

Wilderness Country Club residents enjoy top class golf and tennis instruction

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With only 300 condominiums, Wilderness Country Club attracts residents who enjoy a smaller, more intimate community in a lush environment. What they also appreciate is the first-class golf and tennis instruction from two nationally recognized professionals with nearly 100 years combined in their sports.

Located on 200 forested acres on the east side of Goodlette-Frank Road, just north of Golden Gate Parkway, Wilderness Country Club is only minutes away from Fifth Avenue South, Waterside Shops and Gulf of Mexico beaches. The community features a series of low-profile condominium buildings along with an 18-hole Arthur Hill designed golf course, main clubhouse and four Har-Tru tennis courts.

The club's tennis program is overseen by Tennis Director Gregory "Spike" Gonzales, who started as a tennis instructor in the park system of his hometown at Penfield, New York, in 1964. After a year of working as an educational training specialist for Xerox Corporation, Gonzales joined the pro staff of Chicago's Mid-Town Tennis Club, which was then the world's second largest indoor tennis club. He went on to work with the Club's ownership to help build Tennis Corporation of America (TCA), which grew to having 30 clubs nationwide. Gonzales retired as the company's Chief Operating Officer in 1991.

Gonzales has been instrumental in many aspects of tennis growth nationally. He is considered a founder of the National Tennis Rating Program, bringing together the various national tennis organizations in the late 1970s to adopt the universal tennis player system that has become the cornerstone for national league play. He also consulted extensively with the U.S. Tennis Association (USTA) in developing senior programs and in rolling out the USTA's "Play Tennis America" program to attract new players.

Gonzales has been inducted into the Eastern Professional Tennis Hall of Fame and Rochester Tennis Hall of Fame. In 2006, he joined Wilderness Country Club where he provides instruction to both adults and children. His programs and lessons are taught in a fashion to make learning and playing fun and fulfilling. Gonzales also actively teaches tennis to kids through the Collier County Parks and Recreation and has championed the sport of Pop Tennis, which is an alternative to the rapidly growing Pickleball game.

Gonzales is trained as an Elite Professional by the U.S. Professional Tennis Association and was named Collier County "Tennis Pro of the Year" by the Florida of the USPTA Convention in both 2012 and 2018.

Equally acclaimed is Golf Instructor Peter Krause who started his career at Baylor University followed by pursuit of a professional career on the American mini



The 18-hole Arthur Hill designed golf course is shown at Wilderness Country Club. SUBMITTED

tours and Asian tours. Krause has been teaching golf since the early 1980s as a member of the PGA of America and later developed Peter Krause Golf.

As a player, Krause was 2012 North Texas Senior PGA Match Play Champion, 2007 U.S. Senior Open participant, 2004 Minnesota Senior State Open champion and 2004 Minnesota PGA Senior Player of the Year. The Wisconsin native also won Minnesota PGA Match Play and Minnesota PGA CPC Qualifiers and was a U.S. Senior Open qualifier Sectional Medalist.

In 2008, Krause went to work for well-known golf instructor Hank Haney and has since instructed more than 1,000 juniors and worked with 25 professionals. Krause has been recognized as PGA Teacher of the Year, Golf Magazine Top 100 Teacher, PGA Master Professional in Instruction and Golf Digest Best in State. He has taught champions from junior golf to Champions Tour players, including Graham Marsh.

Krause's teaching philosophy and style have been influenced by some of the game's great teachers, including Haney, John Jacobs, Jim Flick, Craig Shankland, John Fleming and Bill Israelson. He provides weekly golf instruction clinics and private lessons to residents through the Wilderness Country Club Golf Shop with access to the full practice area featuring a driving range, short-game area and putting green.

The golf facilities at Wilderness Country Club will be put to the test on May 29th when the club hosts a USGA Senior Open Sectional Qualifier. This is the first time Wilderness Country Club has been named a host site for the venue featuring 84 of the area's best senior golf professionals and amateurs who will compete for two to three spots in the 2019 U.S. Senior Open on The

Warren Course at Notre Dame. The Wilderness golf course was selected based on conditioning, strategic shot values and ease of walking.

This year also marks the 45th anniversary of Wilderness Country Club. Much has changed in the Naples area since Wilderness Country Club was founded in 1974. But one thing that hasn't changed is the community's lush tropical setting in the heart of Naples. Each condominium building was carefully sited to offer long sweeping views of golf course fairways, trees, sparkling lakes and other native plants.

Many of the two- and three-bedroom units have been fully refurbished for resale while others are like a blank canvas allowing purchasers to use their imagination and create a residence that suits their unique needs. Residences are spacious and feature an abundance of glass that brings the striking beauty inside.

The community's clubhouse is reminiscent of Old Florida and sits on the second highest point in Collier County. The clubhouse provides formal and informal dining for up to 200 people.

Residents also have access to five heated swimming pools interspersed throughout the property. Within the 5-acre Frank Park there are nearly two dozen specimen trees from all over the world, many labeled with their common and Latin names and place of origin. Other park features include four Har-Tru bocce ball courts, a regulation size croquet court, a dog park and herb and vegetable gardens.

Wilderness Country Club has been member owned and controlled from its inception. For additional information on this established community, call 239-261-6060 or visit online at www.wildernesscc.com.