

BIG FISH WITH BIGGER PONDS

Both water hazards were enlarged and bear extended rock boundaries, which will make for caroms destined to run endlessly in television highlight packages. The pond at No. 16 turns the right of that green into a menacing peninsula—five paces from the right edge the green is 12 paces deep. A closely mown bank around the 16th green adds to the drama.

SPRAWLING across gently undulating terrain nearly 19 miles northwest of downtown Detroit, the South Course was created by Donald Ross and unveiled during the final months of World War I. It gained immediate acclaim, hosting the 1922 Western Open, which had the stature of today's major championships (host pro Mike Brady won in a 10-shot romp). While several Ross characteristics remain, the freshest fingerprints belong to Robert Trent Jones and son Rees. The father engineered a drastic make-

over for the 1951 U.S. Open, adding yardage and repositioning fairway bunkers to recreate for players using steel-shafted clubs the challenges Ross devised in the hickory-shaft era. Half a century later, in preparation for the 2004 Ryder Cup and this event, the son followed somewhat the same philosophy: rework bunkers to pinch fairway landing areas while adding more than 400 yards from when the club hosted the 1996 U.S. Open.

Text by Brett Avery • Map by bestapproach.com

WOULDN'T YOU REALLY RATHER HAVE A YANK?

It's bad enough European imports slammed the U.S., 18½-9½, in the '04 Ryder Cup in the host's auto manufacturing mecca. If you can wrap your head around a first PGA title by a European since Tommy Armour in 1930, get a load of these match-play records from four years ago: Padraig Harrington 4-1, Sergio Garcia and Lee Westwood 4-0-1, Luke Donald 2-1-1 and—here's a delicious possibility—Colin Montgomerie 3-1 (including a Friday morning four-ball thumping with Harrington of Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods by a 2-and-1 margin).



2008 PGA			1996 U.S. Open			
Hole	Par	Yards	Par	Yards	Avg.	Rank
1	4	435	4	433	4.263	7
2	5	529	5	523	4.702	18
3	3	198	3	194	3.059	15
4	4	446	4	430	4.099	14
5	4	490	4	455	4.291	5
6	4	387	4	356	3.956	16
7	4	449	4	405	4.196	10
8	4	491	4	440	4.251	8
9	3	257	3	220	3.391	2
Out	35	3,682	35	3,456	36.208	
10	4	462	4	450	4.288	6
11	4	423	4	399	4.118	13
12	5	593	5	560	4.790	17
13	3	191	3	170	3.135	12
14	4	501	4	471	4.370	3
15	4	401	4	400	4.158	11
16	4	406	4	403	4.198	9
17	3	238	3	200	3.337	4
18	4	498	4	465	4.536	1
In	35	3,713	35	3,518	36.930	
Total	70	7,395	70	6,974	73.138	

RING AROUND THE COLLAR

Anyone who picks nits with architectural changes has plenty of ammo in Rees Jones' bunkering. While his father's hazards had fearsome front faces ringed by ragged rough, they now have steep rear faces and mown turf. Most back faces are vertical, much taller than sand's 33-degree angle of repose, so they show a ring of dirt where the sand will not flash to the lip. Expect greenside bunker lies at the bottom of these steep pits. Players may gripe about a second bunker smack in the 15th fairway—essentially a roadblock attempting to preserve a 150-yard approach; and a middle one left of the 18th landing area and a fourth, and farthest, on the right. The seven bunkers at the final hole, set in exaggerated contouring, pinch the fairway to 25 paces at the 205-yard sprinkler head. Finally: Akin to last year at Southern Hills, where the fairway cut surrounded parts of some bunkers, this year's fairways edge up to most hazards.

NOWHERE TO GO BUT UP

Building a forward tee to trim the sixth from 356 yards to a drivable 305 for the Ryder Cup seemed a stroke of genius. In light of the wow! factor of risk-reward par 4s at the last two U.S. Open venues, the PGA of America probably will be forced to ignore its own pace-of-play concerns and push the tees up at No. 6 for at least one weekend round. One mitigating consideration: The redesign included shaving about three feet of height off a ridge that had obscured the landing area from view when standing on any of the three tees.