

Your chance to volunteer at the Players Championship 2020

The New Zealand Golf Course Superintendents Association along with the Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association, in conjunction with John Deere, is delighted to announce the launch of **The Players Championship (TPC) Volunteer Program**.



In March 2020, One NZGCSA member and three members of the AGCSA will secure a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be involved in what has become affectionately dubbed golf's '5th Major', thanks to the generous support of John Deere.



The lucky four will head to Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida in the US to join the course management team at TPC Sawgrass and help prepare the famed Stadium Course for The Players Championship in what is an outstanding career development opportunity. TPC Sawgrass, with its iconic island green on the par three 17th, has been home to The Players Championship since 1982. The world's best annually descend on the Stadium Course to compete for what is now the highest prize purse of any golf tournament - US\$12.5 million. The 2019 event, won by Rory McIlroy, returned to its traditional March date after 12 years of being held in May. That shift, which will also occur in 2020, means the course management team, headed up by director of golf course operations Jeff Plotts, are confronted with very different challenges to getting the course tournament ready. One of the biggest changes is that the course is now played on surfaces that have been oversown.

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

The lucky selected NZGCSA member along with the three selected AGCSA members will join the TPC Sawgrass maintenance team for the duration of The Players Championship, with travel, accommodation, meals and uniform all included.

The application process involves three distinct stages;

STAGE 1: REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

To get the process started, interested applicants are required to fill in an online form to ascertain their eligibility. Once submitted and checked, details will be sent by email regarding the next step. Please note that applicants need to be 21 years of age or over, have been a member of the NZGCSA for at least 12 months or more and be allowed to enter into the USA. The online form, only takes a couple of minutes to complete and can be accessed via www.nzgcsa.org.nz

STAGE 2: FORMAL APPLICATION

All eligible candidates will be sent an email inviting them to continue to Stage 2 of the application process where they will be required to submit a short video (no more than three minutes in length) introducing themselves and briefly addressing the following topics:

- **Ambition** – where you would like your career to go in the next five years.
- **Plans** – what steps you plan to take to achieve your ambitions.
- **Interest (greenkeeping)** – what your favourite aspects of greenkeeping are.
- **Interest (external)** – what your key interests are outside of greenkeeping.
- **NZGCSA** – what do you believe should be key priorities over the next 3-5 years.

The purpose of this video is for the selection panel to gain an understanding of the applicant as an individual, their career aims and ambitions and the positive impact the opportunity to take part in The Players Championship Volunteer Program could have.

Details of the exact format/content and how to send it to the NZGCSA will be provided.

The deadline for registering your interest (**Stage 1**) is **Friday 31 May 2019**, with all videos to be received by the NZGCSA (**Stage 2**) by **Wednesday 31 July 2019**.

STAGE 3: INTERVIEW

The application videos will be assessed and rated by John Deere, with shortlisted candidates then invited to attend a regional interview during **October 2019**.

Interviews will be conducted by a panel of three – NZGCSA x 2 Board Members, John Deere dealer or member of John Deere field staff. Both the video and the interview will be scored to eventually select the successful volunteer, with the successful NZGCSA member to be notified by **30 November 2019**.

The winning candidate will be expected to attend the New Zealand Fine Turf Seminar/Turf Conference (location to be confirmed) in 2020 to take part in a photo shoot and press meetings at their expense.

THE NITTY GRITTY

The provisional date for the 2020 Players Championship is Monday 9 to Sunday 15 March. The successful applicants will need to arrive into the US on Friday 6 March and will not begin the journey home until the afternoon of Monday 16 March. Once the selected candidates arrive at the venue they will be provided with the following;

- Uniform for each day.
- Transport to and from the golf course.
- All meals during the stay.
- Accommodation in a two-person room in a 4-star hotel.

They will be encouraged to constantly update all personal social media platforms following The Players Championship Volunteer Program guidelines.

On the Monday morning after the championship they will all get the opportunity to play the famous 17th hole in a nearest-the-pin competition, the winner taking home the genuine flag from the famed hole.

When they return home they will be asked to submit some written copy to the NZGCSA to be part of an article about the experience, as well as prepare a short presentation to be delivered at the 2020 NZ Fine Turf Seminar/Turf Conference.

John Deere will cover travel expenses for return economy travel from the following locations to Jacksonville, FL:

- NZ: Christchurch and Auckland

The following costs are the responsibility of the chosen individuals;

- Travel to the conference (FTS);
- Filling out and paying for the online ESTA (US visa);
- Travel insurance;
- Transport to and from the selected departure point.

If you would like to be part of the NZGCSA/AGCSA and John Deere TPC Volunteer Program in 2020, head to the NZGCSA website for more details www.nzgcsa.org.nz

AT A GLANCE - TPC SAWGRASS

Director of Golf Course Operations: Jeff Plotts
Years at TPC Sawgrass: Four
Stadium Course Superintendent: Kyle Elliott
Course Architect: Pete Dye (1980)
Tournament length: 7189 yards
Turf: Greens – TifEagle bermudagrass overseeded with Poa trivialis and velvet bentgrass; Tees, fairways and rough – Celebration bermudagrass overseeded with Champion fine ryegrass
Average green size: 510m²
Average tee size: 167m²
Fairway area: 10.5ha
Rough area: 48ha
Bunkers: 88
Water hazards: 17
Soil: Sandy loam
Water sources: Reclaimed

