

PORTAL GOLF HOTEL & SPA GOLF GREENS REPORT - JUNE 2019

I hope you are seeing (and indeed enjoying) the improvement in the Greens which from my recent inspections show significant improvement in condition, pace and run. From my latest round of hole by hole inspections I'd like to formally thank Mr. Barry Robinson for his tremendous work in approach of our summer golf experience here at Portal. The feedback from both professionals, members, corporate and social golfers has remained consistently excellent.

Key intervention this period:

- As discussed with lots of you, wetting agent has been applied to all greens 3rd wk May 2019

Upcoming investment:

- This month sees a high investment period via an irrigation upgrade which commences on the 10th June 2019 – exciting news for us all.

We have been fighting a battle with the lava of the Crane fly the Leather Jacket, at the moment there is no market available chemical we can use to eliminate them, so our options are the introduction of Nematodes which invade the body of the grub and kill them. Although expensive to buy (and critical in terms of timing/weather) we are attempting this intervention in some test environments. Across the board we are then applying garlic and tea extract as a trial in tandem to attempt an irritation to the skin of the grub in turn bringing them to the surface so the birds can naturally remove without pecking hole in the greens! Bear with us but we are pretty sure we have the answer!

Below is a picture of the Leather Jacket grub, dark grey in colour with a leathery ribbed body:



Agronomy:

The samples of the annual soil analysis agronomy break down instructed by myself, as expected, showed nutrient levels low in magnesium and nitrogen. We acted immediately with an application on 28th May 2019. Which, in honesty, is a straight forward fix that pays fast dividends.

The more important finding is that our thatch has degraded by 2%. Although that doesn't seem much, over the whole area of the root zone, that equates to 3 tonnes of fibres material per green; so superb progress.

Below is a photograph showing the soil profile through the greens, showing excellent layering and degrading of thatch:



Photo, same place at my inspection one month ago showing patches colonised by the Bents Grass. It appears our invention has been specific and perfectly timed.



This change is supported via an increased aeration program using micro tines coupled with an enhancement to our topdressing program over sown with Bents seed and the fertiliser. Although expensive, this intervention has accelerated the repair rate and we will now continue to top dress every second week.

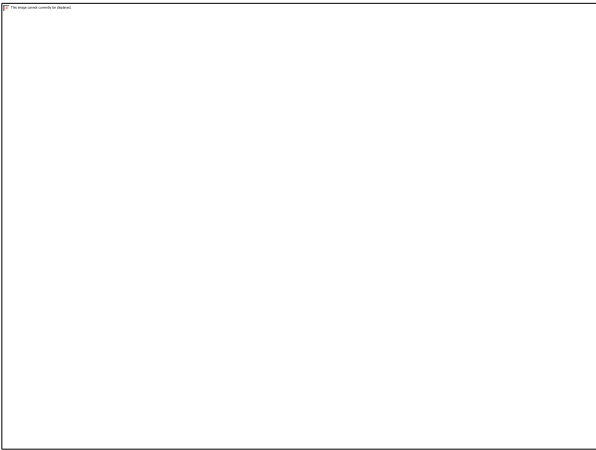
Conservation:

We are now working with the Wirral Hedge-Hog rescue programme and have introduced 6 breeding pairs to both Premier and the Championship Course so look out for these little beauties on your travels.



Horticulture:

A great sign this early in the year is the arrival of our first orchids. A beautiful site only now possible given the removal of the Elder Weed choking prior cultivation. So something we are very proud of this year.



David Steel
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