



ISSUE 70 // SUMMER 2025

BY DESIGN

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



WHERE IT ALL STARTED

ASGCA members talk about the people and experiences that planted the seed for a design career.

CYPRESS BEND

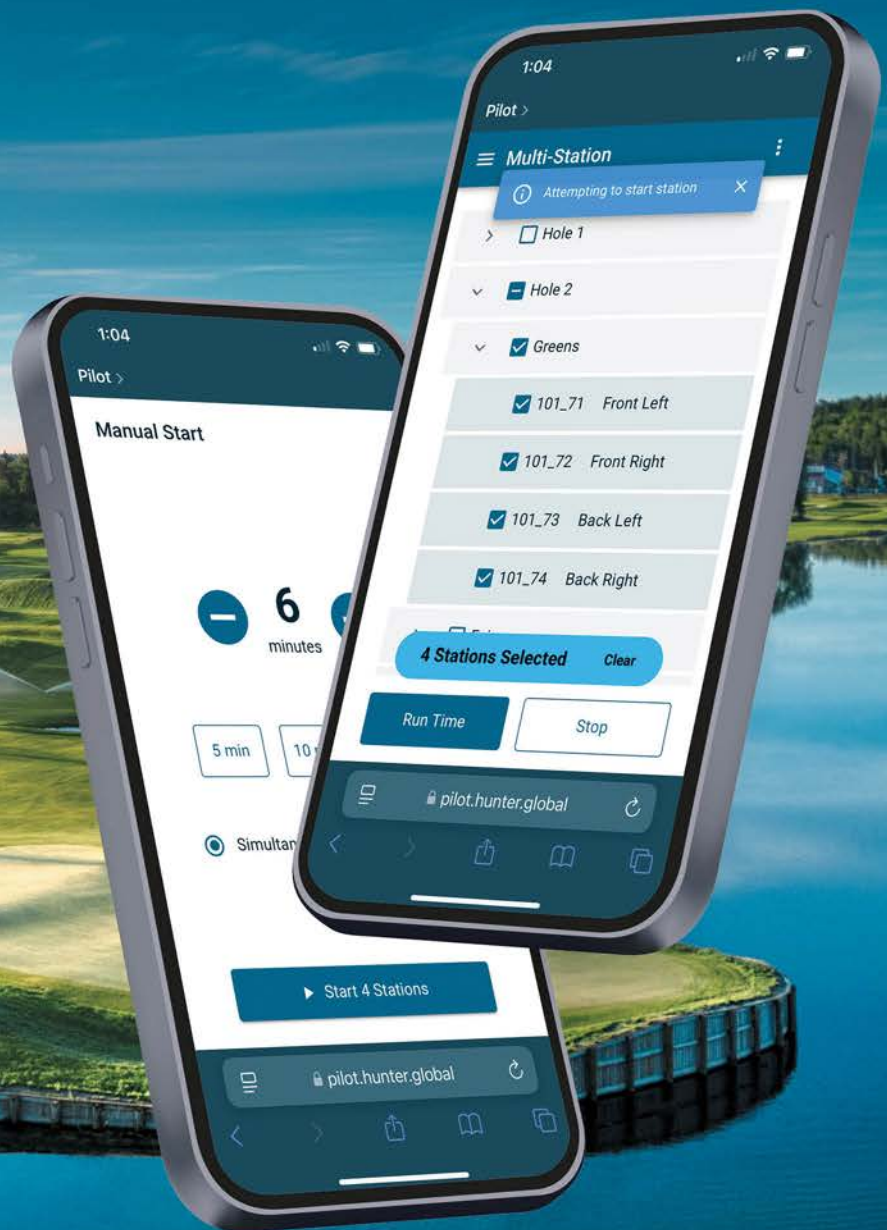
A Louisiana resort course has been transformed thanks to a redesign and new irrigation.

ALSO:

- // Olde Eight
- // Farm Neck
- // Pawleys Plantation

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Brian Costello
President, ASGCA

Stronger together

I recently returned from a trip to Dornoch in Scotland, for the 25-year anniversary meeting of the European Institute of Golf Course Architects. It was something of a pilgrimage; not only is it quite a remote location, close to the very northeastern corner of the UK, but it's also the town where ASGCA Founding Father Donald Ross was born and later became the first professional and keeper of the green at Royal Dornoch Golf Club.

Ross later moved to Pinehurst and hosted the first annual meeting as Honorary President, in 1947, the year before his passing. It is extremely humbling to have been in Dornoch, as ASGCA president, more than 75 years later.

The previous week, I, along with ASGCA Past President Bruce Charlton and Executive Director Hunki Yun, attended the National Golf Day in Washington, D.C. This event allowed us the chance to speak with members of Congress about the significant contribution golf has for the economy, environment and charity.

Many of the stories in this issue of *By Design*, including reports on projects at Cypress Bend in Louisiana (see page 24) and Olde Eight in South Carolina (see page 20), demonstrate how working together brings about great results. Golf has great potential to make a positive impact on communities and the environment – and ASGCA members play an important role in realizing that potential.

In a recent issue of *By Design*, I reflected on my earliest experiences of the game, playing golf with my dad in San Francisco, which planted the seed for my future career. I enjoyed learning how other ASGCA members were inspired to become golf course architects, in this issue's feature article on page 12. I hope you do, too.

for Costello

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Mungeam focuses on playability for Farm Neck project



Farm Neck Golf Club in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, reopened its back nine in May 2025 following the completion of an 18-hole renovation by Mark Mungeam, ASGCA.

The club originally opened in 1980 with a nine-hole layout by ASGCA Past President Geoffrey Cornish and Bill Robinson, ASGCA. A second nine was added later by Patrick Mulligan. Cornish and Brian Silva, were the club's consulting architects until the early 2000s when Mungeam was appointed.

"Many of the bunkers had been renovated in the 1990s by Brian Silva," said Mungeam. "My consultation had included new

greens, path changes, tree removal and additional tees, but there was never a comprehensive masterplan developed until 2022.

"Many players complained that the front and back nines were too dissimilar in character and difficulty, so the primary goals were to make the course more cohesive and make better use of the natural beauty of the site. With 91 bunkers, a key issue was a reduction in the number of formal sand traps, and a conversion of wooded areas and less frequently played rough to native grass and waste sand. A great example of this is the space between holes three and five. When the course was built, this was a

borrow area for fill, which created some abrupt contours. Over time, pitch pine trees took over the area that separated the holes."

Those trees have been removed and areas of rough have been converted into waste bunkers or native grasses.

"Playability and speed of play are important elements of our redesign work, but so are strategic interest, design variety and aesthetics," said Mungeam. "The challenge is to meld these goals together and not let one aspect overly dictate the design."

Front nine work was completed by MAS Golf Construction in spring 2024 and then the back nine from October 2024 to May 2025.



Photo: Ryan Carey

David Fay to receive ASGCA Donald Ross Award

The ASGCA has selected David Fay, who was executive director of the USGA for 21 years, as the 2025 recipient of the ASGCA Donald Ross Award.

The organization's highest honor recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to golf and the profession of golf course architecture. Fay is recognized for bringing national championships to public courses, such as Pinehurst No. 2, Pebble Beach, Torrey Pines South, Chambers Bay, Erin Hills and Bethpage Black. "David Fay made sure to shine a bright light on the accessibility and enjoyment of these courses, while maintaining the integrity of the national championship as the ultimate test of golf," said ASGCA President Brian Costello.



"The course is on the island of Martha's Vineyard and materials must be brought on barges or ferried to the site," said Mungeam. "Barge deliveries have to be scheduled months in advance of when the materials will be needed, and sod trucks can't just drive to the course, they must be offloaded to a different carrier on the mainland, who brings them across on the ferry to the site. As a result, we have reused many acres of existing turf rather than dispose of it. Course Superintendent Andrew Nisbet has done a great job arranging all the material deliveries and overseeing establishment of the new turf."

ASGCA signs pledge of collaboration



Photo: EIGCA

At the annual meeting and 25th anniversary celebrations of the European Institute of Golf Course Architects (EIGCA) in Dornoch, Scotland, representatives of EIGCA, ASGCA and Society of Australian Golf Course Architects (SAGCA) signed a joint pledge for greater collaboration for the good of the game.

The pledge – signed by ASGCA President Brian Costello, EIGCA's Caspar Grauballe and SAGCA's Paul Mogford – sets out a collective commitment to highlight golf's "positive contributions to fostering nature, conserving resources and strengthening community, while creating designs that serve golfers of all levels, promote enjoyment and enhance the overall health of the game."



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Mandell brings Darlington back to its sandy roots

Richard Mandell, ASGCA, is renovating the 1926 golf course at Darlington Country Club in South Carolina, with a design that is more in-keeping with its sandy roots.

The architect has overseen work on the first, third, tenth, thirteenth, and fifteen-to-eighteen. Mandell's

approach has been to expose more of the course's sandy soils to create a more unique and challenging playing experience.

Work on the fifteenth-to-seventeenth was completed in August 2024. "We tried to tie the bunkers in with the sandy waste areas around greens," said

Mandell. "The sixteenth is a great example of how we have made the hole more challenging than it was before. Across these three holes, we have introduced low, rolling ridges that challenge the golfer from a ground game perspective.

"Greens are now more prominent and are more of a challenge."



"Architects need to keep the budget, the client and sustainability in mind"

Jeff Lawrence, ASGCA

In the latest podcast from *Golf Course Industry's* "Tartan Talks" series, Jeff Lawrence, ASGCA, talks about his preferred approach to renovations and golf design trends.

"I always encourage clubs to bite the bullet and do it in one phase," says Lawrence. "It's a huge commitment on the club, and you definitely have to have the right team in place - that's critical in the success of any project."

When asked about golf design trends, Lawrence replies: "I hope to see more sustainability. In recent times, I think we have got a bit crazy with contours and bunkering and things that cause maintenance teams to have large budgets. If, for example, the economy goes in a poor direction, then maintenance budgets will be decreased and we're going to get caught.

"I'm a true believer in trying to get golf courses to be more sustainable and maintainable. That doesn't mean you give up on quality or aesthetics, you just need to be mindful of what it takes to maintain a golf course. Architects need to keep the budget, the client and sustainability in mind."

[Listen to the full "Tartan Talks" at golfcourseindustry.com.](https://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](#)
- Nathan Crace, ASGCA, and Todd Quitno, ASGCA, [reveal how they became fast friends who are now collaborating on multiple projects](#)

Schulties completes East course renovation at Wycliffe G&CC

Kipp Schulties, ASGCA, has completed a renovation of the East course at Wycliffe Golf and Country Club (G&CC) in Wellington, Florida.

“The goal was to create a true championship-caliber course that would position us well as a golf community of choice in Palm Beach County and South Florida,” said Rob Martin, general manager and chief operating officer at Wycliffe G&CC.

This project follows on from Schulties’ renovation of the West course in 2022. “We differentiated the two designs with contrasting bunker styles, landscaping palettes, turfgrasses and trees,” said Martin.

“The front nine spans over two sides of our community with four holes on the north side and five on the south, and a main road in between which made the accessibility

and logistics management quite a challenge,” said Martin.

The course was updated with new irrigation, turfgrass, drainage systems and bunker liner.

“We gave Kipp a fresh canvas with the clear objective of elevating Wycliffe as a leading golf community in Southeast Florida’s competitive market,” said Martin. “The result speaks for itself.”

Golfplan begins 18-hole renovation at California’s El Macero

David Dale, ASGCA, and Kevin Ramsey, ASGCA, of Golfplan have started a golf course renovation at El Macero Country Club, near Sacramento, California.

The project includes a renovation of all 18 green complexes, including softening their shapes to allow water to flow away from the putting surfaces.

The overall square footage of bunkers will be reduced by 60 per cent, with the sand hazards featuring new drainage, liners and sand. The updated bunkers will also have more points of entry, easing access and making them more playable.



Fox Harb'r unveils reimagined Ocean course



Photo: Fox Harb'r Resort

Fox Harb'r Resort in Nova Scotia, Canada, has opened its reimagined Ocean course, part of a plan by ASGCA Past President Doug Carrick and Tom McBroom to create two distinct 18-hole layouts.

The Ocean course includes nine new holes and reshaping the existing nine. The second layout, Vineyard, will be made in a similar fashion.

The Ocean course has been built next to a rugged coastline and offers dramatic views of the Northumberland Strait.

"The Ocean course is a showcase of our region's coastal beauty, and a testament to our commitment to creating extraordinary golf in Canada," said Kevin Toth of Fox Harb'r Resort.

Layton renovation underway at Fox Hollow

Thad Layton, ASGCA, is under way with updates to the 27-hole Fox Hollow Golf Course in Lakewood, Colorado.

Layton is overseeing wholesale fairway expansions across all three nines, reworking select bunkers, removing trees and vegetation, and completely revamping the short-game area.


The long-range plan was developed with Layton using data gathered by USGA's GPS loggers.



Photo: Thad Layton Design


SOCIAL UPDATE



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ASGCA "Boots on the ground" on National Golf Day include President Brian Costello, Executive Director Hunki Yun, Past President Bruce Charlton and Trent Jones



 Golf Course Architecture
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Quail Hollow's consulting architect Tom Fazio, ASGCA, provides insight into how the course has evolved ahead of this year's PGA Championship



 Jeffrey Danner
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Search ASGCA on the below channels for more posts:



Where it all started

What inspires a person to become a golf course architect? Richard Humphreys speaks with ASGCA members about the people, courses and experiences that planted the seed for a career in golf design.

Photo: Steve Forrest



Steve Forrest, ASGCA past president, grew up playing golf at his home course (Holston Hills) in Marion, Virginia.

Photo: Logan Thompson



Logan Thompson, ASGCA, was seven years old when he received his first set of golf clubs.

When children are asked what they want to be when they're older, you might expect them to say a nurse, teacher, astronaut or, maybe now, an influencer. But you'd rarely hear "a golf course architect."

'The Great Junior Golf Design Challenge', organized by the ASGCA during the pandemic, may have done its bit to change that, with young people across the world getting a taste of design by sketching out their ideas for golf holes.

But what sparked the interest of today's golf course architects? And

when did they begin to see golf course design as a career path?

By Design spoke with several ASGCA members to find out.

Family ties

ASGCA Past President Jan Bel Jan grew up in a golfing family. Her father George and his five brothers all caddied at Highland Country Club, near Pittsburgh. Three of them went on to be PGA professionals, with their careers spanning stints at clubs in Florida, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

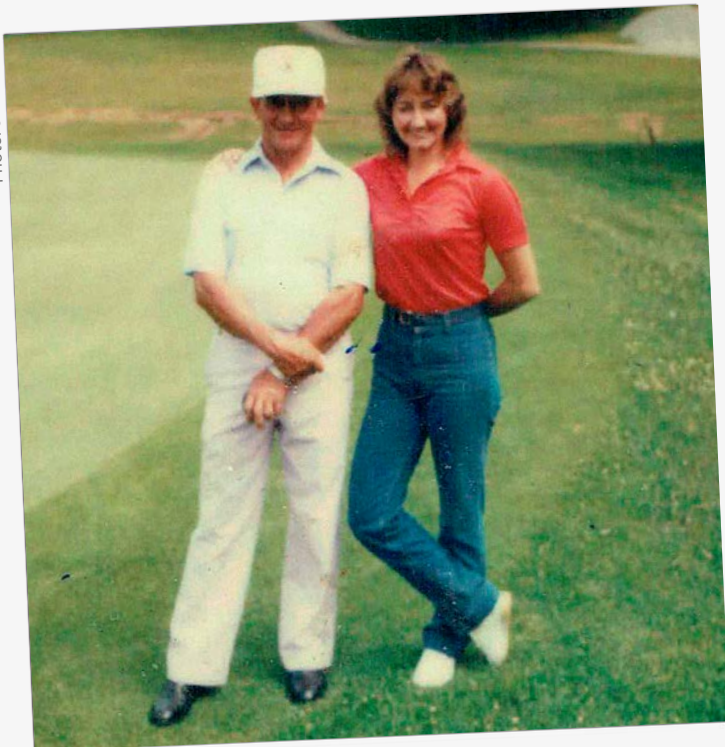
"I recall listening to these men animatedly discussing the courses they'd played, the shots they made, and their competitors," says Bel Jan. "Adult talk was generally boring, but their enthusiasm and intensity piqued my interest, even though I was too young to grasp the depth of their discussions."

"My father designed, supervised construction and was the pro-superintendent of the course where I grew up, Mannitto Country Club. He sat at the kitchen table after my siblings and I had finished our homework and, using colored pencils with lots of erasing and redrawing, routed the course, determined cuts and fills, and prepared green designs on graph paper. As a second grader, it made me laugh to see my dad 'doing homework' and using colored pencils!"

Jan's uncle Willie took her to Longue Vue Club in Pennsylvania. "The entry landscaping was unforgettably beautiful!" she remembers. "I still recall the vibrant masses of color. The clubhouse was the grandest structure – other than a church – that I'd seen! Willie took me on the course, and I saw how scenic and beautiful it was – especially the fifteenth hole. As a youngster, I didn't know anything about design or strategy, but I remember how the golf holes seemed to fit where they were."

"Willie explained this is what his brother, my father, was trying to do at Mannitto. By the time I was a teenager and working on

Photo: Jan Bel Jan



Golf was in the genes for ASGCA Past President Jan Bel Jan, pictured with her father George

CAREER ORIGINS

Photo: Jan Bel Jan



The Bel Jan brothers all caddied in Pittsburgh and three went on to become PGA professionals

Photo: Steve Forrest



The island green third on the Dogwood course at Country Club of North Carolina left a strong impression on Steve Forrest

the course and in the golf shop, I began to appreciate how much the Golden Age courses that my father and uncles played in western Pennsylvania had influenced my interest in different golf courses and design. They understood the qualities of a fair test as well as the aesthetics that provided the ambiance. I learned the basics by listening to them. They made it possible for me to ask better questions.”

The Mannitto club would pass through several owners before the Bel Jan family, who lived on property, left. Jan says that had the family moved earlier, she might not have ended up working in golf course design.

The Nicklaus effect

Two golf tournaments that took place in the early 1970s left a

lasting impression on a young Steve Forrest, now an ASGCA Past President. The Liggett & Myers Open Match Play Championship in 1972 was played at The Country Club of North Carolina in Pinehurst, that saw Jack Nicklaus beat Frank Beard 2&1 in the final, and was “the most exciting golf event,” according to Forrest.

“I specifically remember the island green on the third hole of the Dogwood course,” he says. “I also clearly recall Nicklaus hitting a one-iron over our heads to reach the par-five twelfth in two shots. I never would have guessed that he and I would one day stand beside each other in our Donald Ross tartan jackets at an ASGCA Annual Meeting!”

The second was the World Open Golf Championship (also known as

the Colgate Hall of Fame Classic) in 1973, which was played on Pinehurst’s No. 2 course. “That tournament, coupled with an article I had read in *Golf Digest* about Donald Ross’s design, left me intrigued and fascinated,” he says.

“Until I started thinking about ‘where it started,’ I didn’t realize how many ties to the Pinehurst area were connected to my formative design years!”

Forrest would return to The Country Club of North Carolina in 2002 alongside his design partner, ASGCA Past President Arthur Hills, who prepared a masterplan for the club’s two courses.

“My home course was Holston Hills in Marion, Virginia, not to be confused with Donald Ross’s gem in Knoxville, Tennessee,” says



Photo: Trey Kemp



Trey Kemp, ASGCA, fell in love with the game at the nine-hole Haskell CC course in West Texas

Forrest. “It was the course where I hit my first ever hole-in-one!

“Holston Hills was designed by Fred Garbin as a nine-holer with another nine added later. Consequently, holes ten and eighteen were some distance from the clubhouse. After being an architect for about 25 years, I had the opportunity to show the club a routing plan that would get the first, ninth, tenth and eighteenth holes in closer proximity to the clubhouse – as well as adding a full-size practice range – but being a small-town club, they never really had the money to implement the ideas.”

All roads lead to Texas

“I didn’t grow up dreaming of becoming a golf course architect,” says Trey Kemp, ASGCA. “In fact,

I didn’t even know it was a real profession until a new course was built in my hometown of Amarillo, Texas, while I was in high school.”

Kemp was introduced to the game by his grandfather. “Every summer, we’d play at Haskell Country Club, a small nine-hole course in West



“From the moment I stepped onto the course, I felt like I was somewhere special”

Trey Kemp, ASGCA

Texas,” he says. “That’s where I fell in love with the game.”

Most of Kemp’s early golf was played in West Texas. “The courses were flat, the wind was constant, and the ball seemed to

roll forever,” he recalls. “But there were three courses I played during family vacations that left a lasting impression: Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, the Plantation course at Kapalua, Hawaii, and Pinchurst No. 2. Experiencing those layouts in high school opened my eyes to how

varied and thoughtful golf course design could be. I’m not sure if they were the reason I chose this path, but they certainly didn’t hurt!”

Colonial was the first that Kemp played. “From the moment I

CAREER ORIGINS

stepped onto the course, I felt like I was somewhere special,” he says. “It was the first time I found myself not focused on my own game – I was just soaking it all in. I had never seen anything like it.

“Plantation gave me a whole new appreciation for how stunning a golf course could be, while still presenting a strategic challenge. It made me think more deeply about how a course can make a golfer think their way around.

“And then there was Pinehurst No. 2. That course showed me just how critical green design is to a golf course. One thing I’ve come to believe over time is that all great golf courses have one thing in common: a great set of greens.”

While at university, Kemp worked at Onion Creek Club in Austin. Bill Coore, ASGCA, and Ben Crenshaw had designed a nine-hole layout not long before Kemp began working there. “Bill and Ben were also on site renovating the original course,” says Kemp. “I remember watching

Golf Complex. “It was a special full-circle moment for me,” says Kemp. “I wanted to give the community something unique; a course that stood apart from anything else in the area. My early memories of learning the game in West Texas, along with the lasting impressions of Colonial, Kapalua and Pinehurst, helped shape the way I approached the project, both creatively and personally.”

Nature takes its course

Don Knott, ASGCA, also never imagined a future in golf course architecture. He didn’t play golf growing up, and there was no course in his hometown.

Knott played other sports in his youth, studied landscape architecture at university and had summer jobs where he got a taste of creating park and site plans. After a two-year stint in the army, Knott returned to graduate school at UC Berkeley in 1971 to study architecture, discovered golf and



By 1972, Knott was looking for a summer job and wondered if he could find one in golf course design. “The Bay Area was home to both



“I would strap my clubs over my shoulder and ride my motorcycle to Tilden Park”

Don Knott, ASGCA

them work and thinking, ‘that’s it, that’s what I want to do, too.’”

In 2012, Kemp, while working with John Colligan, ASGCA, returned to his hometown of Amarillo, Texas, to renovate the Mustang course at Ross Rogers

quickly fell in love with the game. “I would strap my clubs over my shoulder and ride my motorcycle to Tilden Park in the Berkeley Hills,” he says. “It was a wonderful course cascading through the wooded rolling hills.”

Bob Graves and Robert Trent Jones Jr,” says Knott. “The Palo Alto office of Jones offered me a spot for the summer. I finished my master’s degree in 1973 and returned to the organization full time that summer. The rest is history, as they say.”



Photo: Kevin Merfeld/Pebble Beach Company

The famous short par-four fourth hole at Spyglass Hill left a lasting impression on Don Knott, ASGCA, who first saw it when attending the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am in the early 1970s

Knott credits his love of nature and the outdoors for his path into golf course design. “My father was an avid outdoor sportsman, and we spent time fishing, hunting, hiking and camping,” he says. “Being in the outdoors was always special – and golf is kind of a journey through nature. The game is an obstacle course – navigating from point A to point B while attempting to avoid hazards has always been intriguing to me. The visual aesthetics of blending the game into nature is also a fascinating design challenge.”

In the early days of his golf course design career, Knott attended the Bing Crosby National Pro-Amateur

(now known as AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am), a visit that left him inspired. “I marveled at the many spectacular golf holes on the Monterey coast, but there was one that was particularly special,” he says. “The fourth at Spyglass Hill had abundant beauty, significant intimidation, a bit of mystery and blended magically into the dunescape. The hole remains one of my favorites in golf.”

Learning from a King

Logan Thompson, ASGCA, is one of the Society’s newest members. His career in the golf industry began in 2014 with McDonald & Sons.

“I was introduced to the game of

golf by my grandfather when I was about eight,” says Thompson. “We would go to many different golf courses in central Virginia and as I got older, I started to pay attention to the differences in each course. I also loved, and still love, building things and was never afraid to get dirty. I started to put both of those worlds together in high school and began researching everything I could about golf course architecture.”

Thompson continued playing golf and studying courses at college. “What I quickly learned is that good golf courses utilize the natural lay of the land as much as possible,” he says. “They also provide a strategic



“The game
is saying hello
to a new crop
of designers.
I’m a voice of
the ASGCA.”

— BRANDON JOHNSON



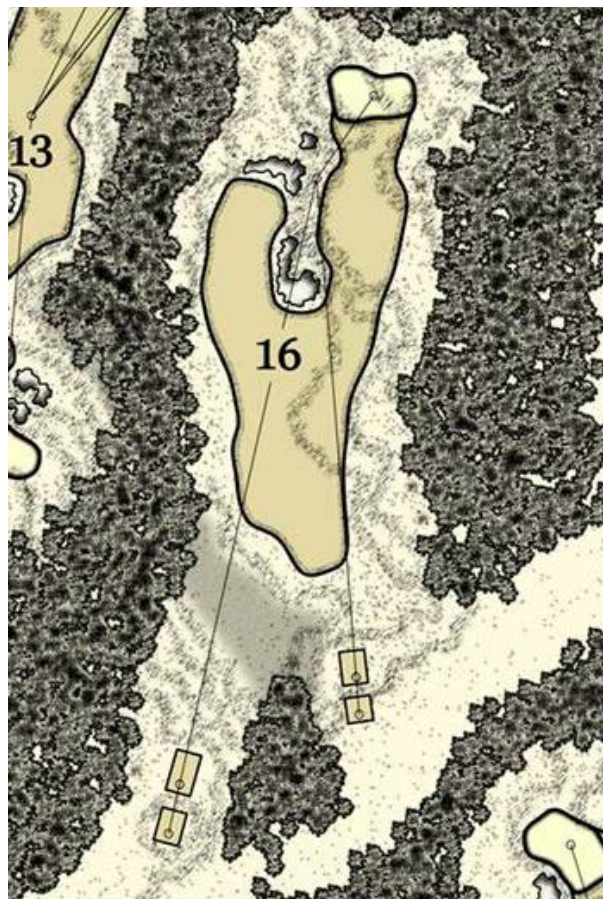
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CAREER ORIGINS

Images: McDonald Design Group



The sixteenth hole at the now-closed King Carter course in Kilmarnock, Virginia, is an example of risk-reward golf that Logan Thomson, ASGCA, played in college, contributing to his appreciation of strategic design



challenge to the best players, while also providing a fun and forgiving course for high handicap golfers. A great example of this was King Carter in Kilmarnock, Virginia.”

Thompson would play King Carter (it closed in 2018) with his uncle. “The design did a great job at providing a ‘bogey route’ for weaker players to get around trouble, while testing the better players with many risk-reward shots,” says Thompson. “I vividly remember the 305-yard par-four sixteenth. The hole had a split fairway with a large bunker complex in the middle. The way you played it was dictated by which tee was used that day, as well as the pin position. For the longer

hitters, the green was reachable off the tee, but if you wanted to lay up, the pin position dictated which section of the fairway you aimed for. The fairway was still wide enough for the weaker player to hit around trouble, reach the green and two-putt for bogey. It’s those risk-reward holes that make golf exciting for all skill levels. For my design work, I ensure every skill level is considered.”

Shortly after joining McDonald & Sons, Thompson found out that King Carter was one of the firm’s clients and he found the original plan by Joel Weiman, ASGCA, and Andrew Green. He learned more about the course from the pair and is striving to implement the design/build

techniques as the new lead designer of McDonald Design Group.

These skills were put into practice on one of his first projects, at Loudoun Golf & Country Club in Purcellville, Virginia. “The second is a great example of a risk-reward hole,” says Thompson. “Our placement of a new fairway bunker complex forces the better players to decide how much they are willing to carry, with a well-placed tee shot catching a slope that allows the ball to roll within 100 yards of the green. At the same time, the widened fairway and approach allows for the weaker players to hit around trouble, as well as utilize the left-to-right kicker slope left of the green.” ●

New vision for Olde Eight

The former Links at Stoney Point in South Carolina is being transformed by a project team aiming to produce a course that is unlike anything else.

Husband-and-wife duo Ashley and Shane LeBaron want to “set the bar” with their new golf club.

They have worked in the golf industry for over 20 years. Shane is an award-winning golf instructor, and has worked at Belfair GC in South Carolina, Knollwood Club in Illinois and Cherry Hills CC in Denver. In addition to managing operations and admin for Shane’s

instruction business, Ashley has held retail and merchandizing roles at Berkeley Hall Club in South Carolina, The Mirabel Club in Arizona and Cherry Hills.

In 2024, the couple – along with founding partners Mitch Kovitz and Matt Green, and with professional golfer and former world number one David Duval as an investor – seized on the opportunity to

purchase The Links at Stoney Point in Greenwood, South Carolina. With a golf course, designed in 1990 by Tom Jackson, along the shoreline of Lake Greenwood, the LeBarons’ vision has been to develop an entirely new identity for the property and its facilities. That vision was to become Olde Eight Golf Club.

To overhaul the course, the LeBarons, Kovitz and Green

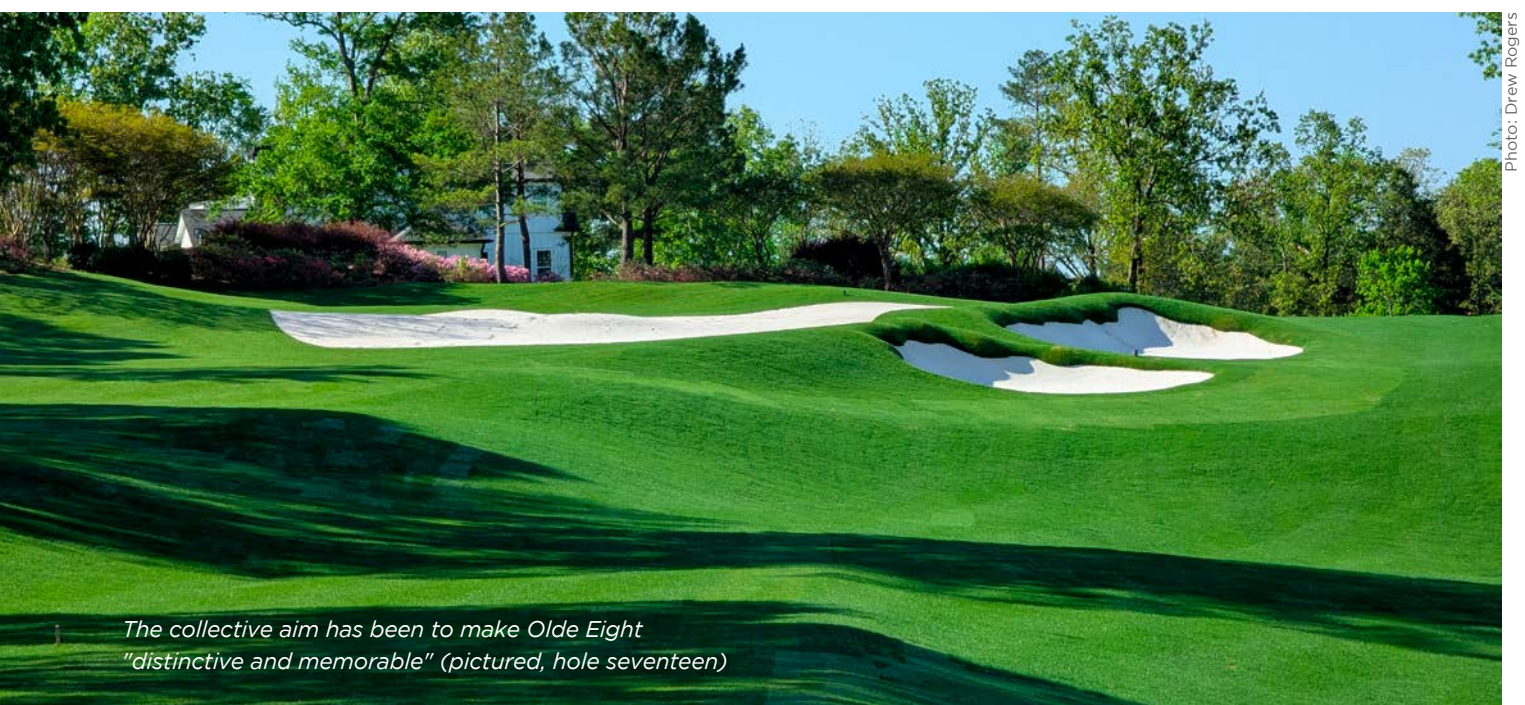


Photo: Drew Rogers

The collective aim has been to make Olde Eight “distinctive and memorable” (pictured, hole seventeen)



Photo: Chris Jordan

Olde Eight is on track to open in October 2025 (pictured, the par-three thirteenth)

assembled a team of JDR Golf Design’s principal Drew Rogers, ASGCA, and architect Joel Hornickel, ASGCA, John Lytle and crew from Total Turf Golf Services (TTGS), Chris Jordan as the club’s director of golf course and

a typical renovation,” says Rogers. “The palette is strong, and the bones are good. The terrain here has nice variation and movement and the sequence through the site exposes its diversity, with both open and wooded areas, mixed

property has been acquired for the expansion of the residential neighborhood to include retail shops, multiple clubhouses, dining opportunities, a lake club, and health and wellness facilities. A par-three layout, putting course and practice facility are also planned.

“First and foremost, we will be establishing a completely new architectural identity and experience,” says Rogers. “We do have the challenge of there already being a golf course here – so the positioning and sequence will not change – but the elements within the golf envelope will most certainly take on a more refined and purposeful character, and in most cases be presented in a much more dramatic fashion. The course is being

“We will be establishing a completely new architectural identity and experience”

grounds, plus experts from Leibold Irrigation, Mazzella Partnership and Better Billy Bunker.

“What attracted us to the Stoney Point site was its solid arrangement – it has a sequencing and fit that we felt could be improved upon within

vegetation, varied elevations and even some accented exposures along the banks of Lake Greenwood.”

JDR’s plans involve the total reimagination of the golf experience while utilizing the original corridors. Additional



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The golf course renovation is one part of the area's redevelopment, which also includes hundreds of new homes, nature trails, green spaces, a marina and more

lengthened to its limits and many holes will feature strategically angled elements that will define the holes visually and beg the skilled players to think, while the shouldering off-line areas will be expansive and playable for the average golfers. I think players will immediately appreciate the balance in the way the course is ultimately presented.”

In JDR’s ‘Scenes From A Build’ docu-series about the project, Shane LeBaron says: “We want that awe factor, the sense that you’ve arrived somewhere. I don’t want someone to come here and say it looks like X or Y, it has to have a unique feel to it; that this is Olde Eight.”

Mazzella Partnership is serving as a liaison and facilitator between the

club stakeholders and the renovation team. “We have been deeply involved in project oversight, ensuring that both the vision of the club and the technical requirements of the renovation are aligned throughout the process,” says Nick Mazzella. “We worked early in the project to help define clear objectives, including scope, budget parameters and quality standards. By focusing on clarity from the start, we minimize ambiguity, which often derails projects of this complexity. We also implemented structured processes for documentation, communication and change management. This includes maintaining updated budget reports, schedules, meeting minutes and regular reporting

formats – tools that help all parties stay informed and accountable.”

Work began in late 2024 and the course is expected to open in October 2025. Shane wants the course to be up there with the very best in South Carolina. “If you ask 25 well-travelled golfers what their favorite courses are, they will come back with the same top 10 or so answers, a Pebble Beach, a Seminole, whatever,” he says. “But if you ask them, ‘Why?’ their why is different. The place created a memory that stuck with them. It was vital for us to produce something out here with Drew that would create a memory where the holes talk to each other. I want you to play this once and it sticks. I want everyone to be able to





Photo: Drew Rogers

Rogers has designed greens and bunkers in "a much more dramatic fashion" than what was there on the old Links at Stoney Point layout

tell a story of all 18 holes.”

Rogers adds: “We certainly don’t play favorites when it comes to golf holes as we like to think about the course as more of a ‘whole’ than of pieces and parts. But with Olde Eight, there is a desire and commitment by

hole so that the entire experience comes together as something very distinctive and memorable.”

Jordan appreciates the dialogue he has had with Rogers throughout the build: “Drew is always looking out for us, he’s

“I want everyone to be able to tell a story of all 18 holes”

the ownership and team to make the course very distinctly unlike anything else. What we liked about this property originally was just how well the course was originally visioned, so the routing does allow for solid variety and distinction. Our aim is to squeeze the very best out of each

calling me over for every visit and saying, ‘are you good with this?’ There will be some stuff that is fun to manage and involve some problem-solving skills, but if that’s what it takes to have the best product out there, then we’re willing to do that.”

Judging by the glimpses of the golf course provided in JDR’s docu-series, the result will be one-of-a-kind. “What makes Olde Eight truly unique and appealing is its commitment to family and community,” says Rogers. “Designed as more than just a destination, Olde Eight aims to create a place where visitors feel compelled to stay – a community that seamlessly blends world-class golf amenities with the warmth and connection of a close-knit neighborhood. The creative and development team here at Olde Eight is probably the strongest I’ve ever been a part of, and we’re excited to create a unique golfing experience like no other, and we’re excited to welcome guests soon.” ●

Walking on water

A resort course in Louisiana has been transformed following a redesign by Jeff Blume, ASGCA, and new irrigation from Hunter Industries

When the owners of Cypress Bend Resort in Many, Louisiana, decided to renovate their golf course, three priorities were outlined: enhancing playability, preserving the natural beauty of the layout's setting and improving course conditions.

The resort assembled a team of experts to help it achieve these objectives, including golf course architect Jeff Blume, ASGCA, contractor Mid-America Golf, Hunter Industries and consultant

Les Hill for irrigation and operator Sterling Golf Management.

A \$6.5 million renovation plan was agreed, which included alterations to the course routing and the redesign of all course features, plus a new irrigation system.

The story of Cypress Bend

You can date the origins of Cypress Bend back to 1968, when the Sabine River was dammed to create the Toledo Bend reservoir, an 87-mile-long lake with 1,200 miles

of coastline. Despite becoming a popular fishing destination, accommodation in the area was limited. The Sabine River Authority decided a hotel was required, and that the construction of a golf course would help attract an operator. ASGCA member Dave Bennett designed an 18-hole layout that opened in 1997.

Warren Founds, the executive director of Sabine River Authority (SRA) for Louisiana, has played a key role in Cypress Bend's



Photo: Kirk Golf Links Photography

history. “I was involved from the start, by locating and purchasing the property for the project,” he says. “With a background of construction and development, I served as the owner’s representative for the initial construction and recent renovation.

“American Liberty Hospitality built the resort with a hotel, conference center, 14 golf condos and has operated the course since opening. Golf is vital to the success of the resort and the quality of life for those choosing the Toledo Bend area for retirement.”

After 25 years of operation, the

infrastructure of the course was increasingly showing signs of deterioration, in particular the greens and irrigation.

An improved experience

“There were some significant routing changes to improve the playability of the golf course,” says Blume explaining that the new eighth hole was “the key that unlocked the door” to address deficiencies of the existing routing. “We replaced three weak holes (nine, ten and twelve) with a new configuration. This was done by creating the par-three eighth on a peninsula of land owned by the SRA. This hole replaced the existing eighth and allowed for the straightening of holes nine and ten, making them more playable par fives. The tee shot on twelve was lengthened to allow for the use of a driver instead of a long iron, and the sixteenth was changed to a par four that offers multiple routes to the green.”

Blume also highlights the impact that tree clearance has had on the course’s presentation. “Not only did clearing make the playing corridors wider and make the course more playable, but it also opened up views toward the Toledo Bend Reservoir that are simply spectacular,” says Blume. “On all but three holes the lake is visible. Eleven holes now flank the lake, making it perhaps the most beautiful course in the state of Louisiana. The new greens and bunkers create an interesting, yet fair examination, and the wider corridors

has resulted in significantly improved turf conditions.”

Founds adds: “The updated course routing uses most of the shoreline property – normally reserved for home sites – in the hopes of creating one of the most scenic public golf venues in the South. With more than half the greens adjacent to the water and several holes playing their entire length next to the lake, I don’t think you will find a more attractive layout.”

Overcoming challenges

Contractor Mid-America Golf worked closely with Blume and Founds to deliver economic value and ensure the design intent was adhered to.

“Our team kept tight control over quantities and made cost-conscious material decisions to stay on budget while achieving the desired outcome” says Casey Hames of Mid-America Golf. “The elevation changes required thoughtful grading and drainage planning to ensure long-term performance without disrupting the natural beauty of the site.

“We also experienced a few heavy rain events during construction, which tested our drainage approach but never significantly impacted progress. Because we self-perform most of our work, we were able to respond quickly and keep the project moving.”

Sterling Golf Management oversaw grow-in. “Our responsibilities included developing and implementing a detailed



Blume says new greens and bunkers create an interesting, yet fair examination (pictured, twelfth)

Photos: Kirk Golf Links Photography

agronomic program, coordinating with the irrigation team for efficient water management, and providing regular updates and strategy sessions with ownership,” says Rene Rangel, the firm’s CEO.

“Our team addressed significant weather and site challenges by maintaining constant communication with all partners, quickly reallocating resources when needed and remaining flexible in the agronomy plan to respond to changing conditions. We provided contingency strategies for extreme weather, implemented a rigorous disease monitoring program and helped mitigate labor shortages by temporarily supplementing the crew with Sterling staff from nearby properties.”

Set up for success

A fundamental part of the

project was to update the course’s irrigation system. Consultant Les Hill created an irrigation plan, and products from Hunter were chosen: a two-wire irrigation system with Pilot Command Center Software, a Pilot Integrated Hub System, TTS-800 rotors and ICD-HP decoder programmer.

“Cypress Bend wanted the most efficient irrigation system on the market,” says Dennis Wagner, national golf specification manager at Hunter. “This meant that they wanted the best rotors with the highest distribution uniformity (DU), with features such as PressurePort nozzle technology for gaining maximum DU. They also required a no-dig rotor, ones that were completely top serviceable for easy maintenance, and a control system that was easily expandable for the

future needs of the golf course. Another requirement was that the control system needed to be easy to use and didn’t require a lot of time programming it every day.”

Hill adds: “Because of the varied elevations and dense tree cover between the holes, radio communication between the central controller and the field would not have worked properly.” Hunter suggested hard-wire communication between the central system and the hubs. “This allowed for high quality communication and the ability for the superintendent to turn rotors on and off with his radio at any location,” says Hill.

The Pilot command center software includes cloud database backup, web-based features and visual insight integrations from POGO sensors.

“Our suite of products meant that Cypress Bend’s staff not only spend



New irrigation from Hunter has helped to produce “significantly improved turf conditions”

less time in front of the computer programming the nightly watering, but it also shortens their runtimes due to the exceptional DU possessed by the rotors,” says Wagner. “Better uniformity equals less runtime, which means less time spent running pumps and helps to save money on electricity. With the Pilot Navigator App, the staff can now command their course from anywhere – they can perform quick system adjustments from their phone or tablet.

“With our two-wire system using a hub – or in this case two hubs – which control all the sprinklers on the course, staff could run programs for grow-in immediately, hole by hole, before the computer was installed.

“The project has turned Cypress Bend 180 degrees from what it was. The quality of the turf is exceptional, because of the Hunter irrigation system. Staff don’t have

to continually do repairs now that it has the new high-density polyethylene system, along with the remarkable Hunter TTS rotors.”

The power of collaboration

“We all worked together perfectly, as we have done several projects together in the past,” says Les Hill. “Jeff allows me complete and total control over the irrigation,

was needed. They had our backs for the entire project.”

Hames agrees: “We maintained strong communication with Jeff, the ownership group and Les to ensure every element – from shaping to the mechanical infrastructure – aligned with the overall vision. That unified approach helped us navigate challenges and deliver a course that reflects both the site’s

“The project has turned Cypress Bend 180 degrees from what it was”

and I allow him to make whatever modifications to the design in the field as he wishes, then I adjust the system to match. Hunter’s field service personnel were on site within 24 hours every time they were requested, and the office itself was very quick to respond when additional equipment

potential and the team’s shared commitment to excellence.

Blume adds: “The entire project team have all had a hand in transforming a tired resort facility into a vibrant, well-maintained destination that is, perhaps, the best golf property in the state.” ●

Pawleys Plantation G&CC

Troy Vincent, ASGCA

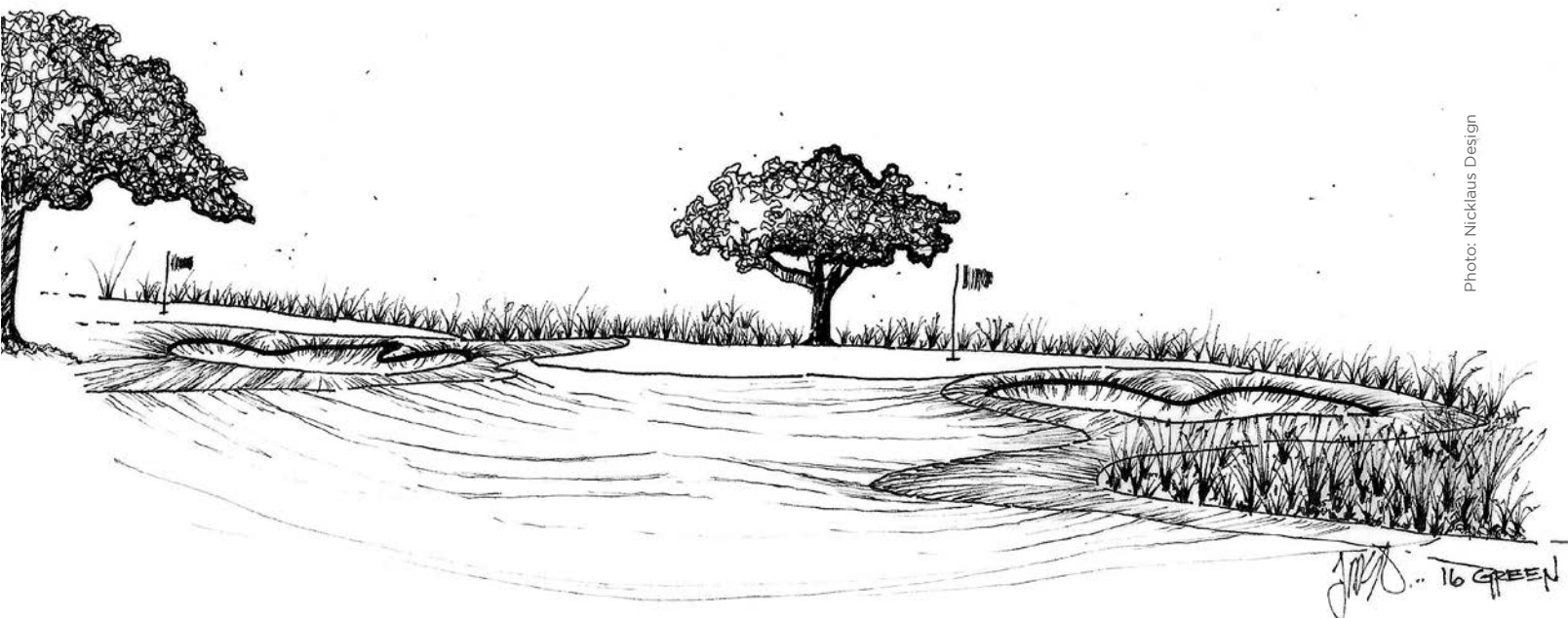


Photo: Nicklaus Design

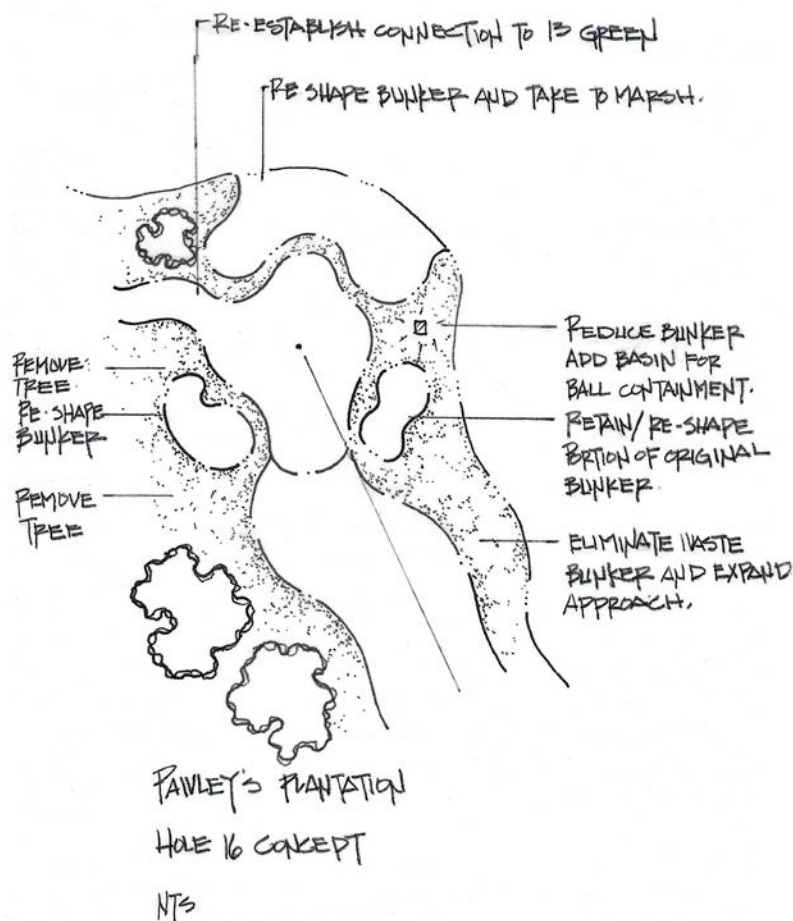
The par-four sixteenth at Pawleys Plantation, near Myrtle Beach in South Carolina, which has been renovated by Troy Vincent, ASGCA, a senior design associate at Nicklaus Design.

The 440-yard hole doglegs left and players often hit into the wind coming off the marsh area that surrounds the green complex.

“The original hole had a large bunker on the right that began 36 yards from the putting surface and extended along the right and back of the green complex,” says Vincent. “We converted a portion of the bunker to fairway, allowing the approach width to be much more playable. We have reshaped a smaller bunker on the right as well as reshaping the bunker located behind the green complex. A catch basin was installed between the two bunkers to retain any errant shots.”

Other work includes removing four trees on the left side and making a greenside bunker on the left smaller.

“The hole now allows more options through expanding the approach area, while protecting errant shots to the right,” says Vincent. “The elimination of the trees to the left have also opened up long views of the marsh area.” ●



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