

Winter 2018

As 2018 comes to a close, and I look back on the year, I am thankful for the opportunities we have had to live our passion for golf course architecture, and thankful for all who have been a part of the work we have done. I am blessed to be able to work with a group of talented men who make up the TDA team and make us among the best in the world at what we do. And we all appreciate, to say the least, our families that support us.

I may be biased, but I can't imagine having better clients than we do. It is very rewarding to go to work for and with people who put their trust in you, inspire you to push yourself to raise the bar, work hard themselves to make the work possible and to provide vital insights, and show great appreciation for the results we work so hard to achieve. A vital part of the group we call our clients are the golf course superintendents who not only play an important part of design and construction, but they ultimately make us look good by the way they maintain the golf course we work on.

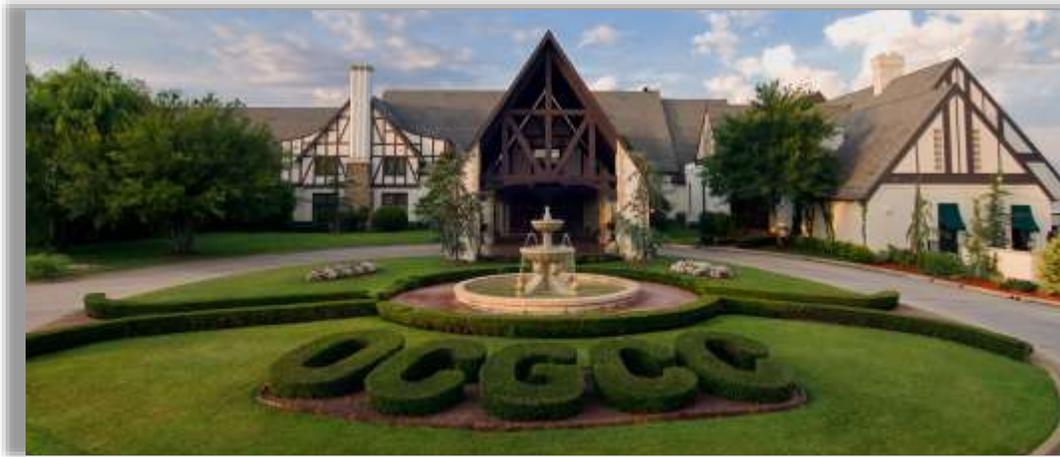
And none of what we do would be possible without the commitment and talent of the golf course builders we work with. I am quite sure we are more than fortunate to work with the most talented, committed, and trustworthy in the golf course construction industry today.

All of us at TDA wish all of you a wonderful Holiday season and rewarding 2019.



(Left to Right): Jason Gold, Tripp Davis, Jack Skirkanich, Kyle Downs and Colton Craig

Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club



Credit: Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club

Our 2019 will get started with a bang in late January in our complete renovation and restoration of Perry Maxwell's and Alister MacKenzie's 1929 design of the Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club in Nichols Hills, Oklahoma.

Our plan will renovate drainage, cart paths, the structure of tees, greens and bunkers, and re-grass most of the course, to include using Latitude 36 Bermuda for tees and fairways, and 007 Bent Grass for the greens. Work will include restoring the original rounded/irregular shape of the tees, returning strategic widths in fairways and removing many introduced trees, plus restoring the strategic intent and style of the bunkers and the size of the original greens. We and the club are also working with EC Design of West Des Moines, Iowa, to plan a completely new irrigation and pump system.

The work to the greens also will include preserving the existing contours, mostly original, while making minor changes to enhance them for modern play. All greens had the existing contours scanned and each layer of the rebuilding of the greens will be carefully monitored with GPS equipment to make sure the important contours are artfully preserved.

Being given the responsibility to renovate and restore the Maxwell/MacKenzie course at Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club is uniquely exciting for me given my history there and the many friends I have there. I first played the course in 1985 as a freshman on the University of Oklahoma golf team, and it has since been one of my favorite courses in the world. Being able to bring the golf course back to more what it was intended to be by Mr. Maxwell and Dr. MacKenzie will be one the greatest thrills of my professional career.

The Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club was one of only a few courses that Maxwell and MacKenzie collaborated on, with Crystal Downs in Michigan and the Ohio State University Scarlett Course being two of the more high profile courses they did together.



Shaper Jason Gold, who has been a TDA staff member for over 10 years, will be on site to shape the course, while I will personally oversee the shaping of the surfaces of the greens to preserve the existing character. Jason and I will be working to make sure every detail is right and that every strategic element is pure to how Mr. Maxwell and Dr. MacKenzie wanted the course to play. They were extraordinary at making everything they did look like a natural part of the land, and using that to create beautiful strategic variety and interest, highlighted by the angles they created and the importance of precision when playing into the greens.

The expectation is to be complete with the work in time to get the course ready for limited play at the end of the year, with the course being ready for a grand reopening spring 2020.

Tripp spent the summer planning every last detail of the work to be done

Northeast Projects

Rolling Hills Country Club



The redesigned bunkering around the 10th green at Rolling Hills

For the last three years, we have been doing more and more work at Rolling Hills Country Club in Wilton, Connecticut, with projects this fall centering around green expansions on #2, #12 and #15, new tees for #3 and bunkers at #2 fairway and green, #3 green, #12 fairway and green, #15 green and reworking the fairway on #8 to drain properly. The membership group we coordinate with has pushed hard to make the work possible and Head Superintendent Glenn Perry has helped to get everything in place. LaBar Golf Construction, with Project Superintendent Chris Walick, has done exceptional work as usual. We can't wait to introduce the changes to the members in the spring.



Jack Skirkanich shows the #2 green expansion at RHCC

Niagara Falls Country Club



Breaking it down before we build it back up on the 11th at NFCC

Our long working relationship with the venerable Niagara Falls Country Club in Lewiston, New York, continued this fall with the rebuilding of the 11th green and greenside bunkers. TDA Shaper Jason Gold, Golf Course Superintendent Dave Meter, and the entire NFCC staff worked hard to get the work done through tough weather. I will be up in the spring to finish shaping the surface of the green to have it ready for play early summer.

NFCC is a great old A.W. Tillinghast design that annually hosts the Porter Cup Amateur. Jason and I have been helping the club with renovation and restoration work for over 10 years, rebuilding 11 of the greens and about half of the bunkers to date.

The Powelton Club

The bunker renovation and restoration work at The Powelton Club in Newburgh, New York, has been progressing well, but overall we are a bit behind due to the record rainfall and saturated site conditions. We have completed or nearly completed work on holes 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17 and 18, which represents a bit more than half of the project. Although the conditions have slowed things down, we are really excited about the quality of the work, transformation of the holes, and overall look and feel of the course. Working with contractor Frank O'Dowd, Superintendent Bob Demarco, and representatives from The Powelton Club has been great fun and everyone is dedicated to unlocking the significant potential of this charming hidden gem in the Hudson Valley.

Founded in 1882, The Powelton Club is one of the oldest clubs in the United States, and its 1926 Devereaux Emmet designed course exudes many of the best qualities of classic Golden Age Golf Architecture: sporty, challenging, quirky, interesting, and fun. The goal of the work is to address the failing bunkers and related infrastructure, and restore the classic style and strategy of the original Emmet design.



The Powelton Club's 16th hole plans



16th hole construction



16th hole grassed

TDA Bunkers

While every part of a golf course should contribute to style and strategy, it is hard to argue with the notion that the bunkers are the most profound part of what gives a golf course its character.

Their location and form in many ways contribute as much as anything to the strategic variety and interest a golf course presents to the player. They provide challenges for the direction and distance a player can play off the tee and they can serve to guard and create angles into the green. We work hard to make sure every bunker has a strategic purpose, either physically or visually.

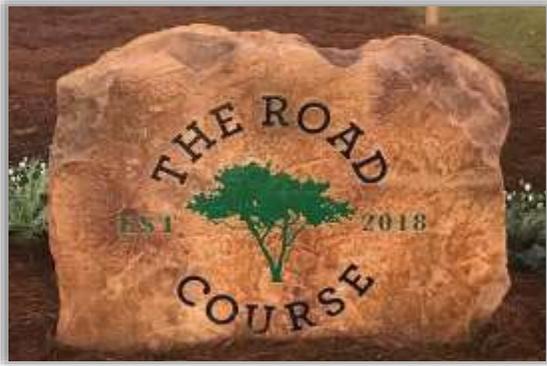
Bunkers also are where we can enhance the landscape art or style of a golf course. Most of our work is at golf courses designed by the historic greats of golf course architecture like A.W. Tillinghast, Seth Raynor, Devereux Emmet, Perry Maxwell, Bill Diddel and Alfred Tull. While we are often adapting our work to the stylistic tendencies of the greats of the past, we also work to give the bunkers a sense of the randomness of nature that helps to make any bunker look like it has been there much longer than we have.

The style and strategy of bunkers form what a player sees, but it is the work under what is visible that helps to sustain the maintainability of the bunker over time. While bunkers in the not so distant past were filled with about any sand, did not have much “structure” and there was not much attention paid to details beyond those that formed style and strategy, today we are building bunkers with very specific techniques and materials, adapted to fit each situation. We are carefully selecting the turf that will form the edges of the bunker, the sand that will fill the bunker, the liners placed between the native soil and the sand, the way drainage is placed in the bunker, and the way slopes are used in and around the bunker. A very technical process, all to help keep the bunkers maintained in a way that will meet the rising expectations of the modern golfer. Few golf course architects work as hard at putting all of the pieces together with bunker design and construction and it has proven to be one of the parts of our work we are very proud of—a TDA bunker.



ON THE TEE

Green Tree Country Club Celebrates The Road Course Opening



TDA spent 2017 and part of 2018 completing a Master Plan for Green Tree Country Club in Midland, Texas, which in addition to a plan to completely redo the East and West Nines, included a new short course and short game practice area along the entry road to the club. The new short course, aptly named The Road Course by Head Professional Brian McKinley, along with an adjacent short game practice area, was built over the spring and summer, and had a grand opening on October 27th. I was on hand to play and experience the work that TDA and Landscapes

Unlimited, Green Tree Head Superintendent Terry Todd and the staff at Green Tree put so much effort into. The short course is made up of three holes, with no formal tees, so players can choose to play each hole as short as they want, or play as long as a 140 yard shot into the 3rd green. While it can be played by all, especially the children at the club, the holes, along with the two additional greens and bunkers, can serve to be a short game practice area that allows everyone to master the shorter shots so important to playing the game well.



Next Issue

In the next issue, we will highlight the reopening of the Willow Brook Country Club in Tyler, Texas; our work at Preston Trail in Dallas, Texas; our interesting work at Ridgewood Country Club in Waco, Texas; our start to the work at Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club and our completion of the revised 12th hole at Rumson Country Club in Rumson, New Jersey.



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