

Course News Letter

Wow!!! what a summer its been. Fantastic golf weather with everyone enjoying some of their longest tee shots for years, but its not so good for turf health with such a long period without any rain as well as seeing temperatures getting up into the mid 30s.

There have been some courses that have been hit very hard by the weather as shown here.



Irrigation System

Thankfully the decision to install the new irrigation system during last winter has proved to be perfect timing and with over 9 weeks of almost continuous use the system has proven itself. We have now reduced a night's worth of water from 75m² for an application down to 32m² per night, which means we are now much more efficient in the way we use water on the course. Over the past few weeks we have also added an

extra 40 tail nozzles to the rotas around the greens. These help to blend in the watered areas to the non watered areas instead of having a line where the water is covering and where it isn't.



Tees

I'm sure we will all agree that our tees have not had a good time during this extreme heat. There were a couple of reasons that the tees were not included when we installed the new irrigation system.

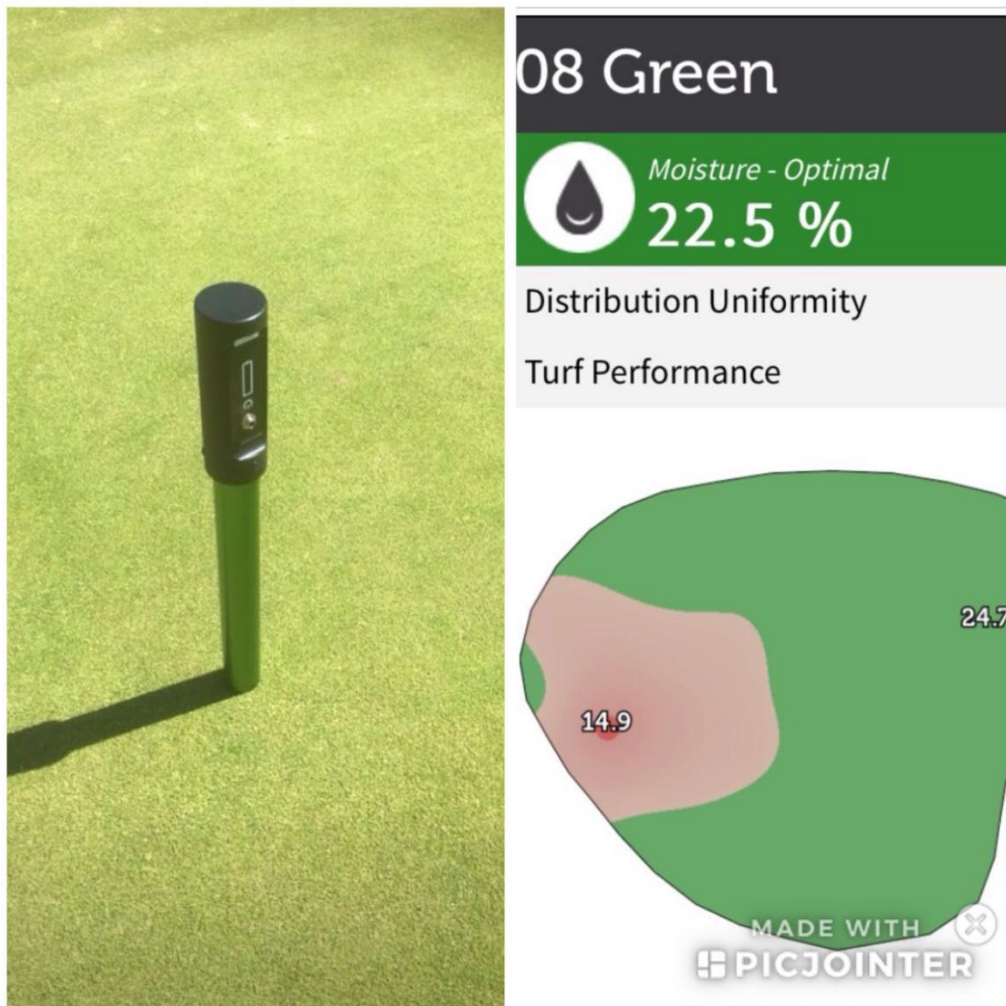
One was because the budget wasn't big enough to include the cost of installing pop ups on all the tees, which would have been over 65K. The other reason was that we have a lot of small tees that either need enlarging or levelling and it would just be a waste of time and money installing irrigation before we do this work.

We are now working on a plan as to how we are going to sort out the tees and install the irrigation to them. The cost of doing this in house will be a lot cheaper but the cost will have to come out of the course working budget. We are hoping to install pop ups into the 1st tee before the end of the year, this will give a much improved first Impression, as well as showing everyone how good the tees will be once they are all completed.

Moisture Levels

Along with our new irrigation system we have also purchased a POGO GPS Moisture Meter. Regular use of this to test each green provides us with a map of each green as shown below. Our target range for moisture levels in our greens is 22% to 28%. If only some areas of the green are in need of irrigation we can now apply water to that area instead of watering the whole green as we had to before.

Each green also has its own micro climate, depending on tree shade, soil make up, slope and the direction in which it is facing. Using the POGO is helping to identify how much these factors are affecting each green, for example one green may need 10% less water or another green may need 5% more than our standard watering program to make them all play the same.



Approaches

These are continuing to improve now that these areas are covered by the irrigation system. These areas will now be treated a bit more like the greens when it comes to renovation time in the autumn. The plan is to scarify, hollow-tine and topdress them so they will become a bit firmer and therefore better to play on all year round.



Long Rough Areas

I know that these have been an area of much concern, but there are a number of reasons for their introduction onto the course. They are as follows:

- For many people outside of golf, courses are thought to be very unnatural environments where we spray chemicals everywhere to achieve our course conditions. With this in mind, there is greater pressure on golf clubs to provide wildlife areas within their course and therefore, long rough areas are one of the easiest ways to provide a wildlife habitat.
- Some tee banks are much too steep and dangerous to cut and the amount of time these come into play is minimal.
- We have also used some areas of rough to shield areas like the 3rd tee from shots off the 4th tee.

Long Rough Management

Over the next few weeks most of these areas will be cut and the grass will be collected. We will also spray off the thick Rye grass in these areas leaving the thin Fescue to thrive. Doing this once or twice a year will help to reduce the thickness of these rough areas and lead to having a thin and wispy rough. These areas will still be a great wildlife habitat and give the desired definition on the course, but golfers will find their balls more easily and still be able to play out of them.



Paths

Pathways are not everyone's cup of tea on the course, but they are becoming a very important factor due to the ever increasing number of members that need the use of a buggy. They also help to take some of the wear off the turf during the winter months, as we are now getting more winter golf than ever before.

The one problem is the grass that starts to grow up through these paths, makes them look unsightly. With this in mind we are currently converting an old truck mounted sprayer with a covered boom to be used to spray the paths on a more regular basis. This will be much quicker to do than using a knapsack sprayer, so we can do this more often before any grass gets the chance to grow through them.

Fairways

This hot weather has hit the fairways really hard, but because of the work we have done over the past 3 years they will recover. To help them do this we will be applying wetting agent and a seaweed fertiliser two or three times in conjunction with a period of steady rain, so as to help wash these products into the surface.



May 2018



July 2018

Wild Flower Areas

Again we now have a nice display of colour with our wild flower areas, but they have also struggled due to the wet spring we experienced. The bees and butterflies are loving them now though.



Bunkers

They have been a bit more difficult to manage and maintain this season with lots of heavy rain early in the year packing the sand down day after day, but now they are so dry it is difficult to keep the sand on the faces of the bunkers. Hopefully now we are back on top of these areas. We do however still have 15 old bunkers with the failing Sportscreat still in them, The plan is to remove this during this upcoming winter so all the bunkers on the course will have the same construction.

Diary Date

Please put this date, Tuesday 25th September in your diary if you wish to learn more about what's happening on the course and why at the Greens Forum.

If there are any questions that you would like to be covered on the night then please feel free to email them to myself beforehand on: coursemanager@theworcestershiregolfclub.co.uk.