

Issue 36 | Winter 2017

BY DESIGN



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into
the future

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The future of design

Most professions change over time. For some, it's clear that the future will be fundamentally different. The advance of self-driving vehicles could render truck and taxi driving obsolete and new healthcare technologies could see physicians devoting most of their time to educating patients on prevention, rather than administering treatment.

But what about golf course architecture? Some aspects of our work are still very similar to the practices of our founding fathers. But will continued advances in technology, environmental factors and golfers' evolving preferences lead to profound change in the future?

With missions including fostering professionalism and supporting design excellence, ASGCA has, since its founding, carefully considered the role and practices of the golf course architect. In our cover story for this issue, which begins on page 12, we asked members what they think the profession will be like by 2030.

The responses make fascinating reading, suggesting some clear trends for the future and raising some possibilities that stretch the limits of our imagination.

I hope you enjoy the read.



John Sanford, ASGCA
President
American Society of Golf Course Architects

BY DESIGN

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COVER



Cover illustration by
www.istockphoto.com/antoniokhr

Projects recognized for design excellence



Photo: Dave Samsom

The ASGCA has released its 2017 list of Design Excellence Recognition Program honorees.

The sixth list of its kind includes 11 projects from North and Central America, with 13 architects highlighted for their work in addressing unique design challenges.

The nominations were reviewed by a panel of golf industry leaders, including representatives from the Club Managers Association of America, Golf Course Builders Association of America and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

“These wonderful golf facilities, and the architects who worked so closely with them, have my congratulations and great respect,” said ASGCA President John Sanford,



ASGCA. “The projects recognized here continue the tradition of the Design Excellence Recognition Program; well-designed facilities that make a positive impact on the game to benefit golfers and their communities.”

Since its creation, the Design Excellence Recognition Program has highlighted innovation and problem-solving skills required of today’s golf course designs, from new 18-hole golf courses to practice facilities and renovations of various sizes.

“ These wonderful golf facilities, and the architects who worked so closely with them, have my congratulations and great respect

In February 2018, By Design subscribers will receive a special edition devoted to the 2017 Design Excellence Recognition Program and including more information on all of the projects. Subscribe to By Design via www.asgca.org.

2017 Design Excellence Recognition Program Honorees

Projects recognized in 2017 include a restoration that was “like an archaeological project” (Colleton River) and a fun 13-hole par three course (Mountain Top). Below is the full list of projects.

Colleton River

Bluffton, South Carolina
Restoration by Tim Liddy, ASGCA

Compass Pointe Golf Club

Leland, North Carolina
New golf course by Rick Robbins, ASGCA,
and Brian Lussier, ASGCA

Golf de Club de Panama

Panama City, Panama
Renovation by Ray Hearn, ASGCA

Hunt Valley Country Club

Phoenix, Maryland
Renovation by Jason Straka, ASGCA,
and Dana Fry, ASGCA

Longleaf Golf & Family Club

Southern Pines, North Carolina
Redesign and academy by Bill Bergin, ASGCA

Meadowbrook Country Club

Northville, Michigan
Renovation by Andy Staples, ASGCA

Mountain Top Course

Hollister, Missouri
New golf course by Jeff Lawrence, ASGCA

Royal Ottawa Golf Club

Ottawa, Canada
Renovation by Neil Haworth, ASGCA

Vestavia Country Club

Birmingham, Alabama
Renovation by Lester George, ASGCA

Wellesley Country Club

Wellesley, Massachusetts
Short game facility by Mark Mungeam, ASGCA

Westfield Group Country Club

Westfield Center, Ohio
Putting course by Dr. Michael Hurdzan, ASGCA Fellow

Renovation

Arlington muni redesigned



Golf course architects John Colligan, ASGCA, and Trey Kemp of Colligan Golf Design have completed the renovation of the Chester W. Ditto Golf Course in Arlington, Texas.

The city-owned course has been completely rerouted to fully utilize the 164-acre site, which has 80 feet of elevation change. It can now play more than 7,000 yards from the back tees—a 300-yard increase—and there are five sets of tees on each hole, providing a range of options to suit players of all abilities. From the forward tees, the course is now 550 yards shorter than it was previously.

“The entire course has been rerouted to take advantage of the topography of the site,” said Colligan. “It will be a new golf course. Fairways and greens have also been shaped to make the game more fun for all levels of players, directing shots back into play.”

Renovation

Oak Hills nears completion

A renovation and restoration project at the historic Oak Hills Country Club in San Antonio, Texas, is close to completion.

Architect Tripp Davis, ASGCA, has focused on the course’s infrastructure, including greens, bunkers and tees.

The Oak Hills course was designed by A.W. Tillinghast

and opened in the 1920s.

“Oak Hills is one of those American courses that lost a number of fairway bunkers during the Great Depression in the 1930s. Most had never been restored, so we did put back a few and move them a bit to make them more relevant to modern play,” said Davis.





Find a smarter way to renovate.

When Atlanta Athletic Club was looking to upgrade their Highlands course to single-head control, they reached out to Rain Bird for fresh ideas. Thanks to an insightful plan to keep their pipe network and install new rotors and IC System™ control, they renovated their irrigation for a third of the cost of a new system. This kind of innovative thinking from Rain Bird is helping them protect their budget and defend their turf.

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New golf course

Baylands Golf Links set for spring 2018 opening

A project to rebuild the golf course on the site of the Palo Alto Municipal GC in Palo Alto, California, is approaching completion.

Golf course architect Forrest Richardson, ASGCA, has been tasked with reconfiguring the original William F. Bell design at the site, which has long been plagued by flooding from the nearby San Francisquito Creek.

The course—which, once reopened, will be renamed Baylands Golf Links—is located in Silicon Valley, between the main campuses of Facebook and Google.

The reworked 18-hole layout will play to a maximum length of 6,800 yards.

An interesting feature is the shared 20,000 square foot green complex on holes three and fifteen. The fourteenth hole meanwhile features two separate greens. One is a classic punchbowl design, while the alternative is on a small peninsula

into a wetland part of the site.

Almost 500,000 cubic yards of soil was moved as part of the construction effort, which was led by Wadsworth Golf Construction. Wadsworth's team has worked alongside representatives

from Toro, Watertronics, Better Billy Bunker and Profile Products at different phases of the project.

The rebuilt Baylands Golf Links course is expected to open for play in spring 2018.



Wetland areas of the course, such as here on the fifteenth hole, have been restored

Photo: Dave Sansom



“Our job as architects is to identify how to make a course as appealing as we can to golfers”

MIKE BENKUSKY, ASGCA

The unique experience of golf course design on a former Cold War military site is among the topics covered by Mike Benkusky, ASGCA, on the latest “Tartan Talks” podcast.

Guy Cipriano of *Golf Course Industry* asked Benkusky about Arlington Lakes Golf Club, and

Benkusky's efforts to provide golfers the option of playing three-hole, six-hole, nine-hole and 18-hole loops.

Bunkers remain a major topic of discussion during any masterplan. Reducing the footprint of bunkers is a recurring theme, Benkusky said, thanks to natural wear and tear, the

need of updated irrigation, and even bunker style.

“A full bunker rebuild allows for more analysis on maintenance and where we are going with them today compared to the past,” he said.

Listen to the full interview [here](#).

HERE ARE LINKS TO OTHER RECENT “TARTAN TALKS,” NOW FEATURING MORE THAN A DOZEN EPISODES:

- Jim Engh, ASGCA, [discusses why he avoids following ‘unwritten’ golf course architecture rules.](#)
- ASGCA President John Sanford, ASGCA, [on his beginnings in the field and his early influences.](#)



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Redesign

Smyers redesigns Eastwood course

Golf course architect, ASGCA Past President Steve Smyers, ASGCA, is part way through a redesign project at Eastwood Golf Course in Fort Myers, Florida.

Last summer, a major connector road construction project was undertaken, which bisected the course's front nine. This meant most of the front nine had to be rerouted, with the entire nine holes having to be reconstructed.

"I regraded the entire site, improving drainage, strategy and aesthetics," said Smyers. "All of the putting surface and surrounds were relocated and redesigned, putting a strong emphasis on subtle

movement within the putting surfaces, and requiring pitching and chipping from the greens surrounds. While putting is an option from around the putting surfaces, it would not be the best play."

The changes to the course included new bunker locations and reworked rough areas to enhance the strategy and shot making.

The project's first phase, which included the redesign and reconstruction of the front nine, took place this summer. The front nine reopened for play on 6 November.

The project's second phase, which will see the redesign and reconstruction of the back nine and driving range, is set to begin in the summer of 2018.



Photo: Steve Smyers Golf Course Architects

Renovation

Norby creates two new holes at Minneapolis course

A project which has seen the addition of two new holes at the Theodore Wirth Golf Course in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has reached completion.

The work, which got underway in May 2017, has been led by Kevin Norby, ASGCA, of Herfort Norby Golf Course Architects, and saw the removal of the former par four seventeenth and par three eighteenth holes.

Aerial photographs of the course taken in the 1960s revealed a short uphill par three hole which had since been abandoned. This featured a blind approach and a green surrounded by bunkers.

"We reinstated that hole but lowered it slightly to increase the green size and improve visibility," Norby explained. "The

resulting hole is a really nice replacement for the par three eighteenth that was lost."

A new 360-yard par four hole was also created to replace the lost seventeenth hole. This will now be the course's final hole, and features a slight dogleg right fairway and four strategically placed fairway and greenside bunkers.

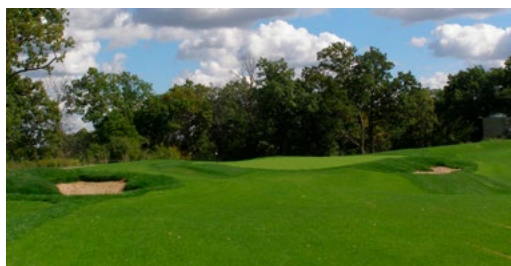


Photo: Peter Wong

Golfer plays every Ross course in existence



Photo: Jon Cavalier@Linksgems

Brad Becken, a member of the Donald Ross Society, recently completed a remarkable quest to play every golf course designed by Donald Ross. It was at Hope Valley Golf Club that Becken became enamored of Ross's work, before playing all the Ross courses in North and South Carolina. Becken has now played the 358 Ross courses still in existence, with Seminole (pictured) topping his list of favorite courses.

Quitno discusses Schaumburg project

Architect Todd Quitno, ASGCA, of Lohmann Golf Designs, has discussed the ongoing project at Schaumburg Golf Club in Schaumburg, Illinois.

Speaking to *Golf Course Architecture*, Quitno provided an update on the project's first phase. The full interview is available [here](#).

New practice facility at The Villages

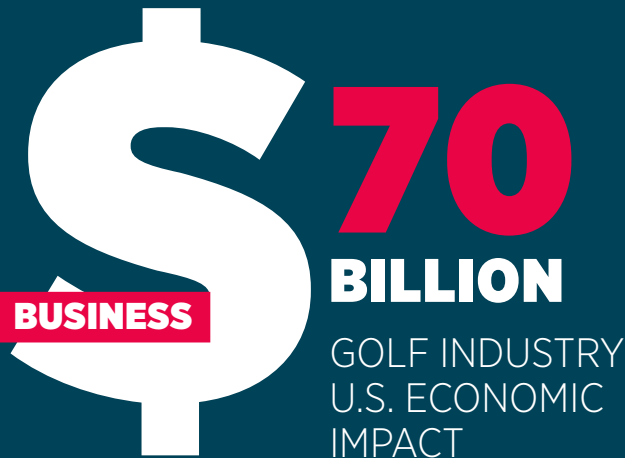
A new multi-use green space and 18-hole grass practice and putting course has opened for play at The Villages in central Florida. Designed by architect Ken Ezell, ASGCA, the new facility is surrounded by water on all sides.



Photo: Ken Ezell

GOLF BY THE NUMBERS

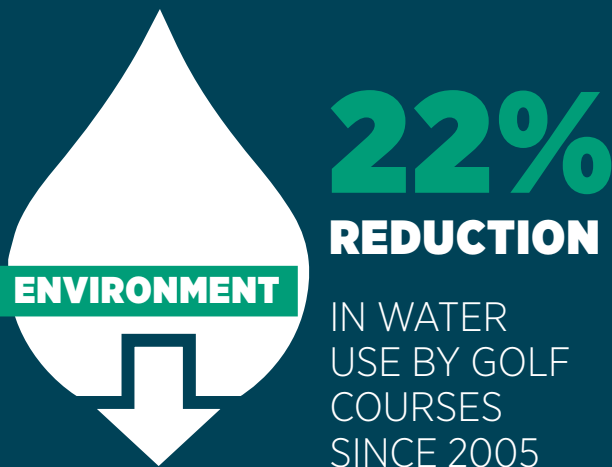
THE GAME OF GOLF REMAINS STRONG. AS THESE STATISTICS FROM ASGCA, GOLF 20/20 AND WE ARE GOLF ILLUSTRATE, MORE GOLFERS ARE PLAYING MORE OFTEN, AND LIKELY ON A COURSE TOUCHED BY AN ASGCA MEMBER.



- 2 million - U.S. jobs with direct ties to golf
- \$3.9 billion - Annual amount raised by golf industry for charity (more than all other sports combined)
- 76% - Golf played on public courses



- 2 million - Those trying golf for the first time in 2015 (more than any year since 2002)
- 29% - Increase in number of youth golfers ages 6 to 17 in the past three years



- 65% - Golf course facilities who have upgraded irrigation systems in the past 10 years
- 77% - 18-hole U.S. golf facilities that have taken steps to conserve energy



- 96% - Advise clients on water quality/availability
- 93% - Help clients improve/expand practice areas
- 93% - Add tees to accommodate juniors, women & new players

DATA COURTESY OF

WORLD GOLF
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Social update



Searching old photos preparing for my talk at @GIS_2018 and came across these from 1983: me helping my Dad's construction company at @ElkRunGolfClub (formerly the Jeff Elks Club) in Indiana for a lake renovation. #TBT



Nathan Crace, ASGCA
@lipouts



#Tbt The 54th ASGCA Annual Meeting (New Castle, Ireland) in May, 2000. 50+ members "crossed the pond" to explore some of the game's roots.



ASGCA



This week's CJ Cup marks the first time the PGA Tour has visited South Korea for an officially sanctioned Tour event. The Club at Nine Bridges designed by David Dale, ASGCA, and GolfPlan. @asgca1946 #pgatour @pgatour



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ASGCA



@ASGCA President John Sanford visiting @GolfChannel studios in Orlando, promoting the great work members are doing with @GCMorningDrive staff.



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#Tbt The membership card of ASGCA "Charter Member" William F. Gordon from ASGCA's inaugural year, 1947. Quite the collector's item.



ASGCA



Shots of the day from Minnesota Valley. The finish line is in sight! @DuininckGolf @Billy_Bunker



Bill Bergin, ASGCA
@bergingolf



#tbt One of the Founding Families of ASGCA: Robert Trent Jones, Sr. (c); Robert Trent Jones, Jr. (l); and Rees Jones (r). @asgca1946 @rtj2golfdesignz



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Looking into the future

Adam Lawrence speaks with ASGCA members to find out how they think their profession will change between now and 2030.

Golf course architecture is not, generally, a business that changes too rapidly. Aside from the use of computer-aided design (CAD) systems to produce incredibly detailed construction drawings, today's business would not be particularly confusing to the generation of architects that founded ASGCA in the 1940s.

But change, when it does come, comes in spades, and we may be approaching a tipping point. The

crash of 2007 had a huge impact on the golf architecture business, and its full effects have not yet been felt. Since 2007, because of the slowdown in new course construction across the world, design firms have reconfigured themselves; the big-name 'signature' design firms have shrunk dramatically, all of them, and in general the typical golf course architect has gone from being a member of a firm with multiple designers to a one- or two-man band.

Why is this change coming now? Well, for starters, we are close to a significant generational shift in the design industry. Many of the names that have dominated the business for 40 years are close to the end of their careers.

Evolving skill sets

Back in 2009, ASGCA assembled a panel of members to investigate and map out the skills that the golf architect of the future would require. The panel, led by Jason Straka, ASGCA, and including Ian Andrew, ASGCA, the late John Harbottle, ASGCA, ASGCA Past President Dick Phelps, ASGCA Fellow, and Shane Witcombe, ASGCA, created a set of Core Skill Charts, focused separately on business skills and technical/design skills.

The charts made it clear that requirements change over time: from developments in construction processes, through designing for those with disabilities, to government regulation in general, the successful

golf course architect has always needed to keep his skills fresh.

“Golfers will always want to play golf. There will always be changes, shifts and resets to the game and golf course architecture. That is not new and architecture will

enhancement, water quality and the like. Golf course architecture will be more responsive to the various ecosystems producing more unusual and interesting layouts, promoting matchplay over stroke or medal play. There will be a greater demand for

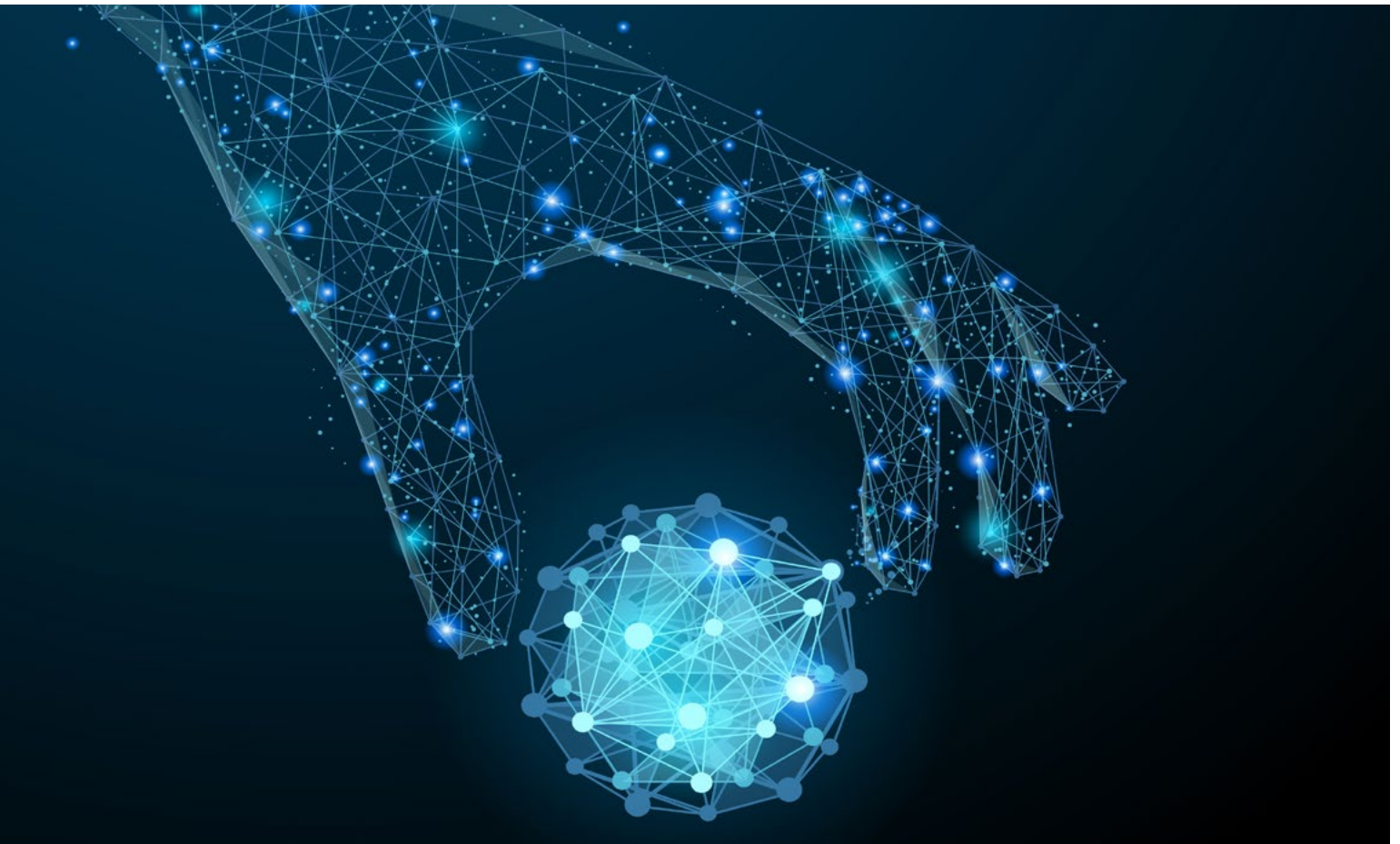
// Golfers will always want to play golf. There will always be changes, shifts and resets to the game and golf course architecture. That is not new and architecture will continue to evolve

ASGCA Past President Greg Martin, ASGCA

continue to evolve,” says ASGCA Past President Greg Martin, ASGCA. “Architects will need to be more responsive to community demands for open space functionality, providing additional benefit for stormwater management, habitat

firm-fast playing surfaces, requiring more width. This will have a dramatic effect on existing facilities that need to widen holes, offer faster surfaces with less inputs.”

Drew Rogers, ASGCA, is a classic example of how the industry has



transformed over the last decade. In 2007, he was a senior associate for the firm of Hills & Forrest, flying around the world and managing a bunch of new course projects. Now, he works for himself, with the support of his wife Alison in business management and marketing, and has a successful practice focused on course renovations. His restoration of Harry Colt's Old Elm course in Chicago has been widely acclaimed, and he is busier than ever.

"The business will continue to become more personal," says Rogers. "More and more of today's savvy clients are realizing that a big-name architect costs more and sometimes yields less in return. They really want to have a collaborative relationship with their architect—someone who listens and works with them, and someone who will help produce something that fits the user and operator first."

"Running a big shop of designers and support staff has seen its day and is likely not coming back," says Brian Curley, ASGCA. "Big drawing production will be handled by landscape architecture and engineering firms when detailed, coordinated plans are needed. Most future great courses will be built on top of mature, existing courses in well-

outweigh any skill factors. Fees from jobs will be irrelevant and the job will be much more of a hobby than a profession. Competition will drive fees down overall."

Technology drives change

Technology is the most obvious driver of change. Todd Quitno, ASGCA, says: "I was just chatting the other day with some friends about the incredible (and somewhat scary) growth in automation and artificial intelligence we've seen in the past decade. I think that growth will continue exponentially into future decades, including within the golf industry," he says. "Thus, for many, the way we design will be influenced by the way we manage golf courses, GPS/drone mapping and spraying technologies, automated infrastructure and equipment, virtual management (from afar), intuitive course handicapping, etc. Of course, this flies right in the face of the history and traditions of the game and its naturalist architecture, so it will be interesting to see how the old melds with the new. That's no different than today, I suppose: those who respect the past while embracing change seem to be the best suited to succeed."

On the same theme, ASGCA Past President Bruce Charlton, ASGCA,

“ With golf course design becoming more digitally oriented, it is my hunch that clients will expect the work product from their golf course architect sooner

ASGCA Past President Bruce Charlton, ASGCA

located areas—with the occasional destination exception—but many of these will prove to be financially unsound and lose their luster with potential developers. In my opinion, the successful golf architect of the future will be a financially independent, well-connected, decent player with enough skills to get by with rudimentary plans. Salesmanship and proper inroads to jobs will

stresses that technological advances imply greater speed. "I think the speed in which golf course design work will be requested will increase. With golf course design becoming more digitally oriented, it is my hunch that clients will expect the work product from their golf course architect sooner," he says. "I also see drone technology being used more in the conceptual phase of routing



DESIGN TRENDS

- 1 REPURPOSING OF EXISTING COURSES**
To focus on playability and environmental sustainability, and carving off land for economic gain or survival.
- 2 MORE ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY**
Understanding the unique aspects of local and community environmental needs and reducing inputs.
- 3 REDUCTION IN WATER USAGE**
Advances in irrigation technology to fully control water and more fully bring the ground game into play.
- 4 SHORTER COURSES**
Which have lower maintenance requirements and enable golfers to enjoy golf within shorter periods of time.
- 5 DESIGN AND BUILD**
Continued adaption of business models to put responsibility for both design and build elements to a single entity.



// Irrigation technology will continue to have an impact as well—the ability to better manage water and distribution of water so that playing surfaces are more complementary of the intended architecture

Drew Rogers, ASGCA

a golf course and initial imaging for the course. Perhaps more golf course plans will be drawn from an oblique perspective with ‘base mapping’ being drone footage?

“It is my dream, and perhaps it will happen before 2030, to design a golf course that can only be played in virtual reality mode; a golf course that is designed on a piece of land that is purely the figment of one’s imagination and cannot be replicated in any way. Therefore, I think the knowledge of ‘moving images’ and how to create them

digitally may come to the forefront in the skills of the future golf course architect.”

Focus on repurposing

There is general agreement that the trends we have seen in the industry in recent years will continue and accelerate. “I don’t believe there will be more new work than what we see now. I think this cycle is going to be very, very long,” says Ian Andrew, ASGCA. “The major trend from 2018-2030 will be the repurposing of existing golf courses. The focus will

be on playability and environmental sustainability (lower input models will be legislated in most areas). There will be lots of carving off land and reducing facilities for economic gain or survival, implying shorter courses—lower par—and no remaining spaces between holes. The underlying theme of the majority of non-elite club projects will be economic sustainability—half of private golf will be in some kind of survival mode. And the architects themselves will all be of the design/build model by this point.”

Andrew’s comment about the primacy of design/build projects is echoed by many architects. There is no doubt that this model has been growing in popularity of late, and lots of designers who come from a traditional contractor-focused construction background have realized the advantages of being responsible for more of a project. But to have a design/build contract on a perfect sandy site is very different from agreeing to one on heavy clay where major earthmoving is required. It remains to be seen how the design/build (or design/shape) model will be adapted to cope with mainstream projects. Andrew is confident it will.

Environment first

“Architects will need to be able to understand the unique aspects of local and community environmental needs and reduce inputs,” says Martin. “Some will gravitate toward more technical expertise, while others will move toward on-site/shaper/field condition value.”

“Many architects have the ability to build their designs as well as design and communicate them graphically and verbally,” says Rogers. “There is a large stable of these designer types out there—and they will continue to do well as their names become more exposed. We’ll continue to see some architects collaborate—combining personal and design-related skills that complement particular project goals. This sort of arrangement, if matched up properly, can produce some incredibly varied and dynamic results.

“I truly believe, and already see signs now, of the length issue changing,

requiring us to look at shortening courses instead of lengthening them. We've already heard from some touring pros that claim that lengthening only plays into the hands of the pro, and that shorter, more strategic holes are often more difficult, especially under pressure. And we certainly know that a longer course has far less appeal for the normal player as well as for aspects of maintaining courses that are stretched out. I just recently finished a renovation in Florida where I purposely shortened five of the holes to improve playability and strategic opportunities. Those back tee areas have now been converted as part of the native landscape—no longer part of the intensive maintenance footprint, and the golfers have not missed them one bit. In fact, the holes that were shortened now have enhanced shot-making choices—opportunities for greater enjoyment. 7,000-plus yards on the card means nothing to anyone, at least it shouldn't. The best courses are the ones that fit and offer up a provoking, memorable playing experience. A long course appeals to few too many golfers to make it worthwhile—and it's too costly otherwise.

"On that same renovation, I removed almost 30 bunkers from the course. Many were strategically invalid and were only adding to the time and cost of maintenance. Today, though, every one of the remaining bunkers is uniquely impacting in the simplest of ways through better design. There are just so many more ways to make golf interesting and challenging than mindlessly plunking in bunkers all over the place.

"Irrigation technology will continue to have an impact as well—the ability to better manage water and distribution of water so that playing surfaces are more complementary of the intended architecture. When water is properly controlled, we have the ability, along with the superintendent, to more fully introduce the ground back into the game. So much can be said about what happens to the ball once it's on the ground. When we can create conditions to promote

that nuance and build opportunities into our designs accordingly, golf will be inherently more exciting and fun to play."

Reducing footprints

"There is no doubt that environmental issues will continue to have a strong influence on the design and remodeling of golf courses, especially regarding water conservation, habitat preservation and the efficient use of land," says ASGCA Past President

this medium, as well as how the ball reacts on this type of surface, to design an appropriate golf experience. With the exception of a small number of championship venues where professional events are continually staged, courses will be much shorter. The average rank-and-file golfer will play these shorter courses with a reduced flight ball."

"The trend of new courses being built more for enjoyment and player friendly courses will continue," says

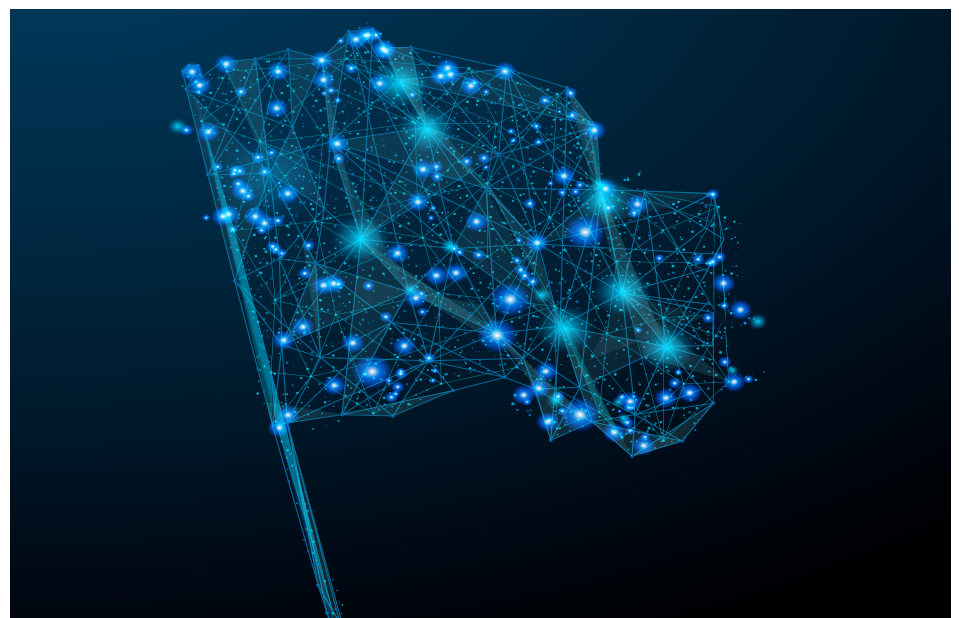
“I wouldn't be surprised to see the overall footprint of golf courses begin to shrink, to make golf course operations more efficient, cost effective and environmentally responsive

ASGCA Past President Doug Carrick, ASGCA

Doug Carrick, ASGCA. "I wouldn't be surprised to see the overall footprint of golf courses begin to shrink, to make golf course operations more efficient, cost effective and environmentally responsive."

"It's conceivable that water may be so precious courses will be totally built of artificial turf," says Ty Butler, ASGCA. "Architects will have to understand building techniques with

Dana Fry, ASGCA. "I am confident that courses being built using less earthwork, water and chemicals will continue as well. Hopefully the ruling bodies of golf will finally get together and dial the golf ball back. If not, 8,000 yard courses will start to become a reality. I strongly feel the USGA, R&A and perhaps Augusta National will take dramatic steps in the next 10 years. I sure hope they do!" ●



Courses for all

For people with disabilities, a round of golf can be a daunting prospect. *By Design* looks at how golf course architects are working to create a positive golfing experience for all types of player.

Golf courses will naturally vary in difficulty, and some golfers will prefer an easier round, whereas others may enjoy more of a challenge. But none would want to be presented with obstacles to their movement around the course.

For people with disabilities, this can be a common problem. So golf course architects work to ensure that their designs are accessible for people with physical limitations. As well as making golf as inclusive as possible, this approach helps clubs by maximizing the amount of people who can enjoy a round at their courses.

Accessibility was the primary focus for design work when Forrest Richardson, ASGCA, was asked to renovate features and paths at the golf courses at Griffith Park in Los Angeles, California for the Special Olympics World Games in August 2015.

“Participants have a range of special needs, but our focus at Griffith

Park was on making sure that the golf course would be accessible for those with physical limitations,” says Richardson.

“The first step was an inventory of any area where we had problems getting a regular golf cart. We looked at stairways and steep grades. This formed a foundation for developing a plan, and from there we created plans to show every point of access.”

Richardson identifies a number of practical things any golf course architect can do to make their design more accessible to all players.

“One of the simplest things we can do is to remove impediments around tees and greens,” he says. “Many courses have added curbs and borders to cart paths, and often these have no openings where someone with a mobility limitation is able to get through. These curbs also hinder a golf cart from accessing tees and green areas. What we strive for is a 5-foot



wide access area to allow easy access from a path to the tees and greens.”

Combining tee surfaces to a single level is another easy step, according to Richardson.

“By choosing a level where there is little to no grade difference from a path, you are able to provide access to the entire tee area,” he says. “This can also ease maintenance by eliminating slopes from one tee to the next. Sometimes you are not able to provide access to a particular tee. This is the nature of golf across natural terrain. When this occurs, it’s important to make sure there is access to at least one tee on the hole, and to make sure staff know so they can accommodate players who need access.”

Richardson adds that even players who may not consider themselves



Photos: courtesy of City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks

Forrest Richardson, ASGCA, made improvements to allow accessibility at the courses at Griffith Park in preparation for the Special Olympics World Games in 2015

disabled need a more accessible course experience.

“In an age when we are seeing more golfers play into their 90s and beyond, I think we owe it to the game to think carefully about how we get people up or down slopes to tees, fairways and greens,” he says. “Practice areas are crucial for access. This is where we can introduce people to the game. There’s simply no excuse for not doing our best to make sure these areas have adequate access without obstacles, steep slopes or narrow openings.”

In Jefferson City, Missouri, Todd Clark, ASGCA, has designed a course specifically for people with disabilities. The Missouri Golf Association hired Clark to design a short course at the Ken Lanning



Golf Center to be fully accessible for disabled people, as well as being suitable for children and beginners.

The nine-hole par-three course features holes of no more than 130 yards, built with artificial turf on flat land with extra wide cart paths that allow players to use wheelchairs all around the course. Greens and tees are also accessible via wheelchair.

In 2016, *Sports Planning Guide* voted the course one of the 10 best adaptive sports facilities in America,

saying: “The Ken Lanning Golf Center believes golf should be a sport for everyone, and since its opening earlier this year, the venue has allowed people with disabilities the chance to enjoy the game like never before.”

Jan Bel Jan, ASGCA, is the secretary of the National Alliance for Accessible Golf, based in St Augustine, Florida.

“The Alliance provides information on the how to incorporate accessibility into golf course design and renovation,” says Bel Jan. “Most



The course at Ken Lanning Golf Center was designed by Todd Clark, ASGCA, to be fully accessible for people with wheelchairs

Photos: Ken Lanning Golf Center

golf course architects provide access for people with disabilities already, through their designs for traditional golfers. This means those golf courses that are inclusionary—family and friends can play golf together with them. Through the Alliance website, golf course architects can learn to help make golf courses they design or renovate more barrier free. They can also learn about programs that club operators can include to encourage participation at the facility by people with disabilities and their families and friends.”

Bel Jan reflects on her experiences at a recent project. “At Pelican Marsh Golf Club in Naples, Florida, a disabled golfer closed his membership at the club because the course became too difficult from what had been the most forward tees at 4,959 yards,” she explains. “He joined a club with an ‘executive’ length that was more favorable to his game, but he missed his friends—and they missed him.”

Once, under Bel Jan’s guidance, Pelican Marsh had installed tees at 4,020 yards for 18 holes, the golfer renewed his membership because the course was now enjoyably playable

for him. He could play from a set of formal teeing grounds with his long-time friends. Bel Jan explains: “The social aspect of golf was enhanced for this golfer and his golf buddies, because they could revive their friendly rivalries!”

Distance is a recurring factor that can make golf courses difficult for new golfers, the less athletic,

for them, regardless of their gender, age or skill level.

“Scoring tees are formal in that they are constructed and maintained as all the other tees, and are built so they appear as always having been a part of the course, even when the course has been retrofitted,” Bel Jan explains. “The design takes into consideration access to the tees with

“The design takes into consideration access to the tees with a power wheelchair or single rider golf cart, slower club head speeds, angle of play and hazards

older players or youngsters, as well as people with disabilities, or the elderly. Bel Jan incorporates accessibility into her own design and renovation work, regularly in the form of ‘scoring tees,’ like at Pelican Marsh, and also Pelican’s Nest in nearby Bonita Springs and Jupiter Island Club on Florida’s east coast. These tees help ensure golfers play a yardage that is fun and challenging

a power wheelchair or single rider golf cart, slower club head speeds, angle of play and hazards. ‘Scoring Courses’ have their own scorecards and are rated by the USGA raters for handicap purposes.” ●

Read more about golf course design projects focused on accessibility at Griffith Park, Pelican’s Nest and the Ken Lanning Golf Center.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTS MEMBERS' WORLDWIDE REACH

OUR MEMBERS...

HAVE DESIGNED COURSES IN

92

DIFFERENT COUNTRIES



FOR SOME COMPARISON, THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPICS IN VANCOUVER WELCOMED ATHLETES FROM ONLY 82 NATIONS



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AVERAGE 18-HOLE COURSES REDESIGNED





A life on the course

Pennsylvanian architect David William Gordon passed away this October aged 95. *By Design* reflects on a career that saw him work alongside his father to create many revered layouts in the northeastern U.S.

David William Gordon's membership of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) had a sense of inevitability about it.

Born in Mount Vernon, New York, in 1922, Gordon was the son of William F. Gordon—one of the ASGCA's 14 founding members. He and his father would go on to form a prolific professional partnership, working together on a host of highly-regarded courses in the northeastern states of the U.S.

David Gordon was a lifelong resident of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Doylestown High School in 1940, before serving in the U.S. Army Air Force in the Second World War. As part of his service, Gordon worked as an instructor pilot in B-24 bombers.

After the war was over, he attended Pennsylvania State University and

earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy. He remained a fan of the university's Nittany Lions football team throughout his life.

Following the completion of his studies, David Gordon joined his father's golf course architecture firm—the William F. Gordon Company.

While there, David designed a number of revered courses in the U.S. His designs can be found in Delaware, Virginia, New Jersey, Ohio, New York, Florida, his native Pennsylvania, and Canada.

Among the portfolio of designs Gordon created during his lifetime are the courses at Saucon Valley Country Club in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (pictured); Browns Run in Middletown, Ohio; Stanwich Club in Greenwich, Connecticut; and Sunny Brook Country Club in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania.

Gordon also worked to redesign the course at Doylestown Country Club, and was rewarded with a hole-in-one there in 1972.

Gordon was welcomed to the ASGCA in 1951. He served as the ASGCA's president in 1959, was awarded Fellow status in 1993, and became the ASGCA's longest-tenured member.

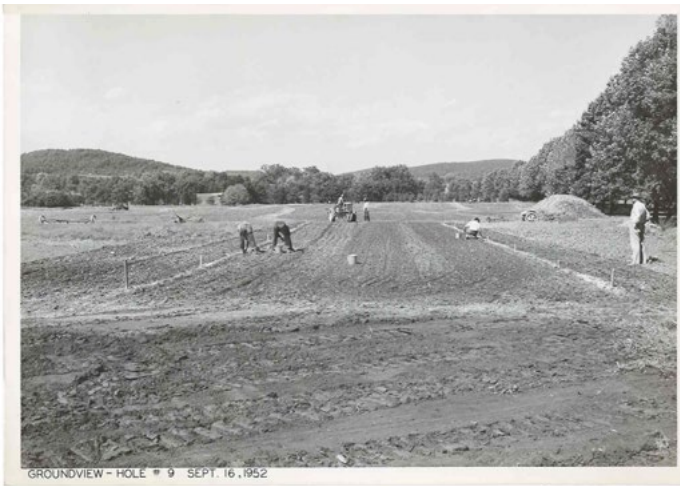
In the 1990s, Gordon presented the ASGCA Foundation with a 1914 manuscript on golf course architecture written by ASGCA founding father Donald Ross. Gordon, whose father had worked with Ross, had found this historic gem in his attic.

The manuscript was used by Ron Whitten to create *Golf Has Never Failed Me: The Lost Commentaries of Legendary Golf Architect Donald J. Ross*. Published in 1996, this book would become a bestseller and provided a new and fascinating





David Gordon worked with his father William to design two courses at Saucon Valley Country Club in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania – the Weyhill (main picture) and the Grace (images below of the ninth hole in construction in 1952)



Photos: courtesy of David J. Gordon

insight into the ways of one of golf course architecture's legends. Gordon's sharing of his discovery was without doubt a great gift to the industry.

During the Second World War, Gordon married his high school sweetheart Lois Lukens.

They separated in 1972. Gordon married Jane DiMeo in 1974. Jane introduced him to trap shooting, and he reached a high standard in the sport.

Following Jane's passing in 2007, David became a volunteer at the Doylestown Hospital, where he gave

more than 3,000 hours of his time to help others.

David is survived by two sons, David Jamieson Gordon of Jacksonville, Florida, and William Freeland Gordon of Thermopolis, Wyoming, and a stepdaughter, Lynn Bullock of Glassboro, New Jersey. ●

“ I love the excitement and joy of seeing my kids hit a good shot or make a long putt



Chris Wilczynski, ASGCA

Chris Wilczynski, ASGCA, started out in the golf course architecture industry as a partner and design associate at Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest and Associates—a firm he worked with for two decades. In 2010, he set up C.W. Golf Architecture in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

How is your game?

My game is OK. I had a 12.9 index at the end of the golf season. Some good rounds and some we will forget! I am horrible off the tee and scramble from that point to make a score. I could be a scratch player if the scoring was just based upon the short game and putting! I don't devote the necessary time to practice and eliminate my bad swing habits. I would rather play and just enjoy the experience!

Which three people would make up your dream fourball?

At this point in my life it would be my wife and my boys, who are nine and fourteen. We played together quite a bit in the last year. I truly see the game of golf evolving into a family sport. It's nice to be able to spend time together, enjoying the outdoors and each other. Where else can you spend this much uninterrupted time together playing such a fun game? I love the excitement and joy of seeing my kids

hit a good shot or make a long putt. I also like that we can play this game together for the rest of our lives.

What is your favourite hole in golf?

I like short par four and par five holes. There are so many options and variables for scoring on a short par four and a par five. One of the first short par fours I ever designed was the second hole at Red Hawk Golf Club in Michigan. It's a slightly uphill, 290-yard hole. The fairway sits at a slight left-to-right angle to the tees. Bunkers flank the right side of the fairway landing area. The green is raised slightly and falls away in the back. Smart or conservative play will yield a par or bogey. Aggressive play could yield a birdie or other! Crystal Downs in northern Michigan has some really great short par fours. And the par five eighteenth hole at Pebble Beach is one of the best par fives in golf. It's fun, beautiful and strategic, with the ocean down the entire left side of the hole.

If you could change or add one rule, what would it be?

I think that out of bounds with white stakes needs to go away. The game is hard enough as it is. Stroke and distance for a ball hit out of bounds is very punitive in

my opinion. I would change the rule so that everything is played as a lateral hazard. Take a one stroke penalty and play the next shot from where the ball crossed the hazard. Changing this rule would speed up the pace of play and make the game more fun for all golfers.

What project are you currently working on?

We are wrapping up a multi-phased renovation project at the Wanakah Country Club in Buffalo, New York. The last two holes were finished this fall. It took us nine years and seven phases to complete the renovation of the greens and the course layout, we have completely redesigned every hole. It has been very rewarding to help the club define a vision for improvement and then work hand-in-hand with them to see the vision become reality. As an architect, that is one of the best parts of our job—to see our vision come to life! We are finishing a golf course master enhancement plan for Blythefield Country Club in Michigan, which is home to the LPGA Meijer Classic. We are also starting on a new golf course residential community project in Florida. We are staying pretty busy and are thankful our clients are entrusting us to help them develop great golf. ●



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