

Jim Mason Believes in Visualizing the Difference Hard Work Makes at Inverness Country Club

Jim Mason's dad Chris shared his love of golf with Jim and his brother when they were young. Besides spending time on the course with his boys, his dad taught them to work on machinery. "When we weren't golfing, we were always outside." At the age of fifteen Jim started working maintenance at the local nine hole public golf course in his hometown of Andover, Ohio. This position allowed him to combine his love of the game with a talent for fixing things. "I've been working golf course maintenance ever since," said Jim.

Jim followed practical experience with a degree from The Ohio State University where he graduated in 2007 with an Associate of Applied Science-Turfgrass Management. Jim did his school internship with Jeff Kent at Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, NC.

Jeff had a great impact on Jim's career. "It was my big eye-opening moment in the golf course industry. All I had known prior to working at Quail Hollow was a three-man operation at Andover Golf Course. I arrived in Charlotte just two weeks before the PGA Wachovia Championship Tournament, and as soon as I got off the plane, Jeff had another Quail employee waiting for me. We went straight to the golf course and Jeff put me to work. My first few weeks there I worked over 100 hours every week. Since then, Jeff has been a believer in me, and has always been there to help me in my career. We've stayed in contact since my internship, and I went back to volunteer for the Quail Hollow Championship in 2008-2011.



The hard work paid off. In April of 2014, Kent asked Jim to move to Miami to be his Assistant at La Gorce Country Club in Miami Beach. There he took part in a \$10 million golf course renovation with Jack Nicklaus.

After completing the renovation at La Gorce and working on the full grow-in, Jim felt more than ready to move on to a superintendent position. He came to Birmingham with his wife, Whitney, for the interview at Inverness. "We just knew that this was a really good fit for us. We had a completely different predetermined mindset on what Birmingham Alabama would be like and we were pleasantly surprised."

Of course, there are always stressors in the superintendent's job. And while Mother Nature can be a challenge, Jim believes the biggest challenge by far is people. "People can be just as unpredictable as the weather! I've learned over my years working maintenance to expect the unexpected, and never get too high or too low, because things can change in the blink of an eye."

Fortunately, there are many compensations for the challenges of the job. "I love riding the course at the end of the day and being able to visually see the difference that our hard work generates. Whether it is just from everyday maintenance or after finishing a project, it is rewarding to see the results."

Inverness Country Club is an 18 Hole Private Golf Course with Miniverde Greens. It was first opened on May 1, 1973, the golf course was originally designed by George Cobb. In 2006, the golf course was completely renovated by noted golf course architect, Bill Bergin.

Jim is also very proud of the fact that earlier this year Inverness Country Club was awarded as the Best Golf Course in Birmingham for 2019. They also just received Employer of the year for 2019 through The Arc of Shelby County. The Arc is an employment services program that provides services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The services address each individuals' specific needs and helps them live full, productive and meaningful lives in the community. "A lot of great people out there are looking for work they just need to be given more opportunities."

Jim confesses, "I am a sports junkie. I love watching football, baseball, basketball, and of course golf. I'm a diehard Cleveland and Ohio State sports fan." While he loves golf, he doesn't get to play as much as he might have expected when he went to work in this great industry.

He has a beautiful wife, Whitney, who is a Legal Assistant with Wettermark Keith. Whitney and Jim have been together since 2011 and married since 2017. He also puts a shout out for Guinness, their nine year old Black Lab Mix who loves going to work with Jim every day.