

GB

GOLF BUSINESS

ALL IN THE FAMILY

CHRISTINE LEWIS MORSE ENSURES
THE OPERATION OF ATKINSON RESORT
& COUNTRY CLUB IS A FAMILY AFFAIR



TWO OPERATORS/ TWO QUESTIONS

While winter means several months of downtime and little to no business for course operators in colder climates, those in warmer regions rely heavily on business from locals, snowbirds and other visitors craving year-round golf. *Golf Business* recently sat down with two warm region operators to discuss their plans for attracting golfers this winter.

Golf Business:

What are you doing new this year to ensure traveling golfers visit your course?

Powell: We're doing a successful weekend Game Day Football Special featuring



"WE HAD A GREAT START TO OUR SEASON, BEGINNING WITH OUR BEST EVER OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER."
- DEREK WHITE

Mark Powell

GENERAL MANAGER
DANCING RABBIT GOLF CLUB
PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI

Derek White

GENERAL MANAGER
DESERT WILLOW GOLF CLUB
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA

half-price pitchers, 50-cent wings and [other food and beverage specials]. A \$50 Sunday afternoon rate is also attracting people. We're cranking up e-mail blasts targeting northern states, and we're aggressively speaking to numerous groups in Chicago, St. Louis and Milwaukee. Our Gift of Golf midweek special (two rounds for \$99) is also very popular.

White: We're continuing to add benefits to our Platinum Loyalty Card program, which offers discounts for green fees, dining and merchandise here, as well as at local businesses. We've also introduced a music and dining series, where guests receive an amazing dinner on our outdoor terrace while enjoying live music simultaneously.

GB: Have you had a busy winter so far, and what kind of season are you projecting for the rest of the winter?

Powell: We were up about 30 percent for October and November—our best fall in the last five years. Based on advance golf and clubhouse room bookings, and replays from last year's groups, there isn't any drop-off for winter.

White: We had a great start to our season, beginning with our best ever October and November. We're hoping that trend continues. We feel good about our new dynamic pricing model for our green fees. That, plus our music and dining series and active social media marketing strategies, is the key component that will lead us to success this winter.

—Steve Donahue

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