

Members course report

June 2024

Introduction: Interim Chair of Greens

Dear Members,

As the G&M Committee has just approved me to be the interim Greens Chairman until the next AGM I thought it would be appropriate to introduce myself.

My name is Dave Reid, I have been a member for nearly 3 years, prior to moving to BSE GC, I was a member at Cleethorpes Golf Club.

It was there I was on the greens committee for 7 years including being the Greens Chairman.

Communication is high on my agenda, to give all members more information on what is happening on the course, hopefully giving more of an understanding of what is happening with both courses.

There is a lot of specific information in this report which will hopefully allow you to understand our longer-term goals for both courses.

If members have any questions regarding the courses, feel free to approach me in the clubhouse, I am hopeful that most are answered within our communication but realise that there might be other questions that you are not sure of.

Dave Reid

Greens

Pro-active vs reactive management

The reason you may be seeing areas of 'stressed', or 'yellowish' turf is part of our botanical species exchange programme – going from an Annual Meadowgrass (Poa) dominant sward to a Bent grass dominant one. This is an ongoing management platform to change from a very weak plant species (disease susceptibility, high inputs/maintenance needs) to a very resilient and sustainable grass species. This is not only to match the desired playing quality and usage requirements, but to also match our sustainability requirements. These have not only been enforced by the facility and management but also forced by changing legalisation within the industry.



To achieve the long-term strategies within the club, we are dictated to by the environmental conditions and adapting them to suit the desired grass species instead of building a platform for undesired species to thrive. The decisions are carefully monitored and are part of our overall strategies. You will notice that this at times early in the season will show 'stressed' areas of turf on the greens. This is actually a very good agronomical sign that we are achieving our targets - the Poa is under stress and the Bent grasses are thriving. This is a time limited occurrence that we must pursue for the greater good and the future proofing of our surfaces.

We are aware the difference in grass species and growing characteristics particularly (mostly between March-May) can produce a surface that isn't optimal for a perfect ball roll. We do everything we can to mitigate these issues, from increased mowing/rolling and verti-cutting/dressing. Typically, the weather from June onwards brings about more consistent growth habits, meaning the issues and differences between grass species becomes negligible.

Independent greens performance testing report – key points

To highlight the positive key readings of the report:

- 96% average of Greens coverage
- All greens tested – very consistent green speed and playing performance.
- Minimal turf disease identified – whilst limited chemical usage in operation.

The key thing to remember about these reports are that they need to be carried out at a quarterly interval to give you a full picture of the performance over the year. The reports have also been designed to not only address short term changes but highlight long term changes that may be required.

Medium/Long term improvements to consider:

- Increase infiltration rates – The major factor in many courses' performance revolve around moisture management. This is a determining factor for many other elements.
- Reduce thatch levels – Levels have increased, mainly due to excessive moisture due to weather conditions over winter and lack of adequate drainage.
- Improve root mass/depth – levels have maintained, however will have been affected by holding excessive moisture throughout winter.

Next steps:

- Testing to be implemented quarterly to give a fair description of the full year.
- Deeper aeration towards the back end of the year to be increased.
- Sand dressing to be increased both on the surface and into the soil.

- Treatments to include thatch reduction products.
- Further infiltration tests to be carried out to identify at which level in the construction needs addressing.

The above steps will aid in improving drainage and we should assess the efficacy of these operations before large-scale investment, e.g., drainage construction.

During our scheduled greens maintenance in early October, we will be carrying out deep aeration work and trying to work in as much sand as possible into the soil profile. This process of increasing the sand content over time will aid in drainage, surface firmness and continue to create a rootzone more suited to the desired finer grass species.

It is important to stress that although we regularly carry out light operations on the greens throughout the year (e.g., verti-cutting/light dressings/tining), there is also a need to carry out more extensive work to really help to move the greens forward in terms of overall performance and health. This should be a minimum of twice per year for at least the next few years.

Bunker banks/green surrounds

Many of you will have noticed that we have let the grass grow on the banks of the fairway bunkers and a few of the green surrounds this Spring. This not only saves on maintenance but also gives the course a more 'natural' look and is a further step towards the course architect's vision for the course. This is very much a trial, and these areas will be monitored to make sure they aren't causing issues with lost balls, etc. It must be noted that the unprecedented high rainfall so far this year has meant some areas are 'lusher' than they normally would be. Let's hope for a drier summer.



Wildflower areas

We have seeded 4 areas around the course with a grass/wildflower seed mix, to try to add some colour and variance. The areas are; RHS 1st tee, LHS 9th tee, LHS 13th tee, RHS 17th green. Time will tell how successful these areas will be.



New machinery

Greens iron

The new greens iron is a vital tool to help produce smoother greens. It will be used multiple times per week, sometimes in place of mowing and sometimes in addition. Ironing on a regular basis gives various agronomic benefits – the main one being we don't have to lower cutting heights in excess in order to improve performance.



Overseeder

Our new overseeder will be used on all surfaces. We will use it to improve sward coverage on the weaker tees, continue our fairway overseeding programme and to thicken up any bare areas around greens and walkways. This machine can also be used on greens, to help us speed up the process of species exchange by overseeding with the desired grass species.



Greene King 9 Hole course

Fairway irrigation project completed and fully operational

New tee on the 9th hole in play

Practice net for the 9-hole course open

Putting green for 9-hole course will be opened imminently

New staff members

We welcome David Nice to the team, who joins us from Bury Turfcare.

David has a wealth of experience in the Turfcare industry and has previously been involved in multiple projects for the club as a contractor, including the 9th green surround and 13th tee.

Dan Knight has joined us from Newmarket Golf Club. He has his NVQ level 2 in Greenkeeping qualification and is keen to expand his skillset and progress his career with us at Bury.

David Reid
Interim Greens Chairman

Tom Smart
Course Manager