



Photo: Drew Rogers

## Rogers gears up for more work at Plum Hollow

Drew Rogers is preparing for another phase of renovation work at Plum Hollow Country Club in Southfield, Michigan.

In 2023 he will conduct studies of the practice facilities and green surfaces, and continue landscape work that he says “will present the course with heightened colours, textures and long, dramatic views”.

This work builds on projects already completed, beginning with floodplain remediation work in winter 2019 and renovations associated with the impacted holes in spring 2021. Rogers also completed a tee and bunker renovation project in 2021.

“Tees were enlarged and rearranged with more varied playing angles,” said Rogers. “The bunker character is quite bold, with features of great scale and depth, more in the character that Hugh Alison likely built. Trees were also removed to open up the

playing corridors so that dramatic vistas would be restored throughout the property and fairways could be properly aligned to their intended widths and angles.

“Our goal for the overall project was to re-establish playing strategies, improve course conditions and aesthetics and to provide greater balance. Speed of play and overall enjoyment are part of that equation as well.”

Work has been well received by the membership. “It has been really pleasing to have members remark about all the playing options that are now in effect that were previously unrealised,” said Zachary Savas, president of Plum Hollow. “Drew has been able to create more variety, especially around the greens with more runoff and bailout areas. The members exude nothing but pride now. New member interest has also seen an uptick, along with our ability to raise the initiation fees.”

*Rogers restored a grander scale to bunkers during his 2021 project, as seen on the seventh*



## Alison, Rogers and Plum Hollow

Golf historian and writer Anthony Gholz provides insight into Alison's original design of Plum Hollow and the impact of Drew Rogers' work

When considering Plum Hollow and its designer Hugh Alison, two thoughts come to mind. The first is Alison's big scale routing, which makes excellent use of the Rouge valley and the ridges and deep swales caused by its various tributaries. Of Alison's routing, unchanged since 1921, only the third and fourth holes make no use of the deep swales and serve to remind us of the flat farmland which surrounds the course. Starting with the first hole the second shot plays across the swale which begins at Lahser Road and crosses the first, second, ninth and tenth holes before entering the Rouge. On the back nine, the big scale of the property becomes more evident, and all the holes make use of the contours created by the creeks and river.

Plum's bunkering, when viewed in hindsight, was neither consistent from hole to hole nor at a scale appropriate to

the property. Was this Alison's fault or Wilfrid Reid's, who was retained in 1928 to rebunker a course less than a decade old? Our information regarding Alison's original bunkering is scant... actually nil. Our earliest photo is an aerial from 1937, long after Alison's original efforts and those of Reid and others.

Drew Rogers' recent renovation has only improved the routing with his change to eleven. He moved the fairway right to play along the ridgeline, removing trees and opening up long views into the Rouge valley. Rather than a short 'get well' hole, it becomes a strategic one from the tee onwards.

Taking inspiration from other Alison courses, such as Japan's Hirono, Rogers has created a

big-scale bunkering scheme that now compares with the best of Alison's work. Plum Hollow is again ready to take its place among the best, and most fun to play, courses of the Detroit area.

*A 1937 aerial of Plum Hollow, one of the earliest photos the club has of Alison's design*

