

Kidd Rocks

by Bradley S. Klein | Jun 6 2008

A remote golf course is a designer's victory lap in his home country.

Since 1876, Scotland's Machrihanish course has been considered one of the world's top-rated layouts. But its remote location (some 140 miles from Glasgow) limited it to the hardest of golf pilgrims.

This fall, when David McLay Kidd's Machrihanish Dunes course opens next door—just the second one he has designed for his home country—traffic will likely increase. As at [St. Andrews' Castle Course](#), Kidd faced design challenges with the property.

The native duneland and grasses of Machrihanish Dunes' 259-acre parcel make it a government-protected site, so officials allowed Kidd to alter only seven acres—just enough for greens and tees. Fairways are situated in natural contours; instead of importing turf, Kidd's team mowed the fescue down to a playable height. Bunkers had to be located in blowout areas where rabbit damage had already dug "wounds" in the land. On the upside, the natural design reduced construction time: Work began last June and ended just four months later.

The links are now under the eye of superintendent Euan Grant, former head greenkeeper of the Old Course at St. Andrews. The par-72 layout, which will range in length from 5,585 to 7,222 yards, has six greens and five tees perched on the shore of Machrihanish Bay. The course's fifth hole, a par 3, affords golfers a clear view of Northern Ireland across the water.

Machrihanish Dunes includes a clubhouse, guest cottages, and upgraded hotels in nearby Campbeltown. The \$60 million project will be open for limited play in October, with a green fee of \$190.