

Course Closure and Suspension of Play Update May 2019

WEEKDAYS

Whilst greenkeeping staff are in attendance the decision on the use of Temporary Greens, play Suspension or Course Closure/reopening will rest with the Head Greenkeeper. He will advise the Professional and Secretary of the current course conditions and, if appropriate, the time of a further inspection and the next course update. Where there is no Greens staff available the Professional is solely responsible for suspension of play or course closure, and when appropriate a change of use from temporary to normal greens.

Potential situations which may result in course closure:

- Flooding
- Frost
- Snow
- High winds – safety issues with debris and tree damage
- Fog – safety issues with limited visibility for players and staff
- Storm conditions, particularly where lightening may become a factor

This information should be communicated to the Membership and Visitors via email, website and social media as quickly as possible by the Professional, and he will continue to update Members during the day.

During adverse conditions which necessitate course closure the professional will inhibit access to the course. (Please refer to Course Safety Assessment on Website.) Where Members, Guests or Visitors are 'In-Play' Suspension of play will be announced by repeated 3 sharp blasts of the Klaxon. Where Closure of the course is deemed necessary there will be repeated Long blasts on the Klaxon as a warning to clear the course. Should this occur within Greenstaff working hours a member of the greenstaff will inform players of the closure; advise to mark and leave the course.

WEEKEND

At the weekend the on-duty greens staff will make any decisions regarding the use of temporary greens, course closure and further inspections required. Before leaving the course, they will advise the Professional of the greens status and the criteria required for making any changes. If the decision has been taken by the weekend on-duty greens staff to use temporary greens they will decide when, if at all, it will be appropriate to move to normal greens. If the greens staff has recommended a further inspection this will be undertaken by the Professional (or his deputy) as will any decision to open or close the course for the remainder of that day. Normal greens should not be used before that time.

If the course or greens (some or all) are flooded at the weekend when the on duty greens staff arrive they should have regard to the forecast for that day, whether there is a likelihood of improvement, and what action should be taken to improve the condition of the course to make it playable. This could include clearing affected greens of water and/or changing the hole positions to higher ground. They should also ensure squeegees are available and located in an easily accessible area.

The Professional will keep members updated by e mail, website and social media and any verbal communication, on the current course condition, the time of any planned inspections and of any changes.

SCHEDULED COMPETITIONS

Greens staff will endeavour to make the course playable, if at all possible, when there is a scheduled competition. At that time, should play require to be delayed they will provide an estimated time when the course might be playable. In the absence of greens staff availability, the Professional is solely responsible for the decision to suspend play pending any further inspection or closure of the course.

The Match Secretary (or his appointed Deputy – Gents or Ladies as appropriate) - will only decide whether the competition is delayed, postponed and/or replayed.

The greens staff in attendance will keep the Professional and Match Secretary advised of the prevailing course conditions when changes to course status is envisaged. The Professional should continue to update members when the course condition status is changed.

The Head Greenkeeper will discuss the weekend weather forecast with the on-duty greens staff who will also keep themselves and the Professional updated on Saturday and Sunday morning as to the forecast weather conditions for the weekend.

Temporary Greens

The use of temporary greens preserves the surfaces of the main greens and provides an acceptable alternative to closing the course. The decision to play on winter greens is never taken lightly and the following factors are always taken into consideration when assessing the conditions:

Frozen plant tissues are easily bruised by golfer's feet and are identified by black footprints

Bruised and damaged grass is at greater risk of disease attack

Playing on severely frozen or wet greens may lead to a thinning of grass cover

Long term damage can take place when play resumes after a sudden thaw

The purpose and use of winter greens is to protect and maintain the condition of the main greens for the playing season.

John McNeill
Greens Convener
April 2019