

SANFORD GOLF DESIGN TO REBUILD BONITA SPRINGS CLUB

In Sanford Golf Design Spring Run Golf Club “found the right talent for their needs.”

Jupiter, Fla. – After putting the finishing touches on one of the most prominent new golf courses in the country, Trump Golf Links at Ferry Park in New York City, architect John Sanford of Sanford Golf Design is proving you can go home again.

In April, Sanford and his Jupiter-based firm will begin construction in Bonita Springs, on Florida’s west side, where they will rebuild the Spring Run Golf Club from the bottom up. The Sanford team will replace worn out infrastructure with a new irrigation systems, establish new drainage for the course, rebuild the deteriorated cart paths, and reposition tee boxes, greens and bunkers.

“The golf course was built 15 to 20 years ago so it’s not that old but it needs upgrading,” Sanford said. “It’s what I call a developer’s golf course. They skimmed on the infrastructure, so the guts of it are falling apart.”

Sanford’s assessment is shared by Spring Run’s general manager Mike Zigler, who said that while the course on the surface looks to be in wonderful condition, below ground its faltering irrigation system was only 57 per cent efficient. The depth of the greens did not meet the industry standards. In the winter months, the course normally does more than 300 rounds daily, exacting a severe toll on greens and fairways.

“This project has been three years in the making,” Zigler said. “We were looking for a different way to go. We wanted some fresh ideas.”

In Sanford and his firm Zigler said they found the right talent for their needs.

“We were thinking more in the way of graphic design to show our members what the course would look like and we’re very happy with John’s ideas, design, landscaping, and graphics,” he said.

The Spring Run club is a residential community anchored by the 18 hole 6,989-yard golf course.

Zigler said the development consists of 847 units with an average of two residents per unit, which translates into a club with a healthy membership roll of more than 1,600 persons.

Sanford said because Zigler and club officials had done extensive homework it was easy to reach agreement on his assessment of what needed to be done.

“When we started the master plan, I said as long as we are putting in a new irrigation system, new drainage, we are going to build all new greens and bunkers, it doesn’t cost more money to give you a great course with strategic quality. “If you build a green and you put it here or over there it is the same cost. The same goes with tees and bunkers. We were able to show the club that we could not only improve the infrastructure and conditioning, but also the aesthetics and the strategic quality of the golf course.”

Sanford said because the club initiated the master planning process a year in advance, he was able to get the master plan approved, completed his detailed design and document stages, and put the job out to bid months ago.

“We were able to negotiate with the some of the best contractors and get the club very good value, for a comprehensive reconstruction of the golf course,” he said. The club will only lose its off-season as the project will be completed in November.

With the existing real estate, the routing will be unchanged. Each hole, however, will be different and each will have a distinct character and strategy making it enjoyable for all skill levels,” Sanford said.

He said his group will work with dirt already on site. The existing lakes and ponds, which handle all the storm water retention and drainage, will be unchanged. Those factors will keep costs down. The fairways will be sloped inward to contain errant shots and speed up play.

“One of the things that I’m proud of, we are going to completely rebuild this golf course, including, all infrastructure – for about \$3 million”. Five or six years ago a job like this was \$5 or \$6 million bucks.”

Zigler said the timing of the reconstruction neatly positions the club for the future.

“We never looked at this project as an opportunity because the economy is improving, but rather as a project that needed to be done now,” Zigler said. “With the new course being ready for the winter season of 2014, Spring Run will be in a strong position to take advantage of the improving economy and housing market in Bonita Springs.”

Sanford’s recently completed assignment, the Ferry Point golf course on the East River in the Bronx, N.Y., is a Jack Nicklaus Signature Design where he collaborated on the design with Nicklaus whiling serving as the project manager.

In early 2013 Sanford’s work on Granite Links, a golf course reclamation of two Boston area landfills, was honored by the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) with one of six inaugural Design Excellence Recognition awards.

Sanford Golf Design is also renovating the Kona Country Club on the Big Island in Hawaii, as well as the Kosaido CC outside Sapporo, Japan.

Sanford Golf Design offers expertise in all phases of strategic, sustainable and significant golf course design. Sanford's services include marketing and communication; construction documents and computer modeling; landscape design and land planning; remodeling and restoration.

The company has produced or renovated more than 60 courses across North America and Hawaii, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Egypt, Japan, and Vietnam.

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