


Justin Thomas designed a replica of the famous island green at TPC Sawgrass at his golf course in Florida

By Stephen Hennessey | March 11, 2025

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Justin Thomas' new golf club, **Panther National**, is one of the hottest new courses in the country. JT collaborated with Jack Nicklaus to build his own club in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., around the corner from PGA National, and the new club opened in November 2023.

Not surprisingly, JT's club includes an ode to a famous course in Florida that has recorded some impressive history. Panther National includes a practice nine holes, Panther9, which boasts an island green that is inspired by the island-green 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass, the site of Thomas' Players Championship win in 2021.



On an episode of Golf Digest’s The Loop podcast in 2022, JT told us that the owner of the property, Dominik Senn, and Nicklaus gave him free reign of what to do with the practice facility. Now when members and their guests play the practice nine holes, they’ll likely be reminded of the Kentucky native’s history with TPC Sawgrass.

“I wanted to build an amazing facility that’s really functional not just for everyday members, but a little selfishly, for me and any other tour pro who wants to practice there,” **Thomas told us.**



Panther National

Palm Beach Gardens, FL



★★★★☆ 13 PANELISTS

We may look back and realize that Panther National was the final new course built in the south Florida counties of Palm Beach, Broward or Dade. One of the most golf dense regions in the world, the counties are hemmed in by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and nature preserves and the Everglades to the west, and there’s almost no more land available upon which to construct an 18-hole course. Several years ago, Swiss businessman Dominik Senn acquired what may end up being the last buildable golf parcel, roughly 400 acres northwest of Palm Beach Gardens bordering a vast wildlife preserve where black panthers are often seen. The Jack Nicklaus/Nicklaus Design golf course—the centerpiece of a luxury residential and recreational enclave—is fittingly modern and unique. The holes play down below tall dune ridges that were created from fill excavated during the construction of several lakes and additional material imported from an adjected housing development, and elsewhere crest 30 and 40 feet above the waterline. The remarkable string of holes from ten through 14 feel like anywhere but south Florida, with elevated tees and greens benched into the ridges. Nicklaus said the par-3 15th, with eight tees that vary from a flip wedge to metal club playing to an 80-yard-deep island green, is one of the best par 3 he’s designed, but it might not even be the best one-shot hole at Panther National—all four are strong and attractive calling cards.

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For the most part, JT said he deferred to Jack with the main 18-hole course, knowing that his design partner has built hundreds upon hundreds of courses for his clients. And JT was a newbie, dipping his toe into golf course design for the first time with Panther National.

The designers also mirrored the angle from the tee box to be the same as it is at TPC Sawgrass. But the green at the seventh hole of the par-3 course differs slightly from the 17th, with the bunker favoring the left side instead of on the front right side. The green at Panther National is slightly larger than the original, measuring 4,479 square feet compared to TPC Sawgrass, which is about 4,000 square feet.

It's a great ode to the Dyes' work at TPC Sawgrass—with Thomas' own stamp of approval.