



Plantation Course at Kapalua to be restored

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Rory McIlroy interview after Round 1 of Sentry

KAPALUA, Hawaii – The Plantation Course at Kapalua – host course for the Sentry Tournament of Champions – is set to get an extensive rejuvenation before the 2020 event.

In a bid to return the course to hard and fast fairways to assist resort players and further challenge PGA TOUR players the property will be shut down on February 12 for a nine-month restoration from Bill Coore.

The current TifEagle Bermuda grass will be replaced across the course with Celebration Bermuda, bringing back the ability to run the ball up and onto the greens throughout the course.

It will once again help showcase the breathtaking elevation changes on the property.

Bunkering will also be addressed, as will numerous tournament tee boxes, but Coore says the design team will remain true to the roots of the course.

“Our hope is that the golf course that will be presented next year will be more of a restoration and rejuvenation, maybe refinements in certain areas, but a restoration of what the course was in its early days,” Coore said.

“There's no intent on our part to create a golf course that's unrecognizable from what's been here before. It will just be a more polished version of that, and in many ways we hope will address developments, evolution that's happened with the best players in the world.

“In its early days the golf course played much faster, much firmer, than it does and has in the last decade. This new turfing will restore those characteristics.”

Mark Rolfing, the NBC and Golf Channel analyst who has been part of the Kapalua team for over 30 years, is extremely enthusiastic about the project.

“What has happened is that for the average player the course has become much harder and for the best players in the world the course has become much easier,” Rolfing admitted.

“One of the goals of this refinement plan is to kind of switch that, how do we go the opposite direction, how do we make it more of a challenge for the best players in the world and at the same time more playable so and consequently more enjoyable for the average player.”

Coore pointed out a frustrating condition the course is currently showcasing – that of soft approach areas near greens but firm and fast putting surfaces.

“That's just a nightmare situation that frustrates everyone,” Coore said.

He referenced an albatross from Andy Bean in the early years of tournament play at the venue on the par-5 18th that landed 120 yards out from the hole and rolled the rest of the way down the significant hill.

“The last few years the best players in the world that are landing the ball 20 yards short of the green and it doesn't get there. So now they have this little chip or pitch to a really fast downhill, downwind, down grain green. That is not a good situation.”

As far as new tournament tees the design team envisaged adding length to the par-4 3rd and par-5 9th for starters.

While all greens will be resurfaced the 6th, 10th and 13th will likely also get updates to get more pin locations.