



COVID-19 Maintenance Update

Over the past 4 months, predominately due to the pandemic, we have had less than 50% less labour on the golf courses compared with 2019. I would however like to assure all our STH that we still strive to improve all our playing surfaces as much as we possibly can.

2nd Fairway

Our 2nd fairway has been over-seeded and given two granular applications of fertilizer since lockdown (see figure 1) and while there is still room for huge improvement we are starting to see life return in the form of green grass. Historically this has been the weakest fairway since the re-location around 15 years ago and some more remedial action will be required moving forward.



Figure 1. 2nd fairway before and after maintenance

Approaches

Our approaches continue to improve year on year (see figure 2).

By extending the run offs in and around the greens complex, and implementing a more rigorous top-dressing program to firm these surfaces, we feel the approaches are now beginning to resemble more of a links course.

We have roped off some areas around these extensions to protect young seedlings, and we thank you for adhering to these traffic management routes.



Figure 2. 13th approach extension

Greens

We received our latest STRI report last month (this can be viewed on our website) and after two hard years or what has essentially been renovation work we are almost at what I would consider to be acceptable levels of almost every category. Organic matter, trueness, smoothness and firmness are around where we need them to be - this has been reflected in some favourable feedback since lockdown was lifted.

Our last **main issue** on the greens is the weed grass *Yorkshire fog* (see figure 3). Yorkshire fog is a horrible, weak, disease-prone grass which putts completely differently to our sward of poa/bent/fescue. It is for this reason greenkeepers will keep pin positions well away from patches of Yorkshire fog. However by not using these sections of the greens we are losing out on some wonderful pin placements. Therefore we have embarked on a species improvement program. By selectively removing the weed grass we then over-seed with browntop bents and top-dress the area heavily to ensure no negative impact on ball-roll. We have started on the worst affected greens 10-18 on 1562 Course, over the next 4-6 weeks these areas may look unightly until the bentgrass establishes however short-term pain will result in a lot of gain. On the back 9 greens I would estimate 10-15% of the total area is affected by Yorkshire fog – that is a lot of pin positions we will gain as the browntop-bent takes hold.



Figure 3. Yorkshire fog to the left prior to treatment.

Regards for now & Stay Safe

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