



Fall 2019

I am pleased to report that the Jimmie Austin Golf Club course at the University of Oklahoma, which underwent a major renovation by our team, jumped 14 spots to #6 on Golfweek's 2019 Best Campus Courses List that was published in August.



Branden Hart

Jimmie Austin OU Golf Club | Hole 3 | par 4 | 331 yards

Originally designed and built by Oklahoman Perry Maxwell in the early 1950's, the Jimmie Austin Golf Club was reworked by Bob Cupp in 1994 and re-opened in 1995. The objective of our work was to adapt the course to the way the modern college players play, giving it the flexibility to strategically challenge the best men and women players in college golf, while establishing an historic and visually interesting style.

Today's top college golfers are playing a great deal differently than they did 25 years ago and the work we did at OU was to adapt to those changes while making sure the golf course has the flexibility to be set up in a way that would strategically challenge all players. Although the course can be set up to play quite long, we didn't want length to be the dominant strength a player needs to play well. We wanted to make the ability to score as the most important strength. [Click to view Golfweek article](#)

We hope you enjoy reading about our projects, and also seeing photographs of our recent work. It's satisfying to return to our client courses and view the results with mature grass growth and to visit with members and staff. We are thankful for the dedicated superintendents with whom we work on all our projects.

Tripp Davis and Associates' Restoration of Northwood Club Earns Renovation of the Year Award from Golf Inc. Magazine



Credit Golf Inc.

Jack Crittenden, Golf Inc.; Jon Davis, General Manager; Tripp Davis and Bryan Nicholson, Director of Golf

In May, Golf Inc. magazine announced that our restoration work of the Northwood Club in Dallas had earned their prestigious Renovation of the Year Award in the Private Club category for 2019. Golf Inc. evaluated private and public course renovation projects in both the U.S. and internationally in determining the year's two first place winners. Renovation of the Year Award was presented at the Golf Inc. Strategies Summit on September 25 at the Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee, Georgia. Northwood Club, originally designed by William Diddel, opened in 1947, hosted the U.S. Open in 1952, and is one of Dallas' most historic clubs.

In bestowing the top Private Club Renovation of the Year Award to Northwood, the Golf, Inc. judges remarked: "What a difference. The changes are very noticeable, including the removal of trees, which improved playability and turf health. Literally a breath of fresh air. This new course offers something for all skill levels and is the talk of the town."

The complete renovation and restoration of Northwood began in late 2016 with the course reopening in April 2018. TDA and builder Landscapes Unlimited reworked the tees and fairways, repositioned bunkers and shaped them in the Diddel style and restored the greens to the Diddel philosophy. New cart paths, drainage and a new irrigation system also were provided. NorthBridge, a new Bermuda grass, was introduced and used over the entire course with the exception of the Bent Grass greens, and Zeon Zoyisa bunker edges. In addition, creeks on the property were restored and a new irrigation lake was built to help recapture more water. Working closely within the City of Dallas Tree Ordinance, TDA and Northwood removed a good many trees to help with sunlight and airflow to key areas, restore the original width of holes and original shot options, and to better expose the rolling terrain. Tripp and his crew also rebuilt the practice facilities, including the driving range, and designed a "Short Course" to broaden the playing options, especially for junior golfers.

"The response from our membership was tremendous throughout the entire process and since re-opening," said Northwood Club general manager, Jon Davis. "Tripp really thought this through and executed nicely to give us an updated version of what William Diddel likely designed for the Northwood membership in 1947. We are truly impressed with everyone's work but are especially indebted to Tripp for his fine oversight of Northwood during this process and post renovation. This is a great accolade that enhances the club's reputation in the state."

Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club



New Short Game Area

The construction of our complete renovation and restoration of the 1928 design by Perry Maxwell and Alister MacKenzie in Nichols Hills, Oklahoma, has wrapped up. I completed the final shaping of the surfaces of the greens on August 19th, only to see an unusual late summer storm pop-up and do some damage. So we had repair work to do, including having to reshape the entire 11th green. We were able to get it all completed and by September 2nd we had pretty much everything seeded and sodded. Chris Walick and his LaBar Golf crews made a great push to get everything done with great quality. The irrigation system installed by Landscapes Unlimited was both one of the more complex systems I have seen and one of the smoothest installations. I have to mention the fine work by Jones Plan of Tulsa to get the cart paths and bunkers liners done. Superintendent Nathan Neumann and his crews also worked hard with tree removal, installing paver paths at tees and greens, and installing bunker sand.



Photo credits: Garrett Barnes

View behind the 12th tee looking back to the 11th green

This has been an extraordinary project to be a part of and we are all so very excited about the results. We can't wait to see everyone get a chance to play. For me, working 30 minutes from my house has allowed me to spend more time with my family and more time on the course during construction. I hope it does not spoil me!

Burning Tree Country Club



11th green

We recently visited Burning Tree in Greenwich, Connecticut, to see how the course is maturing following our redesign work over the past few years. All told, we have redone all 18 greens on the course, plus three new practice putting greens, redesigned all of the bunkers (with the exception of a couple more we are looking at adding), minor reshaping in some fairways, added drainage (and are looking to add more), and we have redesigned select tees. The greens have been the most significant change, taking what were at times very severe greens and creating a lot more variety in hole locations, enhancing the strategic nature of the angles into greens, with a new Bent Grass named Pure Distinction replacing the older Poa Grass Greens. The bunkers are a close second in significance in that we redesigned the style to add a lot of visual interest and to better fit in with the beautiful surrounds. The bunkers are also built structurally to drain properly and support a higher quality of sand.

Superintendent Steve Wickstrom has the course looking outstanding and, just as importantly, playing really well! In addition to normal maintenance practices, he has done some tree clearing, tree trimming, and turf replacement in places to sharpen things up even more and continue to make the turf quality as good as it can be. Tree removal and trimming is something often overlooked as a very important part of improving turf quality, as this reduces shade and increases air flow.



2nd hole

Since our last newsletter, we have better photographs of the work we completed in the spring at The Powelton Club in Newburgh, New York, and at Rolling Hills Country Club in Wilton, Connecticut.

The Powelton Club



Our work at The Powelton Club was part bunker restoration, part new bunkers inspired by Devereaux Emmet, part tee work, minor changes to #16 green, and part minor changes to fairways. Above is one of my favorite photos of Powelton – the restored bunkers around the 4th green.

Rolling Hills Country Club

The work we did last fall at Rolling Hills Country Club has matured very well and we are really pleased with this latest phase of our ongoing efforts. This fall, we will be completing the remainder of the bunkers on the course, along with building new tees and a new green on the par three 6th hole. Chris Walick and LaBar Golf moved from their work at OKC to work with TDA Shaper Jason Gold.



The "new" par three 3rd hole after new tees, the addition of the Fine Fescues around the tees, the new bunkering, and modifications around the green

Willow Brook Country Club

We worked with Bill Willingham and his Course Crafters crews to rebuild the short game practice area near the clubhouse earlier this year, which I recently visited to find the members making good use of it. In spending some time there during our work, we were able to see how the 18 hole renovation work and the 4 hole short course are maturing.



As with any major projects, such as we did at Willow Brook in Tyler, Texas, time is needed to get everything mature and time is needed to get all the members to somewhat “relearn” how to play the course.

We love the way Superintendent Ken Bowman is getting things dialed in and with every visit we make we are hearing more and more members say they’re loving the “new” course.

The club has been awarded the 2021 Texas State Amateur following review of our work, which is an honor given the stature of the tournament and the number of great courses in the state.

Left: A greenside bunker on the 2nd hole

Cabarrus Country Club

I am pleased to announce that the redesign of the putting green, driving range tee, and the tees on the 1st hole at Cabarrus Country Club is my first project in North Carolina. This follows a lengthy process to create a Master Plan for this great old course in Concord designed and built by George Cobb in the mid 1960’s. We hope to follow up with continual improvements to the course and practice facilities over the next few years.



Southeastern Golf handled the construction and I very much enjoyed working with their Shaper Gary Shapiro and Project Manager Blake Huckabee.

Cabarrus Superintendent Kevin Lutz was also very involved, helping keep us all in line and finally getting the sprig on site via Fed Ex! We had a great team that did fantastic work and we all enjoyed being with each other and having a good many laughs. Jim Sparks with Southeastern Golf went out of his way to find me a really good sand pro to finish shaping the surface of the putting green and this was much appreciated. It also was my first project with Southeastern Golf, but I hope it is not the last.

Tripp reviews his design plans before using the Toro Sand Pro to shape a putting green at Cabarrus

ON THE TEE

Indian Hills Country Club (Alabama)

We have completed our Master Plan for the Indian Hills Country Club in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and I presented to a group at the club in early June. It was received with a lot of excitement and now the club is going to work to determine how to make it happen. My visit in June also included playing with Indian Hills member Martin Holt in the Cummings Four Ball, an event that Head Pro Paul Reid has conducted for the past decade, which attracts some of the better amateur players from the southeast. The event honors long time Indian Hills member Jackie Cummings, who was a great amateur who won the U.S. Senior Amateur in 1990. Martin and I held our own and had a great time.

Old American Golf Club Hosts LPGA Volunteers of America Classic



Credit: Old American Golf Club

Old American Golf Club, designed by Tripp and PGA TOUR player Justin Leonard, hosted the Volunteers of America Classic on October 3-6, 2019. The official LPGA tournament featured the world's top talent in a four-day stroke-play event, vying for a \$1.3 million purse in The Colony, Texas. Cheyenne Knight, a Texas resident, was the champion.

“We had a great team to build the course and the Old American staff takes really good care of the course,” said Tripp. “Superintendent Russell Birkhimer had the course in great shape for the tournament. I enjoyed seeing the players strategically attack the course with precision.”



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