



ISSUE 74 // SUMMER 2026

# BY DESIGN

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



## AI IN GOLF DESIGN

How will artificial intelligence impact the profession of golf course architecture?

## DESIGN BOOT CAMP

A first-hand report from the ASGCA Foundation's golf design experience in Pinehurst, North Carolina

## ALSO:

- // Campus Commons
- // ASGCA Donald Ross Award
- // National Golf Day

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**Mark Mungeam**  
President, ASGCA

## Brave new world

In recent years it feels like every time I check the news headlines, I am met with a story involving artificial intelligence. And when I do find myself scanning through social media, I quickly question what is real, and what is not.

There is no doubt that AI is here to stay, and will have an increasing impact on our lives. It's happening quickly, too. I read an article recently that said AI is getting twice as good every seven months. And the CEO of Google Deepmind, Demis Hassabis, says that AI will have 10 times the impact of the Industrial Revolution, in a tenth of the timespan.

So what does this mean for the humble golf course architect? Our cover story for this issue of *By Design* explores this question. Turn to page 12 to get insights from ASGCA members about how they think AI will impact the profession.

Moving back from virtual reality, to just plain reality, you'll find lots more in this issue too, including a first-hand experience of the ASGCA Foundation's Design Boot Camp, a report on a redesign project that prioritized affordability and environmental stewardship, and news of this year's recipient of the ASGCA Donald Ross Award.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

*Mark A. Mungeam*

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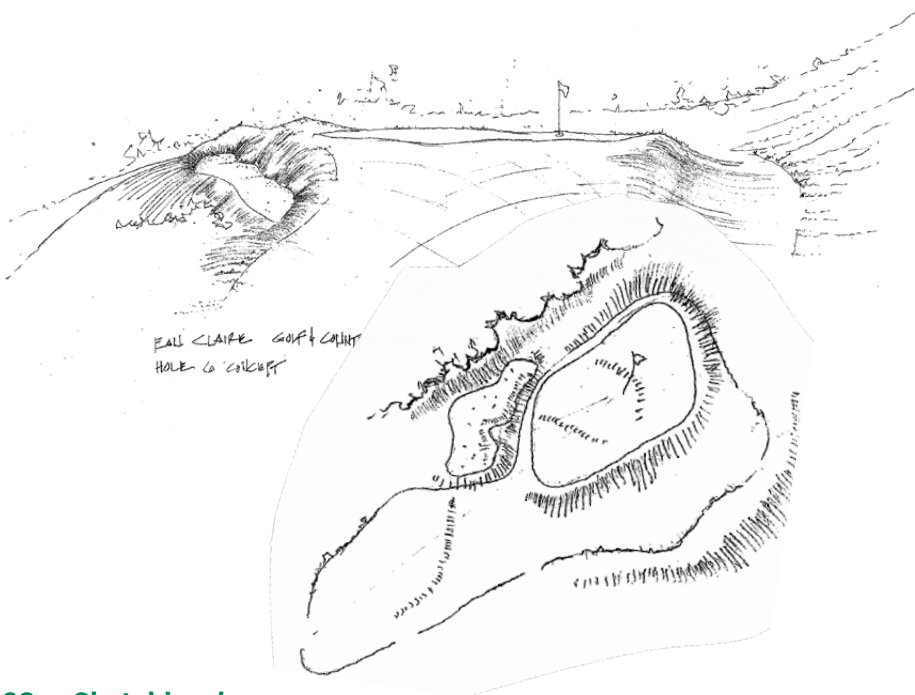
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# Todd Eckenrode focuses on Golden Age style for La Rinconada redesign



**R**enovation work has started at La Rinconada Country Club, near San Jose, California, with Todd Eckenrode, ASGCA, leading a redesign to reinstate the course's Golden Age character.

The \$21 million project includes rerouting holes to make better use of the site's natural landforms, increasing the course's yardage and

improving green-to-tee connections. "This project is about revealing the full potential of a very special piece of land," said Eckenrode. "The strongest holes were retained in the new layout, and the weakest holes were rerouted in entirely different locations, or orientation. Together, the new routing has wonderful variety, flow, connectivity and a

rhythm to it that will really appeal to the golfers."

The project includes renovations to all course features and cart paths. Tees and fairways will be regrassed with bermudagrass, and greens with bentgrass.

The club's environmental responsibility is a key component of the redesign, with out-of-play



Image: Harris Kalinka

*A visualization of Eckenrode's redesign plans for La Rinconada*

areas being replaced with drought-proof landscaping and naturalized meadow grasses to reduce overall turf acreage. According to the club, the project will help reduce water usage on the course by up to 40 per cent, saving approximately 30 million gallons annually. In addition to a significant amount of tree removal, the course will be reforested

with native oak and sycamore trees, restoring both ecological balance and visual character.

“This is a 100-year-old golf course, and we are committed to the redesign evoking qualities of the great golf architecture of this era,” said Eckenrode.

The course is expected to reopen in spring 2027.

## Jim Nantz to receive ASGCA Donald Ross Award

The ASGCA will present its 2026 Donald Ross Award to golf broadcaster Jim Nantz at its Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, this fall.

“My admiration for the American Society of Golf Course Architects runs deep,” said Nantz. “I have long studied their work and the thoughtful process they use to shape their masterpiece landscapes. To be recognized by this extraordinary group is truly an honor.”

Nantz joined CBS in 1985 and has anchored its golf coverage since 1994. He is a member of the Sports Broadcasting Hall of Fame and has also consulted on backyard golf projects, as well as with Australian firm OCM Golf on a short course at Tepetonka Club in Minnesota.

“Jim has been and is the ‘voice of golf’ for multiple generations of fans,” said ASGCA President Mark Mungeam. “His love and respect for the game – and the courses it is played on – is evident in all of his broadcasts. Jim’s appreciation of golf history and his innate storytelling ability grow more impressive each year.”

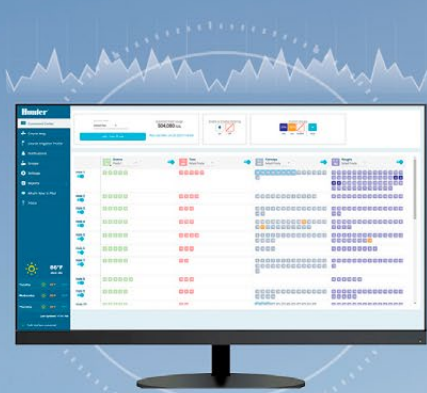


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## ASGCA heads to Washington to lobby for golf industry

Golf industry leaders gathered in Washington, DC, from 4–6 May 2026, for National Golf Day, the annual American Golf Industry Coalition (AGIC) event that brings together lawmakers, federal agencies and policymakers to discuss golf's economic impact and the legislative and regulatory issues affecting the industry.

ASGCA was represented at the event by (main image, left to right) Executive Director Hunki Yun, Past President Bruce Charlton, President Mark Mungeam, Past President Brian Costello and Trent Jones.

More than 280 industry leaders attended the three-day program, which focused on four key priorities for the game: responsible stewardship, health and wellness, economic and charitable impact, and expanding access to golf for all Americans.

Among the topics discussed was the PAR Act (Parity for Athletic Recreation), a bill proposing

modernization of the US tax code.

“This is an outdated IRS code which considers the golf industry as ‘disqualified and unworthy’ of various forms of disaster relief and economic stimulus programs,” says Costello. “This originally was written to support economic development during a recession when the golf industry was primarily private clubs. The golf industry has evolved considerably since 1976 with eight-out-of-10 golfers playing public golf facilities.”

Attendees also discussed the PHIT Act (Personal Health Investment Today), which would allow more than 100 million Americans to use Health Savings Accounts or Flexible Spending Accounts to cover physical activity expenses, helping reduce the cost of maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Through the Fiscal 2027 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, AGIC is supporting the creation of a Certified Seasonal Employer (CSE) H-2B cap



exemption. Under the proposal, eligible employers would be defined as seasonal businesses that have received an H-2B labor certification within the past five years.

“H-2B workers are vital to ensuring the long-term viability of the seasonal industries that depend on them,” says Costello. “Studies show that every H-2B worker supports the jobs of between three to five full-time, year-round American jobs.”

Another AGIC-backed initiative discussed during National Golf Day was a request for \$3 million in congressional funding to establish phase one of a National Turfgrass Statistics Study.

*Learn more about National Golf Day on the AGIC website.*

# Nathan Crace transforms False River into an 18-hole destination

The nine-hole False River Golf and Country Club in Ventress, Louisiana, will reopen in fall 2026 as an 18-hole course with Golden Age styling, designed by Nathan Crace, ASGCA.

Located around 30 miles northwest of state capital Baton Rouge, False River has operated as a nine-hole facility since 1963. Crace was hired to renovate the existing nine and design nine new holes.

“The goal is for False River to look and feel like we completed

a sympathetic restoration of a 110-year-old course that no one knew was hidden here,” said Crace. “At False River, we wanted to incorporate some elements of the Golden Age with some nods to different design theories. There are no true ‘template greens’, but we do have a modified Redan that goes left to right, an Alps hole, a really nice Punchbowl green, a Lion’s mouth and what I believe to be the only course on the planet with two

Biarritz greens – on the long par-four second and par-five sixth that back up on one another with a low-cut area of turf in between.

“There are three corridors that still remain. I almost hate to call it a renovation because we have completely blown the entire place up and created something new.”

*A full interview with Crace can be found on the Golf Course Architecture website.*



## “Golf courses built on landfill give those sites a better use”

**Tim Gerrish, ASGCA**

In the latest podcast from *Golf Course Industry’s* “Tartan Talks” series, Tim Gerrish, ASGCA, speaks about how he uses the terrain, especially landfill sites, to design golf courses.

“Golf course design is the artistic movement of earth to create a gameboard,” said Gerrish. “I’m less of a mound person, and more of working with what’s there without creating something too manufactured.”

After joining Cornish, Silva and Mungeam, Gerrish worked on the nine-hole Sassamon Trace course in Massachusetts, in 2000/01. “Four holes were on landfill,” he says. “I worked on concepts, permitting and oversaw construction. In 2025, I was engaged for a bunker renovation. It was fun to go back! I want to move some things around; I feel I’ve matured with my strategic design.”

Landfill projects are something Gerrish is particularly interested in – he wrote his university thesis on the topic. “They are interesting landforms and I like thinking about how you can blend them in to create a golf course,” he says. “Plus, golf courses built on landfill give those sites a better use.”

*Listen to the full “Tartan Talks” at [golfcourseindustry.com](https://golfcourseindustry.com).*

Here are links to other recent “Tartan Talks”, now featuring over 110 episodes:

- [Brian Curley, ASGCA, talks about the 50-week project he’s leading at Pelican Hill in California](#)
- [ASGCA President Mark Mungeam explores big-picture industry topics](#)

# Rees Jones inducted into New Jersey Golf Hall of Fame

ASGCA Past President Rees Jones has been inducted into the New Jersey Golf Hall of Fame.

The class of 2026 – Jones, Cindy Ferro, August F. Kammer and Jim McGovern – were celebrated at a ceremony in April 2026, held at Upper Montclair Country Club.

Jones, who describes himself as “a true New Jerseyite,” said: “To be included with all the people that have already been inducted, many of whom I’ve been associated with or been friends with is really special. It’s an acknowledgement that I’m part of a significant golf history.

“If any New Jersey club called, I would do the work for them, even if I was extremely busy. Because it’s my home state, I felt a strong sense of responsibility.”

Jones spent his junior golfing days at Montclair Golf Club, where Hall of Famers Carolyn Cudone and Billy Dear helped shape his development. “They started the junior golf program, which helped get a lot of us into the game of golf,” said Jones.

New Jersey has a wealth of high-quality golf, and Jones has worked on courses originally laid out by architects such as A.W. Tillinghast and Donald Ross. “The beauty of New Jersey golf course architecture is that so many accomplished architects built courses here,” said Jones. “They’re models for future architecture.”



Photo: Rees Jones Inc


## SOCIAL UPDATE



 **@ASGCA**  
ASGCA


The Study Tour of Stanley Thompson courses in Canada is underway! ASGCA is hosting members and friends, including travelers from EIGCA and the SAGCA. The Tour includes playing St. George’s G&CC, Summit G&CC and an evening of baseball.



 **@gcamagazine**  
Golf Course Architecture

As seen in our April 2026 issue of Golf Course Architecture... the renovated King’s North course at Myrtle Beach National. One of the earliest Arnold Palmer designs, the South Carolina course has been renovated by former Palmer architect, Brandon Johnson, ASGCA.



 **@Curley-Wagner Golf Design**  
Curley-Wagner Golf Design

Brian Curley, ASGCA, together with Martin Moore of Flagstick GCCM, were on site this week at FLC Pleiku Dak Doa Golf Course in Vietnam’s Gia Lai Province to review construction progress and provide design guidance in the field.

**Search ASGCA on the below channels for more posts:**



# Keeping it real

Artificial intelligence is having an impact on all types of business. Richard Humphreys speaks with ASGCA members about how it might shape the work of a golf course architect.

At the NFL Combine, team scouts no longer have to spend time digging through binders or running their own calculations to get data on the performance of athletes. Via a virtual assistant on the Combine app, they can find out about physical traits, event-day stats, comparative potential and more, as if they were talking with someone who knows every detail about every player.

“I just ask a question as I would ask you a question – and get what I need in seconds. It used to take hours, sometimes not even possible until after the Combine,” says Jacqueline Davidson, director of football research for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

This is just one example of how artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the way people work. In healthcare, it is being used to

detect potential cancer cells, and create personalized treatment plans. In business, AI ‘agents’ are being deployed as virtual workers, handling administrative tasks in a fraction of the time it would take a human. Law enforcement agencies are using AI to flag suspicious activity and uncover criminal networks. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

But how might it impact golf course design?



*AI-generated golf course imagery can be created and refined in minutes*

“AI can never achieve what a human can sense from Mother Nature,” says one skeptical golf course architect. “Nor can it strap its butt to a bulldozer and sculpt the earth.”

On the first count, they may be right, but autonomous bulldozing is already possible, combining AI, GPS and LiDAR to handle clearing and grading with minimal human involvement. It may be some time

before it can achieve the precision and artistry of a skilled shaper, but in an age where driverless taxis are on our roads and robots are performing complex surgery, anything seems possible.

Most golf course architects are already using AI, even if they haven’t fully appreciated it. Type a question into Google now and you will typically receive a detailed response, generated by AI, rather

than just a series of links to resources where you might find the answer. And that could be the primary benefit of AI, in the short term, for golf course architects: helping to save time spent on simple or repetitive tasks.

AI features are already integrated into software that is widely used in the industry. In Photoshop, for example, if you want to see what a photo of a golf hole would look

like with a bunker or some trees removed, you can simply highlight the relevant area and ask the software to remove the hazards. What might previously have taken some skill and time to do manually can now be done easily and in a matter of seconds.

Design visualization is one of the most immediately obvious

first glance but lacks coherence when studied more closely.”

John Aherne of golf visualization company Golfgraffix adds: “AI will become a very useful tool for golf course architects, particularly when it comes to communicating ideas more quickly and cost-effectively. That said, the real value is not in the AI itself. It is in the underlying

### “The more architectural structure and intent you provide, the more useful and accurate the result”

applications of AI. “I’ve been experimenting with platforms that can take a hand-drawn sketch, a plan-based composition, or a photo montage and translate them into more photorealistic images,” says Jeff Danner, ASGCA. “In my experience, the platform itself is less important than the input. The more architectural structure and intent you provide, the more useful and accurate the result.

“Everything still begins with a sketch, a plan or a composition that establishes scale, landforms and design logic. From there, AI can enhance the image – refining light, texture and atmosphere to create something that reads more clearly to the client. What’s become apparent is that AI is most effective when it’s interpreting something that already has architectural structure behind it. Without that, it tends to produce imagery that looks convincing at

data, technical know-how, and experience needed to make sure the output accurately reflects the architect’s design intent.

“In our case, AI sits on top of a workflow and a large library of golf course models that we have built up over many years. Used properly, it allows us to produce high-quality visuals much faster, which should make this type of presentation more accessible to projects of all sizes. I see AI as a very powerful tool, but one that works best in the hands of people who already understand the design and technical side of the process.”

Todd Quitno, ASGCA, has used AI to optimize imagery for his website: “I’ve been taking some of my more mediocre project imagery and running it through AI filters to enhance the quality,” he says. “Basic prompts may be ‘enhance this photo to make it portfolio worthy’ or ‘add late morning or



early evening light to this photo.’ For before-and-after imagery, Quitno has used Photoshop for the initial layout and then plugged in AI tools to provide more detail, “like adding leaves on trees or recoloring with richer lighting.”

ASGCA Past President Brian Costello has also started to use AI to enhance photos and sketches to convey a concept. “With more practice, I can see where AI could become a useful tool to assist with our graphics that are folded into a presentation,” he says.

OLE'

# HOLE 14

(187 YARDS)



*Spot the flaws: there may be several obvious issues with this single-prompt AI-generated sketch, but refinements are easily made*

In the short term, AI may be more focused on the business, rather than creative, aspects of the profession. Anyone who uses Microsoft products like Word, Excel and Outlook, for example, will have noticed a Copilot icon, where AI help is at hand. In preparing this article, I have resisted Copilot's temptation to 'refine this to be clear and professional', but for a golf course architect preparing a proposal for a client, that could be a simple method of helping to articulate

ideas in a way that clients can easily understand.

"It can be very effective in drafting proposals, organizing research and handling certain administrative or marketing tasks," says Danner. "In a field like golf course architecture, where many of us wear multiple hats, those efficiencies can be quite meaningful. Used properly, AI can take some of the back-of-house burden off the architect and allow more time for design, client interaction and construction observation."

It is clear to see these tools generating significant time savings when prospecting for new business, too. If a golf course architect wants to promote their services to all of the golf clubs in their local area, for example, AI tools can help gather together contact names, addresses and email details in a fraction of the time it would take an architect to do that same task themselves.

Andy Staples, ASGCA, says: "AI will begin to replace a lot of writing, not only in terms of



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quick emails or newsletters, but in contracts and specifications.”

Staples warns that as you delve deeper into the technical aspects of the profession, AI must be used with caution. “I have seen some calculations not working out quite right,” he says. “For example, I tried to lay out a wedge range from three separate teeing areas, attempting to make all the targets equidistant from each other. The program gave me a solution, but in the field, the dimensions didn’t work out.”

“What I’m anticipating the most is the streamlining of production,” says Quitno. “I’m already hearing about its ability to take pencil line drawings and turn them into AutoCAD polylines, which would eliminate a very time-consuming step. I could also see AI being able to take a hand sketch or a photo of a project and turning it into a workable plan with the

### “Used properly, AI can take some of the back-of-house burden off the architect”

proper prompts – this is actually a scary thought in terms of potential plagiarism.”

Issues like copyright and quality control are likely to be unearthed with increasing frequency as more people begin AI tools. At the same time, endless possibilities will emerge too: “I can’t really wrap my head around AI’s potential,” says Quitno. “I’m sure it’s going to impact us in ways we don’t even realize yet, for which I’m equally intrigued and apprehensive.”

For now, though, there are lines that most are not willing to cross.

“I haven’t explored AI in routing and, candidly, that’s probably the area where I would be most hesitant,” says Danner. “Routing is fundamentally about judgment, how a course unfolds across a piece of land, how it responds to topography, and how it balances strategy, flow and environmental

### The tools of the trade

Standalone AI tools, and features in existing software, that may be among the first to be useful for golf course architects include:



ChatGPT is already widely used for tasks related to research, writing, editing and communication.



Microsoft Copilot is an AI assistant embedded in apps like Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Teams. Among its many functions, Copilot can help draft and edit documents, reply to emails, analyze data, as well as summarize and transcribe meetings.



Claude is similar to ChatGPT, but particularly adept at analyzing long documents, reports, studies and summarizing complex project information.



Adobe products, such as Photoshop, now incorporate AI features, while Adobe Firefly allows users to generate imagery, including video.



AI tools in AutoCAD could be used by architects to tidy up drawings, refine layouts, optimize terrain grading and drainage, and automate drafting and design analysis.



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considerations. Those are decisions made with experience and time in the field. If we begin outsourcing that level of thinking, then we're moving away from what we've been trained to do as architects. At that point, you're no longer designing; you're directing."

"Golf course design blends engineering and art," says Kevin Norby, ASGCA. "AI will be able to help with renderings and maybe conceptual layouts, but I don't think it will have a great impact on the routing of new courses. As golf architects, we have to consider the somewhat more intangible concepts like strategy, shot options, aesthetics and safety as well as drainage, cart circulation, playability and agronomic issues. These considerations don't show up on an aerial photo or topographic map."

## "Could AI eventually reach a point where it can generate viable routings? Possibly."

Danner adds: "Could AI eventually reach a point where it can generate viable routings? Possibly. But even then, interpretation and decision-making would still be critical. For now, I see far more value in using AI to support the process, improving efficiency and communication, while keeping architectural judgment firmly in the architect's hands."

"It allows us to test ideas more quickly and communicate them more effectively. But it doesn't replace the architect's role. If anything, it sharpens the distinction. AI can generate an image, but it doesn't understand whether that image represents something that works from a golf course architectural standpoint. Understanding how a golf hole functions, how landforms read in the field, and how decisions affect playability still requires professional judgment and experience. That's not something you arrive at through prompts." ●

### The making of a cover

The cover image for this issue of *By Design* was created in just ten minutes using Adobe Firefly and the below series of prompts.

*Create a photorealistic image in landscape orientation of a completely unique par-four golf hole, based on an entirely flat and featureless piece of land but using Golden Age principles of design*



*Make the hole longer and add fairway bunkers and a small stream, and make all the bunkering more rugged*



*Change the perspective so it is viewed from a little higher, and change the time of day to late evening on a sunny day, but with some clouds in the sky*



And then the final prompt, which resulted in the image used for the cover and opening pages of this article: *Make the image another half hour earlier in the evening, and alter the holes in the background so you can see the transition from the main green to the next tee. Remove the golfer.*



# Training days

After a successful first edition at Erin Hills in 2024, the ASGCA Foundation Design Boot Camp returned in 2026, this time in Pinehurst, North Carolina. Lee Carr attended both, and shares her first-hand experiences.

**F**ourteen students enrolled in the second ASGCA Foundation Design Boot Camp, held in March 2026 at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina. This cohort included a dentist, the CEO of a steel business, an entrepreneur, several retirees and two people who have their own golf design businesses. Golf as a passion does not discern by profession.

Arriving for their week of learning on Monday, attendees gathered

about how these weeks would compare. The instructors – ASGCA members who cover their own expenses and donate their time – could have recycled their material, but instead spent time evolving their presentations for this year’s group.

One of my fellow attendees, Barbara Mason, herself an educator, was impressed by the curriculum for the week. “They did an excellent job of layering the

leading their teams with a game plan and posing thought-provoking questions, such as: where is the safety corridor? How can we balance the cut-and-fill quantities? Where is the best place for the cart path?

On Tuesday morning, we learned about irrigation and course infrastructure, and saw the pump station for No. 10 in action. Representatives from Watertronics and Rain Bird, who, along with Kafka Granite, sponsored the Design Boot Camp were there to explain how it all worked. We then walked the course site, with sunshine dappling through the pines, and talked about yardages, grading, hollows and high points.

“I really enjoyed walking, evaluating and seeing the property for the theoretical design that we were tasked with routing,” says attendee Eric Klein, a pharmaceutical professional with a passion for golf and course design that stretches back several decades.

Bill Coore, ASGCA, led the group on a tour of his new layout at Pinehurst. Seeing No. 11 under construction reinforced our newly acquired knowledge of infrastructure. “What I learned

## “The seven ASGCA instructors served as coaches, leading their teams with a game plan”

at the charming Holly Inn, which would be home for the week, and the location for seminars led by ASGCA members on topics including the design process, routing principles and construction documents. To provide deep insight into the venue, ASGCA Past President Jan Bel Jan also delivered ‘A History of Golf Course Architecture at Pinehurst.’

I was fortunate enough to participate in the Design Boot Camp at Erin Hills, so was curious

learning with variety for maximum impact,” she says.

The overarching task for the week was for students to design a golf course, step-by-step, while learning about and applying design principles along the way. The designated land was part of Pinehurst’s Sandmines, a 900-acre site, largely undeveloped, that is also home to the No. 10 course.

To allow for dedicated instruction, four teams were formed. The seven ASGCA instructors served as coaches,



*For this year's Design Boot Camp, four teams were formed, with ASGCA members providing students with instruction*

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## DESIGN BOOT CAMP



Photo: Chasing Fowl

*ASGCA Past President Bruce Charlton reviews plans with participants*

most was how considerations for drainage can be so intertwined with strategic design of the course, and of individual holes,” says Klein. Activities in the field, such as discussing slope while standing in the middle of a practice green, were effectively interlaced with the conceptual presentations and hands-on work.

Another attendee, Win Roney, practiced architecture for over 30 years before retiring in 2024. “As a building architect, my imagination and creative spirit are hard to turn off,” he says. “Golf course architecture is way different than building architecture, but there are some similarities.”

Roney and I were both on the ‘Red’ team with entrepreneur Mike

DiLonardo, where we worked throughout the week to dream big and route our course. Bel Jan and ASGCA Past President Steve Forrest were our instructors. Using topography maps, tracing paper, rulers, pencils, a little math and several erasers, we configured a respectable routing for golfers of all abilities. We were mindful of gas lines, wetlands and potential permitting, soil profiles and unique landmarks that we would want to preserve. We didn’t want the week to end!

“What I liked most was the people, for sure,” says Roney. “My team was amazing. What a fantastic group of instructors we had all week. The combined knowledge and experience they shared with us was

amazing, too. My other highlight was our tour of No. 11 with Bill Coore. What a legend he is!”

I agree. The instructors were a joy, and listening to Bill talking about his process made a big impression. The side conversations with, and among, the architects were every bit as interesting as the formal education, maybe more. Other highlights were playing the Cradle and Pinehurst No. 2, as well as touring the World Golf Hall of Fame.

The ASGCA Design Boot Camp was created to raise funds for the ASGCA Foundation, and it has been very successful. Charities benefiting from this year’s event include the New Jersey Golf Youth Foundation and the Carolinas Golf Foundation, which helps fund turfgrass research

PROJECT UPDATE

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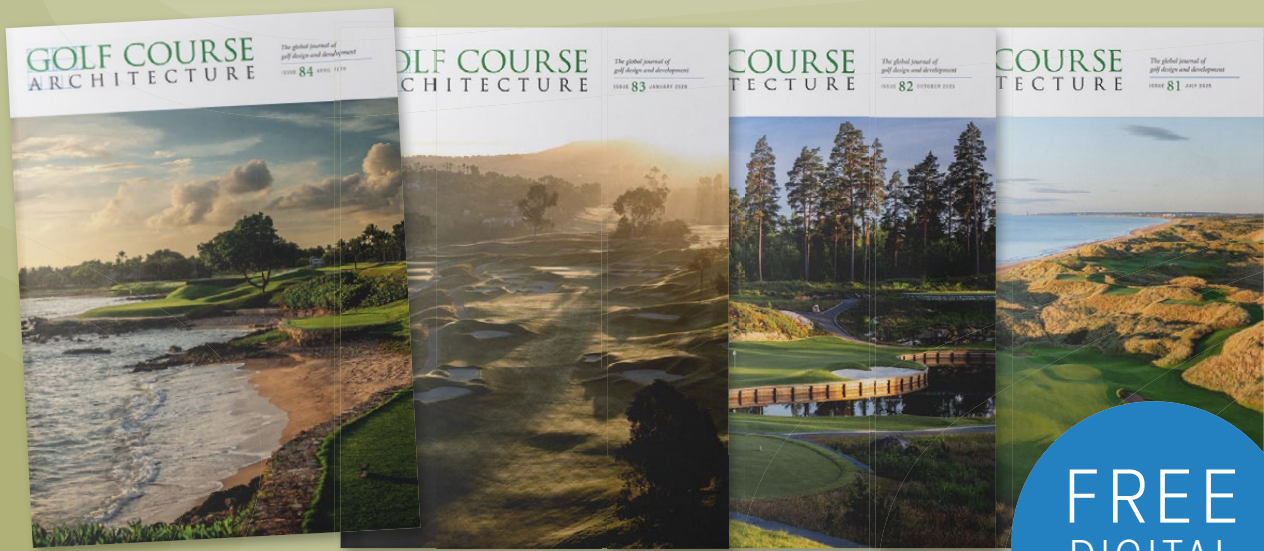
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## DESIGN BOOT CAMP

Photos: Chasing Fowl



*ASGCA Past Presidents Jeff Blume and Mike Hurdzan (right) were among the seven Design Boot Camp instructors*

and offers scholarships to aspiring superintendents and turfgrass managers. Asheville Municipal Golf Course in North Carolina will also receive a donation – this 1927 Donald Ross design is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and it was extensively damaged by floodwaters after Hurricane Helene in 2024.

On Thursday evening, during dinner at the Carolina Hotel, representatives from the receiving charities shared more about their missions, and we were privileged to have several senior Pinehurst representatives join us. As Barbara Mason says: “The fact that proceeds were going to charity was really what swayed my decision to join – I was ‘in.’ Anyone who truly

loves golf wants others to have that same experience, and the charities the ASGCA Foundation focuses on makes golf accessible to all. The entire week had this benevolent vibe.”

**“The fact that proceeds were going to charity was really what swayed my decision to join”**

On Friday morning, the drawings were displayed and each group described the routing, holes and strategies involved in their work. The ideas were all sound but very different, reflecting the wonderful, dynamic aspects of golf course design.

There were hugs and handshakes before departures from the Holly Inn. Diverse backgrounds dissolved through shared experiences, lots of laughter, and a genuine love for golf. Strangers became friends, and

charities were bolstered to help more strangers make new friends through the game. It’s nice to remember how the ASGCA started, and to witness how the Design Boot Camp has successfully transitioned from idea, through execution, to establishment. Where will it go next? ●

# Design that makes a positive impact

ASGCA Past President Damian Pascuzzo and former PGA Tour player Steve Pate focused on affordability and environmental stewardship for their redesign of Campus Commons in California.

The Campus Commons Golf Course, located along the American River near Sacramento State University in California, had closed in 2021 due to a major infrastructure project that would render the layout unplayable.

The work was necessary to accommodate erosion protection and levee expansion. “The course’s future was ultimately decided by water, not golf,” says ASGCA Past President Damian Pascuzzo. “When

time the heavy equipment moved on, the old course routing had effectively been erased – creating an uncommon opportunity and a demanding mandate: rebuild golf in a floodplain, and make it work.”

Pascuzzo and Pate were appointed in 2019 (years of approvals preceded construction starting) to develop a plan that would reimagine the nine-hole par-three course. “The design brief was operational as well as experiential,”

visual anchor, pairing play with long views to the water and the American River Parkway beyond. The routing was also refined to reduce conflict points with the adjacent multi-use trail system – an everyday reality for riverfront sites – by managing lines of play, crossings and separations so everyone can share the corridor comfortably.”

Protecting the course from flood was a key aspect of the design team’s brief. “The grading strategy elevates greens above most flood flows while keeping modeled water surface elevations within the limits established by the US Army Corps of Engineers,” says Pascuzzo. “It’s a careful balance: protect critical playing surfaces and maintain playability, without displacing water or creating new impacts elsewhere along the river corridor.

“In a flood-prone setting, sand is a recurring reset button after high water. We built strategy with mounds that influence bounces and stances, swales that gather or kick shots away and hollows that turn

**“Equipment capital, labor, water and chemical costs were evaluated and influenced the overall design ”**

the US Army Corps of Engineers advanced the major riverbank stabilization and flood-control effort, the property became part of the work zone. A 70-foot-wide strip of the course along the river edge was acquired, and much of what remained served as access and staging during construction. By the

says Pascuzzo. “Campus Commons needed to reach break-even without relying on the county’s support from its three other 18-hole facilities. That meant design choices that would reduce labor, simplify agronomy and recover quickly after inevitable high water.

“Several holes use the river as a



*Since Campus Commons reopened in May 2025, monthly rounds have doubled from 2,000 to 4,000*

misses into meaningful recoveries. The green complexes also have contours and short-grass surrounds to create options rather than penalties. Non-native trees were removed to support the broader ecology. The course's swales create strategy and texture in lieu of bunkers and also provide pathways that help juvenile fish follow receding floodwaters back towards the river after high water."

Areas acquired and reshaped by the US Army Corps of Engineers were revegetated for erosion control, and downed trees were anchored in shallow water to create additional fish habitat. Strict state regulations

prohibit fertilizer from entering the river basin, so agronomy had to be as carefully designed as the routing.

"Equipment capital, labor, water and chemical costs were evaluated and influenced the overall design and agronomic standards," says Pascuzzo. Superintendent Kurtis Wolford developed a 'best management practices' plan to guide inputs, protect water quality and keep operations compliant over the long term. "The result is a reminder that in the floodplain, 'golf design' is never only shaping and greens – it's the choreography of land, water and maintenance working as one," adds Pascuzzo.

The architects knew Wolford would be involved at Campus Commons from an early stage, so collaborated with him during the design phase on how the course would be maintained. "The conversations with Kurtis influenced our design decisions," says Pascuzzo. "We began with the end very much in mind."

Since opening in May 2025, monthly rounds at the course have doubled from 2,000 to around 4,000. The reimagined nine is playable in 90 minutes, and costs no more than \$25 to play (at weekends). Weekdays are \$19 and juniors can play for \$10. ●

# Eau Claire Golf & Country Club

Kevin Norby, ASGCA

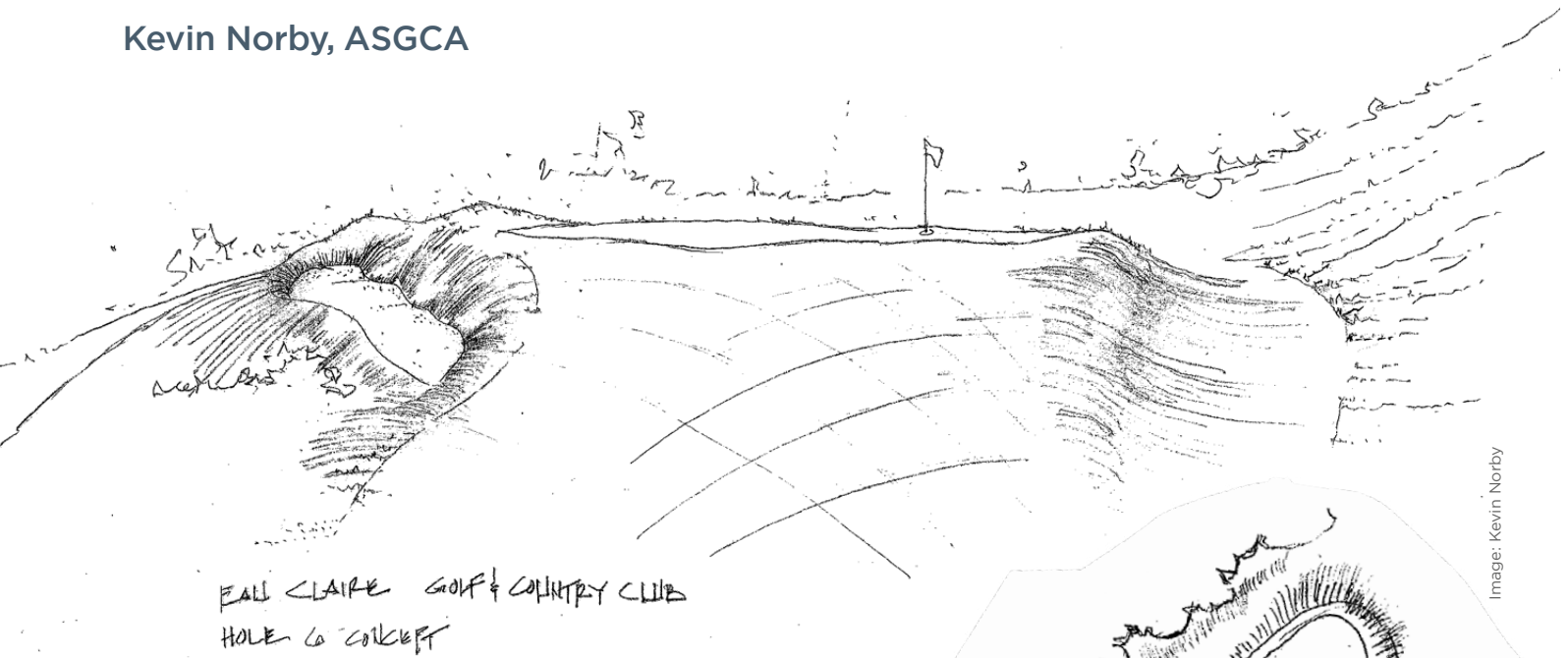


Image: Kevin Norby

Kevin Norby, ASGCA, has sketched a new, alternate par-three sixth hole for Eau Claire Golf & Country Club in Altoona, Wisconsin, as part of a project that will start in September 2026.

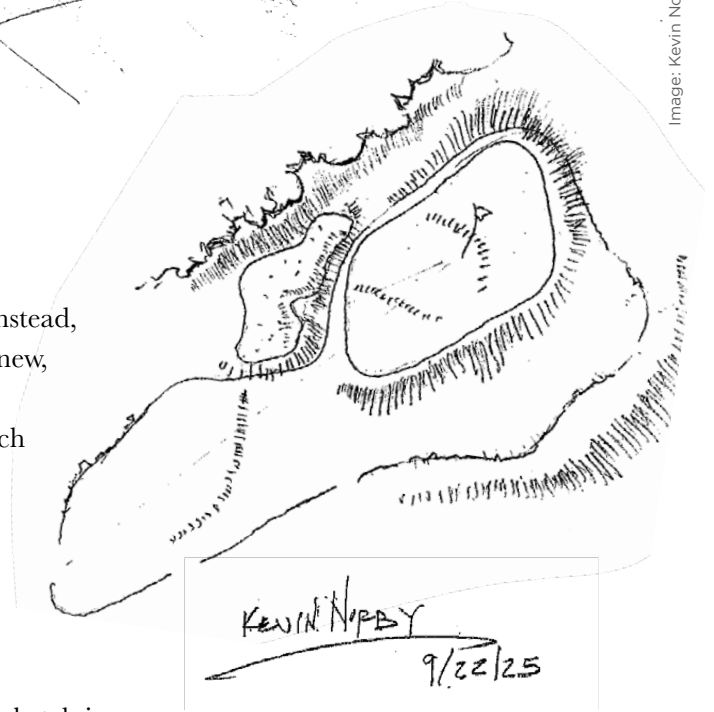
The course was originally designed by Tom Vardon, brother to Harry Vardon, in 1926.

Norby's 160-yard creation will play the same distance as the existing sixth hole. "The current sixth plays uphill to a very small (3,700 square feet) green, which falls off sharply some 12 feet on three sides," he says. "The green is steeply sloped and has limited pin positions so the hole can be challenging and, at times, frustrating for members. We discussed renovating and expanding the green, but members didn't want to lose one of the more unique

holes in the region. Instead, we opted to create a new, alternate hole."

Norby says the sketch helped the members understand what the relationship would be like to Eau Claire River on the left side. Eau Claire published the sketch in its newsletter to help members visualize the new hole.

"The green is elevated with expansive shortgrass collars to the right and back," says Norby. "On the left, the green will sit at the top of a steep slope leading down to the Eau Claire River. I didn't want golfers to try to go down after their ball, so I added a bunker on the left to catch errant balls and provide



some chance of recovery. Like many greens at Eau Claire, the putting surface will be elevated, have some sharp corners and is contoured.

"Tees are staggered so someone playing the back tees will need to carry the bunker for a left pin position. From the forward tee, the front of the green is open and provides an unobstructed approach to a middle or right pin." ●

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