

Light, coffee, workspace: PGA Tour's 'Global Home' opening in February on time, on budget



By Garry Smits, Florida Times-Union
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New building cost \$65 million eventually will house nearly 800 PGA Tour employees

The first thing most visitors to the PGA Tour's Global Home notice is there isn't much difference between being inside or outside the 187,000-square-foot building off County Road 210 in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Thanks to five large skylights, a "collaborative atrium," connecting the two wings and floor-to-ceiling windows, natural light is one of the main features of the building designed by Foster + Partners and built by Clark Construction – which also built the TPC Sawgrass clubhouse in 2007.

"It's 100 percent intentional," said Kirsten Sabia, the Tour's vice president for integrated communications on Thursday after leading a media group through the building. "Prior to designing it, Foster interview a number of employees and asked them what they desired in a new building. The top-two answers were natural light and meeting space. You feel energized when you walk into this building and you feel energized when you walk out."

The walk in is impressive enough. The building has water on three sides with two footpaths leading to the front doors. More than 800 trees were planted around the property.

The project's estimated cost of \$65 million was brought in on budget and on time, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Tours and orientation are being conducted for around 750 PGA Tour employees, with some moving into the building on Feb. 17.

The Tour initially is planning on 25 percent occupancy and will continue to give employees the option of working at home until the pandemic subsides.

The PGA Tour's executive leadership team, headed by commissioner Jay Monahan, plus the Finance and Facilities departments, are already in place.

The Global Home opening will enable the Tour to move out of nine satellite offices at the Sawgrass Village Shopping Center, which were leased after the Tour staff long since out-grew the two headquarters buildings near the TPC Sawgrass.

When former commissioner Deane Beman moved the Tour offices to Ponte Vedra Beach in 1976, he had a dozen employees and worked out of a rented home at the Sawgrass Country Club.

By 1980, the staff grew to 100. Counting the staff that will continue to work at PGA Tour Entertainment at the World Golf Village, that numbers had swelled eight-fold and the new Global Home can accommodate around 300 more.

"When you think about our growth over the last 40 years, it's amazing," said Sabia. "We're looking forward to the next 40 years."

Among the features of the new building:

- Nearly 100 meeting spaces, ranging from small rooms with a table and several chairs to the conference room off Monahan's office that can seat around two dozen participants.
- A fitness center with aerobic machines, weights, rooms for yoga, pilates and Zumba classes and full locker rooms and showers.
- A dining area that includes a salad bar, sandwich bar and pizza oven. Food purchases will be made from area vendors, produce wholesalers and even farms, and plans are to start a vegetable and spice garden.
- A coffee bar where the staff will bake their own pastries and bread.

- There are numerous examples of art on display by First Coast artists, including colorful murals to brighten up otherwise institutional interior stairwells.
- An indoor golf simulator where employees can take a few minutes from their day to hit a few balls.
- A “genius bar,” for technical support on computers, laptops and smartphones.
- And yes, work will get done. The Tour has its three domestic professional circuits, three international tours, and more than 100 events to conduct and almost all of it is back to normal after a hiatus of nearly three months last spring due to the onset of the pandemic.

The Tour staff has hundreds of bosses: players on the PGA Tour, PGA Tour Champions, Korn Ferry Tour and developmental tours in China, Latin America and Canada, who entrust the occupants of the Global Home to create business opportunities in the form of golf tournaments.

Stewart Moore, senior director of communications, said the amenities of the Global Home will enable the Tour to compete for talent in areas such as finance, legal, media, digital, broadcasting, data and technology and marketing -- since part of the deal to get tax and utility incentives from St. Johns County was to add 300 new jobs over the next 10 years.

“This is going to be an amazing recruiting tool,” he said. “You talk to people and they want a café, coffee shop, a fitness center. Having this modern space where they want to come to work will help us keep bringing in the brightest people to keep growing our business.”

The Global Home also will be in full view of fans coming to The Players Championship for years to come. While the old headquarters buildings were tucked away on the main road leading to the Players Stadium Course, the new digs will remind fans that the Tour is unique among professional sports in that its headquarters, signature event and signature course are in the same location.

PGA Tour Global Home by the numbers

13: Water bottle fillers in the building.

95: Meeting spaces.

150: display screens.

750: Initial number of employees to be housed.

4,240: Gallons of paint required for the interior.

10,000: Cubic yards of concrete poured.

16,659: Square feet of solar panels on the roof.

187,000: The building size, in square feet.

\$65 million: Construction cost.