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(industry news)

Golf course architect **Drew Rogers** presided at May's reopening of **Champion Trace Golf Course** at Keene Trace Golf Club in Nicholasville, Ky., following a renovation that included a greens regrassing, bunker refinements, fairway alignments, collar and approach extensions, tree removal, and drainage work. Completed in 1987, Champion Trace had come into existence while Rogers was attending the University of Kentucky. "I watched it being built," says the architect, owner and principal of JDR Design Group. "I remember driving out to the site, sitting there on a traditional black horse-farm fence and watching the design take shape, week by week. It honestly inspired my decision to pursue a career in course architecture." In 2014, a new ownership group engaged Rogers to consult on the resuscitation of Champion Trace, which has hosted an NCAA men's championship, the U.S. Senior Amateur and multiple Kentucky Opens. He was the obvious choice: Upon Rogers' graduation from Kentucky, he was hired by the man who had designed Champion Trace, Arthur Hills. Rogers would eventually become a partner in that firm before forming his own practice in 2010. "Champion Trace sparked my interest at the potential of possibly working for Arthur Hills, ultimately a relationship that spanned 19 years," Rogers says. "So it was an honor to come back and play a role in fine-tuning the course with its new ownership. The greens were a big issue, and I respect that the owners chose to address that need first and foremost. They regrassed with V-8 bent — the same variety we used at Old Elm in Chicago. We also made a number of thoughtful and strategic adjustments around the greens to allow the original design vision to effectively evolve."

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## MAKING HIS MARK

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