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Community Spotlight: Mini golf back at Casey Jones

By **DAVID THOMAS**
dgthomas@jacksonsun.com

A hole in one is nothing uncommon on this golf course.


The Casey Jones Mini Golf Course has re-opened after lying dormant for three years.

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"We saw the opportunity in an ad in The Jackson Sun and thought why not us," Shaun Powers said. "It's a great opportunity."

Shaun and his brother Shane thought the ad was for the mini course at Casey Jones Village and knew it

was as soon as Norwood Jones answered their phone call.

Jones sells real estate with Land Office Realtors and is a retired owner of Casey Jones Village.

"We met with Norwood, and we talked about what it would take to get the course back in shape," Shaun Powers said.

The brothers financed the venture themselves and opened - or re-opened - the course Memorial Day weekend.

"(The lease) worked out good for both parties involved," Shane Powers said. "And we've had an excellent response from the community."

The brothers cover the operating expenses for the business that includes utilities, equipment and scorecards.

One expense they didn't incur was the real necessities - golf clubs and balls.

There are those who remember the game of mini golf - or putt-putt if you're over 30 - when a course existed on Arlington Avenue, next to Classic Bowl.

"Goony Golf" opened in 1977, a \$65,000 project that was developed by Melvin Rowland. Rowland was a shareholder

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KATIE MORGAN /The Jackson Sun

Shaun Powers, left, and brother Shane restored and re-opened Casey Jones Mini Golf Course near the Old Country Store this year. The facility, which had been closed for three years, has two 18-hole courses.

Course info

- Hours: 3-9 p.m. Wednesday-Friday; 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday; and 1-5 p.m. Sunday.
- Adults - 12 and up, \$5 for 18 holes, \$9 for 36 holes
- Children - Under 12, \$4 for 18 holes, \$7 for 36 holes

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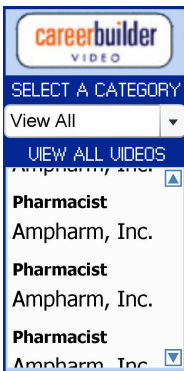
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with Dr. Robert Williams and Dr. James McLemore.

A game could be played for \$1.25, and the facility also had a go-cart track, batting cages and an inground swimming pool.

But the facilities, including the golf course, went the way of the dinosaur as did the game for the most part.

"The Jackson Bowling Center is the only other course in town," Shaun said. "I'm really not aware of any other in the area, but that doesn't mean they don't exist."

The brothers aren't looking at this as a career.

Shaun Powers, 27, is the youth minister at First Baptist Church in Bradford and works on the grounds at West Jackson Baptist Church, and Shane, 29, attends Union University, majoring in social work.

But they didn't enter this venture casually.

"We were apprehensive at first, but the more we thought and talked about it, the better we felt," Shaun said. "It seemed to fit and fall into place."

The brothers said that a week or two before the course opened, they were on sight quite a bit.

"We're there before it opens to make sure it's groomed and looking nice," Shaun said.

The course is open 3-9 p.m. Wednesday-Friday; 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday.

"We have a red and blue course, both 18 holes," Shane said. "The red (course) is more challenging; more curves, twists, sand and water traps. The blue course, you play alongside the three waterfalls."

However, Shane said it doesn't deter anyone regardless of age which course they play.

"On the red course hole No. 16 and (No.) 18 on the blue," Shaun said when asked to name the most difficult holes on the courses. "No. 16 is uphill and you can't see the hole, sort of a blind up hill putt, and No. 18 has two rocks, one on the left side and one on the right and you have to navigate your putt between them uphill."

However, neither course plays favorites. Par is 46 for both.

"The best score for the blue course is 40, and the best score for the red is 43," Shane said.

The brothers believe the game of mini golf is making a comeback, and they are planning events for the course.

"We're talking about having a couple of tournaments this fall," Shane said. "For Halloween, we're having a 'Boo' golf theme ... a safe alternative for children instead of trick or treating, Oct. 26-31."

And people are beginning to rediscover a game that is generally associated with a trip to the beach.

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"We're getting quite a few tourists," Shane said. "Last week we had people from England."

Of course, he attributed that to the draw at Casey Jones Village.

And while some of the restaurant crowd may find their way to the golf course, Shane and Shaun say the course will close for the season in early December.

"We never did it for the money. It's an opportunity for friends to come out and experience and that's really what it's all about. We live in a world with so many distractions; we aren't connected to one another at all," Shaun said. "This is a place to go and talk with one another. It gives people a great chance to interact. It's not a video game; it brings the human element back to life."



- David Thomas, 425-9637

STORYCHAT 

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