

Tom Cade: Okay, this is the news from Washington golf, and I'm Tom Cade, the senior director of communications with Washington Golf. This afternoon, we have with us David McLay Kidd, a golf course designer who is originally from Scotland, but now is headquartered in Bend, Oregon. David, I appreciate you taking the time this afternoon to take a few minutes to talk about things during your busy life. I know you've got a lot going on right now.

David McLay Kid...: Yeah. We haven't been too badly affected by the Coronavirus, and it does seem like a golf is one of the few silver linings to all of this. Every course that I talk to is busy. In fact, here in Bend, but I can barely get a tee time. My friends and I are making tee times at the maximum window we can, and even then we're playing late in the afternoon.

So, golf is enjoying a resurgence. Everyone wants to play golf because we can't do anything else.

Tom Cade: Yeah, it's funny. I've noticed the same thing. I've got some neighbors up the street from me and I had no idea they even knew what golf was. But I was talking to them the other day and I went over there and they've got their golf clubs sitting in their driveway. I asked them, they said the same thing. They said that we can't do anything else, so we're going to go play golf.

David McLay Kid...: Yeah, it's a great thing. I especially love it being a scot, that cart use isn't so appealing either. So, we're seeing a lot more people finding their way to walk around the golf course and maybe figuring out that, hey, this is not so bad. I get a little exercise, a little more social, get to see the wildlife a little better.

It is one of the silver linings is how golf is a pastime. We can all enjoy without fear of the Coronavirus, and you're getting to get a little exercise and enjoy the great outdoors.

Tom Cade: Yeah. So, for yourself, how has this impacted you travel wise or work wise? I know you have to do a lot of traveling for what you do. How's that been?

David McLay Kid...: Well, the projects that are far away have now entailed Microsoft teams or GoToMeeting or even Zoom as a mode of communication. I think what we've discovered through this, assuming that at some point we get back to some form of normality, is that a lot can be done with video conferencing. Probably half the meetings that I would normally have gotten on a plane and spent more time traveling than I did actually on the ground, we could now do a meeting every day and it lasts half an hour and we probably move the ball, pardon the pun, forward just as well, or even better than we would have done trying to coordinate a meeting between 10 people on a remote site somewhere.

I think that we're all learning through this, that travel has been a default that we've used when technology has a light is to circumvent it. We just haven't found reason to do it, and now we have. So I'm hoping that in the future, my

travel will be more tactical. I'm going to make travel to sites when I really need to be on the site, and I can use these video conferencing tools to not make those trips when I don't have to, which obviously saves a great deal of time and expense for everyone.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Speaking of traveling, and some of it is essential and necessary to do for some of the things that you do and your project you're working on. You mentioned earlier that tomorrow you're heading back up to Brewster, Washington to Gamble Sands.

David McLay Kid...: Well, the way I avoid the problem there is, many years ago, I became a pilot. We're lucky enough to have our own small aircraft. So, through the Coronavirus, I've still been able to travel by getting in my plane and flying to wherever I need to go to. And then. Once I'm there, I'm outside with a small number of people in the great outdoors. So, I don't feel particularly at risk. I'm not staying at a big hotel. I'm not eating in a restaurant. So I've still been able to provide the input I need on the ground by traveling individually and being careful where I sleep and eat.

Tom Cade: Yeah. You pilot your own plane?

David McLay Kid...: Yes, I do. I do. I've been a pilot now for eight years, something like that. It takes quite a lot of effort at the front end to get the qualifications. But once you've done all of that work, the benefits are immense. There are 300 commercial airports in the United States, and yet there are five thousand air fields in the United States. If you don't have to follow the schedule of United or Alaskan, and you can fly your own small plane, you can really open up a world of opportunities to save so much time. I'm not going to say you save any money, but you certainly save a lot of time.

Tom Cade: So, up at Gamble Sands, I know they've got a great 18 hole layout already which you designed. I know they have plans for other projects up there. What have you been doing?

David McLay Kid...: Late last year, they asked us to start design work on their second course, which is a short course. We looked at the parcel of land that's immediately to the ... let me think about this now ... the west. So as you drive in, it's the land immediately before you claim the hill up to the clubhouse. They had about anywhere from 20 to 50 acres that we could have used. In the end, we decided to use only the land on the left hand side of the access road as you drive in, which is right below the driving range. There's about a 20 acre parcel in there.

We conceived, in the end, it turned out to be 14 holes. It started out at 13. We found one. So there are 14 holes in there, ranging from 75 to 150 yards. We took all that we had learned from playing other short courses, the preserve at Bandon Dunes, the sand box at Sand Valley, the cradle at Pinehurst, and we thought, what can we do different? How do we put our ruin? You need the twist

on the popularity of short courses? I'm hoping that when you come and see it, you, you will see a unique twist. For a start, the 14 holes are plumbed for sound like a theme park, so we have speakers say all the way through it so we can play some music as you're playing. The holes are ... how do I choose the right adjective? They are wildly creative.

So, to give you some idea, when I was sketching them, I was thinking of simple strategies to make a one shot hole interesting. So I was dreaming up names that would help communicate the strategy. The first hole, for instance, is a long narrow green that's perpendicular to the line of play, and we called it Plinko. The slope behind it is uneven and long, so you're really throwing the ball 130 yards onto a slope and hoping you pick the right spot as the ball rolls back down off the slope and catches the bumps and things as it comes down, and then rolls down onto the green.

So, the third hole is a crater. It's right at the very highest spot, And you're throwing the ball into the equivalent of volcano crater, and the green is completely out of sight inside the crater. So, you don't know when you play the 110 yard shot. You can see the pen from the tee, but that's all. You don't know if you're close or not close. And so it goes on. We built one that we called the corkscrew.

Tom Cade: I can't imagine what that one is.

David McLay Kid...: Exactly. We built a green where the corkscrew was our inspiration. And so it goes on. There's 14 of them out there. My hope is that late this year, when it opens for preview play, the players of the Northwest will shake their heads and think, "What in the hell was this guy smoking when he dreamed this up?" And they'll have a good chuckle to themselves. My hope is they'll play it round and round and round and round until the light fades.

Tom Cade: You've mentioned the popularity of par three courses recently. What is the appeal, do you think?

David McLay Kid...: Well, I like to call them short courses, because I'm not sure par three counts. There's a couple of holes on this course where they're really just putting, and you could ace it in one go. What's their popularity? I think that people want something where they have an opportunity for success. I think all too often, the conventional 18 hole model, for the average player, doesn't offer much opportunity for success, and an awful lot of opportunity for frustration and failure. So, a short course has a much greater opportunity for all levels of ability to enjoy some degree of success.

It takes so much less time. You're looking at an hour to an hour and a half instead of four to five hours. If you're at Gamble Sands and you play the 18 hole golf course, you still have a bunch of the day to burn. If you don't want to play another full 18 holes, why else do you want to do? So we already built the

putting course, which is great in the evenings. We think this short course is good for one or two rounds. I think that's at least a couple hours of great entertainment before or after dinner, or maybe first thing in the morning before your tee time.

Tom Cade: Yeah. The big course there at Gamble Sands is pure fescue. Is this going to be similar with the short course?

David McLay Kid...: Exactly the same. It's exactly the same grassing. This thing is going to be like a pinball machine. So, the ball is going to bounce and run and chase and pitch. There'll be no way, if we can help it, that you can throw a wedge into a spot and have it stop dead. It is always going to move. The players are going to have to make some kind of prediction: where is it going to move once it lands? That's where you come up with ideas like the corkscrew.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Okay. Where are you along in the process of it? Has everything been grassed in? Or what's the status of it?

David McLay Kid...: We are still in the midst of construction. I'm up there this week. I was up there early last week. So we're pushing along. We're on track to finish it by the middle of the summer. And then, the grass grows pretty fast up there this time of year, so we're hoping that by October, the first few groups can go out there. The greens won't be perfect yet, but they can at least get some idea of what's coming. And then by opening of 2021, the course should be in full play.

Tom Cade: Yeah. I know there's a lot of land out there owned by the Gebbers family. Are there plans for others? I know you have the full course and the putting green, and now the short course. Is there plans for something-

David McLay Kid...: There's a third course well in the works that sits to the west of the existing courses. The listeners that know the resort, the lodges that you stay in that look across the putting course, there's a promontory on the other side of the ravine, right on top of the river. That's the 13th green on the third course. So, that course has been laid out, and the family, that Gebbers family, are on track to keep moving forward. The success of the resort has them confident that they can keep on going.

The third course will almost inevitably mean more rooms and at least one more restaurant. It's a pretty big step for them to take, so hopefully once the short course is up and running and that brings even more joy to their customers, they will pull the trigger in short order on the third course. Even though I've tried hard to give them the opportunity to kiss me and leave me at the side of the road, they don't seem to want to. They're very keen that we do the third course as well. This place is going to have my fingerprints all over it forever.

Tom Cade: Yeah. So, do you anticipate this a third course having the same style? Kind of a links style of golf, and fescue, and pretty much the same?

David McLay Kid...: For sure the same playing characteristics in terms of pure fescue and lots of ground game, but I think it will take on a different strategic character. The piece of land is quite different. There's more topography on the third course than the first one. So it will inevitably be somewhat different strategically. Exactly how, I don't know yet. It hasn't gotten to that kind of advanced state. So, we'll have to wait. That could be a couple of years out.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Okay. Do you think, where the existing club houses and the restaurant and the lodging, is that going to remain the hub of the complex that they have going on there? Or will they build another-

David McLay Kid...: Yep. No. It will remain the hub. The third course, we're looking to start and finish it on the right side of the entry route as you drive in, so it will have a remote start and finish. It won't start and end right by the clubhouse, it's maybe three or 400 yards away. But it's not too far away.

As the courses at Bandon Dunes have done, the impetus is always to create the very best golf, and if something else has to give, then we're willing to let that go, i.e. the remote start, in order to get the best golf holes out of it.

Tom Cade: Right. Okay. David, I just want to shift a little bit now. I know that you and your team just finished a renovation of Sand Point Country Club in Seattle. I have not been there. I don't know the timeline, but I've heard already really great things about it. I was actually there ... I guess I shouldn't say that. I was there about six months ago talking with your partner, Nick Schaan, and he showed me around. But I haven't seen it since then. So, this was kind of a different approach to you, wasn't it?

I know it's a traditional style golf course, not much property, not much acreage, in a very urban setting.

David McLay Kid...: Well, it's not something that's generally in my wheelhouse, but my design partner Nick is from Seattle, and he was very keen to at least take a look at Sand Point and show me what it had to offer. When I looked at it on paper, at least, it's 110 acres and the courses, 61 hundred, 62 hundred, something like that, from the tips. It wasn't something that I immediately thought, "Oh yeah, that's something we definitely want to do." However, I went there, and as I drove in the entryway, we're looking down on Lake Washington and out to the mountains. I thought, wow, this is a spectacular piece of land. And then I got to know the membership, especially the folks on the board, and they were phenomenal. I mean, just really down to earth, great people, love the game, don't take it overly seriously. They're not uptight. And yet highly motivated to do whatever it takes to make their golf club the absolute base that can possibly be.

So, I was enthused and agreed with Nick that there was real potential here. All the pieces are in place. You have a pretty good piece of land, spectacular views,

a membership that are really enthusiastic. I couldn't see a reason not to want to try and help them. When we painted out what it would actually take to make the course, the very best it can be, they embraced it. They were all about it. They're like, "Okay, when do we get started? How do we do it?" So, what started as a step by state master planning process quickly turned into, "Let's do it all. We love all your ideas. Do them all."

I'm like, "Okay." So, they closed the course late last year and worked through the last six months or so. Obviously, the last 60 days has been a real challenge for them. Last Friday, the front nine reopened following some fairly significant works, and the back nine will open, I think, in another 30 days or so, and they'll have their golf course back. We've completely rebuilt a number of goal holes. We've re bunkered the entire course. We thinned a lot of the trees that we're dead, dying, unnatural.

Tom Cade: And simply blocking all the great views that you were talking about.

David McLay Kid...: Blocking views and preventing you from finding it and hitting it and finding it again. The core thing about golf: find it, hit it, find it, hit it. We've done all of this and we couldn't be more pleased. It came out really, really well. Working with Ridgetop, who are the local contractor up there. Marcus Harness, the new superintendent, has been phenomenal. Fun to do and come out probably better than we could have expected. The initial feedback from the members ... It's funny how, when we were pitching the ideas we had, there were just a few members that when they listened to my rhetoric, they say, "Well, he wants to take down trees and he wants to make fairways wider, and he wants to make greens bigger, and he wants to move the bunkers around. All I'm hearing is that the golf course is going to be too easy."

They missed the point that you're making it more playable. You're not making scoring any easier. In fact, you're probably making scoring harder because those bunkers are now being put in far more relevant locations that are defending the attacking line. So, a little bit of the feedback I've heard so far is that those members get it now. They're like, "Hmm, I can't just be on it like I used to. I now have to actually put it on a line and be accurate." That's fun to hear.

Tom Cade: Good. Yeah. So, they'll be opening up in about 30 days or so, full 18?

David McLay Kid...: Yeah. All 18, I think, opens in early June.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Okay.

David McLay Kid...: If you can get there, go play it. See what you think. From the tips, I guarantee it will be the toughest 62 hundred yards you play this year.

Tom Cade: Well, there's elevation changes there too. Did you find that somehow different than some of the courses that you've laid out?

David McLay Kid...: I've worked on a few that have serious elevation changes. However, I've never worked on one that was as small as this with serious elevation changes. When you've got a huge site ... I did one in Hawaii that was 500 feet of elevation change, but the goal of course ranged across 600 acres. This site probably has 200 feet of elevation change, and it does it in barely over a hundred acres. So, that's the real challenge is that it's a lot of elevation change and pretty tight. There were certain things. The basic rooting, we were kind of stuck with. There was no way of changing that, fundamentally. We just had to find tactics to make those uphill or very downhill holes intriguing.

How do you make a modest golfer get through it without frustration? And more challenging, how do you get good golfer ... like yourself since I played with you ... How do I get Tom Cade to stand there and scratch his head for a second and think, "Just what am I going to do here?":

Tom Cade: Yeah. Yeah. So, as far as future projects, I think that you might be on a little bit of a pause because you and your wife are going to be expecting your first child. Correct? Soon?

David McLay Kid...: We are, yeah. Yeah. I'm not a late starter, cause I I've already got a couple, but yeah, this is what's going to keep me young into my old age or kill me. One or the other.

Tom Cade: Yeah, okay.

David McLay Kid...: As you know, my wife, she has a bundles and bundles of energy, so she'll make up for whatever I'm don't manage to step up to. So, we're looking forward to that. My travel's going to get curtailed here in the next couple of weeks. This could be my last extended trip up to Gamble Sands to round out the design on the short course, and then I'm going to hand the baton to Nick, and he can get it finished as I turn to fatherhood for a few weeks this summer.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Well, nice. Okay. Just one last thing. I know that the US amateur is scheduled to be held at Bandon Dunes this summer, and they're going to be playing, I believe the match play portion of it on your course there, the Bandon Dunes course, the first one there. Is that right?

David McLay Kid...: That's correct, yep. The match play and the final will get played at Bandon. I asked Mike Davis and Mike Kaiser, why Bandon? And Mike Kaiser instantly turned around and he said, "It's the only course at Bandon that finish with such a strong finish." I hadn't immediately thought of that. But when he said it, it became so true.

There's no other course at the resort that finishes on the ocean. Mike was very keen that, for the biggest tournament that the resort has ever seen, he wanted to showcase the land parcel as best he could. Since it's likely to be on TV, he

wanted those final few holes to be duked out on the oceanfront. I just hope it happens, with everything that is going on.

Tom Cade: Yeah. I know. I was actually just talking to some of the folks down there about that, and they said they have 20 of their caddies that are going to try to play in the qualifier to play in the championship. I think that's really a great story just on its own, but it would be a shame that it did not happen. I know some of the qualifiers are still being TBDed and things like that, so we'll just see what happens. Yeah.

David McLay Kid...: Well, my hope would be, along with a lot of sports, that instead of scrubbing the schedule, you just postpone the schedule. If the worst were to happen, you just push the schedule for the US amateur and push everyone back a year, and Bandon still gets a chance to host in '21. I have no influence there, but that would be what my hopes and dreams would be. In my career thus far, I consider the US amateur to be the competition highlight of my career thus far, given that these are the finest amateurs in the world, playing on a venue that the USGA is selecting because of the venue. It's not tour players playing where the sponsor tells them to.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Are you going to go watch it if you have a chance?

David McLay Kid...: Of course, yeah. I have my room all booked. So yeah, I've got fingers and toes crossed that it goes ahead, and I fully intend to be there. In fact, if the right people are listening, I'd love to have an input into the pin placements on a couple of those rounds. I know that course pretty darn well.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Yeah. Well, I know that you and Nick did some tweaking to that course over the last year and a half or so. I know a lot of work has been going into it to prepare for this championship.

David McLay Kid...: We rebuilt all of the bunkers at Bandon Dunes. Probably 75% of them stayed in place, but about 25% of the moved. The eighth hole, for instance, which was ... The hole is maybe 360 from the tips. The bunkering, over 20 years, had become less and less relevant. So, the eighth hole, as an example, I wanted to do the bunkering into relevant places for the best players of the day. And funny enough, when I was out there and we were debating it, Mike said, "How will you know exactly where to place them?" And I said, "It's easy. See all those divots? I'm going to put the bunkers right there."

Tom Cade: Yeah. Good strategy. Yeah. You made some big changes, like on hole 15 of the par three.

David McLay Kid...: Yep.



Tom Cade: You cut that one bunker in half, and then you opened it up on the left side, which I thought was great. It didn't make it easier. I think that made someone at least have a chance, but still made it harder.

David McLay Kid...: There's a great example of the difference between scoring and playability. Our business talks about challenge and playability as if they're the scales of justice, and they're not. They're not all things that are the same. I didn't touch 15 green. The putting surface is exactly the same as it has always been. For a good golfer, trying to make birdie on 15, especially if there's a wind blowing, is extremely difficult. However, for an average golfer to make double bogey, that's not that easy.

You can easily wreck your card on 15, or you could, because that big bunker, that short right, is where most players ended up because of the wind in their face. If they tried to go west, they ended up over the top of some mounds with an impossible chip back. They'd have to lob wedge it and stop it on a green that's eight steps deep. So, my intention was not at all to make birdie any easier for a good player. My intention was to get the guy who's having the round of his life and not have him get to 15 and make an eight.

So, by moving the bunker back a little bit and making it a little smaller, the average player that misses short right is now in grass. He can chip it off grass. He could even putt it up the slope. For the guy that misses way less, because he's scared of that bunker, he's now on a flatter lie that he can actually putt the ball from off the green, back onto the putting surface.

None of those players are threatening birdie. They're just trying to get par or bogey and get the hell out of there. I was willing to make some concessions to allow that to happen. There's an example of how challenge and playability or not the scales of justice.

Tom Cade: Yeah. I remember the first time I played that after Nick had put his hand on it. That whole left side was completely mowed and smooth and mounded. It used to be just a disaster over there. I thought, well, this must be easy now. But when I actually hit over there, and it's not that easy. You're right. I walked out of there with a four, and I was happy to have it, and I just went on to the next hole.

David McLay Kid...: If you and I, as player and architect, are in a battle together on the gold course, if you're willing to take bogey, I'm willing to give it to you.

Tom Cade: Yeah.

David McLay Kid...: But if you're trying to take birdie, I'm not willing to give you that.

Tom Cade: Yeah, yeah. I was a little surprised at first when they announced that, that would be the course for their match play bracket, the US amateur. But then the

more talking to you and talking to other people and playing it, I realized that it is a really good match play golf course.

David McLay Kid...: Well, it's certainly the final few holes, 14 through 17, are for sure great match play holes because there's such a diversity of opportunity, whether you're the aggressor or on defense. You're going to take a completely different stance on 16 if you're two up then if you're two down. Of all the courses at Bandon, I'd like to think that the first course, my course, offers the best opportunity to be a hero in the final stretch if you're behind and you want to get back. The nuance of match play is so much in the hands between the players, as the parties duke it out. They're not trying to protect the score, they're just trying to beat you on this hole. That makes such a difference to the psyche and the architecture.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Yeah.

David McLay Kid...: So, 16, it would be wonderful if the final game came down to 16, because are you willing to go for it or not? Chances are, in August, you're hitting your tee ball-

Tom Cade: Downwind.

David McLay Kid...: Yeah, you're downwind.

Tom Cade: Yeah.

David McLay Kid...: That's almost impossible to stop. And yet, if the first guy does it, the second guy's almost got to try.

Tom Cade: They've got to do it. Yeah.

David McLay Kid...: That will be a lot of fun to watch.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Yeah, that's a really go for it kind of a hole, especially if you consider on the right, the ocean of course is there and the cliff side, but it's a lateral. It's just a one stroke penalty and you can still chip on and they're putting for par, and they're still in it.

David McLay Kid...: Yep. Yep.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Anyway.

David McLay Kid...: Okay. Just hoping it's there.

Tom Cade: Yeah, exactly. I guess time will tell, but I know that our office is conducting a qualifier for it. I know that the Oregon Golf Association will be conducting one as well. Actually, I guess one of the qualifiers is being held at the old McDonald

course there at the resort. So, it's happening to that point anyway. David, I appreciate you taking the time today.

David McLay Kid...: No problem.

Tom Cade: Hopefully, we'll get together soon and play the short course at Gamble Sands. I do want to get out there later this summer to see what all the excitement's about. Looking forward to that.

David McLay Kid...: Yep. Give me a call. I'd love to tee up with you later this summer.

Tom Cade: Okay.

David McLay Kid...: You can find out what the corkscrew really looks like.

Tom Cade: I'm already afraid of the name, so. Good luck and best wishes to you and your wife, Tara. Have a good week.

David McLay Kid...: Thank you. You too.

Tom Cade: All right.

David McLay Kid...: Stay safe and stay well.

Tom Cade: Yeah. Thank you for that. You too.

David McLay Kid...: No problem.

Tom Cade: Talk to you soon. All right.

David McLay Kid...: See ya. Bye.