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GOLF ARCHITECTURE

Fox Harb'r Officially Debuts Doug Carrick & Thomas McBroom Plan For New Ocean Golf Course

By Andrew Harvie 2 weeks ago

Reading Time: 4 minutes

First reported on *Beyond The Contour* in November 2022, Doug Carrick and Thomas McBroom, two of Canada's more prolific architects ever, will collaborate on a new Ocean golf course using half of Graham Cooke's original golf course.

In a presentation on Wednesday, May 24 in Toronto, Fox Harb'r CEO Stephen Joyce, President Kevin Toth, and architect Thomas McBroom laid out the changes to the already-underway new Ocean course, which included an updated plan first leaked on this site last year. Notably, the golf course is said to be "links-like" and low-profile in its bunkering style, apparently sunken into the landscape. Architect Thomas McBroom likened the bunkering to "random", comparing the bunkering array to Muirfield, while emphasizing the parkland characteristics of the original golf course will disappear. Furthermore, maximizing the 5KM coastline is another focus of the new layout. At least on paper, the changes seem to be an upgrade over the original golf course, with one third of the course touching the coastline.



Architect Thomas McBroom outlined the changes to the 17th green in a presentation in Toronto in May 2023, pointing to the low peak closer to the ocean on the left side and stating the hole will move to a par 5

The plan includes a new nine to the east of the current golf course and an improved back nine on the current course, with insider sources claiming the "Vineyard" course, a combination of the current front nine and a new nine inland, will follow in 2027, though that remains unconfirmed in the official presentation. The plan is a fully revamped golf course ready for the 2025 golf season, with a potential soft opening next year sometime.



For my eye, the 2nd, a 353 yard par 4 working south away from the coast, the looks-to-be Redan long par 3, 5th, and the par 3, 7th along the shore look to be highlights on the brand new nine holes, which will be a blank slate for Carrick and McBroom to find a way to merge their styles. The two architects feature wildly different styles, with Carrick drawing closer similarities to a William Flynn or Donald Ross with more simplistic, effective shapes in a larger-than-usual size and scale, while McBroom seems to draw inspiration from Mackenzie or Thompson's frivolous bunkering shapes. The combination is perhaps worrisome in writing, but the pair collaborated on Legends on the Niagara's overall master plan like Tom Doak and Bill Coore did at Streamsong, and McBroom said in his presentation they once talked about teaming up prior to the Tiger Boom. As mentioned in the original article, the two strengths and weaknesses of the two architects balance out quite nicely, and could provide a welcomed upgrade to the ocean side facility.

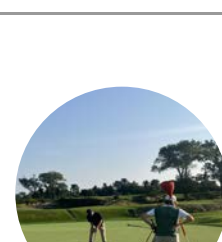
Originally designed in 2000 by Graham Cooke, Fox Harb'r never lived up to the expectations of an oceanfront golf course, failing to crack either *Beyond The Contour's* Top 100 or *SCOREGolf's*. It does, however, rank 74th on *Top 100 Golf Courses Canadian ranking*, and the spa, resort, and other amenities continue to be widely celebrated on a national and international level. Rounding out the new course, the back nine of the original golf course will transition to the back nine to compliment the new front nine, with some savvy changes in play.



Notably, the 14th's bunkering scheme, while not necessarily random as McBroom presented, looks to be a massive improvement over the current Cape-infused middle length par 4, while the par 3's at the 12th and 15th are a massive improvement over the current back nine's one-shot holes on paper. Both the 16th and 17th will move closer to the coastline to bring the ocean more into play, and the way Mr. McBroom described it, it sounds like the latter will play eerily similar to the 15th at Tower Ranch, one of his western creations in Kelowna. Finally, the plan includes a six hole short course and a putting course.

Fox Harb'r CEO Stephen Joyce says the resort is "not influenced" by what *Cabot Cape Breton* does, even though it is a short distance away. However, a putting course, a short course, and the frequent usage of "links" in the presentation seems to suggest otherwise, at least subconsciously. Nevertheless, the changes are, from my perspective, a large improvement over the current golf product. I would be surprised to not see this crack Canada's Top 75 moving forward, but time will tell exactly where it lands. Work is already underway on the new nine holes, with KCM contractors on site throughout the spring rough shaping and prepping the course for some final creative touches.

Author



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Based in Toronto, but having lived in Alberta, British Columbia, Montana, Arizona, and Texas, I have been lucky enough to see over 400 golf courses and counting!

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