

## AUDUBON COUNTRY CLUB GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP A SUCCESS

*Randy Kambic, Special to Coastal Life April 9, 2017*



*Head Golf Professional Justin DeFont, PGA amidst many displays in the Audubon Country Club Pro Shop which recently won a prestigious national industry award.*

*Alan Miller and John Cunningham won the championship and the senior divisions, respectively, of the Audubon Country Club's annual men's member golf championships on April 1. Further, there have been other winners at the North Naples club recently along with course upgrades being a hit with members as well.*

*The club was named 2017 Platinum Award winner by the Association of Golf Merchandisers as a Top 100 golf shop nationwide at the PGA Show, the golf industry's leading event, in Orlando on January 24. The award recognized premier golf shops from the private, public, resort and off-course sectors with each club judged on such categories as customer satisfaction initiatives, creative use of space, inventory control practices, revenue-generating initiatives, promotions and visual displays.*

*Justin DeFont, head golf pro, in receiving the award with assistant pro John Davison, said, "We are ecstatic about this prestigious recognition and it's a testament to the hard work from our entire team, all of whom are integral parts of the clubhouse operations."*

*"It's an important role for me," said DeFont of overseeing the approximately 800-square-foot shop, citing that sales increased 27 percent in the last year.*



*“We upgraded some fixture pieces to make it more open,” said DeFont, adding that a feature centerpiece display that rotates with items based on holidays, seasons and appeal to men and women. “It sparks comments from members, drives them to look deeper and consider more items in the shop.”*

*Other factors in the shop’s success have included “making strides in offering club fitting and more demo days” and “garnering interest from members especially in ladies’ apparel and accessories. It’s been a big hit for us.”*

*DeFont, who joined the club in November 2015 after six years with the South Bend Country Club, in Indiana, has also expanded their inventory to include more non-golf items like coffee cups and handbags. “Even if you aren’t a golfer, we want to serve all members. It also makes what we offer more diverse.*

*He enjoys keeping up with new technological advances to better serve members, including purchase of and being certified, along with assistant pro Pete Eddy, in the Flightscope Launch Monitor system that has enhanced club fitting and instruction. “It’s been used a lot and has helped sell some clubs.”*

*The recent momentum of communicating more with members will be maintained through this summer’s Audubon Around the World program, inviting members to send photos from faraway places with prizes of dinner packages and shop product discounts. “We feel it’s a great fun way for them to show even more pride in their club.”*

*Outside the award-winning pro shop, the private, member-owned facility that opened in 1988, culminated a series of major upgrades. The fairways on the back nine holes were regrassed with more tolerant Bermuda grass, and the bunkers were redone in 2015. Last year, the front nine and the driving range were regrassed and more target areas installed for member practice sessions. The short game center has been planted with Celebration Bermuda grass, and the practice bunker has been revamped.*

*“The changes to the course will improve playability, aesthetics and maintenance,” said DeFont. “Bulkhead work, to help the shoreline around the ponds, creates a defined look and provides protection to prevent erosion.” Also, tee boxes were moved and expanded and feature five separate tees that altogether will “accommodate play and show variety to different players.” The clubhouse was also reconfigured and updated.*



## **‘Snapshots’ With Justin DeFont, PGA**

***18 Hole Signature Joe Lee Design Golf Course. Five sets of tees on each hole-perfect for any level golfer***

***Favorite Holes:*** 10th Hole (Par 4) Tee shot over water & beautiful approach to a pushed up green  
18h Hole-Island green-a spectacular hole with a panoramic view of the Clubhouse to finish your round

***Favorite Golf Events:*** Audubon offers an array of golf programming throughout the year

*Monthly ‘Toss Up Tournaments’* a great way for members to meet new members

*Monthly Complimentary Ladies Clinics* learn new skills & improve your game

*‘Play With A Pro’ Series* Enjoy casual golf with a PGA Professional

*Demo Days* Hosted once per month with a variety of vendors showcasing the latest in golf equipment

*Thursday Couples Twilight* Sunset views & great golf-our most popular event at Audubon

*AWGA Comprehensive Ladies 9’s & 18’s* program with an array of tournaments & events throughout the season

*Alligator Invitational*-Audubon Country Club’s Member Guest-the showcase event of the season