

Robert Brown Chairman of Course Report



It has been estimated that 25% of small businesses don't re open after a serious emergency and we do not want Rowlands Castle Golf Club to be on that list. Our Covid-19 and golf club Management Committee's have been meeting (online) twice a week, to plan ahead and put procedures into operation that give your golf club every chance of securing the facility for members to enjoy for years ahead.

Rowland Castle Golf Club is a close community, with a small number of staff and volunteers working extremely hard to maintain a facility that provides enjoyment, relaxation and sometimes torture to golfers. It is also a highly-skilled working environment, with staff who are professionally trained to complete each of their daily roles and without whom the entire operation would grind to a halt.

The green keepers and I thank our members for their continued support, Rowlands Castle Golf Club is a non profit organisation, it has yearly expenses that are covered mostly by membership revenue, support from our membership has been exceptional during this extremely challenging and difficult time.

As a member I thank Kevin and the green keeping staff for going the extra mile during the last six weeks.



Our green keepers have been working under the guidance of an Essential Maintenance Statement for Golf Courses During COVID-19 Outbreak.

The essential maintenance regime limits activity on the golf course, protecting workers and securing the playing surfaces at golfing facilities.

The statement outlines those treatments considered essential for the safe maintenance of a golf course during the current government restrictions.

The primary consideration must be the health and wellbeing of our green keeping staff.

- Measures include but are not limited to:
- Focus on hygiene and social distancing
- Ensure staff members work separately
- Allocate individual machinery to one worker only
- If multiple staff on site, then stagger working hours and break times
- Limit or prohibit use of communal areas
- Regularly disinfect any surface that is contacted e.g. door handles, fuel pumps, communal machinery
- Ensure there is a robust lone working policy.



Mowing

Greens should be mown according to the rate of growth to a maximum of three times per week. Dew removal should be considered on non-mowing days as required to prevent disease spread. Tees and green surrounds should be mown according to the rate of growth to a maximum of once per week. Fairways should be mown according to the rate of growth to a maximum of once per week. Managed roughs and grass paths should be mown according to need to a maximum of once every two weeks (fortnightly). Only roughs considered to be in direct play should be mown allowing for naturalisation to areas largely out of play. The height of cut adopted for all these areas is site specific but the elevation of the cutting height on fine turf areas is advised to minimise unnecessary stress on the turf. The aim of the above operations is to maintain uniformity, density, texture and health to allow surfaces to be quickly brought back to an appropriate playing standard once play resume.

The greens have been cut at 6mm which is high for the time of year, this reduced stress and possible costly disease treatment, we are experiencing a bit of Fusarium, it usually starts on the more shaded greens with less air movement i.e our 13th.

Other Maintenance

Operations such as maintaining bunkers, penalty areas, wider practice facilities (other than greens and tees), aeration, top dressing and spraying are not considered essential at this time. However, it is conceivable that occasional spraying to control an acute pest, weed or disease problem may be considered essential at times and in some circumstances.



When we return to golf.

Course Condition

Due to the restricted maintenance it could take some time for the golf course to return to our expected condition and the conditions experienced are the result of limitations imposed by the pandemic essential maintenance safety measures and not through neglect.

Possible Issues will be

- Reduced pace of greens through higher cutting heights
- Higher cutting heights in all / most maintained areas
- Lengthier rough areas, particularly in 'out of play' areas
- Untidy bunkers
- Lack of golf course furniture such as bunker rakes, bins, ball washers, benches