DORAL | JOHNSON AND WALES UNIVERSITY

LEARNING FROM THE BEST: Jim McLean gives a lesson to PGA pro Len Mattiace as Johnson and Wales students Jordan Meltzer and Chris Durocher watch and learn.
Johnson and Wales University is partnering with the renowned Jim McLean school to bolster its golf-management program.

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Maybe, but more likely it will be as a pro golfing instructor, or course manager.

Beginning this year, the highly-respected Jim McLean Golf School — in partnership with Johnson and Wales University — began transforming Doral’s putting green into a part-time classroom.

About 30 college undergrads are enrolled in Johnson and Wales’ Golf Management program, which operates within the university’s hospitality college. The program has existed for several years, but this fall semester marked the first time it included the Jim McLean school as official partner. With the McLean school based at the Doral golf course, that meant some classes have been moved outside, overlooking the water hazards and sand traps.

Students at Johnson and Wales receive a bachelor’s degree in sports entertainment event management — with a specialized concentration in golf. Most students simultaneously play for the school’s top-ranked collegiate golf team.

Unlike some golf-management programs, Johnson and Wales accepts those who are

TURN TO GOLF, 4B

SCHOOLS RANKED NO. 1: Jim McLean, seen with students Jordan Meltzer and Chris Durocher, is a household name in golf circles.
Golf program gets pro partner

*GOLF, FROM 1B

just beginning to play the game, and perhaps still have a large golf handicap.

The courses include Introduction to Teaching, Private Club Management, and Golf Club Repair and Design. The breadth of classes was also beefed up to coincide with the addition of McLean's school — students previously took three golf-focused courses; now they take nine.

"I was gonna major in science," said Johnson and Wales freshman Chris Durocher — the top golfer on his New London, N.H. high-school team. Then an e-mail from Johnson and Wales made Durocher realize that golf could take center stage in his education.

"Golf's my passion, so I figured that'd be the best fit," said Durocher, who hopes to establish himself as a professional golfer. If that doesn't happen, his golf-management training will allow him to still stay close to the game — as perhaps a golf instructor or pro shop manager.

Johnson and Wales isn't the only Florida school to recognize the need for workers trained in the business side of golf. Both Florida State University and Florida Gulf Coast University offer their own golf management programs. And both schools boast something that Johnson and Wales cannot — they each have been accredited by the PGA, an honor bestowed on only 20 programs nationwide.

Golf students at FSU and Florida Gulf Coast graduate not only with a degree specializing in golf management, but also with a PGA Class A membership.

"You've met their criteria for learning how to run the business, to teach the game, you've proven a standard of playing ability," said Martha Hall, the internship coordinator for Florida Gulf Coast.

Johnson and Wales has yet to attain PGA accreditation for its 5-year-old golf program, but the school boasts a huge new selling point with the addition of Jim McLean. McLean is a household name in golf circles, and his chain of golf schools has been ranked No. 1 in the country by CNN.

"We wanted the best, and Jim's the best," said Larry LaFauci, Johnson and Wales' program coordinator.

McLean, who runs nine golf schools, said "My thing is really training the teachers, and then the teachers do their own thing, because I'm only one person."

In Johnson and Wales' Introduction to Teaching class, the textbook is all McLean. Students study McLean's top-selling book, The Eight-Step Swing.

To ensure the curricu-
lum stays well-rounded, the golf program’s second teaching course introduces students to a host of other teaching strategies, preached by a variety of pros.

McLean said he already has an existing affiliation with the Professional Golfers Career College, but the difference is that, while the Orlando for-profit school uses McLean’s writings as teaching materials, only Johnson and Wales will also employ a McLean school teacher as a professor in university classes.

America’s colleges and universities are filled with aspiring golf pros, as the glamorous, travel-filled lifestyle of the PGA tour (not to mention the hefty paychecks) can be quite the lure.

Just like in most professional sports, however, the intense competition means that most PGA hopefuls won’t make it in the big leagues.

Baird Cumberland, a master instructor in the Jim McLean school who is now also teaching Johnson and Wales’ golf students, said he makes it a point to tell the college kids “the statistics show that maybe one of you are going to make the PGA tour out of the whole class, and probably not even one.”

For those who don’t make it as a pro, Cumberland stresses that there are countless other ways to earn a good living in golf — after all, the game is a multibillion-dollar industry in the United States.

In addition to nurturing golf enthusiasm among the college crowd, McLean said he hopes his unique partnership with Johnson and Wales will inspire even younger golfers. McLean envisions a youth golf program for ages 12-18 that could be housed at the university in the summer — when most college students are gone, and space is plentiful.

“We feel like it can develop into something much bigger,” McLean said.