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J. Drew Rogers, ASGCA

provides answers to our
Five to Finish questions

Fresh off the back of the highly regarded restoration of Harry Colt’s work at Old Elm in Chicago, Drew Rogers, ASGCA, is enjoying a thriving design business. He has multiple projects under way throughout the United States, his growing portfolio built on a reputation as a great collaborator who delivers an outstanding final product. His skills were developed during 19 years working with Arthur Hills, ASGCA Past President—a period which included the design of Newport National in Rhode Island and Oitavos Dunes in Portugal—before establishing his own design business in 2010.

How is your game?

I was a decent player when I was younger. But now, it’s tough to put much of anything together unless I’m able and willing to work for it—and therein lies the challenge. I guess that has taught me some humility! I found a good teacher last summer here in Sylvania, Ohio, so we’re working on some things that will hopefully help me to start breaking 80 again!

Which three people would make up your dream fourball?

I know this much, those three folks better be able to laugh and have fun! Recently, my 12 year-old son has taken up the game. I enjoy watching him develop—he has the proper attitude, so he would have to be one.

Ben Crenshaw would be another—he just seems to have an ideal disposition and perspective of architecture and the game, he smiles a lot and represents golf with great values. Perhaps Old Tom Morris could come back and join as the third. It is said he was a cheerful and humble fellow, kindly and gentle—and with all that inspiration in him to promote our great game, I think a chance to spend time with him would provide for a fascinating and unforgettable day.

What is your favorite hole in golf?

I’m more a fan of a strategic, thinking man’s test than holes requiring brute strength and precision, so it would have to be a short par-four (under 330 yards) or a short par-three (under 120 yards). Shorter holes don’t tend to exclude the potential for success or enjoyment by lesser skilled players, yet they can still imply just enough treachery to give good players fits—that’s what great holes do, in my opinion. I can’t say as I have a particular favorite, there’s just too many to consider, but the tenth at Riviera and ‘Postage Stamp’ eighth at Royal Troon are great examples. More recently, I have been inspired by Bandon Preserve, the 13-hole par-three layout by Coore & Crenshaw in Oregon. I can’t think of a more enjoyable golf experience anywhere in the world than those magnificent short holes.

If you could change or add one rule, what would it be?

Perhaps a stiffer enforcement of the time it takes to play would benefit everyone’s enjoyment of the game. The Brits rarely allow a four-ball match (only on certain days or after certain hours) and medal play is seldom favored over match play. A move in that direction would help improve speed of play here in the US.

What project are you currently working on?

Most of our work is course renovation and restoration these days—and I really enjoy that blend of work. I’m fortunate to be really busy, just off the heels of our reinstatement of Harry Colt’s Old Elm in Chicago. A similar approach is now in motion at Kenosha Country Club in Wisconsin, an intact layout by Donald Ross. When complete, that course will demand some much deserved notice. Perhaps one the most exciting projects right now is Canal Shores in Evanston, Illinois—a reassembling of the course there into an amazing presentation of golf offerings in promotion of ‘golf for everyone’ in an urban neighborhood setting. I’m collaborating on that one with a creative team consisting of the USGA, Luke Donald, Dave Zinkand and fellow ASGCA member, Todd Quitno. ●