

Greens Report 12/07/2024 – Ryun Holden – Course Manager

Bunker renovation is now complete including the Pro's Bunker in the practice field. All old bunkers on holes 2,5,6,13 and 17 have been closed, reshaped and seeded along with the mound behind green 4. These will grow-in over the next few weeks and be brought back into play. The tree stumps to the right of green 5 have been removed and the area reshaped.

The bunker to the right of green 16 is still outstanding and should be completely rebuilt in the next couple of weeks.







Staffing and machinery issues

In May this year we were able to recruit Lee Johns to bring our team up to the necessary 7 members but unfortunately at the same time lost Ben Thompson. We have then been able to recruit Gary Anderson (Ex BFGC greenkeeper) back to our team. Gary will start next Monday (15th July) but now unfortunately we have lost Lee as he has been made an offer in his previous role which he could not refuse. This leaves us again at the status quo and quite frustrating that despite our best efforts we are unable to bring our team up to the required level.

Regarding machinery; the new equipment has made a big improvement to the quality and efficiency of maintaining the greens, approaches tees and semi-rough. Unfortunately, we have had a terrible year for breakdowns on the machines we were not able to replace. At one point we had 9 machines out of action in need of repair or awaiting parts. World supply issues mean parts are taking weeks instead of days for delivery. Currently we have four machines still awaiting parts or repair, but we are getting there.

The irrigation system was needed a few weeks ago and required significant effort before we had a functioning system. Many issues with pressure and coverage remain and will not be resolved until a new system is installed but we continue to do our best and in this area grateful for the poor summer conditions.

These issues along with the repair/renovation works left after the atrocious winter and another year of unusually strong growth means it has been an extremely challenging season thus far, for myself and my team. We are continuing to work hard on all areas of the course and are well aware of outstanding jobs and details we would all like to see done but hope the need for patience is appreciated.

Continued playing surface improvement.

As course manager, the agronomy and long-term development of the course and the playing surfaces is arguably the most important part of the job. Increased pressures on resources, available materials, as well as golfer demands means getting this part of the job right is of utmost importance. Since I arrived in May 2022, we have been focused on converting the grass types on the main playing areas to those which require less inputs and better support the increasing demands of a modern golf course. Less inputs means, less feed, chemical, irrigation and aggressive maintenance practices such as deep aeration. Initially we had less than 10% of the finer grasses (bent and fescue) present in our greens. We now have around 50-60%. This week we have carried out some plant-potting overseeding to the tees, approaches and green surrounds.

In the picture below you can see the weak growth around the edge of the green compared to the stronger growth towards the centre. The weaker growth is due to the dominance of Poa Annua (Annual meadow grass) which requires much greater inputs to thrive. The darker Bluey Green patches of grass are the bent/fescue patches. The work we have done this week is aimed at increasing the quantity of these better grass types.



The pic below is taken at the back of the 15th greens where growth has always been weak and poor due to the proximity of the trees. You can see the results of the previous overseeding. The regular pattern of grass circles are the newer grasses. They are surviving where the conditions for the Poa are too poor to support growth.

This work is vital and an ongoing process carried out as part of our yearly program and year on year will lead to improved quality of the playing surfaces for extended periods of the season.



Long rough

The rough through the trees has been reduced in height to improve playability and pace of play. This has only recently been made possible due to machine availability. Some of the longer roughs will be cut in coming weeks around the fringes for the same reasons. In normal summers this rough grows thin and wispy, but the strong growing conditions has meant it is more penal than usual. In the link below is a brief video for the R&A sustainability agronomist explaining the importance of the different managed areas across the course.

<https://vimeo.com/949614716/db9b002400>

Ryun Holden

Course Manager