

Rogers Brings Quail West into 21st Century

The Preserve Course here at Quail West Golf & Country Club will reopen early in the new year following a major renovation authored by architect Drew Rogers, who will take a short breather before inaugurating a similar overhaul of the club's second 18, The Lakes Course, in the spring of 2017.

In a way, Rogers' work at The Preserve was standard fare: a complete



green and bunker renovation, irrigation replacement, conversion to Celebration Hybrid Bermudagrass, practice facility expansion and tee realignment. In another way, however, it's a case study in how courses built during the development boom (1990-2005) are now being renovated and otherwise fine-tuned to address agronomic and playability issues specific to south Florida.

busy here (his Toledo, Ohio-based JDR Design Group [www.jdrowrogers.com] is currently directing comprehensive renovation programs at The Club at Mirasol, Royal Poinciana GC, Miromar Lakes Beach and Golf Club, Wyndemere CC and Audubon CC). Both 18s at Quail West are credited to architect Arthur Hills, whose firm Rogers joined in 1992. Rogers subsequently oversaw design and construction of the Lakes Course.

"You cringe a bit when you see consider how Florida courses were designed and built at that time," said Rogers, who formed his own firm in 2010. "In the 1990s, for example, the style was to bring that rough right up to the green edge. The penalty for missing was severe. At the same time, folks who joined this club in the '90s are a little older today. This is the demographic movement taking place today at Quail West and so many other clubs in Florida. These greens today cannot feature so many penal edges, so many forced carries. They also need bailout areas with closely mowed chipping areas to allow more of a variety of flopping, chipping and putting recoveries." 🏌️

"The wooden retaining wall, for example -- that familiar feature providing the hard edge between greens, tees and water hazards at so many south Florida courses -- is a good way to understand what happens to these courses over time," Rogers says. "Putting surfaces are typically designed to be flush with the top of those walls, but 25-30 years of sand and thatch accumulation have raised up the greens and tees. In a region where top-dressing is a year-round discipline, a putting surface can rise a half-inch every 12 months."

According to Rogers, the former ultradwarf putting surfaces on The Preserve Course sat some 13 inches higher than the day the course opened for play, in 1992. For the golfer, the difference can be too gradual and subtle to notice, "perhaps until the

moment his or her ball rolls back off a green into the drink," he says.

Accordingly, Rogers completely overhauled all 18 green complexes at The Preserve. He also replaced those timber retaining walls with stacked capstone and reinstated the seamless relationship between putting surfaces, collars and hazards. As putting surfaces rise, the impact and drama of outlying green contours tend to be diminished -- so the architect pumped new life into these surrounds.

Rogers understands the Florida golf scene as well as any architect working today. It one reason he's so

