

MANCHESTER
COUNTRY CLUB

2017



NEW HAMPSHIRE
OPEN

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Manchester Country Club to Host the 2017 New Hampshire Open

One of the great allures of golf in New England is the history associated with many of the clubs in the region. New Hampshire is no different as many historic and hidden gems dot the golf landscape.

One of these is Manchester Country Club which will host the New Hampshire Open in 2017.

The club was completed in 1923 by famed architect Donald Ross. Ross was instrumental in the creation of the club, having a hand in the selection of the land and overseeing the design and construction of the golf course.

Just 22 years after the club opened, MCC underwent some significant financial turmoil as the club slid into bankruptcy. While the club survived this troubled time, many of the charms of Ross's design were lost due to lack of money, neglect of maintenance, and the passage of time. In 2007, the club and its members embarked on a plan to bring back the historical charm and significance of the original layout of the

golf course. It's been a labor of love for MCC & NHGA Board Member David Larrivee.

An avid golf architecture enthusiast, the project has been at times exciting and frustrating for Larrivee, who's happy that some of the original plans will be implemented for the State Open this year. "The course went through some tough times in the mid 1940's after WW2, and during the lean years many of the course fairway bunkers were eliminated," he said.

Larrivee, a longtime MCC member, has spent time digging through historical records and photos to help complete the puzzle of what MCC originally looked like.

"The only proof of the changes came from 18 original photos taken in 1923 before the club opened, in fact, before the clubhouse was built," said Larrivee. "These photos were critical to the Long Range Improvement Plan (LRIP) put together in 2007 by Ross Renovation Architect Ron Forse of Forse Design."

Some of the historical documents were housed at the club



HISTORY IN THE MAKING: The top photo is of one of the original bunkers from 1923. The bottom photo shows recent in-progress improvements to the #2 fairway bunker. The left photo is of the newly-built Golf House viewed from hole #4.

and others were found by digging through microfiche sheets at local libraries. The process hasn't been all old school as the club has used some of the most sophisticated technology on the planet to map out where old bunkers had been filled in. The results have been nothing short of astounding.

"In what is believed to be the first use of this technology for golf course renovation, we deployed Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to generate 3-D images of many areas on the course where there appeared to be topographical evidence of bunkers which had been 'plowed over' or where there was clearly lack of strategy in the design of a hole – something which would be rare for a Ross design," said Larrivee.

The changes will have a profound effect on the playability and sustainability of the golf course, all things that Larrivee sees as positives for the club.

"The result is that several very strategic bunkers were found on several holes, which once rebuilt, will add significantly to the shot values at MCC," he said. "The renovated and restored MCC will have wider lines of play with restored bunkers which will add back the strategy of the Ross design. It will also yield much improved turf conditions, with more sunlight and airflow throughout the course."

The changes were made not only with upcoming New Hampshire Open in mind. Larrivee noted the LRIP was grounded in the fact that the changes would fundamentally

alter the course. "A stated goal of the Board of Directors is to have the course renovations completed in time for MCC's Centennial in 2023," Larrivee said. "A significant benefit of the LRIP, once fully implemented, is that the course will become much more 'playable,' which will include multiple teeing areas on each hole, making all the holes more playable for all level of players. When completed, MCC will stretch out to a 6900 yard par 71, and will play much longer due to the fairway undulations for which MCC is famous."

MCC General Manager Brian Kelley, PGA feels the changes will be well received by players at this year's Open.

"Those high-level amateurs and pros who haven't played MCC in a couple years are going to be in for a treat," said Kelley. "Our Director of Agronomy Dan Weitzel is a master in his trade, and last year had the course in the best shape in 20 years. With a mild winter, new back tees, and several newly restored strategic bunkers, we expect that all the players will find a true test of Donald Ross golf at Manchester Country Club this July." 🌻

Save the Date

The New Hampshire Open will be held July 26-28 at Manchester Country Club in Bedford. The event is open to all professional players and amateurs carrying a handicap index of 4.0 or less.