culture of mentorship, ensuring that my staff not only meets expectations but exceeds them. Much like a golf coach refining a player's swing, I take a hands-on approach to guiding my team through challenges, offering the tools, knowledge, and encouragement they need to succeed. By fostering a collaborative and results-oriented atmosphere, I help my team refine their skills, build confidence, and advance in their careers.

My leadership style is proactive and assertive, marked by a sense of urgency to achieve personal and professional goals. I am known for innovative thinking and a willingness to challenge the status quo, often bending the rules to find creative solutions. This "outside the box" approach is not just about breaking tradition but about paving new fairways in the world of golf course management. My ability to swiftly adapt to changing conditions and make decisive moves—even with limited information—reflects a confidence that, I hope, is both inspiring and contagious.

STRONGEST BEHAVIORS

The Power Behind the Swing

My strongest behaviors are the driving force behind effective leadership. I demonstrate a high level of proactivity and assertiveness, always pushing myself and my team towards excellence. My sense of urgency ensures that projects are completed efficiently, while my independent nature fosters innovative solutions that often lead to significant improvements. Building and leveraging relationships is another key strength, allowing me to connect with team members, stakeholders, and industry leaders to achieve common goals.

My approach is resourceful and determined, often working through or around obstacles to ensure success. This tenacity is coupled with a collaborative spirit, where team cohesion and interpersonal relationships are prioritized. A risk-taking mindset and focus on future goals make me a visionary leader, always looking ahead to the next big opportunity. Adaptability allows me to navigate challenges with ease, making decisions confidently and taking action swiftly to maintain momentum.

Predictive Index



Nicolas Garibay

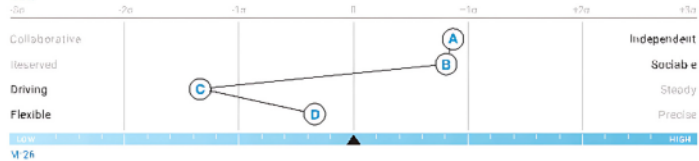
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Report Date 6/12/2023



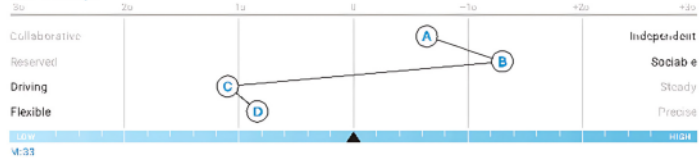
Captain

A Captain is a problem solver who likes change and innovation while controlling the big picture.

Self



Self-Concept



Synthesis



MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Crafting the Perfect Game Plan

To maximize effectiveness, productivity, and job satisfaction, I thrive in environments that offer independence and flexibility. I excel when given opportunities to learn and advance, and I value the ability to express and act on my ideas and initiatives. Variety and challenge in responsibilities keep me engaged, while recognition and rewards for my achievements fuel my motivation.

My management strategies are centered around fostering growth and development within my team. I delegate authority to those I trust, following up with pressure for timely results and ensuring that high standards are maintained. My decision-making process is swift and decisive, focusing on progress and continuous improvement rather than rigid adherence to tradition. By setting clear goals and expectations, I create an environment where my team can thrive, much like a well-maintained golf course that provides the perfect conditions for a great game.



Weekly schedule 5/12/23 No Closure

- Mow outs Monday, Wednesday, Friday **10/4 – 8/2 -10/4**
- 7 Gang & sidewinder weekly **(Try mowing it Monday & Tuesday) again (Thursday & Friday)**
- Vcut (Tuesday) Double (AM)
- Spray gms Monday & (Thursday or Friday)
- Top dress light **(Skip)**
- Roll gms if the previous day was under 11.5
- Rake all bunkers on Tuesdays & Thursdays
- **Bunker detail Starting Monday**
- Spot Spray continue
- Edge greens every Tuesday stay in front of rollers
- Divots on Par 3's
- Round up beds (As Needed)
- Trim Tee signs 1-18



Weekly schedule 6/5/23 Course closure on Tuesday

- Mow outs Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- 7 Gang & sidewinder IS A MUST
- Vent gms (SKIP)
- **Spray Tees/ Fwys (Tuesday)**
- **10 acres/Tank**
- 1. 15-0-0 10Gal/Tank
- 2. Hydration A+ 2.5Gal/Tank
- 3. Primo 80oz/Tank
- Vcut (Double) Tuesday (AM)
- Roll gms & **(0-0-24 Setting J)**
- Spray gms Monday & (Thursday or Friday)
- Top dress light dust (PM) Tuesday
- Roll gms if the previous day was under 11.5
- Rake all bunkers on Tuesdays & Thursdays
- Edge cart paths (INCLUDE STREETS)
- Edge Rock Walls 13,16,18,4,5
- Pepper & Carrot tree patrol
- Spot Spray continue
- Trim coco plums 2,3,4,7,9,12

Driving Success: *Weekly Schedules and Expectations that Keep the Team on Course*

11 MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Crafting the Perfect Game Plan (Cont'd.)



Agronomic Program for September & October

9/16/19

- ∨ Ronstar wall to wall **COMPLETE**
- ∨ Mow Outs Thursday & Friday **(For this week only)**
- ∨ Spray Greens
- ∨ Spray Fwys & TCA

9/23/19

- ∨ Mow Outs Monday's and Thursday's third cut if needed
- ∨ Spray Greens
- ∨ Lite Top Dress on Monday
- ∨ Fertilize Greens (13-0-26)
- ∨ Fungicide & Wetting Agent on Tuesday
- ∨ Round up beds

9/30/19

- ∨ Vent Greens with cross tines @ 3.0, Monday B-9 & Friday F-9
- ∨ Roll Greens
- ∨ Spray Greens
- ∨ Mow Outs on Monday & Thursday
- ∨ Spray Fwys & TCA
- ∨ Round up beds

Driving Success: *Weekly Schedules and Expectations that Keep the Team on Course*

NICOLAS GARIBAY PORTFOLIO

10 MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Crafting the Perfect Game Plan (Cont'd.)

Effective management strategies are key to staff development and operational success. This document highlights three pillars:

- **Labor Management** – *Coaching, training, and retention strategies to strengthen teams.*
- **Assistant Development** – *Structured training to prepare future superintendents.*
- **Technology in Management** – *Leveraging modern tools for data-driven decisions and course optimization.*

By focusing on these areas, organizations can enhance efficiency, foster leadership growth, and adapt to industry advancements.

Nicolas Garibay
Assistant Superintendent
The Venice Golf and Country Club
June 8, 2018

The things that will drive and or change the golf course maintenance industry have always been under speculation. Therefore, I would love to share three great learning tools that will enhance organizations and help retain staff by developing their skill sets with the inclusion of Labor Management, Assistant Development and Technology.

Labor management is one of the most critical roles in the golf course industry, providing assistants the opportunity to view many areas for improvement on all individuals. Developing staff through extensive coaching, evaluating and encouragement, may provide great results. Millennial's are our future and we have to be innovative in how we coach. First, we have to carefully understand what their strengths and areas for improvements could be. Second, develop a plan accordingly with their goals that will help them become successful. Last, getting to know each staff member's personality when communicating direction will facilitate any improvements that are expected from such individuals. Retaining staff is one of the most complicated tasks in the current labor market. Monthly training with a vision of employee development is always a huge benefit for them and the organization.

Assistant development is a very important role for the superintendent, preparing such individuals can be as delicate as the polishing of an expensive diamond. Diamonds are found in a rough form and or shape in which its value is great, but after they go through a cutting and polishing process the result of such is a very impressive "GEM". Assistant superintendents share the same aspect depending on how their polishing process takes place. Developing them can come in many different forms such as: moisture management, irrigation/drainage improvements, maintenance facility improvements, emergency plan layout and any tournament volunteering opportunities. Allowing assistant superintendents to communicate and or update members upon weather, playing conditions and projects through the company app is also a great tool in their preparation for becoming a golf course superintendent. An opportunity with a presentation with the greens committee will allow assistants to gain the confidence in presenting and explaining every task that is being implemented on the golf course. Other areas for improvement may be managing and creating a budget based on an agronomic plan. Assistants should also be trained by developing an agronomic plan based on the budget with the opportunity of presenting it.

Technology has come a long way in the golf industry and plays a critical role in our daily lives. Technology such as drones, pogo and metric meters are amazing tools that will act as a compass in providing vital information regarding plant health along with the response of the plant to any cultural practices being implemented. Technology will motivate staff members by allowing them to collect data and verifying any improvements or changes, recognizing what type of cultural practices are to be implemented.

COMMUNICATION APPROACH

Driving the Message Home

My communication style is as dynamic and effective as my leadership approach. I connect quickly and openly with others, building relationships that are essential for team success. My fluent and fast-paced communication style is both enthusiastic and persuasive, motivating others by considering their perspectives and adjusting my delivery accordingly.

I am known for my direct and self-assured manner, speaking with assurance and conviction that inspires confidence in my team. My ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups—from team members to golf professionals and industry leaders—ensures that everyone is aligned and working towards common goals.

To illustrate this, I will provide examples of bulletins and newsletters I've written, which showcase how I keep my team informed and engaged through clear and consistent communication.

Legend Course

It has definitely been a wild May, it is usually a dryer month and ended up being wet towards the end. Severe erosion was left from the storms that came across Florida, on the week of the 22nd the team has been working hard and efficiently in trying to have them back in shape.



Legend course will be having its first closure for the summer on June 19th. The golf course will go through an aerification process on all short grass, detaching of tees, fairways and approaches along with top dressing.

Practice Facility

Our state-of-the-art practice facility had an extremely busy season, now that summer is here we are excited to start working on beautifying or improving the overall areas. In our Monday closures we are able to accomplish venting, grooming, top dressing, rolling and a granular application to our chipping greens. We hope that you continue enjoying your facility and invite you to use all areas to your benefit and improve your game.

1 COMMUNICATION APPROACH

Driving the Message Home (Cont'd)



15 GREEN



17 GREEN

On Course New: January 3, 2018

Good morning VGCC members, unfortunately we had more vandalism last night on several greens with these two being the worst. Vandalism is something that is never expected and is absolutely disrespectful to our membership and staff. If anyone has any information on who may have been responsible, please contact Mr. Jim Schell, General Manager.

Weather is being a big factor across the country bringing low temperatures down to freezing point. For the next three to four days our job will be to keep a close eye not only on the forecast, but on our golf course. Once temperatures reach 40* Fahrenheit and below the leaf blades will crystallize and form a frost cover, therefore please expect a frost delay. Here I have included a short USGA video that will let you visualize how frost forms and the results if walked and or driven on. <https://youtu.be/zkoWWrHzuAg>

Thank you again for everything you do to protect our golf course as it is our biggest asset, if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at (941) 484-1080 or n.garibay@venicegcc.com

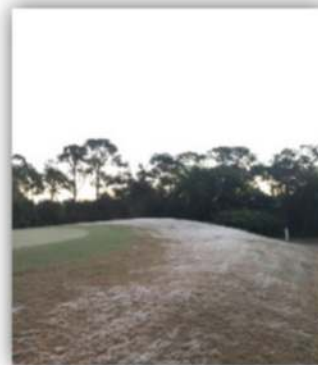
COMMUNICATION APPROACH

Driving the Message Home (Cont'd)

ON COURSE NEWS: JANUARY 28th

Frost delay? Frost only forms when temperatures reach below 40 degrees. Frost is essentially frozen dew and the ice crystals that form on the outside of the plant also can form on the inside of the grass plant. A grass blade is actually 90 percent water therefore it also freezes. Frost delays are conservatively done to maintain the health of the golf course, as it is unknown when damage from frost may occur. The plan of action for frost delay is once temperatures exceed 40 degrees irrigation is to run on all surfaces. Water coming from irrigation ponds can be 15 to 20 degrees warmer allowing soil temperatures to rise and will contribute to a more rapid recovery.

Areas with frost that had visual impact on Monday morning



Upcoming events

- The amending of fairways had to be postponed due to low temperatures and will be completed this following Monday.
- Rroughs will continue to loose color, as they are the most affected from frost due to their higher heights of cut.
- The edging of irrigation heads on holes 8 through 18 along with the driving range is complete while holes 1 through 7 are yet to be completed.
- Greens will be vented this Monday, to improve water infiltration, soil compaction and gas exchange.

Please feel free to contact me regarding any questions or concerns at N.garibay@venicegcc.com or at 941-484-1080.

WORDS FROM THE GREEN

"WHAT NEEDS DONE, WHAT ISN'T GETTING DONE, HE'S GOT A REAL GOOD EYE FOR ALL THAT. NOT EVERYBODY DOES. SOME PEOPLE CAN DRIVE PAST AN IRRIGATION HEAD THAT HASN'T WORKED FOR A WEEK AND NOT SEE ANYTHING. THERE'S ROOM TO IMPROVE AND HE'S ALWAYS LOOKING TO RAISE THE BAR."

*Matt Masemore
Director of Golf Course Maintenance
The Club at Ibis, West Palm Beach, Florida*

"WHEN YOU DO SOMETHING WRONG, HE'LL TELL YOU, BUT HE'LL ALSO GIVE YOU THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO KNOW HOW TO DO THE JOB THE RIGHT WAY, AND WHY IT'S BEING DONE LIKE THAT. HE SEES EVERYTHING. THERE'S NOT A THING HE MISSES. THERE ARE TIMES I'LL DO SOMETHING AND ASK HIM IF HE SAW IT, AND HE'LL TELL ME 'I SAW IT A LONG TIME AGO.' WE NEED LEADERS LIKE THAT."

*Anton Vergottini
Assistant Golf Course Superintendent
The Club at Ibis, West Palm Beach, Florida*

"I KNEW HE HAD WHAT IT TOOK TO LEAD PEOPLE. AND HE HAD THAT STRATEGIC VISION TO LOOK BEYOND RIGHT NOW. HE HAD A SKILLSET YOU CAN'T TEACH IN THE CLASSROOM. YOU JUST KNOW WHEN YOU SEE SOMEONE WHO HAS THAT 'IT FACTOR,' WHEN YOU'RE AROUND HIM, HE MAKES YOU WANT TO BE A BETTER PERSON. AND YOU CANNOT TEACH THAT."

*Carlos Arraya
General Manager
Bellerive Country Club in St. Louis*

"HIS CURIOSITY IS ENDLESS. HE'S VERY HUMBLE, HE HAS A TON OF PRIDE, AND HE'S VERY CURIOUS. IT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR HIM TO KNOW WHAT HE WANTS TO KNOW WHY AND HOW AND WHEN AND WHERE. HE'S A SPECIAL PERSON. [...] IF I WERE A GM, I WOULD HIRE HIM IN A HEARTBEAT."

*Dick Gray
former Superintendent at PGA Golf Club,
Port St. Lucie, Florida*

"Feedback isn't just a reflection of where you are—it's the foundation for where you're going." -

Anonymous

FAIRWAYS OF SUCCESS

A Professional Journey

Over the years, my career in golf course management has been defined by a relentless pursuit of excellence, a passion for sustainability, and a commitment to fostering growth—both in the turf I manage and the teams I lead. Each position I've held has offered unique challenges and opportunities, allowing me to refine my skills, implement innovative practices, and contribute to the success of some of Florida's most prestigious golf courses.

This section highlights the milestones and achievements that have shaped my professional journey. From leading multi-million-dollar renovations to pioneering water conservation strategies, my experiences reflect a balance of strategic planning and hands-on leadership. Whether it's enhancing course aesthetics, improving operational efficiency, or mentoring future superintendents, each role has reinforced my dedication to elevating the standards of golf course management.

What follows is a closer look at the courses and clubs where I've had the privilege to leave my mark, showcasing the projects, innovations, and leadership initiatives that have defined my career trajectory.

Roots of Leadership

A Decade of Learning and Innovation

Hawk's Nest Golf Club was where I truly laid the foundation for my career in golf course management. Spending nearly a decade at this 18-hole championship private club designed by George and Jim Fazio, I had the opportunity to grow from an entry-level team member into a leadership role. This course became my training ground, where I honed my agronomic skills, learned the intricacies of daily operations, and developed the leadership style that I carry with me today. Working at a private club with high expectations for playability and aesthetics, I quickly learned that attention to detail and proactive problem-solving were essential to maintaining elite conditions.

One of the most significant projects I was involved in was the grow-in of TifEagle greens and a full bunker renovation project in 2006. This was my first experience managing a large-scale course improvement, and it pushed me to understand the complexities of agronomic planning, construction logistics, and course restoration. Seeing the transformation firsthand gave me an appreciation for the level of expertise required to execute successful renovations while keeping member satisfaction at the forefront.

Another major challenge I tackled at Hawk's Nest was developing a drought management program during a particularly severe dry season. Water conservation is always a critical concern in golf course maintenance, but when faced with extreme conditions, I had to think creatively to implement solutions that maintained turf health while significantly reducing water usage. Through careful monitoring, strategic irrigation adjustments, and efficient use of our Toro VP Network system, we successfully cut water usage by nearly 50% without compromising course quality. This experience reinforced my ability to adapt to environmental challenges and make science-based agronomic decisions.

Working at Hawk's Nest also gave me extensive experience managing different turfgrass varieties, including Bermuda and Zoysia, and fine-tuning maintenance practices to optimize their performance. Managing warm-season grasses in Florida requires a deep understanding of seasonal changes, pest control strategies, and sustainable fertility programs, and my time here allowed me to refine my expertise in all these areas.

Beyond agronomic work, I gained valuable experience in staff training and leadership development. I learned the importance of building a strong, motivated team and the impact of clear communication in ensuring that daily tasks were executed efficiently. This role prepared me to step into greater leadership responsibilities, teaching me that great course conditions start with great people.

Hawk's Nest was more than just a job—it was where I learned the fundamentals of what it takes to be a successful superintendent. The experience I gained in turf management, water conservation, renovations, and leadership during my time there laid the groundwork for everything I've accomplished in my career since. Looking back, I see this period as the chapter where my passion for golf course management truly solidified, setting me on the path to where I am today.



Where Science Meets Sport

Crafting Tournament-Ready Conditions

Joining the PGA Golf Club as an Assistant Golf Course Superintendent was an incredible opportunity to work at a 54-hole championship facility designed by some of the most respected names in golf course architecture, including Tom Fazio and Pete Dye. This role placed me in a high-pressure, tournament-driven environment where maintaining elite course conditions was not just a goal—it was a daily expectation. With a state-of-the-art 35-acre learning center and a 6-hole short course, the standards for maintenance, aesthetics, and playability were exceptionally high. Every day was an opportunity to refine my skills in agronomy, leadership, and operational efficiency.

One of my primary initiatives at PGA Golf Club was the implementation of a data-driven agronomic program. I introduced accredited soil and tissue testing as a key component of our maintenance strategy, allowing us to fine-tune our fertilization and turf management practices based on real-time data. This approach improved turf health and playability while optimizing resource allocation. By leveraging scientific data rather than relying solely on traditional maintenance practices, we were able to make informed decisions that enhanced course conditions while maintaining efficiency.

In a facility that hosts high-profile tournaments and member events, operational efficiency was critical. To improve productivity, I introduced a Blitz Program, a system designed to help our maintenance team work around the membership while still executing necessary course improvements. This approach allowed us to complete critical maintenance tasks without disrupting play, ensuring that members and tournament participants always experienced pristine course conditions. Balancing maintenance needs with member expectations required strategic planning, strong communication, and the ability to make quick, effective decisions under pressure.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this role was leading a diverse team through a demanding tournament schedule. During peak season, the pace was relentless, but I thrived in that environment. I worked closely with our crew to ensure that every detail—from bunker consistency to green speed—was fine-tuned to meet tournament standards. Leading a team in such a high-stakes setting reinforced my ability to stay composed under pressure, problem-solve on the fly, and motivate my staff to perform at their best.

PGA Golf Club gave me invaluable experience working in a fast-paced, tournament-focused environment where excellence was the standard. My time there strengthened my agronomic expertise, expanded my leadership abilities, and reinforced the importance of adaptability in golf course management. It was a pivotal stepping stone in my career, preparing me for greater leadership responsibilities and further cementing my passion for delivering championship-level playing conditions.



Precision and Progress

Leading a Multi-Million Dollar Renovation

When I joined The Venice Golf and Country Club as an Assistant Golf Course Superintendent, I was stepping into an exciting opportunity to contribute to a high-level private golf club while further developing my leadership and agronomic expertise. One of my most significant projects during this time was overseeing a \$2.5 million strategic course renovation in 2015. This renovation was a game-changer, involving the resurfacing of greens with TifEagle, the installation of TifGrande collars, and the transition to Celebration Bermuda on tees, fairways, and approaches. The project required careful coordination, precise execution, and a commitment to maintaining course playability throughout the process. Seeing the transformation unfold and knowing that I played a key role in improving the course's long-term performance was an incredibly rewarding experience.

Another major improvement I helped implement was the installation of a state-of-the-art Rain Bird IC irrigation system. This upgrade was critical in improving water efficiency, optimizing turf health, and enhancing the overall sustainability of the course. Managing a golf course in Florida comes with the constant challenge of balancing water conservation with maintaining pristine playing conditions, and this system allowed us to achieve that balance effectively. It was satisfying to see the tangible impact this investment had on both course quality and member satisfaction.

Beyond the agronomic improvements, I was actively involved in financial and budget management. I worked closely with the superintendent and club leadership to track operational expenses, forecast future needs, and ensure that every decision aligned with the club's long-term goals.

Using historical data, I helped refine our agronomic programs to maximize efficiency while staying within budget. This experience gave me a deeper understanding of how financial planning directly impacts course management and set me up for future leadership roles.

Communication was another area where I made an impact. I regularly presented at Green Committee meetings, updating members and stakeholders on course conditions, upcoming projects, and agronomic strategies. These meetings were not just about reporting data—they were opportunities to educate, answer questions, and build trust with the membership. I found that when members understood the "why" behind our decisions, they became more engaged and supportive of the work we were doing.

My time at The Venice Golf and Country Club reinforced my passion for leadership, strategic planning, and problem-solving. Working on large-scale renovations and high-impact infrastructure improvements gave me the confidence to take on more responsibility, and the experience I gained in budgeting, communication, and staff development prepared me for my next step as a superintendent. I left knowing that I had contributed to meaningful changes that would benefit the course and its members for years to come.

Green Committee Presentation

As part of my role at The Venice Golf and Country Club, I created this presentation to keep the Green Committee informed on course conditions, renovation projects, and agronomic strategies. It provided insights into the \$2.5 million course renovation, irrigation upgrades, and sustainable turf management practices. By sharing performance data and long-term planning initiatives, I helped align course improvements with member expectations, fostering transparency and collaboration.

In This Presentation

“We will discuss”

- ◆ 1) Weather impact
- ◆ 2) Green conditions
- ◆ 3) Fertility of Fairways
- ◆ 4) Roughs
- ◆ 5) D.R. Tee
- ◆ 6) Club House Irrigation Project
- ◆ 7) Head Irrigation Detail
- ◆ 8) Yardages on Cart Paths
- ◆ 9) Grinders

Weather will have impact on the following:

- Health
- Growth
- Color
- Speed
- Nutrient Uptake

Image here indicates this weeks Weather having Five days in the 40's!

NOW	DETAILS	HOURLY	10 DAY
Mon	 -- 54°	Windy	
Tue	 61° 47°	Windy	
Wed	 60° 42°	Partly Cloudy	
Thu	 60° 44°	Sunny	
Fri	 67° 52°	Sunny	
Sat	 69° 45°	Mostly Sunny	
Sun	 60° 42°	Sunny	
Mon	 64° 56°	Partly Cloudy	

A Vision for Growth

Transforming Turf and Membership at Jacaranda West

When I stepped into the role of Golf Course Superintendent at Jacaranda West Country Club, I was eager to take on the challenge of revitalizing an already established course and elevating it to new heights. One of my first major projects was leading the re-grassing of fairways, tees, and approaches in the summer of 2018. This project required precise planning and execution to ensure minimal disruption to members while achieving the best possible results. Rather than opting for a full rebuild, I focused on strategic restoration efforts that preserved the character of the course while significantly improving playability. The outcome was a course that not only looked better but also performed at a higher level, providing a more enjoyable experience for members and guests.

One of the most exciting developments during my tenure was the impact of these improvements on club membership and revenue. By 2019, financial reports showed a 50% increase in revenue, a direct reflection of the enhanced playing conditions and overall experience we were able to deliver. Seeing this kind of measurable success reaffirmed my belief that a well-maintained course is not just an asset but a key driver of a club's business growth. Through strategic agronomic practices and a commitment to delivering premier playing conditions, we were able to create an environment that attracted more players and strengthened member retention.

Beyond course maintenance, I placed a strong emphasis on communication and transparency. I made it a priority to keep both members and club leadership informed about course conditions, ongoing projects, and future plans. Whether through formal presentations, meetings, or casual interactions with members, I found that open communication helped build trust and appreciation for the work my team and I were doing.

By fostering this dialogue, I was able to create a sense of collaboration between management, staff, and members, ensuring that everyone felt invested in the course's success.

Financial planning was also a key component of my role at Jacaranda West. Managing a course's budget requires not only understanding turf management but also knowing how to allocate resources efficiently. I took a hands-on approach to forecasting and planning, ensuring that capital and operational budgets aligned with both agronomic needs and club expectations. By making informed financial decisions, I was able to implement sustainable management practices that improved course conditions without unnecessary expenditures.

My time at Jacaranda West was incredibly fulfilling, not just because of the course improvements but also because of the relationships I built along the way. I focused on creating a positive and productive team environment where my staff felt empowered and valued. The experience reinforced my belief that great leadership is about more than just managing turf—it's about developing people, enhancing operations, and driving meaningful improvements that benefit both the course and the club as a whole.



Elevating Excellence

Shaping Championship Conditions at Ibis

When I joined The Club at Ibis as the Golf Course Superintendent, I knew I was stepping into a prestigious golf community with high expectations. I was excited to take on the challenge of maintaining and enhancing the playability of the Legend course while also improving overall operations. From the beginning, I focused on refining agronomic practices, optimizing course conditions, and streamlining workflows to ensure that members consistently experienced top-tier playing conditions. Through a combination of careful planning, strategic budgeting, and a deep understanding of turf management, I've been able to enhance both the aesthetic and functional aspects of the course.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my time at Ibis has been mentoring and developing my staff. I strongly believe in fostering an environment where my assistants can grow and advance in their careers. My goal has never been to simply manage a team but to help shape the next generation of superintendents. I take pride in coaching and providing real-world training that equips my staff with the skills needed to take on leadership roles. Seeing my assistants move on to superintendent positions has been one of the most fulfilling parts of my career.

Beyond staff development, I have worked to improve the efficiency of our operations. I introduced a Blitz Program designed to enhance maintenance workflows and attention to detail across our multi-course facility. This initiative has helped our team work more cohesively while ensuring that course conditions remain at their best, even during high-traffic tournament seasons. I've always approached challenges with a problem-solving mindset, addressing issues quickly to minimize disruptions and maintain the high standards our members expect.

Financial planning is another area where I have made a significant impact. Managing budgets effectively is crucial in this industry, and I take a strategic approach to forecasting expenses and planning capital improvements. By carefully aligning financial decisions with the club's long-term goals, I have been able to implement agronomic programs that enhance course conditions while remaining within budget. Whether it's upgrading irrigation systems or making sustainable turf management decisions, I always consider both immediate and long-term benefits.

Communication has also played a crucial role in my success at Ibis. I maintain close collaboration with the Director of Agronomy, golf professionals, and even high-profile figures like Golf Channel's lead instructor, Martin Hall, to ensure that our courses meet the standards required for tournaments and events. Clear and proactive communication with my team, club leadership, and members has been instrumental in ensuring smooth operations and high levels of satisfaction.

Since joining Ibis, I have continuously pushed myself to find ways to improve not just the golf course but also the overall experience for both members and staff. I take pride in the work I do, knowing that every adjustment I make, every training session I lead, and every decision I implement contributes to the long-term success of the club. My goal has always been to create an environment where excellence is the standard, and I look forward to continuing to build upon that foundation.

Strategic Budget & Forecasting

At The Club at Ibis, I developed a comprehensive budget and forecasting program designed to align with the club's expectations while driving course improvements. This strategic approach outlined the necessary investments for turf health, irrigation, and overall course enhancements, ensuring that every decision was backed by data and long-term planning. By integrating historical performance metrics and agronomic best practices, I was able to create a financial roadmap that maximized resources, improved efficiency, and maintained championship-level playing conditions.

Delivering budgets through a strategic program that includes a forecast according to the expectations of the club. Understanding each area or need and how or what it will take to get the course to another level is my first step in improving all surfaces. Agronomic programs are built with or around budget numbers, a program in which will give an overview of how well it will function and allow the club to know where there are areas for improvement. Historical data is also utilized when building programs as it gives us an overview of the previous years and how our programs are working. Every program is built accordingly to best management practices that allow us to make sound decisions and stay within budget numbers.

2017 - 2020 BUDGET & FORECASTING STATEMENT
 AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENT
 (Amounts in \$)

Departmental Budget	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Administrative	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Clubhouse	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Course Maintenance	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Equipment	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Food & Beverage	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
Marketing	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Personnel	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Pro Shop	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Tennis	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Turf Management	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Water	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Other Expenses	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Total Departmental Expenses	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Total Revenue	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Net Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The Blitz Program

At The Club at Ibis, I introduced **The Blitz Program** as a way to enhance operational efficiency, improve attention to detail, and create a more structured approach to course maintenance across our multi-course facility. With a property as expansive and high-profile as Ibis, maintaining pristine playing conditions required more than just routine upkeep—it demanded a system that maximized productivity while ensuring that even the smallest details weren't overlooked.

The Blitz focused on streamlining daily maintenance tasks, optimizing crew assignments, and increasing responsiveness to course conditions, all while minimizing disruptions to members and play. By establishing clear objectives, prioritizing critical areas, and implementing an adaptive scheduling approach, we were able to improve workflow coordination, enhance playability, and address issues proactively rather than reactively.

This program became a core component of our operations, allowing us to maintain championship-level conditions even during peak tournament seasons. More importantly, it helped instill a culture of accountability, efficiency, and continuous improvement within the team. Through **The Blitz**, we not only improved overall course quality but also reinforced the high standards and meticulous attention to detail that define The Club at Ibis.

The Blitz

It is a strategic and most efficient plan on maintaining a multi-course facility. Would you like to know more?





The Next Fairway

Strategic Leadership at Suntime Country Club

When I accepted the role of Director of Agronomy at Suntime Country Club, I stepped into the most comprehensive leadership position of my career. Responsible for all agronomic operations across two championship 18-hole golf courses, practice facilities, landscape areas, and irrigation systems, I combine strategic leadership, advanced agronomic planning, and team development to deliver exceptional playing conditions throughout the property. This role represents the culmination of more than two decades of experience in golf course management and a continued commitment to elevating both people and performance.

I oversee a \$3.3 million annual operating budget and lead a team of 36 staff members, balancing long-range planning, capital project oversight, and detailed agronomic programming. Every decision must support both the immediate needs of the golf courses and the club's long-term vision. Through disciplined budgeting, forecasting, and resource allocation, I work to ensure operational efficiency while maintaining championship-level conditions.

Agronomically, my focus is on delivering consistent, high-quality playing conditions year-round. I oversee fertility, chemical, and cultural programs for all playing surfaces while implementing advanced moisture management strategies and data-driven systems to improve turf health, playability, and efficiency. By utilizing detailed spray and fertility programs, I make informed decisions that maximize turf performance while maintaining responsible stewardship of club resources.

Developing people is one of the most rewarding aspects of my role. I oversee hiring, training, scheduling, performance evaluations, and professional development initiatives designed to build a strong team culture. A particular passion of mine is mentoring assistant superintendents and preparing future leaders within the industry. By investing in leadership development and creating opportunities for growth, I strive to make a lasting impact that extends beyond daily operations.

One of my proudest accomplishments at Suntime has been successfully navigating significant staffing challenges while continuing to improve overall course conditions. Through strong leadership, detailed planning, accountability, and consistent program execution, our team has maintained high standards despite limited resources. These experiences reinforced my belief that effective leadership is defined by adaptability, discipline, and the ability to perform under pressure.

In addition to daily operations, I coordinate major infrastructure and improvement projects, including drainage enhancements, irrigation upgrades, bunker improvements, aeration programs, and long-term renovation planning. I also work closely with the Board of Directors, Greens Committee, General Manager, and membership to ensure alignment on priorities and long-term goals. Through communication, transparency, regulatory compliance, and strategic planning, my objective is not simply to maintain golf courses, but to build an operation that consistently delivers excellence while positioning both the property and its people for long-term success.

Championship Turf

Precision, Performance, Prestige

Delivering tournament-ready conditions requires more than just maintenance—it demands vision, expertise, and the ability to execute under pressure. Throughout my career, I have had the privilege of preparing and managing courses for some of the most prestigious championships in golf. From ensuring pristine playing surfaces to coordinating high-stakes event logistics, my approach blends precision, performance, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

This section highlights my experience in championship-level golf course management, showcasing my ability to create conditions worthy of the game's greatest players.

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Cognizant Classic 2024

(PGA National – Palm Beach, FL)

At one of the most challenging courses on the PGA Tour, I played a key role in preparing the turf to withstand high player expectations and Florida's demanding climate. Focused on agronomic precision, my team delivered peak playing conditions while balancing course sustainability.

100th PGA Championship 2018

(Bellerive Country Club – St. Louis, MO)

A milestone event in professional golf, this championship required intensive preparation under tight timelines. My contributions to agronomic planning and detail-oriented execution helped ensure a premier tournament experience on a global stage.

Diamond Resorts Invitational 2017-2018

(Tranquilo Golf Club – Four Seasons Orlando, FL)

This high-profile celebrity and professional golf tournament demanded flexibility and precision. I contributed to maintaining top-tier playing conditions in a resort environment, showcasing adaptability in agronomic strategy.

PGA National Car Rental Assistant Championship 2015

(PGA Village – Port St. Lucie, FL)

Assisted in course setup and maintenance for one of the premier events for assistant professionals. Focused on ensuring fair and consistent conditions, optimizing green speeds, and fine-tuning playing surfaces to meet championship expectations.



PGA Senior National Championship

2015

(PGA Village – Port St. Lucie, FL)

Preparing for this event required balancing firm and fast conditions suitable for a championship while accounting for the specific needs of senior professional players. My involvement in course preparation contributed to a successful and competitive tournament.



FSGA 97th Amateur Championship

2014

(Hawk's Nest Golf Club – Vero Beach, FL)

Worked closely with the agronomy team to refine course conditions for Florida's most prestigious amateur event. Implemented strategies to enhance turf resilience while ensuring challenging but fair playability for competitors.



AT&T HP Byron Nelson Tournament 2011-

2012

(TPC Four Seasons – Las Colinas, Dallas, TX)

A PGA Tour staple known for its demanding course conditions, this event required meticulous attention to detail. I was involved in daily course preparations, focusing on precision mowing patterns, bunker consistency, and overall playability.



U.S. Open Qualifiers 2008 & 2012

(Hawk's Nest Golf Club – Vero Beach, FL)

With U.S. Open-level standards in mind, my focus was on optimizing green speeds, fine-tuning fairway conditions, and ensuring a championship-caliber test for qualifying players. These experiences sharpened my skills in preparing elite-level competition conditions.



Rooted in Growth

Cultivating Excellence On and Off the Course

From the start of my career, I've believed that success is built from the ground up—whether it's managing world-class playing conditions, developing future leaders, or continuously expanding my own expertise. My journey has been shaped by a commitment to learning, innovation, and fostering a team-driven culture that thrives on excellence.

I take pride in not only maintaining the highest agronomic standards but also in creating environments where people and courses flourish together. Leadership, for me, goes beyond day-to-day operations; it's about investing in those around me, mentoring future superintendents, and implementing strategies that ensure long-term success. Every challenge presents an opportunity to improve, and I approach each project with the same mindset—how can we make it better, more efficient, and more impactful?

Through industry certifications, advanced training programs, and hands-on leadership, I have refined my skills to ensure every course I manage reaches its full potential. But beyond turf management and operational efficiency, my greatest achievements come from mentoring those around me, pushing boundaries, and leaving each place better than I found it.

This section showcases my accomplishments, certifications, and industry recognitions—each one a testament to the passion and dedication I bring to golf course management.

Certifications & Accreditations

The foundation of exceptional golf course management is a blend of experience, technical knowledge, and continuous education. While hands-on work has been a defining part of my journey, I've always believed that refining my expertise through industry certifications and specialized training is just as critical. Each accreditation I've earned has helped me elevate course conditions, improve operational efficiency, and implement innovative agronomic strategies that push the boundaries of what's possible in golf course management.

*One of the most impactful programs I've completed is the **Syngenta Business Institute at Wake Forest University**. This elite training, designed for golf course superintendents, provided in-depth education on financial management, negotiations, and leadership development. It enhanced my ability to balance agronomic excellence with business strategy, allowing me to manage budgets effectively while delivering high-quality course conditions that align with club expectations.*

*Another key milestone in my career was my selection to **Green Start Academy in 2018**, where I was recognized as one of the top 50 assistant superintendents nationwide. This program was a turning point, offering mentorship from industry leaders and in-depth discussions on agronomy, career development, and leadership. It reinforced my passion for staff development, shaping my philosophy on mentorship and preparing me to cultivate the next generation of golf course superintendents.*

*My certification in **Florida Golf Course Best Management Practices (BMPs)** has been invaluable in implementing environmentally responsible maintenance strategies. Sustainable golf course management is more important than ever, and this certification has helped me refine water conservation techniques, optimize fertilization programs, and enhance integrated pest management strategies. By applying these best practices, I ensure that the courses I manage maintain top-tier playing conditions while meeting environmental regulations and long-term sustainability goals.*

*To further strengthen my agronomic expertise, I obtained the **Florida Commercial Turf and Ornamental Pesticide License**, which has allowed me to manage pest control programs with precision and compliance. Understanding the science behind chemical applications ensures the safety of the course, the environment, and the staff handling these treatments. By staying ahead of regulatory requirements and best practices, I've been able to enhance turf health while optimizing resources and reducing unnecessary applications.*

In the Spotlight:

Features & Recognitions in the Industry

Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of contributing to the golf course management industry in ways that extend beyond the greens. My journey—from my early days working in agriculture to leading top-tier golf courses—has been recognized by industry professionals, publications, and mentors who have played a role in shaping my career.

*I am honored to have been featured in **Golf Course Industry Magazine**, where my story was highlighted as an example of perseverance, leadership, and dedication to the craft. The article captures my journey from farm fields to fairways, detailing the lessons I've learned along the way and the passion that drives my work.*

*Additionally, **my participation in major tournaments like the 100th PGA Championship at Bellerive Country Club** has been covered in various publications, showcasing the behind-the-scenes efforts that go into preparing courses for high-profile events. My contributions to **Golfdom Magazine** and other industry outlets have allowed me to share insights, strategies, and experiences that continue to shape my approach to course management.*

The following pages contain excerpts from these articles, offering a glimpse into my professional journey, the challenges I've overcome, and the impact I strive to make in the golf course industry.

In the Spotlight:

Features & Recognitions in the Industry (Cont'd.)

// 2018 PGA CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

Continued from page 23

NICOLAS GARIBAY
Assistant superintendent,
Venice G&CC, Venice, Fla.

Nicolas Garibay started his career in golf course management out of necessity. Recently married and looking for a way to support himself and his wife, he began searching for a job. He reached out to Carlos Arraya, then the director of golf course operations and the general manager of Hawk's Nest GC in Vero Beach, Fla.

All Arraya could offer him was a part-time job as an operator. Even though Garibay had no true goals or passion for the trade,



Nicolas Garibay

he accepted the position. Working at Hawk's Nest with Arraya as his boss, Garibay began to develop a passion for the craft and desire to climb the ladder.

He went on to earn a certification from the University of Georgia in the principles of turf and turfgrass management. From there, he was promoted to second assistant at Hawk's Nest, then assistant superintendent. Garibay credits much of what he has learned to Carlos Arraya. "Everything that I have learned is from Carlos. He was my mentor and guided me."

With hopes of one day becoming a superintendent, Garibay looks to once again learn from his mentor and others like him



Venice G&CC is laid out to meander through 26 lakes on the property.

at this year's PGA Championship.

"Most important to me is to help develop my skills to become a superintendent," he says. "I want to see what it takes to be a high-level superintendent and the work that it takes."

— Dillan Kanya, contributing editor

In the Spotlight:

Features & Recognitions in the Industry (Cont'd.)

The Fruit Picker

South Florida superintendent Nicolas Garibay started a life in agriculture at age 5, working alongside his family on Michigan and Florida farms. Fast approaching 40, he's never stopped.

By Matt LaWell

INSPIRATIONS

JUNE 2013

NICOLAS GARIBAY PORTFOLIO

In the Spotlight:

Features & Recognitions in the Industry (Cont'd.)

INSPIRATIONS



Every spring, from the years before he was old enough to remember to the year before he married his wife, **Nicolas Garibay** traveled with his family from Florida to Michigan and back again to pick fruit.

Garibay climbed in the back seat of a Ford Econoline van with his brother and his sister, his parents up front splitting the drive time. The journey normally started around dawn, everything they owned packed in a trailer hitched behind them. Sometimes extended family joined in, as many as a dozen or 15 other cars filled with aunts and uncles and cousins. Somewhere along the ribbon of

highway they would all stop at a McDonald's or a Taco Bell for the largest meal of the year. Garibay remembers his father, **Eduardo**, ordering 50 hard tacos and 50 soft tacos, the feast emerging from the back in a cardboard box. *Eat up*, his father would say, and Garibay would tell him, *This is too much food*, but the tacos seldom survived. They might all pull off at a rest stop every couple hundred miles but more often they pushed through the day, then the night. Everybody not behind the wheel nodded off sooner or later. By the time they woke up again, the roll of the road had transformed into the stillness of a farm. New state, new home, the cycle of the land pulling them in.

After unpacking their lives into their next temporary home — only beds, tables, a couch, and major utilities were provided in the mobile homes they inhabited for about six months at a time — they settled in for maybe a day or two, acclimated to the weather, the neighborhood, school again, then got back to work.

▲ Before he started working alongside his parents around age 5, Nicolas Garibay would still walk Michigan fields with them as they picked fruit.

Of course, there were challenges. In Michigan, Garibay and his siblings, **Eddie** and **Adriana**, were the only Hispanics in their school, and even though they counted plenty of friends in both states, every trip felt like starting over. When they reached high school, their class credits almost never transferred from state to state.

And the work was physically hard. There were hot days, cold days, wet days, long days. Equipment busted. Sometimes work poured in by the bucket or the bushel, sometimes by the hour. No two days were ever quite the same. But, Garibay remembers, "everywhere we went, you would

see family. That was the beauty of it.

"Nowadays, where can you have your entire family working together?"

Years before he first worked on a golf course and decades before he became the superintendent of the Legend course at The Club at Ibis in West Palm Beach, Florida, Garibay worked alongside his family, planting corn, squash, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, green beans, zucchini, even watermelon in Michigan. The family picked strawberries from the ground, then cherries from the trees. Garibay remembers picking fallen fruit for juice at 5. He remembers sheathing himself in a rainsuit and climbing higher and higher in a picker to pluck leaves

from cherry trees at 8. He remembers running a tractor at 12. Oranges filled their Florida winters. "Everything had its calendar," Garibay says.

The Garibays last trekked north in the early 2000s, their shift mirroring a larger national trend. Migrant farmworkers who traveled from state to state, following the harvests and the work, accounted for about 15 percent of hired hands throughout the 1990s. That number plummeted in the early 2000s and today sits around 3 percent, according to the U.S. Labor Department's most recent National Agricultural Workers Survey.

Two decades of travel and work took a toll on the family. Eduardo and his wife, **Esther**, were approaching their 40s and had started to slow down. Eddie had already stopped traveling with them, remaining in Florida to work his own jobs, and Adriana was starting high school. Garibay had recently fallen in love with a girl named **Miriam** whom he was certain he would marry. And their youngest child, another son named **Ezequiel**, was new to the world.

Garibay already knew a few years earlier that he didn't want to push his body to work his whole life.

"We had a supervisor, a guy from Texas, probably 75," he remembers. "Any time he would give me and my brother a ride to a different crop or a different field, he always gave us a pep talk and asked us what we were going to do with our future."

Work, the boys said. *Keep coming up here and working.*

No, the old man replied. *No, no, no. You cannot be like your father and your mother. You need to think different-*

© COURTESY OF NICOLAS GARIBAY

In the Spotlight:

Features & Recognitions in the Industry (Cont'd.)

INSPIRATIONS

ly. You don't want to be out here, 50 years old, digging a trench with a shovel. You know English. You don't have to work out here in the fields. You can do something different. You need to do better in life.

"He would talk to us like we were sons," Garibay says. "That's when we thought about doing things differently, about not killing ourselves for work."

Garibay remembers the name of the man who persuaded him to not work himself into pain, paralysis or something worse. **Ovidio Chapa**.

"We didn't think it was wrong," Garibay says. "We just didn't know any better. I'm thankful he told us those things."

Garibay is almost 40 now, nearly the same age his father was the last time he headed north, and he still wakes up as early as he did during those years on the farm—earlier, probably—though he no longer grinds physically every day, just mentally.

The alarm beeps at 4:15, he locks the front door on his way out by 4:50, and is normally at The Club at Ibis, a 54-hole private community, where he started as the **Jack Nicklaus**-designed Legend course superintendent in November 2021, around 5:40. "I sit at my desk for 10 or 15 minutes, brainstorming, thinking of what needs to be done today or the next day," he says. He finalizes the day's plans with his assistants, then passes along first and second jobs when the rest of the 23-person crew arrives around 6:30.

He still works with the land, but with far less stress on his body these days than his parents endured. Most mornings are filled with rides around the course, his focus on details.

"What needs done, what isn't get-



ting done, he's got a real good eye for all that," says **Matt Masemore**, the club's director of golf course maintenance for the last 16 years. "Not everybody does. Some people can drive past an irrigation head that hasn't worked for a week and not see anything.

"There's room to improve and he's always looking to raise the bar."

Garibay talks throughout the day with his assistants, **Trent Thomas**, a recent convert to golf course maintenance, and **Anton Vergottini**, a native South African who moved last month from Ibis to Lemon Bay Golf Club in Englewood, near the Gulf, to work on a major renovation. He never wants to micromanage them. He wants to give them the room to try, fail and succeed. But he still pushes them as he was pushed when he was younger.

"My job is not to develop them to be an assistant here," he says. "My purpose and my goal is to develop them to be promoted. That's what I want."

Thomas says Garibay holds high expectations for them, "but never unreal expectations. He does really work to develop people." Vergottini

calls Garibay a great leader. "When you do something wrong, he'll tell you, but he'll also give you the necessary equipment to know how to do the job the right way, and why it's being done like that. He sees everything. There's not a thing he misses. There are times I'll do something and ask him if he saw it, and he'll tell me, 'I saw it a long time ago.' We need leaders like that."

How did a first-generation Mexican American — a Michican, he sometimes calls himself, blending his birth state with his national heritage—who never finished high school and only later earned a GED and a certificate from a University of Georgia turf program, climb from picking fruit to leading a team of almost two dozen at an elite private club? How did he trade up from working with his body to working with his brain?

Chapa and his message certainly helped. So did the love of that girl, Miriam — turns it really was love at first sight: They married two years after meeting at Frog Leg Festival in Fellsmere, which is affectionally called Little Mexico and where they

▲ Nicolas Garibay, left, loves teaching and coaching in life and on the course. His recent students include assistant superintendents Anton Vergottini, center, who recently left The Club at Ibis, and Trent Thomas.

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In the Spotlight:

Features & Recognitions in the Industry (Cont'd.)

INSPIRATIONS

both lived, when he was 18 and she was 16. And there were mentors who pushed and pushed and pushed for years.

The first and most frequent was **Carlos Arraya**.

Garibay *dived into* work the first spring, summer, and fall he remained in Florida — and he started out on a golf course maintenance crew.

Still just 15 years old, he followed a couple uncles and a couple cousins to Hawk's Nest Golf Course in Vero Beach, Florida. Arraya remembers hiring the four of them and then hearing about "this kid who worked hard and was in love with this girl." Even then, Garibay impressed Arraya. "This is a good-looking kid," Arraya remembers thinking, "A little wet behind the ears, but he looks like he can run a fly mower. Let's put him on the team."

Garibay worked most of that first season on fly mowers and weed eaters and edgers — still the kind of hard, physical work he was used to on the farms — all for about \$7 an hour.

"I felt like I needed more," he says, so he left to work for the next five months at Orchid Island Golf and

Beach Club, also in Vero Beach. No longer spurred by Arraya or his family, he left the industry for the only time to work alongside Eddie on concrete jobs for the next seven months for \$14 an hour. "We were having a great time," he says, "and then jobs started going down, we got less hours and fewer jobs, our checks were cut in half." They switched gears again, this time working in air conditioning for about eight months. The money in that industry was even better, until it wasn't. He returned to Hawk's Nest months after Arraya returned from his own stint away from the club and, for the second time, asked Arraya for a job.

"I told him, 'If you want to come back and you want to make it a career, you have to make a commitment to people,'" says Arraya, now the general manager at Bellerive Country Club in St. Louis. "That's how it all started. We were sitting at 10 tee looking at 11 green, and I said, 'If you're going to do this, you're going to do this the right way. I'll do everything I can to give you everything I know.'"

They worked together most of the next 13 years at Hawk's Nest — most of them with Eddie, who followed his

brother into golf and is now an assistant superintendent at John's Island Club in Vero Beach — and later at The Venice Golf and Country Club in nearby Venice.

Arraya listened to Garibay on the radio most days, talking with the assistant superintendent and the rest of the team. Even then, Arraya says, "I knew he had what it took to lead people. And he had that strategic vision to look beyond right now. He had a skillset you can't teach in the classroom. You just know when you see someone who has that 'it factor.' When you're around him, he makes you want to be a better person. And you cannot teach that."

Arraya pushed him to earn his spray tech certification. He pushed him to earn that turfgrass certificate from the University of Georgia — which he finished in half the suggested time. He pushed him to finish three, four, five jobs when others on the team finished one or two. He pushed him to set goals. "I certainly yelled at him enough," Arraya remembers.

One day, about seven years into their second run together, Arraya called Garibay into his office, dropped his work file on the desk, told him to read it, and walked out for a few minutes. Certain he was about to be fired, Garibay left the file where it was. *If you're going to fire me, he remembers thinking, just fire me.* When Arraya returned, he asked Garibay if he had read it.

"No,"

"Nick, you're so hard-headed. Just read it."

Garibay opened the folder and on the top sheet spotted the words "assistant superintendent."

"I can't remember if I shed a tear or not," Garibay says. "I was very grateful. I wanted to have a better work life than my parents. For me, it's very emotional, because I saw what they went through. They suffered. They worked in the rain, they worked in the snow, they worked when it was cold, wet feet all the time. It was brutal. I'm accomplishing what I wanted."



In the Spotlight:

Features & Recognitions in the Industry (Cont'd.)

INSPIRATIONS

That promotion sparked the next decade for Garibay. He moved to PGA Golf Club in Stuart, where he worked as assistant superintendent under Florida legend **Dick Gray**. Despite working together for just six months, Gray describes Garibay as “unforgettable.”

“His curiosity is endless,” says Gray, who retired in 2020 after 53 years in the industry. “He’s very humble, he has a ton of pride, and he’s very curious. It’s not enough for him to know *what*, he wants to know *why* and *how* and *when* and *where*. He’s a special person. He calls me or sends an email every now and then, and he always thanks me.”

He reunited with Arraya at Venice for nearly four years, then landed his first superintendent position in November 2018 at Jacaranda West Country Club in Venice, working under corporate director of agronomy **Augustin Lucio**. Three years there earned him the position at Ibis.

“The accomplishments I have had in my career have been emotional, just because I never thought I would be where I’m at. I didn’t think I had the potential to be a superintendent, especially at a club like Ibis,” he says. “I didn’t think I had the capability of becoming a superintendent. And then within a month or two afterward, I was like, ‘I was ready a long time ago.’ I called Carlos and told him that.”

Yeah, man, Arraya said. *I know you were.*

During that same stretch, Garibay’s life off the course reflected his life on it: disciplined, dedicated to family, ever growing and improving. He and Miriam, who also traveled every year throughout her childhood from Florida to Texas, where father sold cars around citrus picking, became parents when they were young — **Nicolas Edwin** is now 19 and **Yoseleen** is 15. After being baptized as Jehovah’s Witnesses, they welcomed **Amarayah** in February 2022. He shows off videos of her dancing in the kitchen.

He mentions a few favorite Bible verses — Proverbs 27:17, *As iron sharp-*

ens iron, so one person sharpens another ... Proverbs 3:5, Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding ... Isaiah 41:10, Do not fear, for I am with you; ... I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

He clutched to those last two verses throughout three harrowing days last year, less than a week after Amarayah’s birth, when Miriam was admitted to the hospital with post-partum hemorrhaging that nearly killed her.

“She was already cold, she was shivering, and she was telling me to take care of the family, take care of the kids,” Garibay says. “That’s the last thing you want to hear. We could have lost her. That would have changed my life completely. I wouldn’t be here. Golf? No, I’m done. That’s why I say, and why I tell my staff, you can’t take anything for granted.”

“I think it brought us even closer together,” Miriam says. “We appreciate everything even more.”

What might be next for Garibay? He turns 40 this year, though as a Jehovah’s Witness he won’t celebrate the day. Fatherhood should be more fun than ever, especially with his son starting to study electrical engineering after excelling in his first job as a two-time McDonald’s employee of the month, and his daughters starting high school and walking, respectively.

On the course, Masemore is set to retire this month, opening up a director of agronomy position. Garibay has already added his résumé to the pile.

“If I were a GM, I would hire him in a heartbeat,” Gray says. “I would tell him, ‘This is what this membership expects, here’s what they want, and I know you can do it.’”

“He’ll be a director somewhere,” Arraya adds. “He’ll be at one of the big clubs.”

Will Garibay’s nontraditional background and climb hinder him? Gray says it might. Arraya says Garibay should lean into what makes him different — especially his quarter of a century of boots-on-the-ground work.

Words of wisdom

“There are a lot of Hispanics probably in the same boat I was, working in agriculture with their parents. Becoming a golf course superintendent is something that’s reachable and it’s probably something they would enjoy. There are a lot of operations that are bilingual and it’s a great opportunity. If this is something you want, go for it, because it’s definitely worth it.” — *Nicolas Garibay*

“Being Latino helps him tremendously because it helps him relate to all cultures, not just Hispanics, because he understands the challenge to overcome the optics,” Arraya says. “That’s a reality that people are uncomfortable talking about, just like gender, just like race. I think he will leave a mark in 10 or 15 years in Florida as one of the better directors and one of the better leaders in our industry. I would be shocked if that didn’t happen.”

“His climb, it’s pretty special. There are a lot of guys in his shoes who maybe didn’t have the personality or the leadership skills and never got an opportunity. Nick’s pretty courageous. It takes a lot of courage to step outside that comfort zone and say, ‘Yeah, I don’t have a degree.’ I remember for so many years trying to camouflage that in his credentials and finally saying, ‘Own that. You don’t have that but here’s what you do have. It gives people hope, and that’s what we all need.’”

Whenever and wherever that next step happens, Garibay will be ready. He has been working on the land since he was 5. He learned about responsibility through all those years on the farms and the courses. He learned about loyalty. He learned through experience.

“That’s what I think I gained,” he says. “And what did I lose? I don’t think I lost anything. I never felt like I lost. I always felt like I gained.”

“Everything I’ve done I feel has prepared me for where I am.” **GCI**



From the Fields to the Fairways

A Vision for Excellence in Agronomy

A Journey Rooted in Hard Work and Growth

From the time I was a child working the farmlands of Michigan and Florida, I learned that the land demands respect, patience, and relentless dedication. I've spent my life understanding how things grow—not just turf, but people, careers, and the potential for something greater. Agronomy isn't just my profession; it's my passion. It's the medium through which I've built a career, developed leaders, and transformed golf courses into places of beauty, challenge, and excellence.

Vision for the Role of Director of Agronomy

As Director of Agronomy, I don't just want to manage a golf course—I want to shape its future. My vision is to combine innovation, sustainability, and leadership to create an environment where excellence isn't just a goal, but the standard. The foundation of any premier golf course isn't just the turf—it's the people who cultivate it, the systems that support it, and the leadership that drives it forward. I believe in fostering a team culture that thrives on growth, accountability, and purpose. Through strategic planning, data-driven agronomic practices, and hands-on mentorship, I aim to elevate playing conditions and operational efficiency while ensuring we remain responsible stewards of the environment.

Long-Term Goals in the Golf Industry

I've never been one to settle. My long-term ambition is to be more than just a leader—I want to be an innovator in golf course agronomy. I aspire to lead groundbreaking renovations, redefine industry best practices, and play an active role in shaping the future of golf course management. Whether it's through pioneering sustainability initiatives, optimizing agronomic programs, or mentoring the next generation of superintendents, I want to leave a legacy that extends beyond the courses I manage. Golf is evolving, and I want to be at the forefront of that evolution, ensuring that every decision made today benefits the game for decades to come.

Dedication to Staff Development and Innovation

I am where I am today because someone took the time to challenge me, push me, and believe in my potential. That's the kind of leader I strive to be. My greatest pride isn't in the courses I've managed—it's in the people I've helped develop. I believe in building a team that not only understands the science of agronomy but takes pride in its art. My approach is simple: teach, empower, and inspire. When my assistants move on to lead their own courses, I know I've done my job. Innovation doesn't just come from technology—it comes from people who are encouraged to think differently, take initiative, and push boundaries. My role is to provide that space, to challenge conventional methods, and to ensure that every course under my leadership isn't just maintained, but elevated.

A Commitment That Goes Beyond Turf

This isn't just a job for me—it's a lifelong commitment to excellence, growth, and the future of the game. Every decision I make, every program I implement, and every person I mentor is part of something bigger. I want to continue building, leading, and redefining what's possible in agronomy. Because at the end of the day, it's not just about great turf—it's about creating something lasting, something meaningful.

Leadership at Suntree Country Club

Today, as Director of Agronomy at Suntree Country Club, I oversee all agronomic operations across two championship golf courses while managing a \$3.3 million annual budget and leading a team of 36 employees. Through strategic planning, innovative agronomic programs, and a commitment to staff development, I have successfully elevated course conditions despite significant staffing challenges. This role represents the culmination of my passion for leadership, mentorship, and the pursuit of excellence in golf course management.

NICOLAS GARIBAY PORTFOLIO

A Legacy is Not Given— It's Built.

Success is not handed down. It is earned through years of dedication, relentless pursuit of excellence, and the courage to embrace both challenge and change. From the fields where I first learned the value of hard work to the meticulously maintained greens of championship courses, my journey has been defined by resilience, leadership, and an unwavering commitment to growth—not just for myself, but for those around me.

Every early morning before the sun rises, every decision made to enhance course conditions, and every moment spent mentoring and developing staff has been a step toward something greater. I have cultivated not just landscapes, but opportunities—opportunities to lead, to inspire, and to raise the standards of what is possible.

The role of Director of Agronomy is not simply about overseeing a course; it is about carrying forward a vision, refining it, and elevating it beyond expectations. It is about honoring tradition while pioneering the future. I do not just see the responsibility of this position—I feel it. It is a challenge I am prepared to take on, a legacy I am ready to uphold and expand.

Every experience, every lesson, every challenge has prepared me for this moment. I stand ready—not just because of where I have been, but because of everything I have done to get here.

NICOLAS GARIBAY PORTFOLIO