

Knollwood completes Raynor/Banks restoration with help of Ian Andrew



By Adam Lawrence

Wed 18 Jan, 2017

When the new [golf season](#) opens at Knollwood CC, members and guests will see a course that looks more like 1927 than 2017. The club has just completed a six-year project to restore it to something

more akin to what architects Seth Raynor and Charles Banks originally built.

Canadian restoration specialist Ian Andrew has guided Knollwood through the process. “It’s an honour to restore one of Raynor’s most interesting courses,” said Andrew. “He built some wonderful template holes, but like Shoreacres in Chicago, he also created some unique holes that are even more compelling – golfers won’t soon forget the sixth green. The course begins with a flourish and builds to a climax, culminating at the finest par-four finisher that I know. Plus, one of the best parts about a round at Knollwood is once you’ve finished 18, you’re not done. There’s a stunning short par-three 19th hole to settle your bets.”

Before one spade of dirt was turned, Andrew pored over Raynor’s original plans and sketches as well as Banks’ construction notes. In addition, the club’s archives yielded an aerial photograph taken in the middle of construction in 1926. Andrew and the Knollwood team have been working on the entire course restoration plan since 2010. The project began in 2011 when the 16th green was restored and has continued intermittently since. The third green was restored in 2012 and the 12th green returned to its original configuration this past summer.

“The first stage was recapturing green surfaces and extending all the collars out to the sharp banks around the greens and bunkers,” Andrew told *GCA*. “It was during this stage that we returned the original 16th green back to its original extent and resurfaced the 16th green (retaining the original contours). The year after we did some tree removal and fairway expansions. The only significant restoration was to the bunkering of the third green.

“Things then got stalled for a few years, but last year the club decided to renovate all 19 holes’ worth of bunkers. We returned the bunkering back to the original locations and to the original style of Raynor/Banks. There were a couple of fairway bunkers relocated to address the new distances the ball travelled where those holes bordered public roads. This was done for strategy and safety. The concepts for both were taken directly

from another nearby Macdonald/Raynor course and duplicated in both style and placement.

“The previous fall’s work saw us rebuild the 12th green to restore the angle, original pitch, bunkering and setting of the original green site. We expended every collar to make sure they all fell slightly over each edge to create an infinity horizon. We fixed surface drainage problems on two greens, restored all the bunkers, returned a series of original feeder slopes back into play, widened all the approaches back out to the bunker edges, re-drained the perennially wet 13th fairway and removed 200 trees for playability and views.”

During this final phase of the course restoration, Andrew focused on bunker location and bunker reshaping, tree removal and fairway/target-line changes. The bunker restoration and tree removal projects, performed by NMP Golf Construction, began this past October and took over two months to complete. In addition, irrigation issues around greens were also addressed.

Founded in 1894, Knollwood was one of the first 15 clubs to join the USGA and iconic golfers frequented the club, including Francis Ouimet and Bobby Jones. The original golf course was designed by Lawrence Van Etten and opened in the summer of 1895. In 1924, the club hired AW Tillinghast to expand the course. At Tillinghast's direction, the club purchased an additional 50 acres of adjacent land which was ultimately redesigned by Seth Raynor to add approximately 1,000 yards in length. Raynor passed away before the course was completed, so Charles Banks finished the project.