

Creating a mountain at the Union League of Philadelphia Golf Club



When the Union League of Philadelphia purchased the aging Sand Barrens golf course near the Jersey Shore, the terrain was flat, the ponds were small, everything was overgrown, but they saw the potential to transform it into something magical and completely different.

Renamed the Union League National Golf Club, the old Swainton, New Jersey course is now wonderfully unrecognisable. Rising from the centre of the course is a mountain 78 feet (24m) above sea level, in a region where

the average elevation is 16 to 28 feet (5 to 9m). This peak is now the highest point in three surrounding counties, and no materials were imported to create it. Instead, fill and dirt from all over the course was moved by Bell Articulated

Dump Trucks (ADTs), then the mountain was carefully sculpted to look like it's always been there. At one point, there were five Bell ADTs working on site, moving dirt, rocks and other types of fill from other parts of the course, building

the mountain and all the many new levels to this once flat golf course.

"When all is said and done, it will be 36 acres (14,5ha) of hills. Everything we found in the area, we transplanted onto the mountain and all over," said Tim Malone, the owner of Guaranteed Landscaping Inc, the landscape company hired for the project. "We have to manage all the dirt, sand and trees, and this is where Bell Trucks come in handy because this isn't just your basic golf course project. Everything you see is brand new, other than the big trees we left, whereas before you couldn't see from hole to hole."

Originally, there were a few small ponds, but now there are 24 acres

(9,7ha) of ponds. "Everything we did was with Bell Trucks," Tim said. "We dug out ponds, we dug out big stands of trees and moved dirt, sand and trees to create the mountain. We moved whatever was here and then put it back where we wanted it."

All that dirt moved with Bell ADTs comes in at an astounding 1,4 million cubic yards. The project started in February 2018 and for the past three years, it has been the largest construction project in the US. Amazingly, during the whole construction process, Tim and his team have kept the golf course open. "I built the mountain between the three 9s and kept it open the whole time. We built a lot for the pros, and we've had a lot of pros here already checking it

out, like Gary Player, from South Africa."

Even sand on the tee complexes came from the old course. On site native plants were recycled and moved – everything supposed to be growing around the pine forest was put back once the terrain was re-sculpted.

The first truck Tim ran was a B35D, and the smallest truck used was a B30E. He's had at least one B30E working at all times. "I liked the B30E because it had no tailgate on it," he said. "We used Bells for everything with the trees, too. We would put logs on it, put the trees taken down on it and drive out to a staging area, grind everything up, then put it all back into the mountains."





(From left): Kevin McCarthy (Highway Equipment, Regional Account Manager), Tim Malone (owner of Guaranteed Landscaping, Inc) and Mike Pizzolato (Highway Equipment, Rental Coordinator).

All the trees, chips, ground up stumps and sod soils were put into a pile to become topsoil and then used. Trees and plants to be reused were carried to the site by Bell ADTs, then transplanted by hand.

"Bell Trucks are solid," Tim said. "I love Fleetm@tic®, it tells you what you moved and when, and the Hill Assist function for climbing and retarder for coming downhill are great. Bell Trucks hold up, have great fuel efficiency and a button for high gear. If you're on a bridge or hill, the I-Tip won't let you tip over, and they are easier to drive, have back up cameras, they hold a lot. We've had no problems at all with them. I'm happy with the

trucks and happy with Highway Equipment, I couldn't have done it without them."

Bell Trucks America dealer, Highway Equipment, introduced Tim to Bell ADTs, and he was impressed the first time he saw them in operation. "They're good trucks, it's like driving a car, it's so easy," he said. "I have a 16-year-old driving one right now, he came to work with his dad for the summer and I said put him in a truck."

"Our biggest challenge here is managing the dirt," Tim said. "I'm a dirt guy so to me, Bell Trucks are the best. They have met all our expectations."

Recognised as the premier Jersey Shore golf course and a top choice of golfers, the now private Union League National was strategically designed to offer a challenging yet enjoyable round of golf for the experienced, intermediate and beginning golfer. The 236-acre (96ha), 27 championship hole golf course was designed by the Nation's Finest Golf Architecture Team Hurdzan/Fry, and has an expansive double-sided practice range with grass tees and an 18 000 square foot (1 670 square metre) clubhouse.

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