

## The Pulpit Club

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### ABOUT THE COURSE

Established as one of Canada's most prestigious private golf destinations – with both The Pulpit and The Paintbrush courses consistently ranked in the nation's Top 25 – The Pulpit Club is set against the rolling hills of Caledon, North of Toronto and offers a year-round outdoor lifestyle experience for members and their families. As golf journalist Lorne Rubenstein shared, "members here are very fortunate to belong to the best two-course club in the world."

**Type of Club:** Private

**Architect:** Dr. Michael Hurdzan and Dana Fry

**Number of holes:** Two 18-hole golf courses

**Number rounds annually:** 20,000 per golf course

**Practice Facility:** Full practice facility at The Pulpit, short range at The Paintbrush

**Number of staff year round and seasonal:**

Seasonal 65 between both golf courses. 10 within management year-round.

**How many mechanics, assistants:**

**The Pulpit:** Shawn Weber (Head Mechanic), Jeff Cardwell (Superintendent), & Brandon Allan (Assistant Superintendent)

**The Paintbrush:** Gary Wonfor (Head Mechanic), Michael Allen (Superintendent), & Michael Vincent (Assistant Superintendent)

**Both Courses:** John Vincent (Assistant Mechanic), Quinn MacPherson (2nd Assistant Superintendent), & Alex Bond (2nd Assistant Superintendent)

It all begins here.

Hole No. 1 - The Pulpit

Member since 2005

## Rob Wright

Chief Operating Officer,  
The Pulpit Club



*After a ten-year tenure as golf course superintendent at The Pulpit Club, Rob Wright pivoted and took on the role of COO.*

*Written by Andrew Marsan, Turf Technical Sales, Plant Products.*

*Photos provided by Rob Wright.*

### Rooted in Legacy, Driven by Vision.

For many, golf is just a game. For Rob Wright, it's been a lifelong commitment—one defined by loyalty, leadership, and unwavering commitment to excellence. Now Chief Operating Officer of The Pulpit Club, Wright's story stretches from raking bunkers as a teenager to overseeing operations at a destination defined by two of Canada's most iconic golf courses. His rise through the ranks reflects not only personal grit but also a deep-rooted understanding of what it means to lead—

both on the ground and at the executive level. His story is one of generational legacy and forward-thinking vision.

"I've worked at The Pulpit my entire turf career," Wright says. "I started on the divot crew in 1998, and over time, I've grown with the property and the people. It's always felt like home." His father, Ken Wright—the original grow-in superintendent for both The Pulpit and The Paintbrush—was both a mentor and a guiding influence. "Robert's accomplishments are a result of passion and hard work," says Ken. "I couldn't be prouder."

## IN THE HOT SEAT

**Q:** Favourite Major?

**A:** The Open

**Q:** Favourite golf course?

**A:** Kingarrock Hickory Golf

**Q:** Ultimate foursome: You and ?

**A:** My two boys, Carter and Gryphon, and my dad.

**Q:** Favourite meal?

**A:** Surf and Turf (Lobster & Rib Eye)

**Q:** Favourite Band?

**A:** Garth Brooks

**Q:** Lowest round ever and where?

**A:** The Paintbrush - 73

**Q:** Favourite course designer?

**A:** Hurdzan and Fry

**Q:** Favourite Movie?

**A:** Tin Cup

One of Wright's earliest golf memories is from 1993 when The Pulpit hosted the Export A Skins Game. "I got to see Jack Nicklaus, Fred Couples, Raymond Floyd, and Nick Price up close," he recalls. "Having the opportunity to meet those individuals at a young age—and seeing that some of these experiences could continue throughout my life and career—was very enjoyable."

After earning his diploma from the University of Guelph and completing

the short course at Cornell, Wright took on increasing responsibility. In 2015, he followed in his father's footsteps and took over as golf course superintendent. But his progression didn't stop there.

"After working on the course for 10 years, I knew this was it," Wright says. "There's something about the hands-on nature of it—the creativity, the problem-solving—that grabbed me early and never let go."

Nearly a decade later, in a rare career pivot in the golf industry, he now serves as COO, a role he assumed with the support of a forward-thinking ownership group and his predecessor, Rob Roxborough. "When I was asked by the owners for my recommendation on how The Pulpit Club should move forward after my exit, my answer was quick and clear," says Roxborough, now general manager at Cabot Saint Lucia. "Rob Wright offers the knowledge, expertise, and

professionalism to take the organization to another level. He's an organized visionary—a rare combination of creativity and business acumen."

That blend of ingenuity and business savvy is central to how Wright leads. While still deeply involved in turf management, his responsibilities now extend to comprehensive operational oversight across both properties. Despite the broader scope, he hasn't stepped away from the day-to-day. "I'm still out there," he says. "This industry doesn't reward distance. It rewards presence."

One of the strongest forces behind Wright's rise has been the belief and trust of ownership—particularly John Clark, Chairman and co-founder of Longridge Partners Inc. Clark and the ownership group saw not just a superintendent, but a leader ready for more. "Their support has been everything," Wright says.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Predominate grass type:** The Pulpit - bentgrass. The Paintbrush - bentgrass. Tees & fairways seeded to a mix of fescue.

**Predominant soil type:** The soils at both properties are very sandy. Drainage is never a concern.

**Types of greens:** California style

**Course Length:** The Pulpit - 7162 yards. The Paintbrush - 6780 yards

**Size of Greens:** The Pulpit - 4 acres. The Paintbrush - 6 acres

**Size of Tees:** The Pulpit - 3 acres. The Paintbrush - 3 acres

**Size of Fairways:** The Pulpit - 25 acres. The Paintbrush - 60 acres

**Major Challenges:** The Pulpit's primary challenge is a result of its size and complexity; managing traffic flow can be tough. As both courses are located at the top of the escarpment, wind is a constant factor that leads to surface dryness and spring desiccation.



Hole No. 8 - The Paintbrush





*Stars of the show: the black-faced Suffolk sheep grazing at The Paintbrush.*

Michael Allen, now superintendent of The Paintbrush, has worked under Wright for nearly two decades. “His ability to transition from superintendent to COO is no surprise—he brings the same intensity, leadership, and care to the boardroom that he brought to the turf,” Allen says. “It’s a testament to his relentless work ethic and deep understanding of what it takes to deliver excellence.”

Wright’s leadership philosophy starts with people. “You build a great team before you build anything else,” he says. His mornings start early with a cup or two of coffee and some time connecting with his team before the day’s morning meeting—a small but meaningful ritual that sets the tone. Under his mentorship, a strong bench of assistants and AITs has flourished, including recent promotions of Michael Allen, now superintendent of The Paintbrush, and Jeff Cardwell, now superintendent at The Pulpit. “It feels really good to watch these individuals advance their careers,” he reflects.

“Rob has always been a steadfast supporter of the golf operations team,” says Tyler Boudreau, a long-time employee and now director of golf at The Pulpit Club. “His vision, dedication, and collaborative spirit continue to elevate everything we do.”

That vision includes memorable innovations—none more iconic than the flock of black-faced Suffolk sheep grazing 10 acres of fescue at The Paintbrush. “It started as a maintenance idea,” Wright explains, “but it’s grown into something far bigger.” The sheep now serve as brand mascots, featured on head covers, hoodies,

and a Vienna lager dubbed Out of Bounds, brewed with a local partner. “They bring a smile to everyone who visits,” he says.

Despite his many achievements, Wright is quick to name his greatest one: his family. Married to Megan since 2008, she has stood by him through all the long days and big decisions. Together, they’re raising Carter (11) and Gryphon (8), both golf enthusiasts and avid hockey players. “They’ve told me they want their first jobs to be at the course,” he says. “That means everything.”

“You can’t do this job without a support system, and I’ve been lucky to have that from day one,” Rob says. The influence of his father remains a constant. Even now, he visits weekly, offering advice and support. That generational bond has shaped not only his career but also his worldview. Off the course, he finds balance through time with his family. He serves as an assistant coach for his sons’ rep hockey teams in Alliston, takes country drives in his 2011 Corvette, and enjoys rare weekends at their northern Ontario cottage. The family’s newest member—Hatty, a Bernedoodle puppy—adds even more energy to the mix.

Wright’s career is a study in both legacy and reinvention—built on the foundation his father laid, strengthened by the mentorship of leaders like Gordon Witteveen, and propelled by his own desire to innovate and lead. Whether it’s facilitating world-class playing conditions, mentoring the next wave of young professionals, or attending closely to the details that elevate the member’s experience, he’s doing it with the same mindset that got him here.

“This isn’t a job that rewards you every day,” Wright says. “There will be ups and downs. You’ve got to put in the time and be willing to fail. Experience and persistence go a long way— but this industry will test you.”

Looking ahead, Wright has his sights set on more travel with Megan. “I’m a big fan of the Caribbean and cruises,” he says. “Scotland and St. Andrews are special too—I’d love to explore more of Europe.” Though retirement is still some time away, Wright adds, “Being only 40 years old, I’ve got some work to do before that time comes.”

Until then, he remains focused on growing a culture of excellence. His principles are simple but powerful: listen to everyone but make your own decisions. And if you’re going to complain, be part of the solution. He believes patience, hard work, and resilience are essential traits for those entering the industry. “The best superintendents have lost grass,” he says. “You learn more from failure than success.”

“I never set out to be a COO,” he says. “But in this industry, if you’re always trying to improve and willing to take on new challenges, the path has a way of revealing itself.” For Rob Wright, that path—winding through fescue, family, and fearless leadership—is just getting started. ■

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