

CAROLINAS

green

MAY - JUNE 2025

Jordan Soaks Up Any Stress From Olde Eight Project

by Craig Smith

How do you handle stress?

That was the question posed to Chris Jordan during his interview for the job as director of golf course and grounds at Olde Eight Golf Club in Greenwood, SC last fall. Some of us tackle stress by taking a long walk, hitting the gym, or listening to music. But Jordan's answer was surprising.

"I take hot Epsom salt baths. Hot Epsom salt baths and a good dose of self-care will take you a long way," the 34-year-old Jordan said shyly, wondering how his answer would sound to the interview committee. He didn't have to wonder for long. "They all laughed," he says. "But they remembered my answer, and they remembered me. I was just being honest."

When the interviews were complete, Jordan landed the job over a handful of highly qualified finalists in a national search, even though he didn't have a direct link to the club. What he did have, however, was a tie to the area, and the experience to handle the large reconstruction project that lies ahead.

The massive project with golf course architect Drew Rogers includes an 18-hole championship golf course, a putting course, a par-3 course, and three miles of hiking and biking trails. The main course work entails a complete facelift of what was formerly known as The Links at Stoney Point.

The new name of Olde Eight Golf Club was settled on by new owners to recognize South Carolina's history as the eighth state in the Union. The aggressive target date for completion of the 18-hole course, which will have Tifeagle bermudagrass greens and Tahoma 31 bermudagrass fairways, is late fall.

"Chris was our clear choice," says Shane LeBaron, 46, one of the owner investors who again laughed out loud when reminded of Jordan's answer on how he handled stress. "We fully understand how important this position is, and we couldn't have a better partner than Chris. He is an all-star. He has done an outstanding job and has earned everyone's respect."

LeBaron has enjoyed a successful career in golf and will be the director of instruction at a newly built teaching academy when the project is complete. "We have an employee-first culture, so when we hire someone, the person part comes first," he says. "Chris is always prepared and handles every situation with an ease and calmness. His crew is willing to go above and beyond for him, and that tells you a lot."

One of those team members Keith Bishop, who has stayed on as golf course superintendent under Jordan. "Keith knows the property better than anyone. His knowledge is invaluable,"



Chris and Laura Jordan are both graduates of Clemson, where they met and where Chris proposed on the 17th hole of the school-affiliated Walker Course. It looks like little Liza is on the road to being a Clemson fan too

Jordan says of the 62-year-old Bishop. Bishop and the rest of the crew from The Links at Stoney Point have welcomed more responsibility and a chance to show what they can do with more resources. "They have willingly accepted the new challenges," Jordan adds. "They said, 'Bring it on!'"

The move to Greenwood was Jordan's third in just eight years, with each step an upward career move. This one, additionally, brought him to within an hour of where he was raised, in Chapin, SC. He studied turfgrass at Clemson University and graduated in 2013, staying on at the school's Walker Course for three years as an assistant superintendent.

In 2016, he moved to Forest Lake Club in Columbia, SC and stayed five years, with the last two as head superintendent. In 2021, he was named superintendent of the North Course at Berkeley Hall Club in Bluffton, SC where he oversaw a major renovation in his last year.

"I have been a superintendent without an open golf course for the past year," Jordan laughs. "I haven't had to field complaints about bunkers or green speeds. But my day is coming, and I can't wait to see what is in store here. The goal is to have one of



Olde Eight is set for completion by the end of the year

the best golf courses in the state, and the ownership is providing the resources to make that happen.”

Jordan has been a member of the Carolinas GCSA and GCSAA since graduating college. “If all goes well, I plan to stay right here,” he says. “I’m done moving around. I couldn’t be happier right now. We have a one-year-old daughter Liza at home, and we are close to family again.” Liza grew up in nearby Newberry.

An imposing figure at 6’5”, Jordan played football, basketball and baseball in his teenage years, always rooting for the University of South Carolina. But that all changed when he decided to attend Clemson, where he planned to be a biology major and become a physical therapist.



Chris Jordan and his wife Laura with Clemson head football coach Dabo Swinney. It is ironic that while Jordan, originally a Gamecock fan, was at Clemson, the Tigers never defeated South Carolina in football

“My parents converted to being fans of both schools, but not me. I totally jumped ship,” says Jordan, who attends as many Clemson sporting events as possible. “Clemson is special to me. It’s where I met my wife. And after seven years of dating, I proposed to her on the 17th hole of the Walker Course there. And our daughter’s middle name is Walker.”

During his first summer break from Clemson, he fell in love with working on a golf course at Mid Carolina Club under Scott Crouch. A graduate of the turfgrass science and management program at Clemson, Crouch helped Jordan perceive of an alternative path.

“I hated golf before I worked for him,” says Jordan, who switched his major upon returning to school. “I thought I would be studying something that would require less lab work. I didn’t realize how much science was involved in turfgrass studies. I think I did more lab work than if I had stayed a biology major!”

Crouch is not the only mentor with a role in Jordan’s steady rise in the profession. There is Carolinas GCSA past president Don Garrett, CGCS at the Walker Course, Chris Bennett at Forest Lake, and Adam Miller at Berkeley Hall. “I get goose bumps just thinking how lucky I have been, but I have been ready to take advantage of the opportunities that I have had,” Jordan says.

Jordan is also a small investor in the Olde Eight project that will be a draw for the club, along with fine dining, tennis, swimming, and boating on the Lake Greenwood. “I feel lucky to be here at Olde Eight,” he says “When I was considering Olde Eight, I was advised to, ‘Just be yourself. People like you.’ And I said, ‘I can be me all day long.’”

It turned out that advisor in that instance, Tyler Bloom, was right. ■