

SECRET SERVICE

COLE CHATHAM, A MEMBER OF THE OUTSIDE GOLF SERVICES DEPARTMENT AT THE CLUB, HELPS KEEP OPERATIONS RUNNING SMOOTHLY FROM BEHIND THE SCENES.

BY ASHLEY RYAN

Whether it's the middle of winter or time for spring flowers to begin to blossom, there is very little difference in the weather throughout the year in Orange County. Luckily for Cole Chatham, one of the golf course attendants at Newport Beach Country Club, that means mostly sunny skies for locals to tee off under all year long.

As a member of the outside golf services team, Chatham plays a pivotal role in creating the optimal experience for those visiting the club for a morning or afternoon of gameplay. Though he spends most of his time behind the scenes—specifically downstairs in the clubhouse basement, where he and his colleagues ensure everything is operating smoothly, such as the storage of golf bags and maintenance of golf carts—Chatham has a hand in a variety of areas at the club.

In the basement, which he lovingly refers to as “the dungeon,” Chatham says he can often be found pulling out or putting away golf bags for members. “That’s basically all I do,” he jokes.

But it’s certainly not his only task, with a job that also entails folding towels and taking care of golf carts, a duty for which Chatham was recognized by the club after expertly detailing eight carts in a single hour. “I almost filled out the entire list [of completed carts] with just my name,” he says. When Chatham isn’t spending time indoors, he’s out on the driving range, picking up balls in that Southern California sunshine.

As a Newport Beach native, Chatham has been close to the coast his whole life, but the country club’s ocean views became part of his everyday life in 2016, when he started his career with the company. As he approaches his third anniversary at the club this spring, Chatham thinks back on the memorable times he has had on the property. While he notes that his paycheck is high on his list of what he enjoys most about his job, he jokingly adds, “[And] when I don’t have to repeat myself seven times over the radio.”

But with the good also comes some challenging aspects. Chatham says that work can test him at times, citing his biggest hardship as dealing with how quickly things can change around the club.

Prior to starting work at the club, Chatham took some classes at Irvine Valley College, where he hoped to study the intricacies of video game design before struggling with mathematics and ultimately selecting a new route. Even earlier, in 2011, Chatham graduated from Crean Lutheran High School in Irvine, where he was a varsity volleyball player.

When he’s not working, he says it’s important for him to take time to recover from the job, so he usually spends his time unwinding and relaxing. When he’s looking for a little more excitement, Chatham says he plays the Call of Duty: Black Ops Zombies video game, noting that it has been his go-to game for two or three years.

While Chatham is content with his job for the moment, he will likely stay a few more years, then move on to something new—though he says that his next step is still a mystery even to him. Wherever his path leads, he is sure to take the skills he has learned here at the country club with him.

