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# Top Canadian golf architects pitch in as work begins on Fox Harb'r resort expansion

**Bill Spurr - Multimedia Journalist** | Posted: June 5, 2023, 2:28 p.m. | Updated: June 5, 2023, 2:30 p.m. | 4 Min Read



Top Canadian golf architects Tom McBroom and Doug Carrick have teamed up to create a new course at the Fox Harb'r resort. - Bill Spurr

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The best view of the expansion happening at the Fox Harb'r resort is from the nearby lobster boats plying the waters of the Northumberland Strait.

But a year from now, golfers will get to see what architects Tom McBroom and Doug Carrick are creating with \$10 million.

It's not at all common for two top architects to work together on a project, and this partnership came about because the two essentially tied in an international competition held by the resort.

"Doug and I each submitted a separate proposal, and we both had the same vision, to do this 18-hole ocean course," said McBroom. "I think Kevin and Steven said, 'Boy, these guys are on the same page, they're Canadian, let's give the job to them after we find out if they'll work together.'"

Kevin and Steven are Fox Harb'r president Kevin Toth and owner Steven Joyce.

"We wanted to take advantage of the chance to have two of Canada's greatest golf architects work together," said Toth, describing the pair as having different styles but similar sensibilities. "When I asked both Tom and Doug if they would consider that, it took them a couple of days, but they came back and said they'd be honoured to work together. It's been great to watch."

So far, a par three course has been plowed under, tennis courts have been relocated to the other side of the spa, and the movement of a couple of hundred thousand cubic metres of earth ("not a crazy amount") is underway.

The section under construction right now is scheduled to open mid-summer of 2024, and the nine ocean-front holes already existing will undergo a renovation to make them "links-y."

"The new ocean course opens first thing in 2025," McBroom said. "The whole point of a links course is to make it look natural ... what we want to achieve is that it doesn't look like we moved any dirt, we want it to look like this was always here."



Fox Harb'r resort president Kevin Toth. - Bill Spurr

"A big difference is bunkers, bunkers and green surrounds. So, the bunkers will be deep and set into the ground, rather than lifted up."

Demonstration bunkers were built last week. The new holes will have bent grass fairways, bent grass greens and bluegrass fescue rough.

Saying that "every architect worth his salt" wants to build a course on the ocean, McBroom and Carrick credited Fox Harb'r founder Ron Joyce for having the foresight to reinforce the shoreline when the resort was built.

"The storms are more intense now, so we have to plan to deal with those things during construction, how you build the golf course and how you protect against erosion of the soil during construction. Those are things that are a little different than when we first got in the business," said Carrick, adding that even though Fox Harb'r has deep pockets, they have not been given carte blanche. "We've had to make adjustments to meet budgets. It's very rare to get a client that says spend whatever you want."

Toth echoed that, saying that while he would never take the five-minute walk from his office to where the work is being done to offer advice, for example, on the shape of a green, the resort has given "a lot" of input to Carrick and McBroom.

"It was on the overall design, practicality, usages, what we wanted the guests to experience," he said. "We wanted a golf course that was going to be dramatic and took advantage of ocean views at every opportunity. You create the best golf course possible, but it's going to be well over a million a hole."

There will be a period of time when the resort has 27 holes in play, with the ultimate goal of an 18-hole parkland course to complement the 18 holes of links golf.

That's probably five years away.

Fox Harb'r wants golf that's "fun and fair," with a degree of difficulty that reflects the resort's population. In other words, not too penal.

"So far, from what we've seen, we're really excited about it," Toth said. "We felt like it was time in the evolution of the resort to anticipate growth, mostly on our membership side, and we wanted to accommodate that. We also wanted to open up the real estate opportunities on the east side of the property."

During the construction phase, 40 workers have moved to the area, and are renting housing locally, creating a bit of a boom.

Fox Harb'r has just finished the creation of additional staff housing and will add 30 full-time jobs when the first new nine is complete. That will bring employment to just under 300.

When Fox Harb'r opened, tee times were 20 minutes apart, which is extremely rare. It's too busy there now for that to be the case, but the resort wants to maintain an unhurried pace.

"We're at 15,000 rounds. In our long-term strategic plan, 15,000 was where we were going to start expanding the golf course. We won't build the final nine until we get to about 22,000 rounds. Most Canadian courses are doing 20 to 25 with just 18 holes."