

## FROM TEE TO GREEN!

### PGA Administrator Jim Hart Is High On Brunswick Golf

BY DOUG RUTER

It would make perfect sense for one of the top professional golf administrators in the Carolinas to live in Myrtle Beach—the golf capital of the Southeast. Instead, Jim Hart chooses to live in Brunswick County. He likes the slower lifestyle, uncrowded beaches and schools. The director of the Carolinas PGA Section also is pretty high on the county's burgeoning golf industry.

While his territory spreads from the South Carolina Lowcountry to the North Carolina mountains, Hart isn't shy about speaking well of the layouts his home county has to offer.

With the exception of Tidewater in Little River, Hart rates most of the newer courses in Brunswick County higher than the new clubs being built along the Grand Strand.

"I think the newer golf courses are better than what's gone in the Myrtle Beach area," Hart said. "Generally the courses in Brunswick County have been better—the ones that have opened in the past five years—because of the land."

Many of the local courses have been built along water or marshland. Most new clubs along the Grand Strand are inland courses and can't match the scenery or demanding conditions of the local ones.

Because of the quality of its courses, Hart says Brunswick County is in a position to attract a lot of the visitors who have traditionally visited the Myrtle Beach clubs.

"Brunswick County offers a less crowded alternative and has a lot of new, well-conditioned, challenging courses close to Myrtle Beach," he said. "I think they have a unique opportunity to draw more tourists and residents."

Hart is such a believer in what Brunswick County has to offer that he moved his family from North Myrtle Beach to the Calabash area 6½ years ago to get away from the city congestion.

"The golf that's offered here is very inexpensive compared to most areas, and the caliber of the courses is very good. The variety of the courses is very good also."

Hart says he doesn't think Brunswick County has too many golf clubs. Both Palm Beach County, Fla., and Palm Springs, Calif., have a higher concentration of courses.

"I don't personally think there's too many," he said. "It's like any other business. The ones that are capitalized and run well are going to do well and the ones that aren't will fail."

An avid golfer since age 12, Hart says his administrative duties and family don't leave much time for play. But he still tries to get in about two rounds per month.

"Between work and four kids there's not a lot of time," he said. "I don't miss it until I play. When I play I enjoy it a lot, but when I'm working I don't think about it at all."

Hart says golf is a great asset to coastal areas that depend on tourism to drive their economies. Tourists spent \$123 million here in 1991, putting Brunswick County 10th in the state in travel-related expenditures.

"The people who come here for golf generally have disposable income and they spend money while they're here," Hart said.

Golfers often return to the same vacation spot every year, tell friends about where they have played and often choose to retire in a golfing area.

"We like living in Brunswick County," Hart says. "We're real pleased with the lifestyle and the schools. The schools get a bad rap, but we think they're pretty good."

Hart and his wife, Mary, have two children in Union Primary School, Katie and Jimmy, and two pre-schoolers, Charlie and Anna.

A native of Bethlehem, Pa., Hart was raised in the Endicott, N.Y., area and graduated from the University of Florida in 1978.

After two years as a professional in the Orlando area, he moved to the Carolinas to take over as tournament director at the Carolinas PGA Section, which has headquarters in North Myrtle Beach.

He served in that capacity until Jan. 1, 1986, when he took over as the section's executive director.

Hart oversees the day-to-day operations of the section, which organizes golf tournaments and seminars for professionals and runs an employment referral service that matches up pros with courses. "We're also a golf clearinghouse of information," he said. "We get over 10,000 telephone calls per year. It's a busy operation."

The Carolinas Section operates on a budget of about \$3 million per year. The office has seven full-time employees and plans to add an eighth this month to help with the tournament program.

The section conducts about 230 tournaments per year with purses totaling \$2 million. In addition to PGA pros, approximately 18,000 amateurs play in PGA events per year.

Hart recently was elected to a two-year term as chairman of the PGA of America's Section Executive Director Group. He will serve as a liaison with PGA officers and staff. "I'll get to interface with senior management and staff at the PGA," Hart said. "It's been kind of busy already just the first few weeks. I'm looking forward to it."

The Carolinas PGA Section is a non-profit association established in 1923 and is the largest of the nation's 41 sections with 1,625 members and apprentices.

Members are club pros at approximately 800 facilities in North and South Carolina. The facilities include 18-hole, nine-hole and par three courses and driving ranges.

The section also boasts about a dozen members who are PGA Tour professionals, including Jay Haas who

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JIM HART of Calabash has been executive director of the Carolinas PGA Section since 1986.

led for fourth in the recent Buick Invitational of California.

Hart said the Carolinas Section has doubled its membership in the last nine years. He attributes the growth to the proliferation of golf courses in the Carolinas and

older courses realizing the benefits of hiring club pros. "Some other sections have not had a course built in the last 10 years," Hart said. "We've been fortunate here, partly because the land is available and affordable."

## SCHOOL WEATHER NETWORK

### Team Takes Hands-On Approach To Meteorology Studies

BY SUSAN USHER

"Wow! It looks like 21 degrees!"

A chill wind is blowing and the forecast calls for snow mixed with rain as four bareheaded students eagerly cluster around an odd-looking box perched on a wooden post behind Shallotte Middle School. Ignoring the ventilation holes along the sides, with its peaked roof and lift-away door the wooden rectangle closely resembles a very large bird house.

It shelters not birds, but a critical piece of equipment for the school's first weather station—a maximum/minimum thermometer.

Each school day at 2:30 p.m., Neil Ansley, Sean Pruitt, Glacia Simmons and Erin Lee step out of Darrell Cheers' eighth grade physical science class on a very important mission: collecting data from the station to share with classmates, and with the National Weather Service office in Raleigh. Once each day's data is recorded, said Ansley, the team resets the thermometer using a magnet.

The quartet and their classmates are volunteers with the School Weather Network, a statewide project of the National Weather Service now in its third year. During its first two years the program involved 3,700 primary and middle grade students who made 1,580 weather observations.

Shallotte Middle is the only school participating in Brunswick County. Two schools from New Hanover County belong to the network, none from Columbus,



SEAN PRUITT takes a mid-morning peek at the thermometer inside the shelter as Glacia Simmons (right) prepares to jot down data. Looking on are Erin Lee and Neil Ansley.

Bladen or Pender counties.

Cheers, project sponsor, thinks it is worth the extra effort to give students another type of hands-on science experience, one that excites their interest in and curiosity about weather and the science of weather, meteorology.

Between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. stu-

dent volunteers at 85 schools across North Carolina head to a touch-tone telephone to call 1-800-662-TEMP.

After logging their outgoing call at the front desk, Shallotte Middle School team members take turns using the telephone keypad to transmit the maximum and mini-

mum temperatures and total precipitation for the previous 24-hour period in a digital code to a computer database.

Shallotte Middle's station went into operation Feb. 16, thanks to a bit of help from Gary Poulos' carpentry students at West Brunswick High School. "They made the in-

strument shelter," said Cheers.

From now through April 2, students will collect data daily, with Cheers doing the honors on weekends and school holidays.

When the four return to class with their data classmates are waiting, said Simmons. "They're ready for the information."

The class plots each day's data on graphs, which will be assembled later to share with the school and to become the foundation of the school's own weather database. The class receives weekly data summaries by mail from the National Weather Service office in Raleigh, relaying data from other network sites.

While the students haven't taken up weather forecasting, more weather-related analysis is in the works. "They'll pick a school in the western part of the state and do comparisons," said Cheers.

He said other classes at the school will also have a chance to get involved with the project.

All four team members have some interest in the weather, though none is contemplating a related career. They're glad to be part of the project, though they didn't know exactly what was involved when they signed on.

A hands-on approach to meteorology makes it "a LOT more fun," said team member Erin Lee. "I think it's neat."

Handling weather observations yourself also makes the process easier to understand, added team mate Sean Pruitt.

He and fellow weather watchers also like that they're part of something bigger than themselves and something important.

"We're part of this big chain. I like being part of something that makes a difference," said Pruitt as team mates nodded in agreement. "We're counting for something."

Added Ansley, "It helps the Weather Service figure out what the temperature is."