

Conner Wilson is Experiencing the Rewards of Managing Turf at Vestavia Country Club

Conner Wilson grew up playing golf with his Dad at Rock Creek Golf in Fairhope, Alabama. He never visualized making a career of golf course maintenance until he had worked at Auburn University Club for a couple of summers during high school.

“At first, I hated the work, but by the end of the summer it had grown on me. I ended up liking it enough to work there again the next summer. At the end of that summer I decided that the Golf Course Industry is something that I wanted to pursue as a career. When it was time for me to go to college I decided to major in Agronomy at Auburn University.”

Conner completed his degree at Auburn University in Crop, Soil, & Environmental Sciences with an emphasis in Turfgrass Management and graduated in December, 2019. Sound career advice from his uncle, Eric Bauer, Director of Agronomy at Bluejack National helped Conner jumpstart his career upon graduation, but he also respected advice from John Szklinski, superintendent where Conner interned at Charlotte Country Club. Szklinski told Conner, “When pursuing a career take the correct ‘ladder’ to the top. Don’t get caught up in the job title or course name, don’t rush into any job, but take a job that will set yourself up for success.”



While he is a recent graduate, Conner has several years of experience. He spent the summers of 2015 and 2016 employed at Steelwood Country Club in Loxley AL. In the summer of 2017, he worked at Auburn University Club in Auburn AL. In 2018 he was an Agronomy Intern at Charlotte Country Club in Charlotte NC, and his last internship was at Bluejack National in Montgomery, TX. Upon graduation, interested in the Birmingham market, Conner reached out to several people with ties to golf courses in Birmingham regarding any job openings. He was put in touch with Owen Coulson at Vestavia Country Club and brought on as Assistant.

Conner loves the instant gratification that comes with his work at Vestavia. “It is rewarding to make improvements and see the results instantly. One thing I was warned about as the hardest part of the job was managing people. I expected it would be hard but wasn’t really prepared for how difficult, until I got into it.”

Another thing that surprised Conner was “the amount work and planning that go on behind the scenes. As an intern I was exposed to a lot, but now that I am on this side of things, I see how much input is required to be successful in managing the course.”

Through hard work Conner hopes that he can achieve a superintendent’s position at a nice club in the future. He enjoys golf though he doesn’t play as well as he would like. He particularly enjoys playing at Rock Creek where he grew up playing with his Dad. Conner says, “I like pretty much all sports. Football and basketball are my favorite to watch, but my true passion is the outdoors. I love being outside hunting and fishing.

Conner’s family, his dad, Kern and mom, Mary reside in the Fairhope area. He has one sister, Bailey Siegel.

Vestavia Country Club opened in the late 1940s as a riding club, soon becoming a renowned golf course designed by George Cobb. It was recently renovated in 2016 by Lester George, becoming one of Birmingham’s finest golf courses. The 176-acre property is home to several amenities for members to enjoy including 18-Hole Golf Course, 9-Hole Par 3 Course, 15 tennis courts, three pools, and a first-class fitness center. We appreciate Owen, Conner, and Jeff for hosting the AGCSA’s 2020 Assistant’s Seminar!
