



## **Course Report. April '23 – July '23.**

**By Robin Little**

### **General.**

During the early part of the season greenkeepers time was taken up with a huge amount of irrigation repairs. The time taken did take us away from other jobs however getting water to greens has to be priority. Following a dry spring, the weather has turned very wet and we've had 130mm of rain during the second and third weeks of July. This is exceptional for the time of year, if the course has been closed or buggies have to be banned then please respect our decision, we are protecting the course for the benefit of everyone.

### **Greens.**

Early season growth was slow due to cold dry conditions and this wasn't just at Penrith golf club, it is recognised nationally that the weather warming up in spring has been later than ever before with good weather continuing into September and October. Fortunately, through spring and early summer we haven't had any disease. Growth currently is steady and we always monitor the amount of growth each day. Liquid fertiliser is applied to greens every other week, this keeps the growth rate more consistent than it would be if a granular fertiliser was applied at 6 – 8 week intervals. It also ensures that there isn't a surge of soft growth which would be susceptible to disease.

At this point in the season, we aim to not feed the greens any more than necessary, which is why we drip feed on a fortnightly basis. There is high percentage of annual meadow grass in some of our greens, particularly the 1<sup>st</sup> green, due to the greens being too wet prior to drainage work being carried out. This grass is slower to start at the beginning of the season, is more susceptible to disease and demands higher nutrition than fine leaved perennial bent grass which is what we are actively trying to encourage. Because annual meadow grass prefers higher levels of nutrition, not over feeding means we are discouraging the grasses we don't want and encouraging the ones that we do.

As well as drainage systems regular aeration is carried out to keep the greens as free draining as possible, excessively damp conditions causes the bent grass to die back. The drier we can keep the greens the more bent grass coverage we can maintain and the better the putting surfaces will be. Having our own seeder would mean that we can overseed with bent grass regularly, easily and efficiently, this would be the preferred method as bent seed is currently around £500 - £600 per bag so we need to guarantee good sowing and germination with no wastage. This is something which I would encourage the club to look at and invest in.

Greens 2, 8 and 16 have been top dressed by hand to top up any settlement on drain lines and we will continue to do so when time allows until we are happy.

The back edge of the putting green burnt off slightly due to a damaged sprinkler, the area has been overseeded and the sprinkler replaced.

The drain lines on the 8<sup>th</sup> green have been over seeded with bent grass to improve the way that they blend in with the rest of the turf.

### **Aprons.**

These struggled during the hot dry spell in May and some areas burnt off due to the lack of water. As soon as there were any signs of rain, we sprayed with a mix containing penetrant to help rehydrate the soil, wetting agent to keep it wet, seaweed to reduce stress on the grass plant and fertilizer to encourage re growth. Some areas will require overseeding which we aim to carry out as soon as possible as the current warm wet weather couldn't be better for germination.

### **Tees.**

Divotting continues to be carried out on weekly basis (twice a week for par 3's). An application of fertiliser will be put down last week of July to aid recovery from the high volumes of traffic which the course receives. Selective weed killer will be sprayed on summer tees and the tee banks second or third week in August.

### **Fairways.**

Holes 11 and 12 have burnt off particularly badly, as well as the weather this is down to the fact that there is very little soil, some areas are just having a few inches on top of bed rock. These 2 also have quite a lot of moss in them so we have sprayed with penetrant to help get fertilizer and iron into the soil which will blacken the moss and encourage growth.

Fairway divotting is something that we simply don't have time for due to other priorities. When Dads Army organise divotting parties please support them, and the club, and get involved.

### **Maintenance week.**

From Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July, for the whole week, we will be carrying out annual maintenance on all 18 greens on the golf course plus some overseeding work on aprons which burnt off in May and June. We will be scarifying, hollow and solid tining, and top dressing, followed up by double rolling to put the surface back down and iron out the bumps. Fertiliser will be applied afterwards to ensure recovery is as quick as possible. During this period temporary greens will be in use on and off to accommodate greenkeepers work. This is essential work so please be patient and allow us to get on and have the work finished as soon as possible.

### **Project Work.**

- Almost all bunkers have now been topped up with sand following lots of repairs to liners. Whenever bunkers are topped up with fresh sand, they will always feel softer than normal and very dry weather means the sand takes longer to settle and firm up. Now that it has, and it has been rained on a few times the improvement is noticeable. For reference we use bunker 435 sand which is very widely used from Brampton to Birkdale.
- New Irrigation valve sets have been installed at the 1<sup>st</sup> green, 2<sup>nd</sup> tee, 7<sup>th</sup> green, 16<sup>th</sup> green and 17<sup>th</sup> tee. New cables have had to be put in on the 11<sup>th</sup> fairway and between the 4<sup>th</sup> green and the 15<sup>th</sup> tee simply due to the age of them. New sprinklers have been installed on the putting green, 7<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> greens and 2<sup>nd</sup> tee, and a leak had to be fixed on the front left - hand corner of the 18<sup>th</sup> green caused by a cracked fitting on the bottom the sprinkler. This area is very soft but it will tighten up

and when it does, we will seed and top dress to repair the damaged turf. The valve set on the 18<sup>th</sup> green is still to replace but at the moment it is not a priority.

- Paths on the 3<sup>rd</sup> tee, 4<sup>th</sup> tee, 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> tee have been topped up again and rerolled.
- Trees have been pruned on the left hand side of the 6<sup>th</sup> fairway about 100 yds forward of the tee, this has been done with a view to be cutting some of the rough further back to avoid slow play looking for balls.