

Get Out And Enjoy The Beautiful Weather And Play A Round Of Golf

By Karen McBride



This beautiful fall weather is what golfers wait for all year long. It is the short period of time where the rainy season ends; and before it gets too cold to even hold the club. Luckily for the golf enthusiasts, the Lutz area has an abundance of golf courses.

Lutz Executive Golf Center is located at 2220 Newberger Road, Lutz, 949-6687. It can be reached more directly by driving from Livingston and then turning onto Newberger, rather than coming in from Highway 41, and maneuvering the long winding road. You do not need to reserve a tee time. The nine hole course is reasonably priced at \$10 for nine holes, \$8 for juniors (age 12 and under). Practice your swing on the driving range for \$6 (40-45 balls), \$8 (70-75 balls) or \$10 (100-105 balls).

Beth Kaufman built the par 3 golf course, after retiring from competition in Amateur golf. She wanted it for her husband's retirement, but sadly, he passed away one year after the course opened. Kaufman designed the golf course for beginners, kids, seniors, and people that are physically challenged. She wanted a place where they could enjoy a beautiful day in the fresh air, while walking on a smaller course. Golf carts are available for the physically challenged, but she encourages senior players to walk for the health benefits.

Player's camps are scheduled on Sundays during the school year for the Junior Golf Program. With the indoor practice facility, lessons and clinics do not have to be cancelled or rescheduled due to inclement weather. Summer camps are three days and the students compete in a "mini Masters" tournament. Last year, 259 students attended. "It is important to teach the kids good sportsmanship and respect, along with playing golf," says Kaufman.

Lutz Executive Golf Center also offers disc golf, which became a formalized sport in the 1970s. Discs are thrown towards an elevated metal basket. Discs are sold in the pro shop for \$19 and up. They come in different sizes: the putter is thick and the driver is thinner, to help the disc fly farther. For more information, go to www.lutzgolf.com.

For a larger course, you may choose Heritage Isles Golf and Country Club (Heritage Isles), which is located at 10630 Plantation Bay Drive, Tampa. The par 72 course is designed for all ability levels, with five tees. When designing the golf course, they wanted to keep the natural beauty, including cypress groves, wetlands and a 100 year old oak tree.

The rates are as follows: Weekdays - \$22 (before 12pm), \$22 (12pm-3pm), \$18 (after 3pm). Weekends are \$27 (before 12pm), \$24 (12pm-3pm), \$22 (after 3 pm). Call 907-7447 to reserve a tee time. Golf attire is required, including collared shirts, no denim or cut off shorts allowed, and soft spikes only.

Golf clinics are offered on Saturday mornings from 9-10am, to learn the basics to help you with your golf game. The cost for adults is \$20 and \$15 for children. Supporting charities is important to Rick Bradshaw, General Manager of Heritage Isles, and a golf tournament supporting Tampa Fisher House will be held at Heritage Isles on November 18. The charity helps members of the military and their families during times of need. Fisher House donates "comfort homes" for the families to be able to stay nearby when their loved one is in a military or VA medical center. For more information, go to www.fisherhouse.org/community/events/local-events/tampa-fisher-house-golf-classic.

Mark and Connie Schwab, along with their business partner, Dennis Calnon, recently opened the Back 9 Café in Heritage Isles. "The restaurant is a positive addition to our country club and we are glad they are here," says Bradshaw. Choose from an assortment of food, including Cuban sandwiches, cheeseburgers, and chicken wings. It is open seven days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner, 8am to 10:30pm (except Sundays until 8 pm). The restaurant has several large screen TVs perfect for watching football and other sports. The 4000 square foot restaurant and adjacent party room can be reserved for meetings, weddings, birthday parties, and other events. Call 907-0267 for more information. The restaurant is open to the public, and has weekly events, such as Monday night football and special events like "Comedy with the Funny Divas" which is coming Saturday, November 19 at 8:30pm. Tickets are \$10. Check the calendar of events for more details.

Farther down the road, off Highway 54, is Lexington Oaks Golf Club, which opened in 2000. It was designed by Gordy Lewis, with an equestrian theme. The 6,748 yard course is located at 26133 Lexington Oaks Boulevard, Wesley Chapel. Annual memberships start at \$1200 and offer many benefits including preferred tee times, 15% discount on food, as well as a 10% discount on items in the pro shop. Weekday rates are \$34.95 and weekends are \$44.95. Rates are reduced after 2:30 to \$22 and to \$15 after 4. For more information, visit www.lexoaks.com or call 907-7270.

When you are looking for a fun family activity, consider playing a round of golf. With so many beautiful golf courses in our area, you do not need to go far to enjoy a day of fresh air, exercise and quality time with your family or friends.