



Spring 2019

This year marks 25 years since I started Tripp Davis and Associates. I feel unusually fortunate to have been able to survive, and often thrive, in such a tough profession, especially since I did not work for one of the name architects before starting my own firm. There is no question our commitment to doing great work, and to be uncompromising in doing so, has been a reason we have made it, but that would not have been possible without having a lot of great clients with vision and trust in us, and all of the exceptional construction talent we have been able to work with. I have also been very fortunate to have had great talent within our company, with most everyone that ever worked here lasting 10 years or longer. Currently, Kyle Downs, Jason Gold and Jack Skirkanich are my “gang” that strives every day to make our work special.

All of us have our families to thank for their support, and I am very blessed every day to have married Jenny Davis. My uncle told me I “out punted my coverage” the day we were married, and he does not know how right he was. This is often a tough and very time consuming profession we have chosen and while the reward of seeing our work come together is great, so can be the sacrifice in time for our families.

The Tribute Golf Club in Dallas, which opened in 2000, was my firm’s first really big break with a new course construction project, and we have since gone on to do 18 new courses, which become sort of like your newborn kids. In that same year we were hired to rebuild a green at Engineers Country Club on Long Island’s north shore, which was our first opportunity to work on a historic course designed by one of the greats of the past – Herbert Strong being the original golf architect at Engineers. Since that time, our firm has been hired by some of the most historic clubs in the country as our reputation for being one of the best with historic renovation and restoration has grown. Working on these courses designed by the best golf architects of the past is something I still see as extraordinary. It is an experience that makes us even better when we do new courses, or redesign/reconstruction projects, by giving us a very broad creative range we have experience perfecting.

In this issue of our newsletter, we highlight our exciting work underway at Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club; the reopening of the Willow Brook Country Club in Tyler, Texas, last fall after two years of work; our renovation work at Preston Trail in Dallas last summer; our renovation and redesign work at Rolling Hills in Connecticut last fall; the conclusion to our bunker restoration work at The Powelton Club in Newburgh, New York, this spring; and the completion of the new 12th hole at Rumson Country Club in New Jersey. We also have a short story on some of the accolades the work we did at the Northwood Club in Dallas keeps bringing in; and we have an item of the recent NCAA Women’s D1 Regional played at the Jimmie Austin University of Oklahoma Golf Club, which we reworked from 2014 through 2017.

It has been exciting times, but I am always looking forward too – looking for that next opportunity to put this great team to work on creating something special for our client.



(Left to right):  
Kyle Downs, Tripp Davis, Jack Skirkanich and Jason Gold

*Tripp Davis*

# TDA Begins Construction at Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club

We started our extensive renovation and restoration of the 1929 design by Perry Maxwell and Alister MacKenzie in late January. Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club in Nichols Hills is one of a few courses that Maxwell and MacKenzie collaborated on together. Their work here was unique and extraordinary and it has been a thrill for all of us to in part renovate and in part restore this truly special golf course.



*LaBar Golf is detailing a bunker at the 17th green*

TDA is working with LaBar Golf of New Jersey, along with Project Superintendent Chris Walick leading the way. LaBar is focused on most everything but irrigation and their work, alongside TDA Shaper Jason Gold, has been really fun to watch. They are being assisted by Jones Plan out of Tulsa with cart paths and bunker liners, a company we work with a lot in Oklahoma. Landscapes Unlimited of Lincoln, Nebraska, is doing the irrigation system, led by Chris White, and they are as usual doing a great job. Golf Course Superintendent Nathan Neumann is also getting in on the work, as he and his staff are doing tree removal, pop irrigation heads around bunkers, and installing pavers for paths at tees and greens. Nathan is pretty much the gate keeper to everything being done, and he has been very good at it.



*TDA Shaper Jason Gold is creating a bunker. Jason has been with TDA nearly 14 years.*

# Willow Brook Country Club



*Hole 2 (par 5)*

The 18-hole renovation of the legendary Willow Brook Country Club, in Tyler, Texas, was completed last fall and reopened a short time later. This year is the first full season that members will play the entire renovated course. TDA accommodated Willow Brook's need to remain open during the course renovation work and we designed a two-stage construction plan. The back nine renovation was from January 2017 to October 2017; the front nine construction spanned the spring and summer of 2018. Members enjoyed a re-opening ceremony in October 2018.

"I visited Willow Brook this January and the course overall is really good," said Tripp. "The greens are coming along even after getting sprigged a bit late last year. I can't wait to play it this spring and summer."

"Tripp took the course backbones and brought out the beauty of the place in the features," said Kyle Downs, TDA Senior Golf Architect. "We added subtle elements of strategy to the course which the golfers are finding interesting to learn."



*TDA's Kyle Downs with  
Head Pro Chris Hudson at  
Willow Brook*

Green complexes were rebuilt, shaped and grassed with TifEagle. Latitude 36 Bermuda grass was used for the fairways and tees, which is an extremely tight turf that is really fun to play on. The Tifway 419 Bermuda was planted in the rough. The bunkers were built using Better Billy Bunker Liners and Premiere White bunker sand from Arkansas. Course Crafters did the construction work, led by the shaping of Bill "Hollywood" Willingham.

While most of the routing stayed the same, TDA changed the back nine routing that previously had five consecutive par 4 holes. The conversion of hole 11 into a par 5 and hole 12 into a par 3 created for better flow and variety.

The 18-hole renovation was part of TDA's Master Plan for the course and its practice facilities. TDA previously designed a four-hole short course with holes ranging from 60 to 140 yards. We worked with golf course builder Course Crafters on the project.

# Preston Trail Golf Club



*7th hole after renovation*

TDA returned to Preston Trail Golf Club in Dallas, Texas, in the summer of 2018 for bunker renovation work. When we did the complete renovation and restoration in 2008/2009, we used a bunker liner that had about a 10 year life span, which was the best available at the time. By 2018 it was time to put new liners in, that would last longer, and we ended up going with a sand that was not available originally as well. We are using the Premiere White bunker sand from Arkansas, and after working with the club on which bunker liner to use to best fit the sand, Superintendents Alan Houdek and Chris Rick chose Bunker Solutions. While we were on site to renovate the bunkers, we took advantage of the opportunity to make a few tweaks to make the entire bunker scheme even better after 10 years of learning how the players played the course we gave them in 2009. Course Crafters and TDA Shaper Jason Gold fought a lot of weather problems, but pushed through to create something everyone is really enjoying. The new sand, supported by the new liner, is a big hit.

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## Rumson Country Club 12th Hole Restoration

TDA began the reconstruction of Rumson Country Club's 12th hole in the fall of 2018 by first building a new green in a new location, which allowed the current hole to stay in play. This spring, the rest of the hole was taken out of play as work was completed to rebuild the tees, the fairway, and fairway bunkers. The club is located in Rumson, New Jersey.

LaBar Golf is handling the work, along with a helping hand from Superintendent Ben Stover. This is TDA Design Associate Jack Skirkanich's home course, so he has been there most every day.

"Rumson is a great club with a lot of history, dating back to the original design by Herbert Barker in 1910," said Tripp. "Barker also was very involved with helping Walter Travis in the redesign of Garden City Golf Club in preparation for the 1908 U.S. Amateur. The two courses have a lot of similarities and Garden City has been a source of inspiration as we have worked on the course for the last few years. The results of the work we have done here are that much more fun to see since this is Jack's home club, and where he grew up learning the game."

## Tripp Davis Redesign at Northwood Club Named Top Course by AvidGolfer

The Northwood Club in Dallas was recently recognized as the Best Country Club in Dallas/Fort Worth in the Elite Category, and also was honored as the Best Course Renovation of the Year by AvidGolfer DFW Magazine. The renovation work was conducted by TDA. Davis' redesign was called "astounding" and "fantastic," and his work was praised for "keeping the course mostly intact while using subtlety to update the layout."

"I am honored to have Northwood Club recognized by AvidGolfer Magazine as the Best Elite Country Club and Best Renovation in Dallas/Fort Worth," said Tripp. "Our approach was to restore the original character found in Mr. Diddel's greens, rebuild the bunkers to reflect Diddel's style, and reposition bunkers and tees to be more strategically relevant for today's game. To see our work elevate the status of Northwood is very gratifying."



Photo Credit Kevin Carpenter

*AvidGolfer also highly ranked the above 14th hole at Northwood Club as the Best Par 5 and the best tee shot in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex*

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## Jimmie Austin OU Golf Club Hosts NCAA Women's Golf Regional



Photo Credit Branden Hart

*8th Hole | par 5 | 600 yards*

The University of Oklahoma's Jimmie Austin Golf Club in Norman hosted the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Women's Golf Regional on May 6-8. The course was one of just four qualifying sites prior to the National Championships in Arkansas. Texas, Florida, Wake Forest, Purdue, Arizona State, and Mississippi all made it through. The University of Oklahoma's Kaitlin Milligan, who grew up with Tripp's daughter Maggie, was the individual medalist at 208, 8 under par, which qualifies her to play at the National Championship in Arkansas.

In 2017, Tripp and his team completed the 18-hole Jimmie Austin (OU) Golf Club renovation that brought out the naturalistic attributes of the site in order to embrace original designer Perry Maxwell's styles and influences. The NCAA also selected the course as a Regional host for the 2020 Division I Men's Golf Championships.

# ON THE TEE



## Rolling Hills Country Club (Wilton, Connecticut)

Our most extensive work at Rolling Hills to date was finished up just a few weeks ago and we will have a complete story with pictures in the summer issue.

We are very excited about this work coming back into play, and then going into our Fall 2019 project, which will surpass last fall's work as the most we have done to date.

## The Powelton Club (Newburgh, New York)

We began last fall with our bunker restoration work at The Powelton Club with every intention to finish before Christmas. But Mother Nature had other ideas. We have been back this spring and should be done soon. It has been a thrill to work on this Devereux Emmet design from the 1920's, and to restore his iconic bunker style and bring this fun course in a neat part of New York on the Hudson back to where it looks like Emmet.



Frank O'Dowd and his Intergolf crews have done a great job weathering through and we could not be more pleased with their work. Bob Demarco, the longtime Superintendent who retired over the winter, handed the reins to Vince Barnaba, who came over from Westchester Country Club. It was great to work with Bob and I hope he plays a lot more golf in retirement. Our project Chair, Kurt Najork, has been amazingly supportive in more ways than one.

Look in the summer issue for more photos of the work we are very proud of.

## Davis to Qualify for U.S. Senior Open

Tripp has applied to qualify for the U.S. Senior Open Championship at Warren Golf Course at Notre Dame, in Notre Dame, Indiana, on June 27-30, 2019. He will go through qualifying at the Stonebridge Country Club in Frisco, Texas, on May 28th. His wrist injuries seem to be behind him and although he does not have time to play many competitive events, this is one he especially has wanted to try to make the field.



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