



Access for all

LA course upgraded for Special Olympics

The City of Los Angeles was selected to host the Special Olympics World Games, to be held in August 2015. The golf events would take place at the city's Wilson and Harding municipal courses in Griffith Park, classic era designs by George C. Thomas.

Neither course was compliant with accessibility guidelines set out by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Cart path access to tees and greens had been compromised by decades of additions that involved curbs, walls and stairs.

In order to get ready for the Special Olympics, the host city needed a solution to rectify the access issues and, at the same time, build forward tees to allow yardage to be more flexible and meet the criteria of the Special Olympics golf format.

Complicating the assignment was a limited budget and minimal cart path

coverage—more than six miles of new paths would be required.

Forrest Richardson, ASGCA, developed a master plan for both golf courses, with a focus on preparation for the Special Olympics. In preparing the master plan, care was essential to preserve the classic design features of the courses, making additions appear as if they were part of the original intent and design.

Goals established to guide the work included: conforming to ADA accessibility guidelines; constructing new paths to work with existing paths and routing them out of distant views where possible; constructing new tees to appear as original; attaining a forward yardage length of approximately 5,000 yards at each course.

The project saw paths added to 31 golf holes, 68 existing tees re-leveled or rebuilt, and 28 new forward tees constructed.



Griffith Park GC

Location: Los Angeles, California

Golf course architect:

Forrest Richardson, ASGCA,
Forrest Richardson & Associates
www.golfgroupltd.com

Project summary: In preparation for the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, the golf courses at Griffith Park in Los Angeles needed to be updated to meet event requirements and conform to standards for accessibility, while preserving their classic design features.

Partners: City of Los Angeles (James Ward, David Takata, Bob Davis); American Landscape (construction); Mark Fine, Design Associate

