

# Sunshine Coast greenskeeper moves to a World 100 golf course



[Keili Bartlett](#)

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*Pender Harbour's Jason Haines is moving from his home turf to Cape Breton to work at a World 100 golf course. | Courtesy of Jason Haines*

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After living most of his life on the Sunshine Coast, and his greens-keeping career on local golf courses, Pender Harbour's Jason Haines embarked for Nova Scotia on April 1.

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“And that’s not a joke,” he laughed, as *Coast Reporter* caught up with Haines after his first day on the job. Haines is now the superintendent for Cabot Links, one of [Cabot Cape Breton](#)’s three golf courses. In 2022, *Golf Digest* ranked Cabot Links as #35 on its [World’s 100 Greatest Golf Courses](#) (sister course Cabot Cliffs is #10).

Haines got his start on the greens when he was 15 years old at the Pender Harbour Golf Club. By the time he was 25, Haines had only lived off-Coast for a few years when he attended college in Alberta. Around 2008, Haines was becoming bored of the job. Then the recession hit, and golf clubs were thrown into hardship.

“We set to work to figure out a new way of managing golf courses that was more sustainable economically, firstly, because we couldn't [afford to] lose money, but also, it turned out that the economic sustainability worked hand-in-hand with environmental sustainability,” Haines said.

Where the mainstream media applauded high-end golf courses spending millions, Haines touted a focus on a minimalist approach to waste reduction and saving money. With the emergence of social media, Haines’s Twitter and blog took root. On [fusariummy.blogspot.com](#), Haines’s down-to-earth humour peeks through as he writes about “turf nerd stuff,” and has earned him [invitations](#) to speak at golf shows around the world. What were once considered radical ideas (which Haines points out feed off of scientists’ research), are now becoming more commonplace.

At home on the Coast, Haines did much more than offering prime golfing turf. For 14 years, he volunteered for search and rescue, and was the rope rescue team leader. At Dakota Ridge, he

operated the snowcat, and he's volunteered with the mountain bike society to build trails.

In 2019, Haines started working at the Sunshine Coast Golf & Country Club in Roberts Creek. Then, another fateful set of circumstances changed the game again: COVID.

"Those were, to me, great opportunities to make some big changes. You know, it's when things are going well, it's hard to change. But when things are really bad, you can take that risk — you can take the risk of a new idea," Haines said. "To me, it wasn't a risk. I knew it would work, but for other people that need to sign off on these risks on these ideas, they almost need to be desperate. So I was again blessed with a bad situation... and made the most of it."

Haines was far from eager to leave the Sunshine Coast. But when an opportunity opens at a Top 100 course, it can be a once-in-a-lifetime chance. Cabot Links features a rare style of golf called links golf and fine fescue as its dominant grass.

"From a golf course perspective, there's not many people in the world that are managing that type of grass," Haines said. "I've managed the same type of golf course my entire career. So, to me this was attractive because it's completely different." With his family's approval, Haines applied and landed the job.

When he talks about the support he received from the Coast community, Haines gets emotional. "I've been super blessed on the Sunshine Coast to have the support of the superintendent at the Blue Ocean Golf Course," he said, as well as his predecessor at the course in Roberts Creek. "Even though we weren't part of the same business, we really worked together to do the best that we can."

Soon, Haines will be joined out east by his wife Samantha and their sons Aryn and Avery. Although Haines is currently preoccupied with a cross-country move and getting his footing at a new job, he says he will continue his blog.

When Haines spoke to *Coast Reporter* on April 3, he said the first day on the job went well and he looks forward to growing. The course is positioned between the Atlantic Ocean and the community of Inverness. As an iceberg floated by, Haines saw the first green blades of grass begin to poke through the snow.

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