

Sekä pohjoismaista, että kansainvälistä näkemystä omaava golfarkkitehti, Peter Fjällman kertoo mielipiteensä korjausrakentamisesta:

Renovation of Golf Courses

The Board of Directors of a golf club suddenly realise that a lot of members have left the club. By gathering information regarding the situation the club realise that the golf club “down the road” are offering more value for money. They have invested in a renovation project to correct serious maintenance problems and updated the overall design of the golf course to increase the enjoyment for its members and attracting new members. The golf club has also taken several actions to enhance the aesthetic features of the golf course and the surrounding landscape. The goal is to make sure that the golf club and their golf course is sustainable in the future.



The above scenario highlights the fact that there are several different reasons for starting a golf course renovation project. Over the last couple of years we have seen a decline in numbers of players coming into the game. Members of existing golf clubs have been recently more inclined to change their membership to other golf clubs. You could say that today’s golfers are more mobile and they are making sure they spend their money in a sensible way regarding their golf. So the current economic situation for many golf clubs in the Nordic countries are troublesome and to keep up with competition there is a need to renovate. In many ways a difficult financial equation to solve!

When the decision is made to start a renovation project one of the first step is to get a qualified and professional golf course architect involved. By thoroughly examine his or hers previous work, regarding renovations and alterations of golf courses, the golf club should be able to appoint the right person. My experience from several projects in Sweden and recently at Kurk GC in Finland is to create a small project group consisting of representatives of the owners, the head greenkeeper, the club manager and the golf course architect. When needed the group will engage other specialists to solve certain issues or problems. And of course when the renovation starts the chosen constructor will be a part of the group.

It is vital that the group continuously inform the membership about the progression of the project. If the members feels involved in the project the chances are they stay loyal to the club and endure the inconvenience a renovation may cause to the playability of the course. With good logistics

from the project group the members could take active part in the construction which will have an enormous impact on the total budget of the project and also create a stronger connection to the golf club.

The key issue, after the necessary economic decisions have been made by the club, is to define the objective of the renovation project. Maybe one golf course needs to change their greens completely as they are causing maintenance problems or not up to the standard that today’s golfers expect. Maybe another course needs to improve the strategy of the course to make it more interesting to play and to adjust better to the modern game. The wear and tear on small

tees are a big problem on many golf courses and to improve bunkers are in many cases a desirable project.

For a successful project it is also important to have a realistic time schedule. Renovation projects tend to run over several years so many things can change during the implementation of the project. It is imperative that the project group are on top of things during the realization of the project and communicate to members on how everything are developing.

I recommend getting the following steps correct for a successful renovation project:

- Make a careful budget on how a renovation project will affect the clubs finances in short and long term. The question to ask “Can we afford it”.
- Appoint a qualified and professional golf course architect.
- Create a knowledgeable project group.
- Define the objectives for the renovation project and make all the necessary plans.
- Appoint a qualified constructor.
- Make a realistic time schedule
- Communicate to members during the implementation of project.
- Close control from the project group during the project.

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