



Vertical construction of PGA TOUR global home to begin by THE PLAYERS Championship

By Jon Blauvelt
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When the golfing world descends upon Ponte Vedra Beach for THE PLAYERS Championship this year, visitors and TV viewers will have a chance to see more than just the greatest field in golf. According to officials at the PGA TOUR, they will also get a first glimpse of vertical construction of the company's new global home.

"We expect that when people come for THE PLAYERS in mid-March, that they will see construction," said Kirsten Sabia, vice president of integrated communications for the PGA TOUR. "I don't know how much people will be able to see. But there will be vertical structures that will be visible."

Since construction of the 187,000-square-foot facility off Palm Valley Road began in summer 2018, efforts have been dedicated solely to clearing the site, stabilizing the ground and obtaining the necessary approvals and permitting from St. Johns County, Sabia said. Now in 2019, the PGA TOUR is focusing on the exterior build of the facility, and come THE PLAYERS, that will be evident. So evident that Sabia noted the PGA TOUR will be providing broadcast teams of the tournament with talking points about the construction.

According to Sabia, the PGA TOUR is currently working with Baker Concrete on the concrete pour for the foundation of the building. Once the concrete work is finished by the end of February, the plan is to then start vertical construction. Clark Construction, the company that built the TPC Clubhouse, is the general contractor of the global home project.

Sabia also noted that widening of Palm Valley Road adjacent to the facility's main entrance will take place in summer 2019. The entrance will be located where the St. Johns County Courthouse Annex currently sits on Palm Valley Road. The PGA TOUR purchased the Annex property in summer 2018. The Annex will eventually be transitioning its services to 151 Sawgrass Corners Drive in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Sabia said the road into the entrance will be called PGA TOUR Boulevard. A traffic signal will be installed at the intersection, as well as a left turning lane for drivers coming from the west on Palm Valley Road. In addition, Sabia said there will be modest signage for the entrance, as well as a guard gate. Over the course of 2019, Sabia said the current PGA TOUR Boulevard that winds past Sawgrass Village and Sawgrass Marriott and into the Sawgrass Players Club will be renamed TPC Boulevard, pending approval from the county. In addition, Sabia said the PGA

TOUR is planning improvements to ATP Boulevard, which she said will be a service entrance for the new headquarters.

From a traffic perspective, Sabia insists these changes and the overall development of the global home shouldn't cause much impact.

"As we consolidate our existing employees, many of whom are residents of Ponte Vedra Beach and the Beaches and travel A1A as their normal drive to work, and operating now under one headquarter location, the result will be net-net," Sabia said. "In theory, it shouldn't impact traffic, much at all, except for normal business growth, because we have made a commitment to the county over the course of the next decade or more for additional jobs."

More specifically, Sabia explained that PGA TOUR staff heading eastbound on Palm Valley Road will never reach A1A, therefore decreasing trips there and on Solana Road, which is currently used by staff members to cut through the Sawgrass Players Club. With that being said, Sabia noted that traffic patterns within the Sawgrass Players Club should also decrease.

As for future traffic, Sabia said it will not exceed traffic volumes previously considered and approved by the state and county. She noted these volumes were included and evaluated in the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization's recent Ponte Vedra Beach/Palm Valley traffic study in 2017. She said the study determined that improvements to Palm Valley Road in the vicinity of the proposed PGA TOUR headquarters, including at the A1A/Palm Valley Road intersection, are not required based on traffic growth through the study's planning horizon of 2040. As a result, Sabia said the improvements the PGA TOUR is making are above and beyond what would be necessary.

Moving forward, Sabia said the PGA TOUR plans to focus on interior construction of the global home in 2020. The company is scheduled to receive its certificate of occupancy in the fourth quarter of 2020. The PGA TOUR then plans to move its 800 employees currently spread out in 17 locations in Ponte Vedra to the new building in the first quarter of 2021.