

24 02 2019

Harpenden Common MANCO Report: February 2019

Dear General Manager

Please find below my February report for Harpenden Common:

Golf Course

The weather has been quite challenging since my first report in January. Last week turned out to be quite nice but prior to that we had two dumpings of snow, sleet and then heavy rain. This made the course very sloppy and winter felt like it had arrived at last!

Last week was good though and Sean and the team did their first micro tining operation of the season. First they verti-cut (to remove lateral growth), then micro-tined with an 8mm solid tine, lightly top dressed and then rolled and brushed to work everything in. The team completed the main greens in one day and the two practice greens the following day. This work went smoothly and looking at the greens on Wednesday, I believe that it was an operation well done.



As well as this the team completed their annual deep-aeration on the fairways. A 25mm tine went down around 200mm deep. The work looked very clean to me and apart from a few 'plucking' areas, I was pleased with the tine pattern and finish.

Maintenance to the course will really start to pick up over the next few weeks. All the playing areas will be included and the planned works consist of the following:

- Greens, collars and approaches – Deep aerate and a heavy application of sand in March.
- Tees – Hollow core, sand and overseed followed by two granular fertiliser applications.
- Fairways – Scarify, fertilise and core/overseed any weak areas.
- Surrounds and weak areas – Hollow core, overseed and fertilise.

As you can see, the remainder of February and all of March will be about making sure that the priority areas are set up for the season ahead. Once March ends we will be in the playing season and our focus will shift to light maintenance.

Winter programme

When I got involved with the club in December it was decided that we would scale back the winter



programme somewhat to put focus and attention into the main playing surfaces. This has paid off with many positive reports from members and visitors. The team have been working on areas such as leaf collecting in the trees and renewing the 4th tee steps, but with the maintenance works listed above, our aim is to still continue the winter programme on a reduced schedule.

One job that the team have been working on is raising and levelling the greenside sprinkler heads. This is not an exciting job but it is absolutely essential that when the sprinklers come up they apply water in a uniform manner. Having level sprinklers is the

only way for this to happen. We also plan to do an audit of the greens set up to make sure the 'data base' is calibrated correctly with what's out in 'the field'. This is crucial in order for areas such as greens to be pushed to the limit and will be a focus as we go in to the season.

Training

At this time of year staff training is a high priority. It is so important to make sure all the club's staff are trained both from a health and safety point of view and also to make sure their skills and techniques are kept up to date.

Last week Olly attended a two-day mechanic's course at Ealing Golf Club. The week before Sam and Olly attended a moisture meter seminar and the whole team went to Oakland College where a seminar covered topics from managing turf at Twickenham, to team building and motivation and golf course architecture. Any training is good and if you only pick up one thing, it is one extra thing that makes you a better professional.



Over the next 6 months we will continue to work in this area. Sean and Olly plan to take the team to other courses to see how they run their operations. We are also looking at volunteering tournament support at other clubs, a practice that has become popular in the industry. Once a month now the team will get together to discuss plans ahead and any areas of concern. On the golf course we will continue to monitor operations to make sure that the standard is maintained in a good efficient manner.

Holding tank and pumps

There was some good news a couple of weeks ago with the club sanctioning the upgrade and renewal of the irrigation holding tank and pumps. This has been an area of concern for the team and me, with the holding tank in particular looking very vulnerable. The upgrade will involve renewing the pumps and moving them into a self-contained pump-house with a new pressure vessel and control unit. The steel frame on the tank will be upgraded and a new liner installed. It will also be made bigger in order to hold more water during the season.

All in all a good investment which will take some of the risk factors away from irrigation system.

Regards

Greg Evans