

On Course Online

WITH TRIPP DAVIS AND ASSOCIATES



September 2021

The interesting times we are living in continue. In addition to COVID, we have been dealing with record or near record rainfall on most of our projects. All projects have had to deal with some sort of material shortages or delays, and getting to projects has been nothing short of challenging as the airlines are significantly understaffed - leading to a lot of delays, cancellations and missed connections. But we are pushing through and I am especially proud of how all of the clubs and Golf Course Builders we are working with have kept their focus on quality instead of just wanting to get the work done. The work we do, if done well, will last for a long time. However, if something is done just to get it done you will be fixing it sooner than later. We only ever accept work done properly, but when the clubs and the Golf Course Builders are committed on quality too it makes the work more complete and makes it a lot of fun.

The rain, project delays and travel challenges also have made it hard, at best, to do one thing I love to do, and that is return to the clubs we have worked with to review what we did and see the people we worked so closely with. I have missed this, as it's one of the more enjoyable parts of what we do. I hope to get back to doing this soon, but the most important role we serve is being on site and making sure we get it right.

I hope everyone is doing well and I hope to see you soon.

Best,

Tripp Davis



Tripp reviewed the shaping of the 17th green at BraeBurn Country Club in Houston, Texas

Credit: Long Drive Agency

Thunderbird Country Club



The new green and bunker work on the 2nd hole at Thunderbird Country Club

TDA is overseeing the course renovations at Thunderbird Country Club in Rancho Mirage, California, which began this summer with three holes and the practice areas, and will continue in 2022 with the remaining 15 holes on the course. Tripp and TDA Staff Shaper Jason Gold are working with Golf Course Builder Total Turf, Thunderbird Superintendent Roger Compton, and his staff.

Thunderbird Head Professional Nick Dekock was interviewed by Larry Bohannon for The Desert Sun to discuss the renovation. Read Larry's full article [here](#).

On Tripp:

"Some outstanding candidates applied to retain the job. But Tripp was one who was really accepted by the membership," said Nick Dekock. "He also wanted to bring it back to the restoration, to the original historical design and not try to create a golf course. There might have been one or two others who in my opinion wanted to completely transform Thunderbird, and that's not what any of the membership wanted. They wanted to keep the original design."

On Tripp's bunker work in 2020:

"There is more of a rustic, natural flowing shape to the bunkers," Nick Dekock said. "He redid the two bunkers by the first green last summer, and it just had a more natural flow. Aesthetically, you can see the bunkers from the fairway, and they have a more natural look."

History

- Thunderbird Country Club was the first golf course in the Coachella Valley – two hours east of Los Angeles. It was a popular club that attracted both Hollywood celebrities and top professional and amateur players.
- Thunderbird hosted the 1955 Ryder Cup on the Lawrence Hughes 1951 designed course. Thunderbird was the first host of the PGA TOUR's Desert Classic, which became Bob Hope's tournament and now is named the American Express, one of the longest standing events on tour.

The International's Oaks Course



Tripp (left) with the International staff in a new bunker on the 12th hole of the Oaks Course

Escalante Golf acquired The International Golf Club in Bolton, Massachusetts, earlier this year with the intent of upgrading both the Oaks and Pines Courses. Escalante immediately hired TDA to rework the Oaks Course with a focus on complete tee and bunker renovation and redesign over the original Tom Fazio design, to also include select work to greens and the practice areas. Tripp and TDA Senior Golf Architect Kyle Downs, working with Superintendent Michael Galvin and Golf Course Builder Agri-Scapes, have seen the work turn out exceptionally well. The Pines Course is now slated to undergo a thoughtful reimagining by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw in 2022 and 2023.

“To work with a great company such as Escalante and to play a role in transforming such a special place as The International has been an extraordinary experience. They expect great work from us, and they are wholly supportive to help us meet, and hopefully exceed, their expectations”. – Tripp

On Tripp Davis and Associates:

“Tripp Davis and Kyle Downs excel in golf course remodeling, most recently taking The International Oaks Course in Bolton to a new level and making it great again! Humble and easy to work with, not only are they innovative in their design approach, they remain true to the traditional style of old course architecture. Their design is focused with the player in mind, making the course challenging and fun for players of all handicaps. Bunker design takes a special eye and artistic ability to make them feel like they have always existed, play well and able to be maintained with ease. The International bunkers are some of the best I have ever seen!” - Jody Tavarez, Vice President of Agronomy for Escalante Golf

Go Deeper: Read Golfweek's story on Escalante's vision to reimagine The International [here](#).

BraeBurn Country Club



BraeBurn Country Club's Short Game Area

Credit: Long Drive Agency

BraeBurn was originally designed by John Bredemus in 1931 and was extensively reworked in 1991 to address flooding issues. It was the 1991 project that was able to add some significant elevation changes to the course, which makes it unique to the Houston area. The legendary Hall of Fame golfer and three-time Masters Champion Jimmy Demaret was one of the club's early professionals.

While keeping the same basic routing of the course, TDA is rebuilding and redesigning the entire course to make better use of the elevations created in the 1991 flood control project, primarily by pulling the relatively isolated low areas back into the course, and using the raised areas in a more naturalistic way.

"BraeBurn has been an exciting project, taking a piece of ground with so much potential, and then realizing that potential. Work with the entire club, Superintendents Terry Gill and Aaron Englehard, Golf Course Builder Greenscape Methods, and Irrigation Contractor Heritage Links has been a great experience and all have been very focused on long term quality through the challenges this year has presented." - Tripp

Learn More in the Golfweek article [here](#).

Green Tree Country Club



Green Tree Country Club's shaped and sodded bunkers on the 5th hole

Tripp's original vision for Green Tree Country Club in Midland, Texas, was a renovation and redesign inspired by the classic style of Australian Sand Belt courses such as Royal Melbourne and Kingston Heath, both of which Tripp was able to see in person during a trip to Australia with the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Kyle Downs, working closely with Golf Course Builder Course Crafters, has nailed the bunker style, and set up the greens for Tripp to come in and provide strategic subtleties and shapes. The entire club, including Superintendent Terry Todd, Director of Golf Brian McKinley, and General Manager Wray Crippin have been encouraging and very supportive in our pursuit to get every detail just right.

"I could not be more pleased with how Kyle has worked with everyone at Green Tree to create this unique style. I did the design and I get on site often enough, but it is how Kyle and Course Crafters have taken the time to literally hand craft the work that has made the difference." - Tripp



Tripp explains the construction process to Green Tree Country Club Members during a tour of construction

In Other News...

Indian Hills Country Club

TDA is conducting a bunker renovation at the Indian Hills Country Club in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, renovating select tees as well, and remaking the 16th, 17th and 18th holes in large measure. Rain has been the major issue in getting things done, but Golf Course Builder Southeastern Golf with Project Superintendent Clyde Hall have done exceptional work in spite of the challenges. We are getting close to finishing and we will have good pictures and a full recap in our next edition.

Atlanta Athletic Club

TDA has been selected as the Consulting Golf Course Architect at the Atlanta Athletic Club in Johns Creek, Georgia, with the first project being the renovation and redesign of the Riverside Course in 2021. The Atlanta Athletic Club was the great Bobby Jones's home club his entire life. With two historic courses and a nine hole Par 3 course, AAC has hosted a myriad of major events over its storied history. Most recently, AAC hosted the prestigious KPMG Women's PGA Championship on the Highlands Course in June.



Tripp's KPMG Women's PGA Championship Pro-Am Group at Atlanta Athletic Club

(left to right) Bruce Barfield, president Atlanta Athletic Club; Kelli Kuenhe, former U.S. Amateur Champion and LPGA TOUR winner; Cristie Kerr, LPGA Major Championship winner; Andy Barfield and Tripp. There was a lot of joking and fun with this group since Kelli is a former University of Texas Longhorn and Tripp and his caddy Joe Dan Rogers are both former OU Sooners.

Tripp On Air:



Charlie Epps, Tripp and Will

The Charlie Epps Golf Hour

Tripp was invited as a guest on the popular Charlie Epps radio show to speak about his expertise as one of today's foremost course designers. A variety of topics were discussed, including Tripp's introduction to the business of golf course architecture and the iconic courses he has been hired to renovate and restore. Charlie also asked Tripp about his experience on the 1989 University of Oklahoma national golf championship team. [Listen](#)



Tripp Davis and Associates
Golf Architecture



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