



GOLF COURSE REVIEW

Prepared by

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Director

Sports Turf Practitioners (Ire) Ltd

Meeting date – 21st March 2024

MEETING SUMMARY

This month's meeting focused on the overall condition of the course which is unfortunately largely waterlogged. We also discussed the agronomic plan for the upcoming golfing season to include greens, tees and fairways.

The afternoon concluded with a meeting with Pauline, giving general feedback on observations made. We also took time to review machinery cap-ex and drainage plans for the course.

Meeting Contributors

Pauline Mooney – General Manager

Paul Ryan – Head Greenkeeper

Gerry Byrne – Director, STP (Ire) Ltd

Executive Summary- Key Findings

1. **Golf course** heavily waterlogged, however, cutting opportunities were taken with a mini dry spell two weeks ago to cut and keep grass under control.
2. **Greens** are in good condition, unfortunately other than cutting, no agronomic inputs could be facilitated due to the deep waterlogging and inability to traffic the land. We will quickly pick up on the inputs when ground conditions improve.
3. **Approaches and green surrounds** are largely waterlogged.
4. **Tees** are good but require spring fertilisation, understandably delayed as increased cutting and presentation requirements would not be facilitated.
5. **Fairways** are waterlogged and unfair to rate.
6. **Rough** also waterlogged and not trafficable.
7. **Bunkers** very well maintained.
8. **Landscape** excellent, Paul and his team have focused on improving the landscape beds on the golf course which is most impressive.
9. **Pathways** also excellent, Paul also took on the challenge to address pathways at the 1st and 2nd which consistently wash away, he has addressed this in a most professional manner and full credit to his ingenuity in developing such a plan and delivering a fine finish.
10. **Bridges** damaged during the flooding period repaired and railings painted by the team.
11. **Maintenance yard and shed** very clean and tidy, all machinery serviced and sharpened for the coming season.
12. **Drainage** concerns remains, proposal from Drainage expert Richard Hayden submitted to management.
13. **Fence repairs** was required and addressed by Paul at the back of the 9th green.

Golf Course

Greens

Greens are in very good condition with no disease present. They are softer than normal due to early season sanding not applied. This is totally understandable as machinery is not able to traffic the land since December. Other than mowing, no agronomic inputs were applied.

Despite this, it is most pleasing to report of a very healthy root zone with exceptional rooting for the time of year. A strong platform is in place for quality surfaces this season.



Excellent rooting and turf density

As we move into the spring period, ground conditions will improve and a resumption of the agronomic works is planned.

Recommendations;

- Begin sand topdressing and apply every two weeks until surface smoothness and firmness is achieved.
- Nutrition is applied but a further granular will be needed at the end of April, look towards a slow-release product with mid-range nitrogen such as 14.3.7 at 30 grams per square metre.
- Rockastem programme to cease from April.
- Wetting agent to begin from April.
- Trace element package to be applied monthly to include the introduction of Primo Maxx plant growth regulator, beginning at .3 litre per ha raising to .4 litre.
- Cutting practices to increase in line with growth patterns.
- Reduce height of cut to target of 3.00mm.
- Vertical mowing to be introduced to thin out the canopy and facilitate sand ingress.
- Preventative fungicide a judgement call by Paul but be careful of the transition from winter to spring which is a dangerous time for disease outbreak, perhaps a preventative may be required to ensure full protection.

Green surrounds and approaches

Are under control despite not being cut to schedule, they will quickly improve when more regular mowing is facilitated. Spring fertilisation is recommended to boost growth and colour.

Tees

Condition of tees are best described as fair. They are very hungry but under control. Understandably Paul has resisted the temptation to fertilise as it would increase growth and the need to cut which would be a struggle in such wet ground conditions.

Recommendations are to apply the instock 11.5.5 at a rate of 35 grams per square metre when ground conditions improve.



Tees very hungry which is understandable as cutting cannot be facilitated, fertiliser planned

Fairways

Fairways are fully waterlogged and not trafficable. Thankfully, Paul had a short window three weeks ago and took the opportunity to get a cut and control to the fairways which will hold them for another couple of weeks.



Fairways completely waterlogged

Rough

Also heavily waterlogged and not trafficable, even foot traffic struggles in the rough, so no transport is recommended to ensure ground damage is limited.

Bunkers

Are in very good condition with edging and general presentation impressive.



Bunker maintenance excellent

Yard and Machinery Shed

The yard and sand bays is very clean and tidy. Paul has ensured the fleet of machinery was fully serviced and sharpened over the winter months and the cutting fleet is ready for the season.



Cutting units in readiness for the season

Golf Course Ground Conditions

The underfoot ground conditions has significantly deteriorated over this winter and spring. The course is largely unplayable during this time and the worrying trends of wet conditions prevailing is of concern.

I have instructed drainage expert Richard Hayden to provide a initial exploratory proposal to management which remains under review.

One of my key concerns is the soil which have sealed the gravel bands and potentially rendered them ineffective. This brings the issue of increased sanding to the fore which we will continue to discuss with management.

I would also recommend the club consider a shockwave or vertiquake slit tine machine which is designed to insert a continuous slit into the soil and carry the water to drainage pipe or open ditches. Joe Bedford to comment on same on his next visit.



Gravel bands sealed with soil / Shockwave Slitter

Winter Works

Despite the challenging ground conditions, Paul and his team have pushed through a stretch body of winter works with a focus on improved landscape, pathway improvements, bridge works and fence repairs.

Landscape

All landscape beds addressed throughout the golf course with cleaning, mulching and introduction of fresh plants. Paul also built flower boxes which are most ingenious and impressive, these will be placed throughout the course and clubhouse environs.



Landscape improvement works include bridge painting

Pathway improvement works

The most impressive winter project undertaken by Paul and his team was rectification of the pathways causing so much trouble in recent years, following constant washouts and expensive repairs.

The 1st repair was the path leading to the maintenance yard with a water catch basin installed to intercept the running water coming off the land. This will ensure washouts will be minimised.



Pathway works leading to the maintenance yard and soak pit catching water off the land

The 2nd and most important was the problematic 1st pathway which suffered from regular washouts. This was addressed by rebuilding the bridge which water crossed from the park flooding and flushing the pathway, having an instant effect and very impressive.



New bridge constructed with slatted concrete to allow water to enter into the ditch

Finally, the pathway at the 4th was edged and replaced with fresh stone.



Tidy pathway to the 4th

Bridges

All hand rails were painted over the winter and the bridge at the 9th which was badly damaged from a recent flood repaired.



Bridge repair and painting of hand railings

Fence at the back of the 9th repair

The fence at the back of the 9th required attention and also modernised over winter and presents much better.



Fence repair at the back of 9th green

SUMMARY

Full credit to Paul and his Team in delivering an enormous and most impressive winter project works. All areas of concentration are to improve the presentation standard of the course, improve colour and ensure pathways and bridges are made safe.

It was most challenging with ground conditions; however a strong platform is in place for instant improvements, we just need some kind dry weather and improvement in ground conditions over the coming weeks

Our next visit to the club is scheduled in late April to review our spring programme and develop further plans for summer presentation standards.

Gerry Byrne
Director
Sports Turf Practitioners
March 27th 2024

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