

PRESS RELEASE FROM TOFTREES GOLF RESORT/NAGLE DESIGN WORKS



Toftrees golf course to get major upgrade from Nagle

Architect aims to create ‘one of the best public courses in Pennsylvania’

STATE COLLEGE, PENNSYLVANIA, FEBRUARY 20, 2025 – The Toftrees Golf Resort is to undergo a major renovation project at the hands of Jim Nagle of Nagle Design Works – and the architect believes the property has the potential to become one of the best public courses in Pennsylvania.

The Toftrees course dates from 1969 and was originally designed by prolific architect Ed Ault. The resort was acquired some years ago by local investment group and is managed by the hospitality company Shaner Hotel Group, and the golf course project is part of a substantial upgrading project for the whole resort.

“Shaner senior vice president George Wolfe – who I have known for twenty years, since he was greens chair at the Sunnehana club – called me a few months ago to talk about a bunker problem they were having on the course,” says Nagle. “I visited the course, and from a quick fix the conversation soon moved to potentially developing a comprehensive renovation plan for Toftrees.”

“Towards the end of the original owner’s life, capital investment was in short supply, and the golf course suffered,” says George Wolfe. “Since we came in, we have slowly been fixing that – we brought Marriott Golf in to manage the golf operation, and now we’re taking the next steps. Although we have owned the resort for a number of years, it is only recently that we have started redeveloping it – our vision is to create a first class hotel with excellent banqueting and

convention facilities – and with that, it was obvious that upgrading the golf course would be important.

“Toftrees was originally a semi-private club with a hotel attached – it had a resort feature, but it always felt like a private club. There has always been a tie between the golf course and Penn State University, which is local. Ault did a lot of work in the region in the Sixties, but I think this must have been quite a big project for him, as there was a masterplan for the whole community involved. I’ve played a number of Ed Ault’s courses, and there’s no doubt in my mind that this is some of his best work – he had a great piece of land to work with.”

It was the site on which Toftrees sits that made Nagle sit up and take notice. “It was the property that made this a great opportunity for me – it has great undulation, and some really nice features such as a wash running through it that could be opened up,” he says. “The routing is very good – the only hole that stands out as being especially challenging is the thirteenth, which has a blind tee shot with the hillside on the left and a tight corridor. The rest of the course flows nicely, with wonderful contrast and elevation change. The course needs improvement, but it doesn’t need blowing up. Today, golfers have higher ‘design IQs’ than in decades past. With the advent of social media and the many golf design related podcasts, golfers now demand more thoughtful engaging design: Toftrees can provide just that. The greens, routing, setting, and natural topography lend themselves to creating a dynamic golf course that engages players and challenges them appropriately – something any resort or public facility needs to guarantee return play.

“There is an abundance of inferior tree types on the property, but at the same time there are substantial mature stands of trees. The fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth have too many undesirable evergreens that are hiding the beauty of the land. Tree work is only one part of the plan, but it really stands out. The bunkering could be more creative, which would give better aesthetics and playability. At the moment, the course features sixties/seventies bunker styling, and lots of them are elevated above natural grade. Most are at the sides and don’t create much interesting strategy. We will try to fix that.”

“I have played pretty much all of the best courses in Pennsylvania, and I’m quite convinced that Jim will give us something that matches up very well with the top public venues in the state,” says George Wolfe. “To the right of the par three sixth is

a former quarry that could be a beautiful feature, but it is inundated by foliage. I'm certain Jim has his eye on opening this area up. The course has great rhythm to its routing and great contour to the land. The course is solid, but some past tinkering needs attention, and, with Jim's eye, I'm convinced that Toftrees will emerge from this project as a world-class track."

Design work is starting immediately, but no date has yet been set for construction to begin.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. About Toftrees Golf Resort: Nestled within 1,500 acres of secluded pine forest in Central Pennsylvania, Toftrees Golf Resort offers guests a unique experience with resort-like amenities in a peaceful, natural setting just minutes from downtown State College. Toftrees's golf course originally opened in 1969, and was originally designed by golf course architect Ed Ault (1908-1989). www.toftrees.com

2. About Nagle Design Works: NDW was founded in 2024, when Jim Nagle ended, entirely amicably, his more than 25 year association with fellow architect Ron Forse. Over almost three decades, Nagle has established himself as one of the leading experts in enhancing the designs of some of history's greatest golf architects. His hands-on, detail-oriented approach ensures that he not only meet but exceed clients' expectations, consistently delivering tangible value. At the core of his ethos lies a commitment to design excellence, creativity, and the pursuit of making golf both enjoyable and challenging. It's this passion that drives him forward with each and every project he undertakes. www.nagledesignworks.com.

3. Interviews with Jim Nagle and George Wolfe can be arranged; contact Adam Lawrence to discuss. Photography to support this release can be downloaded [from this Dropbox link](#).

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