

Architect peeks at course changes

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Jeff Demossy
The Daily News-Sun

Golf course architect Tripp Davis was joined at Lakes West Golf Course Friday by John Snyder, RCSC director of golf and grounds and several board members. Davis, whose firm, Tripp Davis and Associates, handled the redesign of the golf course, was there to check out the progress and to answer questions about the changes being made.

The most important thing, he said, was to make the course more interesting and more challenging.

"Everything we do is done with that in mind," Davis said. "From the very beginning of the process, that is what we are trying to do."

The biggest concern with Lakes West was, by far, the bunkers, although Davis explained that the changes to the course are far more expansive than just that. He described the new sixth hole in detail. The hole, he said, will provide a more interesting challenge to golfers. The bunkers and fairways, he said, have been reshaped and, in some cases, removed in order to achieve that.

"The bunkers on the sixth hole weren't in play in a strategic way," Davis said. "They were kind of out of the way. We've addressed that and we've addressed the mowing patterns on the fairway, and now you'll have to take those bunkers into account."

The architect said his company always takes the course's players into account when they begin the evaluation process. In the case of Sun City golfers, he said, the focus needs to be on the ground because for seniors, golf is less of an aerial game. "When you're designing for Tiger Woods it's tough, because he can take the ball up and over just about anything," Davis said. "Here, angles are very important because the players play at ground level much more often. So we take that into account when we begin the design process."

Davis said he will be putting together a book that contains a description of each of the holes as well as suggested angles and distances to hazards.

"I think it's much more fun to play golf while taking strategy into account than it is to go up and just rip it," he said. "We want people to know the elements of strategy we've implemented into their course. I think they'll enjoy it more if they have an understanding of that before they play."

Gary Brawley, senior golf architect for Tripp Davis and Associates, has been on site at Lakes West almost every day. Brawley said it is important to have someone there to make sure all the design and evaluation decisions are properly carried out.

"When you're talking about renovating courses, very often things will change on the fly," he said. "Plans have to be altered, things don't go the way you mapped them out. It happens. And so it's very important to have one of us here to make those decisions about how to adapt while keeping the overall plan intact."

Davis said budgeting is another key stage in the process, and one that takes place early on.

"That's something that's like a battle that's won before it's ever fought, you know?" he said. "If you plan carefully, it's easy to stay within budget. If you don't plan carefully, well, things can get out of hand. We're very cautious about that."

The Recreation Centers of Sun City board members on hand, including Jim Bishop, President Warren Hoffmann and Diane Worth, said they are discussing the prospect of having Davis and Associates do an evaluation on all the RCSC courses, in part to help prioritize which course should be revamped next. No such plans have been budgeted, but Bishop said it might be something they consider.

Overall, Davis said he was pleased with the implementation of the redesign plans at Lakes West.

"I think it's going to be one hell of a fun course."

For more information on Tripp Davis and Associates, visit www.tdgolfarchitecture.com.



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ASHLEY LOWERY/Daily News-Sun
Golf Architect Tripp Davis (right) talks with Board of Directors member Jim Bishop and President Warren Hoffmann at hole seven at Lakes West Golf Course in Sun City Friday.

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