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Easily one of Texas' most respected golf heroes,
BEN CRENSHAW is these days leaving his
mark as a golf course architect. P.18

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DALLAS

Notebook

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Dallas and Donald Ross



By elevating the greens, the course was given a much more authentic appearance. Now, instead of looking like a mid-century modern design, the DCC course once again looks like it was built in 1912.

Nearly 63 years after his death, the influence of Donald Ross is still felt. Most recently, the father of American golf course architecture has been impacting the Dallas Country Club course renovation through the historical mind and adept hands of the course architect John Fought and his John Fought Design team.

"We're very good at classic architecture," Fought says. "I've researched Ross and his work for 40 years now and I've been designing in the classic architecture style for 20, so we were a good fit for what the Dallas Country Club was looking for."

Of course, it's not that the DCC and its members had a particular fondness for Donald Ross, or any historical connection to the transplanted Scotsman, or even the expectation that the architect most known for his Pinehurst No. 2 design would help resurrect their almost century-old course.

But after 100 years—and despite a Jay Morrish renovation as recently as 1999—it was time for the club's course to get a complete overhaul. For example, the 150-year-old oaks lining the fairways were stately, but also contributed to its uninviting nickname, "The Cage." And a number of small renovations throughout the 21st century left some with the impression that the course had been built in the

1970s. That's why Fought and his appreciation for classic architecture was brought in.

Early on, Fought realized Ross's influence would come into play. "When we got here, one of the first things I noticed was the bunkers," Fought says. "There was a lot of sand." So, Fought and his team looked at all of the sand-faced bunkers and removed almost half of them from the course altogether. The bunkers that remained were all given a grass-faced Ross treatment. As Fought says, "One well-placed and well-done bunker can be much more impacting than having nine bunkers on one hole."

Then, Fought and his team raised all the green complexes. By elevating the greens, the course was given a much more authentic appearance. Now, instead of looking like a mid-century modern design, the DCC course once again looks like it was built in 1912. Next up were the tee complexes. To complete the revamping, Fought redesigned all 18 tee boxes in the period-specific rectangular style.

As for the course nickname, to eliminate the cage-like feel off the tee, Fought removed a number of trees. "Too many of the oaks had encroached on the course," he says. "Fortunately, there were so many trees, that the oaks that were tucked



behind that first row looked great once we exposed them.”

With the removal of the DCC clubhouse and plans for a historic and early 21st century consistent clubhouse to be built on a separate section of the DCC property, Fought was also able to add a little more modern length to the classically redone course. “We pushed

the 8th green back 75 yards and made it a 535-yard par-five,” the architect explains. “That allowed us to turn the 455-yard 11th hole into a good par-four instead of keeping it a really short par-five.”

Taken all together, from bunkers and greens to tees and trees, Fought and his team saw the renovation of

the Dallas Country Club course as a chance to introduce Donald Ross and his design aesthetic to the historic club, an introduction long in the making, but well worth the wait.

DALLAS COUNTRY CLUB
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