

THE FIRST SOCIAL NETWORK

The Landings Club—Transforming a Paradigm Pioneer

By Mark Pazdur, Publisher



“In the past decade, \$62 million in capital projects were completed. Our latest enhancements include a new Marshwood Clubhouse and Franklin Pool Complex, the renovated Magnolia Course, and a new Golf Coaching Center at the Deer Creek Course. At our peers, you must travel by car to reach different amenities. Here, everything is accessible by hopping into your golf cart. It’s an undeniable convenience.”

— GARY LORFANO, DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA: When The Landings Club was founded in 1974, its success was far from certain. Little did the developer know that *TIME* magazine would rate Savannah one of its “World’s Greatest Places.”

“We have come a long way since those early days,” commented Steven Freund, executive director of The Landings Club. “Our 5,500-acre island [The Landings occupies 4,500 of those acres], surrounded by salt marshes and the Intracoastal Waterway, has become one of the most affluent and well respected member-owned communities in the Southeast. Our hallmark is access to six golf courses designed by Arnold Palmer [two courses], Arthur Hills [two courses], Tom Fazio and Willard Byrd—all designated as Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries.

“If you love golf, you will love living here.”

TOUR TESTED

Scott Justman, director of golf at The Landings Club, quickly learned the importance of adaptability. “I was 16 years old when I arrived for the first day on the job at our local course,” recalled Justman. “I thought I would be emptying trash and refilling the candy machine. The club was hosting a junior clinic and soon after the lesson began, one of the kids shanked a shot and hit the instructor in the forehead. He was dazed and confused, but otherwise unhurt. Instead of mundane tasks, I stepped in to teach the class.”

Adding to his experience was a degree from Ferris State University, considered the leading college for those pursuing a golf career. With a diploma in hand, Scott held several positions at prestigious golf facilities, including Reynolds Lake Oconee, a highly regarded multi-course community in central Georgia.

“My resume prepared me for managing the golf operations at The Landings Club during what we would all agree has been an uncertain time,” said Justman. “I’ve learned to highlight the positives and play with the ‘cards that have been dealt’ in an ever-changing landscape.”

The Landings Club, by any yardstick, is a large opera-



The Marshwood pool boasts a resort-style complex with a zero-entry access and a large cabana bar, perfect for outdoor dining or drinks with friends.

“The Landings Club is top-notch golf. Not many private clubs in the world can compare to its diverse courses and overall amenities. It is an ideal setting for great living. I refer to it as a golfer’s golf club delight. My course, Deer Creek, is a core design with distinctive, tall pines, and the Lowcountry marsh edges come into play. I had a wonderful piece of land to work with, and the setting is one of a kind. I have many golf courses that I am proud of. If I placed my top 15 designs into a hat and only one could be picked, I would be happy to stake my reputation on Deer Creek’s quality golf experience.” —TOM FAZIO

tion with more than 3,500 full golf members. “Our golf membership grew by 11 percent over the past year after an equally robust 2020. In years past, if you were able to keep membership churn to a minimum, it was considered a win. The fact that we added a net 353 members in the past 12 months is a testament to our diverse offerings.”

A question mark that remains is if the pandemic pulled demand forward in an unsustainable trajectory.

“It’s the great unknown,” grimaced Justman. “Golf is a sport that’s slow to react to changing times. We are already being proactive in subtly adjusting our thinking from how to *attract* new members to *retaining* current members. It’s a tall order considering our constituents are from three generations with different wants and demands. A purist who plays 300 days per year has different expectations from a social golfer who plays occasionally. To appease everyone, we now host 70+ golf events per year, ranging from guest speakers [Roger Cleveland recently discussed design aspects of wedges] to a superintendent revenge tournament [across three courses with whimsical obstacles including one green with six pins, but only one hole].”

Other facets of The Landings Club are equally impressive with golf shop retail sales up 67 percent and lesson revenue up 70 percent. “One of our natural benefits is space,” continued Justman. “With six golf courses and multiple practice facilities, we have the bandwidth to handle the increase in tee times. As an example, 90 percent of our residents have private golf carts. So when other clubs have to limit play for lack of available carts, we are able to meet the demand.”

For the fourth year in a row, the club hosted the Club Car Championship, and completed the first of a five-year deal with Korn Ferry Tour Final Stage Q-School. “As you can imagine, a community as large as ours, with residents having diverse careers [from famous authors to retired NYC police officers], we were worried if we were making the right decision to host a Tour event. Response has been largely positive. Members look at it as another opportunity to throw a party and enjoy watching great golf.

“The event supports our brand as a Tour tested facility,” described Justman. “The beauty of The Landings Club is when one course is unavailable for play, we have others as

“The healthiest private communities are those that increase member equity—not just the balance sheet but their emotional equity to the club, and I believe these two ideas are inseparable.”

— STEVEN FREUND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



options. Having aspiring, young professionals test their skills here is exhilarating. I am proud to expose my golf leadership team of 15, a mix of PGA, LPGA, and apprentices, to the world of professional golf. With more than 600 members volunteering to help, it's a highlight on our golf calendar.”

THRIVING BEYOND GOLF

Member participation in racquet sports is up fivefold in the past six years. “While The Landings Club will always be known as a community with golf at its core, our rac-

quet sports facilities are growing by leaps and bounds,” expressed Chris Kader, director of court sports. “We live in a highly scheduled, time starved society that is not slowing down. A game of pickleball or tennis allows you to compete, socialize, and exercise in two hours or less.”

No matter your passion on the court, The Landings Club has a league to match your ability. “The days of a tumbleweed rolling across the court on a weekday afternoon are long gone. We have 1,200 active tennis players, 650 pickleball players, and 850 regulars on the bocce courts,” revealed Kader. “What’s even

more impressive is the subcategories of players within the leagues. Our ladies tennis league is over 250 strong and our booming junior tennis program has almost 300 kids on the courts. I must admit, the ambient sound of squeaking shoes on the court is soothing to my soul!”

While The Landings Club’s golf department boasts a Korn Ferry Tour event, the racquets team hosts The Savannah Challenger, the longest continuous professional sporting event in the city. “We have the facilities, staff, infrastructure, and know-how to pull it off,” smiled Kader. “Star power is notable. Daniil Medveded, currently No. 2 in the world rankings, lost in the first round of competition back in 2017. Best of all? You can watch world-class tennis in your backyard that is only a cart ride away.” ■

For more information on membership, please visit LandingsClub.com.

THE LANDINGS CLUB BY THE NUMBERS

- ✓ 4 Clubhouses
- ✓ 6 Golf Courses
- ✓ 2 Full-Service Marinas
- ✓ 30 Miles of Trails
- ✓ 108 Holes of Golf
- ✓ 150+ Stocked Lagoons
- ✓ 2-Acre Community Farm
- ✓ 15 Pickleball Courts
- ✓ 31 Har-Tru Tennis Courts
- ✓ 8 Bocce Courts
- ✓ 52,000 sq. ft. Wellness Facility
- ✓ 300 Social Events Annually
- ✓ 35+ Youth Camps
- ✓ 5 Resort Style Pools
- ✓ 1 Outstanding Lifestyle

