



ISSUE 69 // SPRING 2025

BY DESIGN

Excellence in Golf Design from the American Society of Golf Course Architects



GOING PUBLIC?

The boom in participation has led to an influx of new private courses, but are municipalities investing too?

DESIGNS FOR TGL

We speak to the architects behind the fantasy creations for the new high-tech simulator league

ALSO:

- // 2025 GCSAA Show
- // Addison Reserve
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Brian Costello
President, ASGCA

Where it all started

In my interview for the last issue of *By Design*, I recalled tagging along while my dad played golf at the public Colma course in San Francisco. It was an accessible, affordable facility that introduced me and many of my friends to a game that has gone on to bring us great joy throughout our lives.

Most people can vividly remember their earliest experiences of golf, and, for many, those memories were made at courses that are welcoming to all. Often, those courses are operated by their local town or city. Municipal golf plays a huge role in providing people of all ages with a way to enjoy the game and associated benefits of exercise and fresh air.

As golf continues to benefit from a boom in popularity, it is great to hear that golf course development is not just happening at high-profile private courses, but also at those fantastic municipal facilities that we all know and love. Our main feature article for this issue (see page 14) profiles some of the work that ASGCA members are doing and considers what is driving local government decision-makers to continue investing in golf.

One thing that few of us will recall from our childhood is a high-tech golf league played in an enormous arena. But TGL is here now and looks set to succeed in the future, in no small part thanks to the creativity of Chad Goetz, ASGCA, and Agustin Pizá, ASGCA, who were among the architects to have designed holes for this new format. Turn to page 20 to hear their insights into the creative process.

I hope you enjoy the read.

Brian Costello

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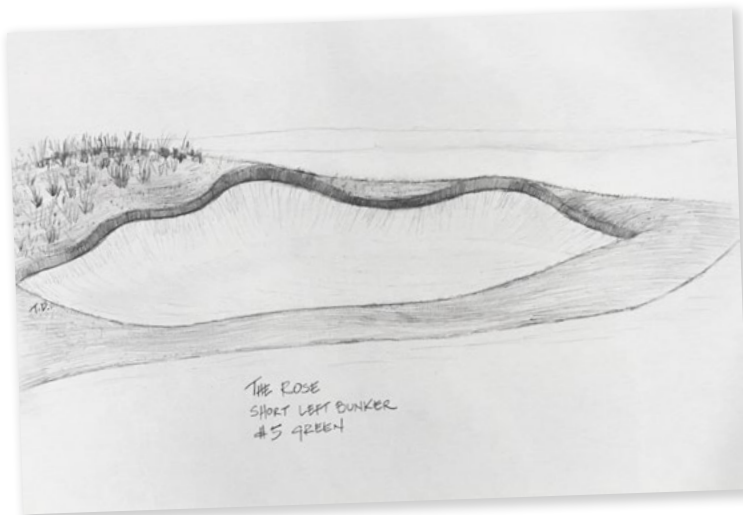
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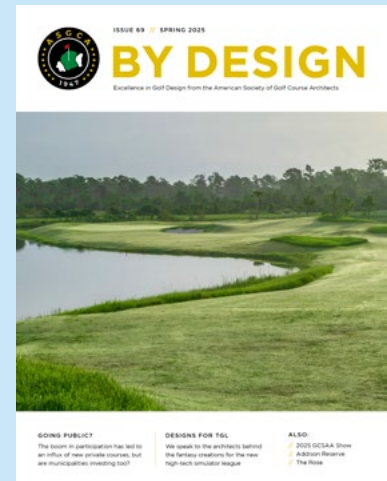
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The Nest at Sandhill Crane, a new par-three course designed by Chad Goetz, ASGCA, of Nicklaus Design. Read more on page 14.

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Rees Jones completes \$24m renovation at Addison Reserve

ASGCA Past President Rees Jones and Steve Weisser, ASGCA, have completed a renovation of the 27 holes at Addison Reserve Country Club in Delray Beach, Florida.

The \$24 million renovation of the club's three nines – Redemption, Salvation and Trepidation, which were originally designed by Arthur Hills, ASGCA Fellow, and built in the late 1990s – was undertaken in two phases. Work on the practice facilities and Trepidation nine taking place in 2023, then the Redemption and Salvation nines following in 2024.

“The newly redesigned Addison

Reserve 27-hole golf course was created so that each hole offers a distinct challenge and character,” said Jones. “The golf holes have a visual appeal while being strategic to play. Players of all skill levels will enjoy playing this course on a continuing basis.”

The redesign emphasizes the ground game; every green can be accessed with a running shot, while new contour introduces challenge on fairways and around greens.

Bunkering was completely rethought too: “The bunkers were very flat and it was sometimes hard to recall which hole you were on,” said Weisser. “The challenge

with a place that people play all the time is to name any of the 27 holes and immediately be able to visualize it. It was fun to do and Michael [McCarthy, CEO of Addison Reserve] pushed us; every hole had to be better, and not just better than it was before. And every single homeowner has an opinion about what they are seeing – so we looked at every little detail, from visuals to how you play it and how to maintain it.”

Greens have been designed to provide options to vary play. “They are quite large, about 6,500 square feet on average, and are made up of several flatter areas with transitions



Photo: Gideon Heller

The closing hole of the Salvation nine at Addison Reserve is a par-five to a green surrounded by water

between them,” said Jones. “It maintains the interest because you have a different challenge every time you move the pin.”

“Rees and Steve also wanted all three ninth holes to be unique,” said McCarthy. “The par-four ninth on Trepidation doesn’t have any bunkers but is a monster of a hole; on Salvation’s par-five ninth you have to carry water twice; and nine on Redemption is a short par-four where a cascading stream wraps around the green.”

Read more about the Addison Reserve project in the January 2025 issue of Golf Course Architecture magazine

Steve Smyers and Craig & Coyne golf design firms merge

Two golf course design firms – one led by ASGCA Past President Steve Smyers and the other a partnership between Colton Craig, and Tom Coyne – have merged to create Smyers Craig Coyne (SCC).

The new firm will work on three new course projects in 2025, in South Dakota, Georgia and Florida, as well as a redesign in Indiana.

“What makes us such a strong team is that we each bring different and specific skill sets to the table,” said Smyers.

“I’m forever grateful for Steve’s mentorship; he’s the Mr Miyagi to my Karate Kid.” said Craig.

“What drew me to Steve was our shared respect for golf and our common values. Steve is the man – we’re lucky to have his wisdom in our corner,” said Coyne, a *New York Times* bestselling author and editor of *The Golfer’s Journal*.



Photos: SCC



Steve Smyers, pictured right with Tom Coyne. Top, Smyers with Colton Craig



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Dye Designs renovates South Korea's Woo Jeong Hills

Dye Designs is renovating greens at Woo Jeong Hills Country Club near Cheonan, South Korea. Mother-son duo, Cynthia Dye McGarey, ASGCA, and Matt McGarey, will redesign all 18 putting surfaces, plus two practice greens.

“It’s been more than 30 years since Woo Jeong Hills opened, so updating the size, contouring and drainage of its greens is important to ensure it remains among Asia’s best,” said Dye McGarey. “This project is especially meaningful to us given we’re refreshing my cousin Perry’s first golf course design in South Korea, a country he enjoyed and



Photo: Dye Designs

where he did so much great work.”

Construction is expected to be complete by late March with the

course, which was designed by Perry Dye, ASGCA, reopening for member play in late spring.



“There were a lot of CAD lines and geometry behind the location of the tees and greens”

Alex Hay, ASGCA

In the latest podcast from *Golf Course Industry's* “Tartan Talks” series, Alex Hay, ASGCA, of Lobb + Partners, discusses work he has overseen at Vancouver’s University GC and how to help bring more golfers into the game.

University GC wanted a permanent solution to reduce the number of balls being hit out of the property from the tee shot on the sixth hole. “The golf ball is going further than ever before and further

offline than before,” says Hay. “University GC had a par four close to the boundary, followed by a par three. And after lots of analysis and multiple plans, it worked out that it would be better to flip the pars on those two holes. There were a lot of CAD lines and geometry behind the location of the tees and greens to make sure we were putting them in a safe spot.”

And how to get more people into the game? “The more

opportunities we provide, maybe it’s a pitch-and-putt or a putting course, the more we’ll see golfers filter to traditional golf courses,” says Hay. “If we can set up traditional courses in a way so that the jump isn’t too big, that will help. Plus, having forward tees and multiple ways to play the holes will also help them.”

Listen to the full “Tartan Talks” at golfcourseindustry.com.

Here are links to other recent “Tartan Talks”, now featuring over 100 episodes:

- Logan Thompson, ASGCA, [talks about how an architect fixes problem holes](#)
- Chad Goetz, ASGCA, [shares experiences from his two-and-a-half decade career](#)

“Like all great art
the answer is on the
canvas, and my
canvas is dirt. I’m a
voice of the ASGCA.”

— GIL HANSE



asgca.org

Bergin to renovate The Golf Club at Crown Colony in Florida

The Golf Club at Crown Colony, on the southern outskirts of Fort Myers, Florida, will undergo a \$12 million renovation project by Bill Bergin, ASGCA.

Bergin’s masterplan has been approved by members – it does not alter the course’s routing, but the architect says, “everything else will be changed”. The project includes upgrades to irrigation and drainage, rebunkering, regrassing and adding new or relocating tees to allow the course to play from 4,300 to nearly 7,000 yards.

Bergin’s redesign will also open up a large portion of land near the clubhouse and eighteenth, which will be used to create a practice facility with a double-sided range and short-game area.



Photo: The Golf Club at Crown Colony

Before the renovation begins, the course will host the 2025 U.S. Senior Open and qualifying for the U.S. Open. It will remain open

throughout the 2025 season with work scheduled to begin in spring 2026 and completed by the end of the year.

Mark Hollinger, ASGCA (1954-2024)

Mark Hollinger, ASGCA, passed away at the age of 70 in Winter Garden, Florida, in December.

A native of Pennsylvania and raised in Warner Robins, Georgia, Hollinger joined with Willard Byrd & Associates in 1986 before moving to JMP Golf Design Group in 1990.

As a partner and principal at JMP, Hollinger worked across the United States and internationally, notably in Asia. His designs include Juizhaigou GC, Dongzhuang Beach GC and Jian Lake

Blue Bay GC in China; Wildhawk GC in California; Iwate Numakunai GC in Japan; and Las Lomas Golf & Habitat in Mexico.

ASGCA President Brian Costello, a former partner with Hollinger, said: “Mark retired from JMP in 2021, but his legacy will live on, in particular, with the significant number of highly regarded golf courses that he designed for the firm in China.”

Hollinger is survived by his wife, Kimbo, daughters Hannah and Jordan, and his brother, Richard.





Photo: Brandon Johnson Golf Course Design

Brandon Johnson develops renovation plan for Jeremy Ranch

Brandon Johnson, ASGCA, will oversee a renovation of the golf course at Jeremy Ranch Golf and Country Club in Park City, Utah.

The architect has developed a masterplan that focuses on a complete renovation of green complexes, bunkers and tees,

regrassing, native area conservation and cart path work.

“Our intent is to restore the original sizes and shapes of greens while making targeted expansion and contour modifications to introduce new pin locations,” said Johnson.

“We will retain the existing character

of greens and use that as a guide when redesigning any that will increase pin locations, setup variety and playability. Greens that currently have limited pinnable areas due to severe slopes and pitches will be recontoured to make more playable with increased setup options.”

Curley-Wagner to design new course in the Philippines

Developer Villar Group has appointed Brian Curley, ASGCA, and Jim Wagner, ASGCA, to create a new golf course in Villar City, a 3,500-hectare planned development spanning 13 cities and towns across Metro Manila and Cavite in the Philippines.

The 18-hole golf course will be built on a 65-hectare parcel that features open meadows, areas of mature vegetation, rolling terrain, elevation changes and two natural stream systems that flank the eastern and western edges of the property. Curley-Wagner will create a masterplan, as well as also designing practice facilities and a short-game area.



Photo: Curley-Wagner Golf Design



Image: Fought Golf Design

John Fought begins renovation of Indian Wells muni

John Fought, ASGCA, has started a renovation of the Players course at Indian Wells Golf Resort, owned by the city of Indian Wells in the Coachella Valley of California.

Fought created the current layout in 2007 and has returned to reconfigure the 18-hole routing following the sale of land for new resort development.

The current seventeenth and eighteenth holes will be removed from the routing and the main body of the course, north of the

wash, will be reconfigured to make space for two replacement holes. “I have to build seven new holes from the existing course, allowing for returning nines and a spectacular finish along the wash,” said Fought. The remainder of the course will see minor updates to greens, tees and bunkers.

“I want everything that is being done to be easily maintained whilst also being fresh and new.”

The course is expected to reopen in November 2025.

Fry/Straka to redesign Sarasota National

The Sarasota National community in Venice, Florida, has approved a renovation master plan by Dana Fry, ASGCA, and ASGCA Past President Jason Straka.

Fry/Straka’s plan is to redesign the course, rebuild greens and bunkers, regrass all fairways,


rough and tees, and install a new irrigation system. Architects Dana Fry and Jason Straka will also oversee the expansion and renovation of the practice facility to include a 47,000-square-foot putting green and a 1.75-acre short-game area.



Photo: Troon

SOCIAL UPDATE



 Golf Course Architecture
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The Club at Quail Ridge has reopened the North course following a renovation by architects Jason Straka and Dana Fry and contractor NMP Golf Construction.



 ASGCA
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We are better together. So, ASGCA Winter Meeting starts with updates from our industry partners, including GCBA President Jon O’Donnell.



 Richard Mandell
@RichardMandell

Thanks to the Donald Ross Society for visiting my work at Bobby Jones Golf Club in Sarasota, Florida last week. Here is a link to the before and after presentation I made to the group.

Search ASGCA on the below channels for more posts:



Going public?

New private courses are cropping up all over the United States to accommodate the increasing popularity of golf, but does the trend relate to public facilities too? Richard Humphreys speaks with ASGCA members to find out more.

According to recent data from the National Golf Federation (NGF), on-course golf participation in the United States is at its highest level since 2008, with over 26 million Americans playing golf on a course in 2023, and over 14 million more engaging with the sport on a simulator, range or similar.

This boom in popularity has led to a spike in new golf course development. The NGF reports that there were more new courses being developed in 2024 than there has been at any time since 2011, with this upward trajectory starting from mid-2020.

Among the more high-profile pockets of development are South Florida – where new clubs include Panther National, Miakka, the three-course Apogee Club and two-

course The Ranch development – and Texas, where the Omni PGA Frisco Resort has opened its two Fields Ranch courses and at least ten new courses are expected to follow elsewhere in the state.

Much of this new development is, however, firmly focused on the private market, or to people who can afford green fees at the top end of the scale. Is there, flying somewhere under the radar of mainstream golf media, a similar boom in accessible and, in particular, municipal golf?

The power of investment

If the project list of Todd Schoeder, ASGCA, is anything to go by, golf's boom definitely extends to the public sector. He has five muni projects in planning or at the

design stage, with budgets ranging from \$8-\$40 million. Schoeder has already demonstrated the power of investment in public facilities with his highly regarded 2020 transformation of City Park Golf Course in Denver, which revitalized the course and also improved its flood detention capacity, reducing the risk of flooding for the nearby community. Working alongside ASGCA Past President Forrest Richardson, Schoeder has also completed the renovation of Los Alamos Golf Course in New





Mexico, which included several changes to improve safety for users of nearby roads and trails.

“There is absolutely a trend of cities, counties and municipalities investing in their primary asset within their community,” says Schoeder, who highlights the appeal of new amenities, player enjoyment, revenue generation and course playability to municipal decision-makers. “They’re not afraid to invest these days.”

Among Schoeder’s recent commissions, a common driving

force is that courses are simply worn out. “Quite often, it begins with the need to replace the golf course infrastructure,” he says. “It could be irrigation, cart paths, bunkers, greens, tees or stormwater management. Safety is also an important consideration for munis, given cities and counties need to think about liability – hitting distances nowadays have had impact. These conversations about addressing deferred maintenance sometimes lead to larger scale projects... more likely now that

cities, counties and municipalities have more money.”

Todd Quitno, ASGCA, is noticing similar: “Most of my municipal work started with the need to address deferred maintenance, with a lot of these places having been run on a shoestring budget,” he says. One example is Canal Shores in Evanston, a suburb of Chicago, where several agencies – public and private – came together to revitalize the course. “The impetus behind the project was that the greens, irrigation system and turf



Rounds at the city of Boston's William Devine course have risen from 35,000 to 50,000 over the past 15 years that Mark Mungeam, ASGCA, has worked there

were failing. Everything they had deferred was coming to a head and then Covid came and created the opportunity to do something. Initially money was raised with the idea of rebuilding greens and upgrading irrigation, but we took it from this addressing deferred maintenance standpoint and ended

a four-hole junior loop, plus other additional amenities. “They have a social center; the First Tee will be having junior clinics all summer on the practice green and there’s a giant area surrounding that green where a caddy training program will start. There’s a lot of activity to enable Canal Shores to be successful.

Committed to improvement
Much of the work that Mark Mungeam, ASGCA, is doing at municipal courses is less about a boom in popularity. “Most have been undergoing a gradual improvement process over a number of years, with the city of Boston’s Donald Ross-designed William Devine at Franklin Park and George Wright courses as prime examples.”

Mungeam developed his first masterplan for those courses in the early 2000s, following the city of Boston’s decision to take over their operation and management. Course improvements have occurred every other year at each layout, over the last 15 years. “The only thing that has changed over the past five years has been the rising cost of materials – it has nearly doubled – and a reduced interest from contractors to bid on municipal projects. Every year

“Conversations about addressing deferred maintenance sometimes lead to larger scale projects”

up focusing on how to build a community asset and add amenities that weren’t there before.”

In addition to some new holes, rerouting and course changes, Quitno has also overseen the creation of a new 27,500-square-foot putting green, which forms part of

I think they’re going to monetize that green for corporate outings, introduce food and beverage options and they’re making improvements to the patio space. It’s a huge social space; it always was, but they now have the amenities to really pull that all together.”



Photo: Ross Mungeam

has also been successful in terms of aesthetics and economics.

“We host 27 different golf leagues and many outings,” says Greg Tudor, golf course superintendent at Frear Park. “Having the course drain properly has increased our revenue stream and let myself and my staff focus on grooming the course instead of pumping bunkers and worrying about the shortgrass areas being too wet to handle play after each rain event.”

Public priorities

“Expanding, levelling and relocating tees are very much considerations from munis,” says Mungeam.

“Tee expansion spreads out the wear, contributing to better course conditions.” Tree work can help too. At William Devine, Mungeam very selectively removed some, while at George Wright, which was built through a forest, there has been a lot more vegetation management required. “There were lots of big trees and brush underneath them, so vegetation removal has really opened up the course and made it play faster and better,” he says.

Municipalities are more likely to approve funding for golf course work where there are wider community benefits. “They’re using golf courses to capture stormwater runoff, treat water and filter it before it goes back into the ground,” says Schoeder. “So, golf courses have become what they always have been, an asset and resource for the community. This has been the case for my projects at City Park,

we bid out the work to contractors and create new plans. We used to get interest from several contractors, but now, we only get interest from one or two because they have so much private work available to them.”

Mungeam has also recently completed work at Frear Park Municipal Golf Course in Troy, New York, an 18-hole design comprising nine holes built in 1931 and nine by ASGCA Founding Member Robert Trent Jones, Sr. in 1964.

“The original masterplan was too much for the city, but we value-engineered it, keeping as much of the drainage work as possible,” says Mungeam. “Prior to our work, there were times when the back nine would be closed because it was so wet.” Now, following a \$2.1m project, which included all bunkers, many new tees and one renovated green, the course drains well and

Serving the community well

Wellman Golf Club in Johnsonville, South Carolina, which had been closed since 2010, reopened in 2024 following a \$5 million renovation by ASGCA Past President Rees Jones and Bryce Swanson, ASGCA



Photo: Dustin Guider

The rebirth of the Wellman club as a municipal facility was funded by a Florence County ‘penny tax.’ “The Johnsonville City council members knew that reviving the golf course would provide a recreation and social center for all Florence County residents,” says Jones. “The recreated golf course has also revitalized the real estate market in Johnsonville.”

The design team preserved the original routing while making changes to improve the flow of the holes. “The site’s sandy soil naturally aids the drainage, and the existing tree-lined layout allowed for an affordable irrigation system,” says Jones. “These natural characteristics enabled us to build a minimalist, Golden Age design.”

“It’s now a social gathering spot,” says Jones. “I know what a club like this can mean for the whole community.”

Read more about the Wellman renovation in Golf Course Architecture magazine.

MUNICIPAL GOLF

Florida's new playground

The Park, designed by Gil Hanse, ASGCA, Jim Wagner and Dirk Ziff, opened last year after a group of donors – led in part by Seth Waugh, the former CEO of the PGA of America – raised \$56 million to reimagine a lost course in Florida

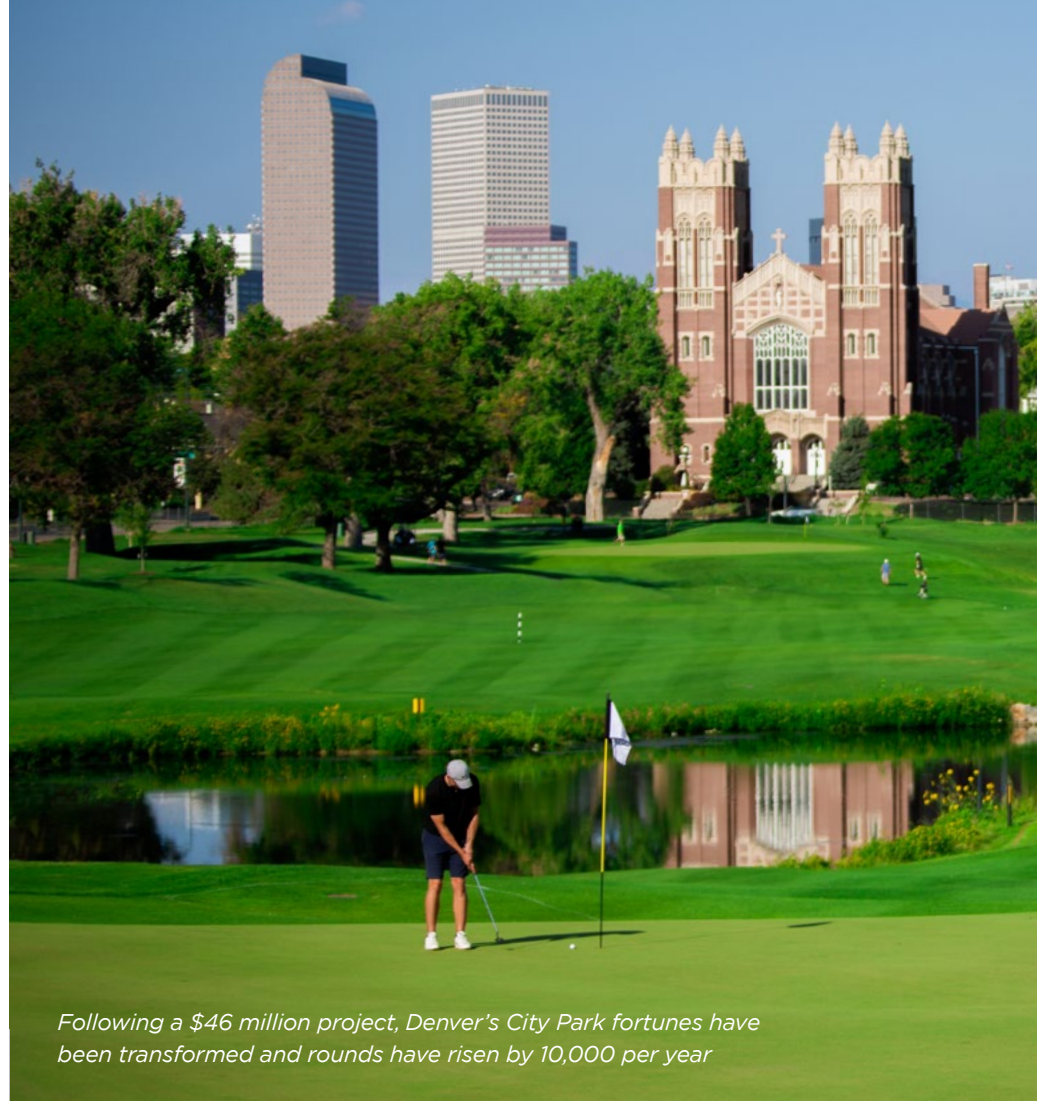


Photo: The Park

The City of West Palm and the donors hired Hanse Golf Design to create a new layout on the site of the former Dick Wilson-designed West Palm Beach Golf Course, which closed in 2018. The Park has been built for Palm Beach residents and in addition to the 18-hole layout, there are state-of-the-art practice facilities, a nine-hole lighted short course, a putting course, junior caddie programs and various youth educational services.

“We wanted to call it The Park because this is 190 acres owned by the residents and, like a park, it should be open to all,” Waugh said at the course’s opening.

Rates for West Palm Beach residents begin at \$60, Florida residents begin at \$160 and out of state rates are \$220. Local juniors (under 17) can play for \$20.



Following a \$46 million project, Denver's City Park fortunes have been transformed and rounds have risen by 10,000 per year

.Meadow Park, Los Alamos and Lake Arbor.”

The holy grail is to attract non-golfers and deliver community benefits while also increasing the revenue-generating potential of a course. Denver’s City Park has seen rounds rise from 45,000 a year pre-renovation, to 65,000 in 2024. And at Franklin Park and George Wright, rounds have risen from 35,000 to 50,000 per year. “Obviously not all of that increase is because of the work that’s been done,” says Mungeam. “There’s been the general increase in play that our industry has seen, but the work has definitely impacted the visibility of the courses. Prior to our work, most of their play was from within the city, but now, both courses have become a

bit of a destination, so they’re pulling people in from outside of the city.”

What’s trending?

“Many of the munis I’m working at are adding putting courses and other entertainment to their facilities,” says Quitno. “Those sorts of amenities have become big in the community sector.

“I’ve always had municipal work but they all now have more money and have received record rounds in the last couple of years, so they’re able to tackle the stuff they haven’t been able to do for the last 20 years.”

“Speed of play, shortening the separation between tee times and efficient maintenance are of interest to my clients,” says Mungeam. “They’re looking to



Photo: Tanner Gibas, City and County of Denver

Building a new nest

In August 2023, a new, 18-hole par-three course, designed by Chad Goetz, ASGCA, of Nicklaus Design, opened at Sandhill Crane Golf Club in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

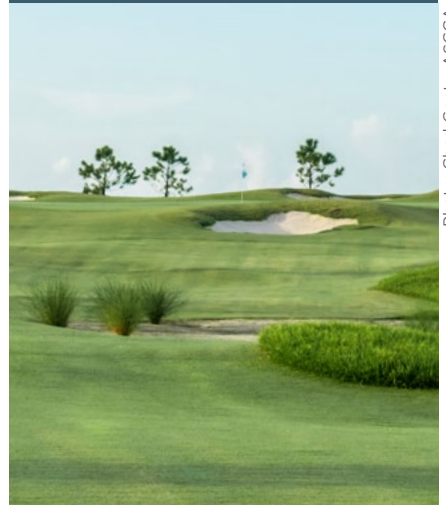


Photo: Chad Goetz, ASGCA

improve player movement around the course by making the flow from tee to green and from the green to the cart path better.

“Municipal golf courses are being closed because they ‘just cater to golfers’, so we are also seeing a push to make them a valuable community resource. We now see things such as movies on the practice range, festivals and even closing the course one morning a week for walking/running and bird watching.”

Schoeder says municipals are looking to think more outside-of-the-box. “In a lot of cases, these are prime assets within their community. The game is changing... there are different users and expectations. From the moment you reserve your tee

time, to playing your round and then evening entertainment, we as architects are looking for what’s going to carry them into the future, how they can continue to attract players, retain those players and grow the game.

“Some of these projects are focusing on entertainment concepts – like driving ranges with state-of-the-art hitting bays, food and beverage and simulators. They’re trying to tie all those aspects together. We’ll see more of these things and alternative golf courses.

“Muni facilities are savvy enough to understand the game is evolving and changing, whereas the private clubs and high-end public facilities are a little more resistant to making wholesale changes.” ●

The project came about following the city of Palm Beach Gardens acquiring an additional 115 acres alongside its existing 18-hole design and originally planned a new practice area and nine-hole layout. “After exploring some options, we persuaded the city that an 18-hole par-three course might better complement their existing facilities,” said architect Goetz.

The Nest course has holes ranging from 100-256 yards from the back tees and 70-156 yards from the forward tees. The layout is lightly bunkered for a Florida course and includes five bunkerless holes. Green fees for The Nest range from \$49 to \$84.

“South Florida is starved of public golf – especially during the busy seasonal months, so this is a welcome addition to local and visiting golfers,” said Goetz.



Designs for the big screen

Chad Goetz and Agustin Piza discuss their design decisions for holes that have been played in TGL, golf's newest competition.

The new TGL high-tech golf simulator league has now progressed from vision to (virtual) reality, with the six teams of PGA Tour pros hitting into a 64-foot tall screen for 15-hole rounds at the purpose-built SoFi Center in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, culminating in a playoff final in late March.

Among the stars of the show are the virtual golf holes, created

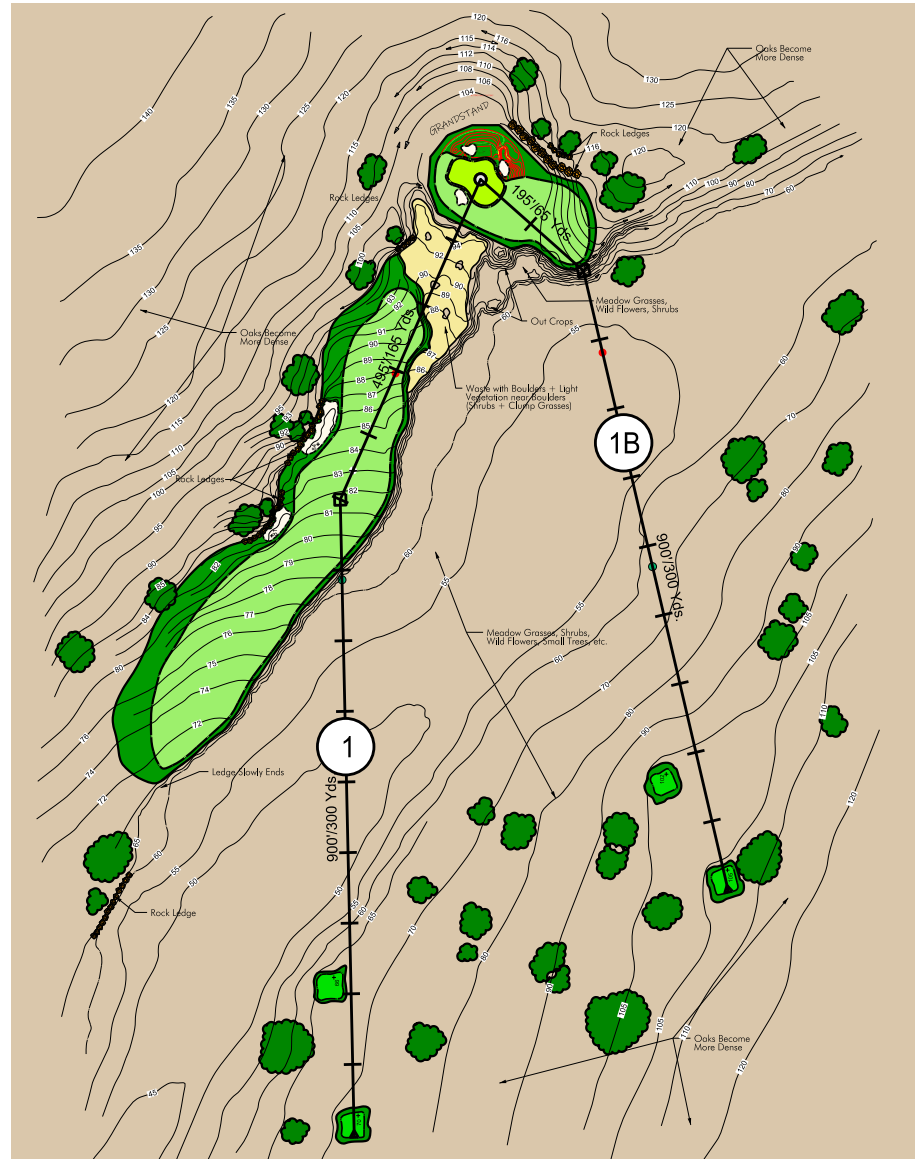
over fantasy environments by golf course architects Beau Welling, Chad Goetz, ASGCA, of Nicklaus Design, and Agustín Pizá, ASGCA. *By Design* spoke to Goetz and Pizá to gain an insight into their design decisions and early thoughts on how the holes have performed.

“The first impression that one can have is that we had no constraints,” says Pizá. “But there are restrictions,

not in the imaginary world of the golf setting, but in regard to technology and how the game transitions from the simulator world into the existing green.

“We had to design for this one putting surface that can rotate 360 degrees; the outer tongue of the green can also rotate.”

For those that have played on a simulator, uphill and downhill shots



Images: Nicklaus Design

Chad Goetz's Bluebonnet hole is a par four of 474 yards, where players will take on as much of the carry as they dare. The green becomes drivable when the hole is played from the forward tees

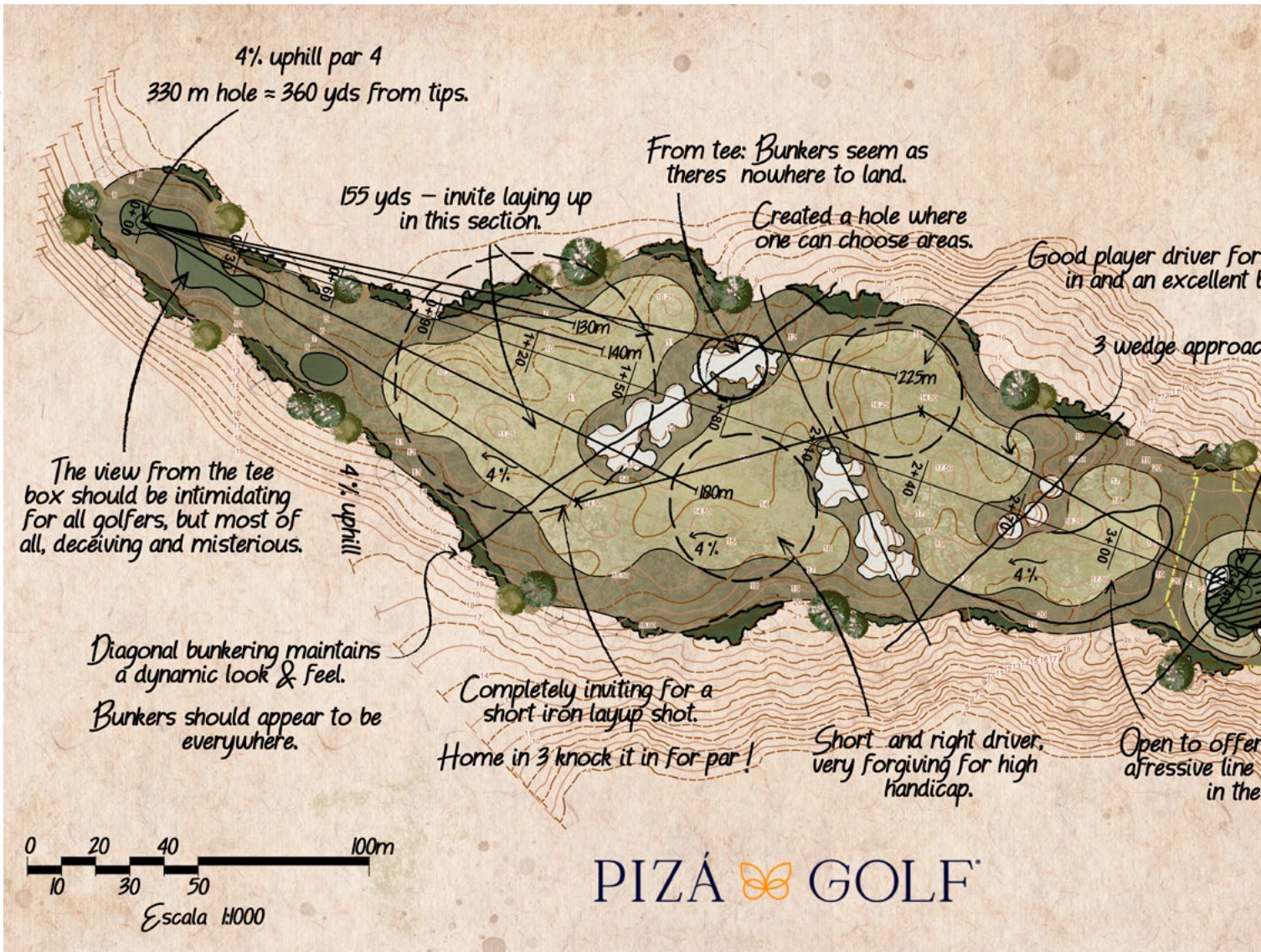
are uncommon or don't display too well. "If you're looking at a five-storey screen and you have a shot that is more than six-to-10 percent uphill, you can't see the horizon, you only see a big wall of green because the cameras are fixed on that one point," says Pizá. "The same happens when there is a 30-foot (or more) drop to a fairway or par-three green, the only thing that you see on the screen is sky, because the screen doesn't move with your head.

"Other than that, the sky has been the limit!"

Goetz also highlighted slope as one of the primary considerations. "We were given some early slope criteria of what would fit on the screen," he says. "I decided to try and test that criteria and create a mountain hole with a more uphill tee shot followed by a downhill approach. We had to tweak the design a little bit but combining that idea with the speed slot feature of the tenth hole at Augusta

National and you have the 'Alpine' hole. This seems to be a favorite of the fans and players, as the guys can drive it massive lengths if they hit the speed slot.

"TGL also wanted us to avoid shots in the 30- to 70-yard range as the players would have to hit that pitch shot almost into the bottom of the huge screen. That is why you see so many holes with bold, non-recoverable cliffs or water features around the greens. TGL also wanted to avoid having trees where



a player might get stymied, or deep-faced bunkers in the line of play, as those obstacles would be difficult to replicate in the game format.”

And while it’s early days for the virtual league, the architects have found season one to be a gratifying and educational experience.

“We’re all still learning, and it’s a cool learning curve,” says Pizá. “Each week we’re seeing how players respond to each hole and each feature. Our original intent was to design holes according

to the average carry of the top players.” However, some setup changes have been made recently, with tees moved up or back depending on the distances the players have decided or managed to hit during matches.

“I’m really happy with how the holes have performed,” says Pizá. “I have liked this experimental phase of TGL and have enjoyed seeing how they have been played and hearing what the players are discussing. Seeing them on a

40-second shot clock and talking about how to play the hole in different ways has been great – it was designed to be matchplay alternate shot and to generate conversations between the best players. The way TGL has set up the 15-hole experience with my, Beau’s and Chad’s holes has been great.

“The entire TGL experience has been fantastic, and, for the first time in my career, I can finally say I had a blank canvas to work on.”

Goetz says: “Watching the early



The Plank, a 380-yard hole from Agustín Pizá, offers golfers a choice of landing areas between the large bunker complexes that diagonally bisect the fairway

matches, I feel like many of the players have the same expressions as I did when starting the design process. It's a feeling of 'this feels like the sport and profession I know well, but this is a different animal and I'm not exactly sure what to think or do yet.'

"I really did not know what to expect when the players started playing these holes in live matches. They have made some of the shots I thought might be extra challenging look pretty easy, and in some cases,

they seem to be playing the holes a little more conservatively than I would have thought. I guess a conservative tee shot with the 'penalty' of playing an approach shot that is an extra 10-to-20 yards longer with a carry over a bunker doesn't scare them too much. Maybe the more human golfers among us could learn a lesson from that?

"During early meetings we asked if the holes should be based closer to reality, or could they take on more fantastical forms like one might see

in a video game. We were asked to keep our holes more traditional in appearance. So, if we were asked to design more holes for season two, it would definitely be fun to try a more unconventional form. To add more variety to the catalog holes, I think a par three requiring a driver could be a fun option.

"This has been such a unique and fun experience, and it has definitely pushed me to explore my creativity and continue to explore what makes a great golf hole." ●

Scenes from San Diego

Moments from the 2025 GCSAA Conference & Trade Show, where ASGCA was a Presenting Partner.

The annual GCSAA Conference & Trade Show is the foremost event in the golf course development industry, with architects, superintendents, builders and vendors from across the world meeting to learn about the latest in golf design, construction and maintenance, and network with their peers.

This year, over 11,000 people attended the event in San Diego, California. More than 6,700 seminar seats were filled, which is the highest total since 2008. ●



Photo: ASGCA



Photo: ASGCA

Attendees discuss hazard placement at a workshop hosted by Nathan Crace, ASGCA, and Jeff Danner, ASGCA



Photo: ASGCA



Photo: GCSAA

The Golf Sustainability Showcase highlighted research, innovation, technology and best practices



Photo: GCSAA



Ian Williams of Green Irrigation Solutions was one of several speakers at the ASGCA Winter Meeting

Photo: ASGCA



Photo: GCSAA

The ASGCA Winter Meeting and Networking Breakfast were both well-attended events and enabled members and partners to catch up with one another



Photo: ASGCA



ASGCA Executive Director Hunki Yun with ASGCA President Brian Costello

Photo: ASGCA



Photo: GCSAA

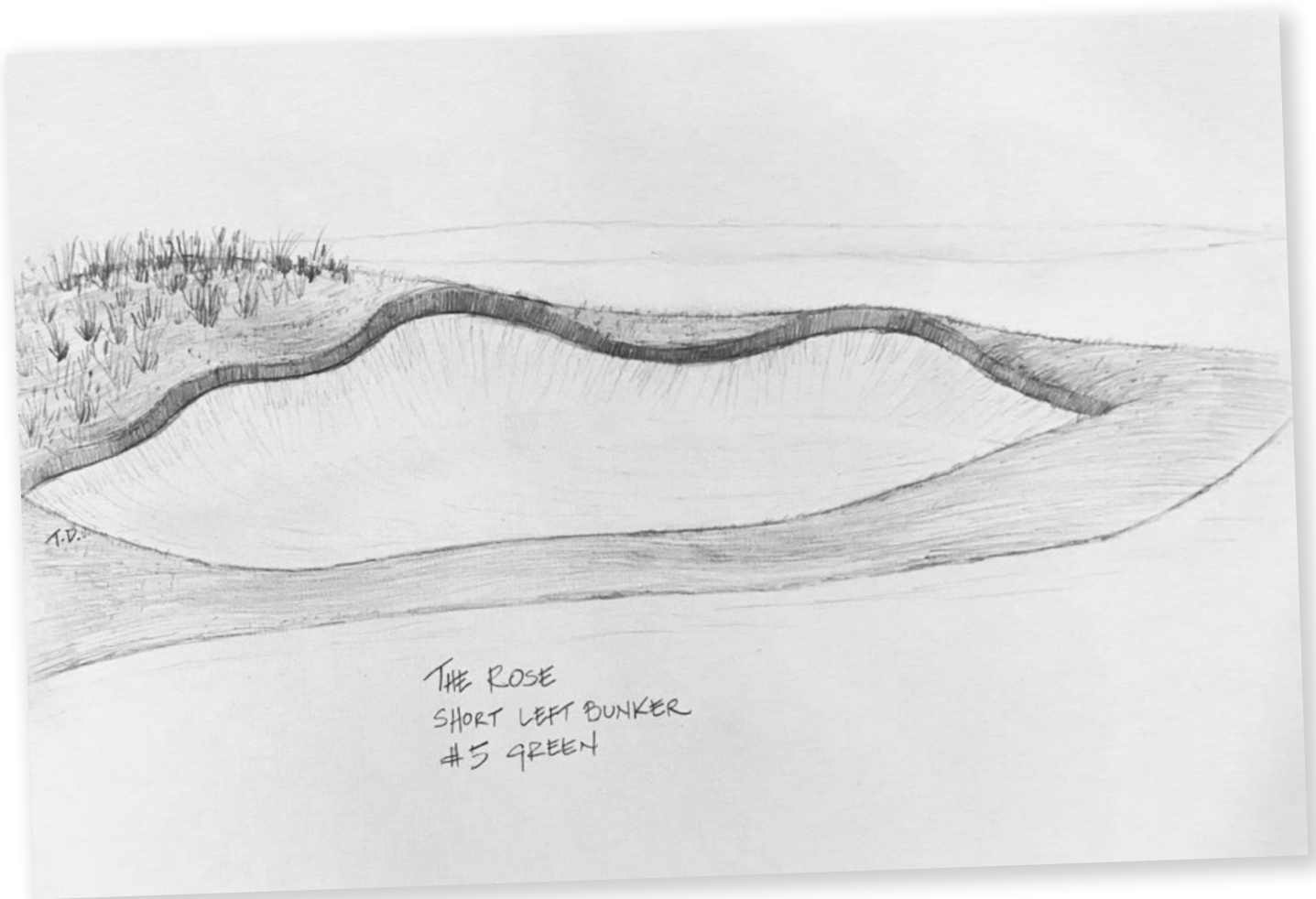


Photo: GCSAA

The conference and trade show is produced by the GCSAA along with its presenting partners: ASGCA, GCBAA and USGA

The Rose

Tripp Davis, ASGCA



A bunker sketch from the fifth hole at The Rose, a new course designed by Tripp Davis, ASGCA, in Athens, Georgia, which is expected to open in 2026.

“The bunker style is inspired by the Australian Sandbelt, AW Tillinghast and what looks good on site,” said Davis. “It’s a very rolling site and in places we need the bunkers to really pop so the thick smooth edges are looking better than a ragged edge. This bunker is short left of the green, which is on

a ridge about 25 feet above where approach shots are coming from.

“This bunker conflicts with the horizon line of the green and the steep fall back-right of the green to really challenge depth perception. I have heard that we all have range finders these days so we don’t pay attention to depth perception, but any player with good distance control has to have good feel in any shot because how often do we hit eight iron, for example, the same distance? Playing in the US Mid-

Amateur at Bandon Dunes years ago I hit three eight irons one round varying from 115-to-170 yards.

“This bunker is also a bit of an identifying point,” continued Davis. “If you carry it, you will get a little kick forward and because of the green’s design, the front will help gather this shot. It’s a longer hole where a lot of players will be hitting hybrid in – this is something I noticed on old Ross courses I played growing up – with bunkers short to allow for a run up.” ●



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