

## Dear Members

Finally we have had some persistent rainfall that has enabled the turf to slowly start recovering from this summers drought. We are still seeing some mild temperatures that is enabling growth to continue. I am hopeful that this can continue until winter really does kick in and grass growth ceases. We have applied fertiliser to our Fairways, Approaches and Semi-Rough to try and push the recovery along, which is helping speed up the process.

Our putting surfaces are now well on their way to full recovery from the intense works that were carried out a few weeks ago.

This year we carried out some extra works for the long term improvement of our putting surfaces. The week prior to maintenance week we sprayed our putting surfaces with a selective herbicide for the control of White Clover (*Trifolium repens*) and Buckshorn Plantains (*Plantago coponopus*). The added bonus of spraying this type of selective herbicide is that it had a detrimental effect on a coarse weed grass Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus Lanatus*) that was within a number of our putting surfaces.



(Yorkshire Fog 6<sup>th</sup> Green Prior to Application) (YF Eradicated 6<sup>th</sup> Green 5 Weeks Post Application)



*(Green 8 One Week After Application, Yorkshire Fog Starting to Decline)*



*(8<sup>th</sup> Green Five Weeks Post Application)*



Eradicating this weed grass out of our putting surfaces is essential to further improve the playability and consistency going forward. Our aim is to create a monoculture of fine fescue grasses that make up the majority of grass types within in our greens. We still have a long way to go in achieving this but we must make a start somewhere.

Maintenance week went extremely well. My thanks has to go to all the greenkeepers for coming in on the bank holiday to ensure we had an undisrupted start whilst the golf course was closed. In total we pulled 4,600,000 cores out of our 11,000m<sup>2</sup> of greens. The greens were top dressed, over seeded with a fescue seed blend and top dressed again. We used 45 tons of top dressing in total.



*(Many Thanks to Butch for Helping Clear Cores)*



*(Core Aeration Holes Filled with Sand)*





*(New Fescue Seed Germinating Within the Aeration Holes)*

I understand that for a few weeks after these essential works were carried out the greens really were in a terrible state. These works are essential to the long term health of the putting surfaces and if maintenance works were not carried out the overall performance would decline rapidly.

Now the greens have recovered from these major works many of you will have noticed that the ball still does have a small amount of movement to it whilst putting. We will be applying a very light topdressing to the greens this week which will help fill the voids and bring back normal true surface levels.

The Greenkeepers have now moved on to our other main playing surfaces. Tees have been hollow cored with the cores being smashed to recycle the sandy soil as a form of top dressing leaving the organic matter (Thatch) on the surface to be blown off.

Currently the Greenkeeper's are undertaking the same practice on the approaches. This has proved to be somewhat difficult due to the rainfall we have experienced of late which has made the soil

cores being pulled from the surface very tough to break down. This has left certain approaches and surrounds a little untidy. We will be going back through the approaches cleaning the areas once all the major work has been completed.



*(Tees Hollow Cored)*

As we are now heading in to the Winter months we will be adjusting the height on which we mow our surfaces throughout the course. Our summer heights of cut for greens are 4mm which we have recently moved up to 4.5mm and will be increasing to 5mm as temperatures drop and grass growth slows. The reasons we must leave more leaf surface on is down to the climatic conditions we face in the winter. Our focus moves from presentation and playability to winter maintenance and the limitation of turf damage whilst still facilitating play. Photosynthesis has significantly reduced at this time of year so leaving slightly more leaf tissue will help the plant utilize any sunlight that does occur. Whilst also enabling the plant to increase its carbohydrate reserves which are critical in ensuring winter survival.

We will be applying monthly turf hardener products mainly containing Potassium (K) and Iron (Fe) with low amounts of Nitrogen (N) if conditions are favourable. We will also be applying seaweed and a soil conditioner containing amino & fulvic acids, vitamins, enzymes & carbohydrates when soil temperatures are above 5<sup>°C</sup>

An industry leading penetrant wetting agent (Aqua Rapido) will be applied. This product has a powerful effect on the movement of excess water through the soil profile. Keeping the putting surfaces dry and playable through periods of prolonged rain. This product also reduces dew and frost formation on the greens keeping them drier to reduce disease incidence and open for play.



Next up will be our Fairways, Carries and Semi-Rough Aeration. Unfortunately we are not in the position to be able to hollow core fairways, semi-rough etc due to the vast area that would need to be cultivated. We will be using a tractor mounted Verti-Drain that will progress through the course over the winter months. If members do find their next stroke comes where the Verti-Drain is working could they please move their ball to the side and play around the machine. This will keep our Green staff safe whilst the machine also is able to continue working. Rather than stopping for every group that plays. This will enable us not to close the hole being worked on keeping all holes open for play. We will have a warning sign on the tee of the hole being worked on.

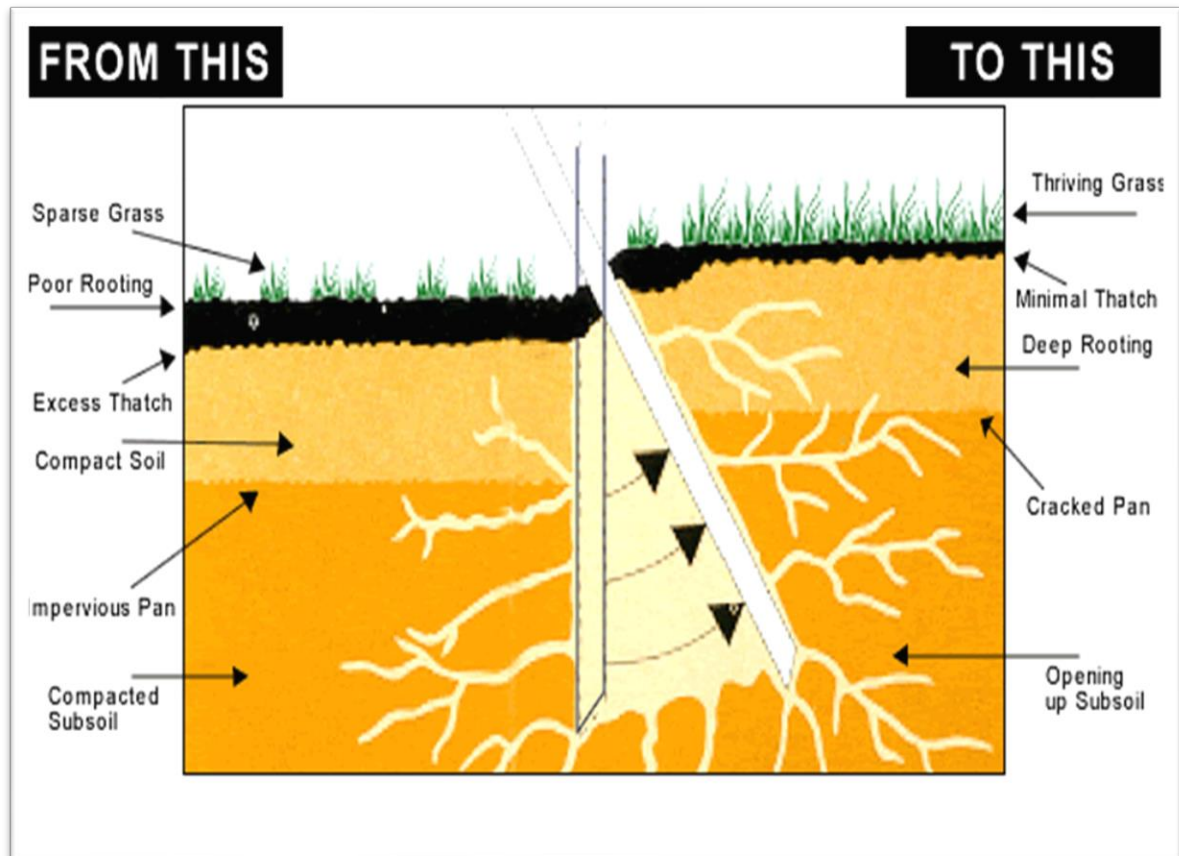


The Verti-Drain's primary use is to relieve soil compaction that occurs from golfing traffic and greenkeeping practices. It also creates channels through undesirable layering within the soil profile. Benefits also include greater drainage in poor soils and deep rooting turf.

Much like core aeration Verti-Draining creates very high surface disturbance so communication with golfers and management is key. This is difficult as the soil conditions have to be in no more than a moist state making informing of the membership in plenty of time near on impossible. The Verti-Drain works in a way that as it enters the rootzone it will also have a heaving motion as it reaches its desired depth, this in a no more than moist soil will open up pour spaces within the profile. Solid tines may up lift and fracture the soil mass during extraction with substantial increases in soil macro porosity and the benefits are most pronounced when executed in dry soils; conversely, if soil moisture is high no improvements in soil macro porosity will occur.



(Verti-Drain 9<sup>th</sup> Fairway)



(Benefits of Verti-Drain tines with heave action on dry to moist soils)



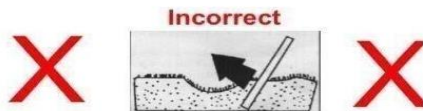
### **PITCHMARKS**

Due to the recent wet weather and heavy maintenance works carried out the putting surfaces have become quite receptive with unrepaired ball marks now increasing. I thought it would be a good time to remind all about the importance of repairing their pitch marks. We are seeing many unrepaired marks on all the greens of late with the 18<sup>th</sup> being particularly damaged. If I could politely ask all members to take a bit more time on the greens checking for their ball marks and even repair any that is not. This would help the overall plants health whilst aiding golfers putting that the ball doesn't hit a unrepaired mark or old scar that causes the ball to bobble.

### **Pitch Mark Repair Process**

Help to maintain the condition of the greens by repairing your own and at least one other pitch mark per green.

There is a right and wrong way to repair pitch marks



Pulling up with the repair tool will bring sand and roots to the surface, thus damaging the root structure and causing the mark to heal very slowly



Pull the sides of the pitch mark toward the centre and then flatten gently by tapping it down with your putter. This will close the hole and not cause damage to the root structure, helping the pitch mark to heal quickly.

A pitch mark repaired within 10 minutes of being made will fully recover in 3 days. A poorly repaired pitch mark or one left for a day before being repaired will take over a week to heal



Now we are approaching the Winter months where the weather can be quite extreme. The new course flags, pins and hole cups that have been in place throughout the season will be replaced with the old ones. This is so the new hole flags and pins are protected through the winter storms etc. Giving the green staff chance to clean and refurbish our existing hole equipment ready for the following season. This will prolong the life of our main course furniture ensuring we are looking our best during the main part of the golfing calendar.



*(New Flags, Pins, Hole cups)*

Recently G.C.M sent three staff to Jersey for the British and International Golf GreenKeepers Association Education day held at Royal Jersey G.C. This was a full day of education presented by B.I.G.G.A for Channel Island GreenKeepers. The day was incredibly informative with many subjects covered by industry leading professionals.

Some of the subjects covered -

- Drought stress soil hydrophobicity and the use of wetting agents
- Leather Jackets life cycle and timing of insecticide application
- Irrigation upkeep and general maintenance

I would like to thank G.C.M for giving Myself, Wayne and Shay time to attend these seminars. I know we all took a great deal away from this event which will help within the workplace whilst also aiding Wayne and Shays current work based diplomas which both are currently undertaking.



*(B.I.G.G.A Education Day Royal Jersey Golf Club)*

We will shortly be commencing with our winter works programme and I will report on this during my next update. We have many issues with our irrigation system and many hours this winter will be focused on repair works ready for next season. We will also be carrying out ongoing Ecological works within the overall Ecological Management Plan.

I hope this has given you all a brief update on what and why these recent works have been implemented and the progress we are making.

This past season proved to be incredibly busy with some excellent scores achieved. I hope everyone enjoyed their golf this year and are currently working on their game ready to go again next year. I will update everyone again around Christmas.

Kind Regards

Ollie



