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**SIX CASE STUDIES:**

## PGA Facilities React to the Changing Golf Landscape







# PGA<sup>TM</sup>

## MAGAZINE

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# C O N T E N T S



62



## F E A T U R E S

**On the cover**  
(clockwise from top left):  
Independence Golf  
Club, Farmington  
Country Club,  
Fargo Country  
Club, Goat Hill Park,  
Thoroughbred Golf  
Club, Penn Oaks  
Golf Club.

### On the Web

For the latest industry news, you can log onto [PGAmagazine.com](http://PGAmagazine.com).



### Cover Story

#### 62 PGA Facilities React to the Changing Golf Landscape

Six case studies show creative programs and forward-thinking PGA Professionals are helping public and private facilities survive and thrive  
**by Roger Graves**

#### 66 Case Studies

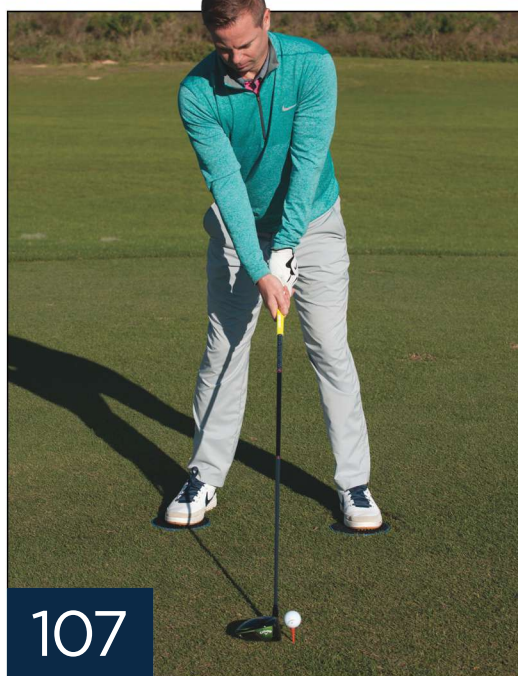
#### 94 New Beginnings for Philadelphia-Area Clubs

### Instruction

#### 107 Teaching Teachers

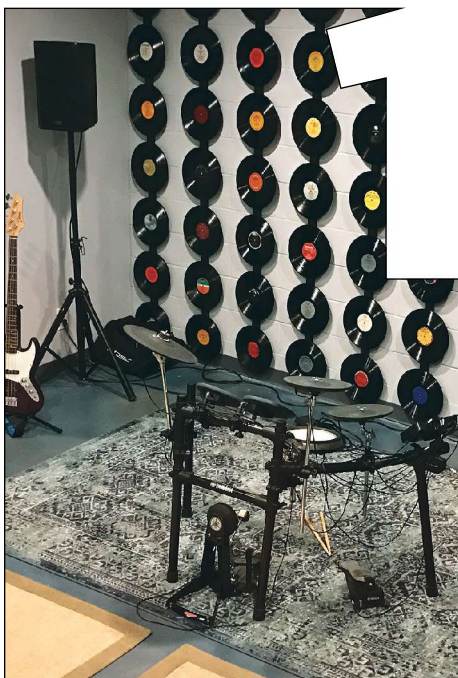
Slide your students to a better turn  
**By Jason Guss, PGA, with Don Jozwiak**

#### 112 Business of Instruction



107

# PGA FACILITIES REACT TO THE CHANGING GOLF LAND





# SIX CASE STUDIES SHOW CREATIVE PROGRAMS AND FORWARD-THINKING PGA PROFESSIONALS ARE HELPING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FACILITIES SURVIVE AND THRIVE

*By Roger Graves, Senior Writer*

**L**IKE A SEASONED HEAVYWEIGHT BOXER, GOLF HAS PROVEN IT CAN TAKE a punch over the past two decades. It was staggered by the Great Recession, pummeled by the economic downturn's lingering effects, and battered by a one-two-three punch of oversupply, declining rounds played among many demographics, and perceived apathy toward the game by younger generations.

## SCAPE





## CASE STUDY

# 2

# FARMINGTON COUNTRY CLUB BOLSTERS FACILITY WITH NEW “HYBRID” COURSE, PRACTICE AREA

## PRIVATE VIRGINIA CLUB UPHOLDS ITS JEFFERSONIAN TRADITION OF CATERING TO MEMBERS BY INVESTING IN COORE-CRENSHAW RENOVATION PROJECT

Farmington Country Club PGA Head Professional Rob McNamara tours the Coore and Crenshaw-designed hybrid course with a group of members.

**F**ARMINGTON COUNTRY CLUB, NESTLED AT THE FOOT OF THE BLUE RIDGE Mountains in Charlottesville, Virginia, traces its roots to Thomas Jefferson, who built a house on the picturesque estate in the early 1800s. The country club itself opened in 1929 and has provided members with comfortable amenities and outdoor activities ever since, perpetually adding new features and programs to stay abreast of the changing times.

When the tradition-rich club decided to solve three pressing problems by bulldozing its nine-hole East Course, eyebrows were raised. But now that the golf course design firm headed by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw has transformed the nine-hole “overflow” course into a majestic 10-hole hybrid

course and expanded practice area, Farmington Country Club is the talk of the town – and perhaps all of Virginia. By providing time-conscious members with a challenging course they can play in 90–120 minutes, and by presenting golf-hungry members with a state-of-the-art short game and practice area,

FARMINGTON COUNTRY CLUB



the club has re-energized interest and created a bright, new experience for golfers of all skill levels.

### Members Love to Practice

Why the change? Farmington Country Club members love to practice and take golf lessons. PGA Head Professional Rob McNamara and staff, however, had a limited teaching and practice area. The practice range wasn't deep enough for members to hit today's high-tech drivers, for example, so the club needed to enter the 21st century when it comes to overall facility features and amenities. So they hired Coore & Crenshaw and associate designer Dave Axland to create a shorter version of their worldwide golf masterpieces.

"The East Course renovation and creation has really been a phenomenal process," admits McNamara. "The idea to offer an alternative to the existing, underutilized course was motivated by several issues. One, the East Nine was used primarily as an overflow nine. Two, our existing practice range had become quasi-obsolete due to the advancement of golf equipment and the distance golf balls travel.

"Additionally, the club has a shortage of parking places. The existing range was the best place to add parking, assuming there is an additional area for golfers to practice. Therefore, we sought to solve all three problems with one project.

The club was fortunate to have one of the best golf architecture firms, Coore & Crenshaw, agree to help, adds McNamara, noting that the new 10-hole hybrid course will have six par 3s, three par 4s and one par-5 hole.

"They carefully and successfully solved the golf issues. The new, 10-hole course is fun and challenging with amazing holes," he explains. "Additionally, they have laid out an incredible, comprehensive practice facility. We have always had great professionals who can play and teach. Now, we have the physical facilities to accommodate all of the needs of our members and us as teachers."

McNamara says the new facility features four practice greens, giving the club eight greens total to

accommodate all short game disciplines. A double-sided practice tee includes elaborate specialty stations such as an uneven lies area, fairway bunkers, junior golf chipping green, flat putting green, wedge course, full swing rough area, greenside bunkers, pitching areas and a five-bay indoor/outdoor climate controlled building with the latest in teaching technology (TrackMan and SAM PuttLab).

### Parking Problem Solved

"The new facility will allow us to cannibalize some of the existing warm-up range for additional parking," says McNamara, noting that the new practice area opens in May and the new 10-hole hybrid course in June. "The bottom line is that the investment in golf is going to pay huge dividends for the club. The membership has already toured the new course several times, and there is a lot of excitement in the air.

"It opens the door for members who can't spend the day at the club to enjoy a shorter golf experience."

Farmington Country Club, of course, still has a highly challenging, classic 18-hole course, but McNamara believes the new hybrid layout and expansive practice area will create a new magnet to attract golfers from throughout Virginia and the region. He compares the 10-hole hybrid course to Bandon Preserve, the scenic short course built by Coore & Crenshaw as part of the Bandon Dunes Golf Resort in Oregon.

"If people thought Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw were going to create a boring, par-3 course on this property, they are going to be very pleasantly surprised," says McNamara. "This is a fun, yet challenging golf course that will encourage people to hit a variety of shots and prepare them to play better golf on any course they want to play.

"It's going to be awesome for Charlottesville because people will want to come from out of town to play the course and shop the city. This is a course any player will enjoy – from scratch to a 36 handicapper."

It is a contemporary, new wrinkle at Farmington Country Club of which Jefferson himself would be proud. ■

The new 10-hole course and sparkling practice facility at Farmington Country Club have reenergized the membership, including the junior golf program, at the historic facility.

