

Wetherby Golf Club Ltd

COURSE MAINTENANCE POLICY

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1. Introduction

This policy document sets out details for the management of the Golf Course at Wetherby Golf Club, approved by the Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as the Board) of Wetherby Golf Club.

Changes to the policy will not be introduced without approval of the Board.

2. Policy Objectives

To ensure the Golf Course is maintained to the highest standards throughout the year in order to provide players of all ages, gender and playing abilities, a challenging and enjoyable Course.

The Rules of Golf will always be observed. Typically, the Course will not be changed during the club's active season (April – October inclusive).

Course management will be carried out as laid down by the Course Management Policy (CMP) with amendments from time to time, submitted by the golf club's General Management Group (hereinafter referred to as GMG) to the Board, which subsequently gain approval of the Board.

The principle objectives of the CMP are:

- Ensure strategies, policies and plans that develop and maintain the Course and Clubhouse surroundings are in place, are operational and are under review at least on a yearly basis.
- Ensure maximum member and visitor enjoyment during any year through continuous improvement of the course whilst respecting any financial restrictions the Board might implement from time to time.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

The implementation of the Course Management Policy is the responsibility of the GMG, aided and assisted by the Greens Working Group (GWG).

The Greens Working Group is made up of a Chairman of Greens and the General Manager of the Golf Club and up to three more selected members of the golf club, further supplemented by others (members or external) who are co-opted to the working group to undertake specific projects.

The Greens Working Group will meet once per month (or as necessary) to discuss the implementation of the CMP and to effect any working changes appropriate to ensure the policy remains effective.

The main objectives of the GWG are:

- Ensure the CMP is effectively being carried out. Notify the Board via GMG when any material change occurs or is programmed for change.
- Ensure course working and club golf calendar are working in harmony and that one or other does not present a conflict that prevents golf course working and/or golf events taking place.
- Consider monthly direct and indirect overhead expenditure reports relating to the Course.
- Consider monthly any health and safety matters affecting staff working and/or golf playability.

4. Resources

4.1. Staff

Course staffing levels are managed by the General Manager and Course Manager. Staffing levels can fluctuate from time to time but will always be sufficient to implement the CMP. Should a situation arise where this is not the case the GMG would be informed by the GWG and this would be taken up at Board level.

The core staffing level at Wetherby Golf Club consists of:

- Course Manager (L3)
- Deputy Course Manager (L3)
- Greenkeepers x4 (L2)

Apprentices, temporary staff, and outside contractors may be employed when appropriate within the constraints of the annual budget.

There is a commitment to training and education of greenkeeping staff who are all encouraged to obtain the relevant certificates in Greenkeeping to the maximum of their individual capabilities.

5. Financial

The budgets for the Course, agreed to by the Board, will consider the CMP and strive to ensure the policy is adequately financed during each period of 12 months.

6. Work Planning

6.1 Timing of Work on the Course

Invariably, ongoing essential work needs to be fitted in with the golfing calendar. It will be the aim of the General Manager, in regular discussions/meetings with the GWG, to plan this work well in advance so that the periods during which work must be done, can be agreed in advance and communicated to members.

Such work may well call for the closure of a hole or holes or necessitate the use of alternative greens to ensure the work is carried out effectively with long-term benefit to playing conditions and the safety of staff and players alike. Maintenance weeks will be communicated in advance to the membership.

[NOTHING HERE]

7. The Course

The Course was founded in 1910 being laid out on fertile land overlying calcareous bedrock. The adjacent river Wharfe is prone to overtopping its banks in times of heavy rainfall. Soil conditions at these times become waterlogged and consequently present difficult conditions for playing golf.

Soil compaction is an ongoing phenomenon, particularly in high traffic areas such as greens, tees, designated paths and fairways. A developing policy is being pursued using a variety of aeration techniques designed to relieve soil compaction with a view to promoting a more suitable growing environment.

7.1 Tees

The maintenance of teeing grounds has high priority, these are cut 13mm - 16mm (time of year dependent). Tees are subject to all normal cultural practices, i.e., mowing, aeration, nutritional plus divot repair using soil/seed mixture. Tee markers will be moved regularly to ensure even wear of the teeing area consistent with R& A recommendations. Litter deposited in tee boxes will be removed as regularly as necessary.

7.2 Fairways

The aim is to maintain fairways at a height of 14-20mm. The frequency of cutting and height is dependent on growing conditions, which, in summer, is largely dictated by the weather. Fairways will be cut with outlines to enhance aesthetic appeal and are subject to seasonal maintenance such as aeration.

Typically, the maximum distance on par 4 and par 5 holes from the RED tee distance marker to the start of the fairway will not exceed 90 yards. From the WHITE tee distance marker this will typically not exceed 165 yards.

7.3 Surrounds & Approaches

Height of cut normally 14-20mm, as a rule these areas receive the same attention as greens usually being verticut, fertilized, and aerated.

7.4 Semi-rough

The aim is to maintain semi-rough at a height of 30 – 60mm, with any first cut of the semi-rough at 30mm. The frequency of cutting is dependent upon growing conditions. Such areas are of lower maintenance requirement though they do receive aeration attention in needy places by way of Verti-Draining.

[NOTHING HERE]

7.5 Greens

The aim is to achieve a consistent true and smooth putting surface during the main playing season, on all greens including the practice putting area, acknowledging that alternative greens may need to be brought into play during periods of inclement weather.

Turf composition is variable, some greens consisting almost entirely of annual meadow grass, whereas others display populations of bent and ryegrass.

Appropriate mechanical treatments and sensible top-dressing policies should minimise the lack of uniformity on putting surfaces, particularly during the main season, including the use of an “Iron” and “Sorrel roller and brush”. A robust program of regular, ongoing aeration is in place, the long-term objective being to create optimum conditions for both healthy bacterial activity and plant vigor.

The height of cut on greens is the responsibility of the Course Manager. Factors dictating cutting height are climate, time of year and the golfing calendar. Cutting heights typically range between 3mm and 8mm. depending on the above. Nutritional requirement on greens will be based on soil analysis, past records, prevailing need, and professional intuition.

A preventative regime is followed to minimise fusarium patch disease. Systemic fungicide is applied through the growth season to build up resistance to the disease within the grass plant.

This complements the use of contact fungicide treatment used throughout the year to address any spontaneous development of the disease.

7.6 Top Dressing

These applications are made to greens, when conditions allow, following verti-cutting or aeration. Top dressing is used to correct minor surface levels, help break up thatch accumulation, augment microbial population and assist in surface drainage.

7.7 Drainage and Waterways

On the Course, the dispersal of surface water from playing areas is of paramount importance. Many drainage ditches exist, and all must be kept clear of debris and silt.

An annual program is in place to ensure drains are not neglected and function properly. The General Manager & Course Manager will, as appropriate, liaise with Leeds City Council, Yorkshire Water Authority, Environment Agency, Wetherby Town Council and adjoining landowners to ensure that dikes and ditches function to their true potential.

7.8 Preparation of Temporary Greens

Alternative greens will be used as little as possible. However, it is good insurance to have ready a set of reasonably playable surfaces to allow play to continue when main greens are being occupied for maintenance reasons or due to unsuitable ground conditions.

7.9 Bunkers

The aim is to maintain consistent sand in quality and depth in all bunkers. Sand bunkers will be regularly raked by Greenkeepers. They will be inspected frequently for water retention and kept clear. Bunker edges will be maintained in a tidy condition being attended to throughout the season. Adverse weather conditions can impact on this work.

A hand rake will be provided at each bunker, two in the large ones, and all players will be expected to rake out their pitch marks and foot marks as a matter of ordinary course etiquette before leaving the bunker. Rakes will be positioned in line with the latest R&A /Club recommendations.

7.10 Paths and Walkways

All paths and walkways should be maintained to a safe standard and weed free. The long-term objectives are to ensure all paths are resilient to flooding and with a consistent surface.

8. Course Status Evaluation and Procedures

8.1 Objective

To keep the Course open and playable with minimum constraints for as long a period as possible without compromising longer term quality.

However, when adverse conditions lead to an increased degree of potential risk to players or stress to the Course then there is no option but to place restrictions on play including closure of individual holes, the use of winter greens, trolley and/or buggy usage or complete closure. There shall be no alteration to playing conditions on competition days.

8.2 The Daily Decision Process

Decisions regarding the balance of short term versus long term interests of members will be made between the Course Manager, or in his absence a delegated subordinate of the greenkeeping staff, the Professional and the General Manager, if possible a minimum of 2 out of 3 are required..

Following an early morning assessment of prevailing conditions, details on the Course status will be posted on the golf club's website (www.wetherbygolfclub.co.uk) and Club V1 App. The course status is also obtainable by dialing 01937 580089 Option 0.

Monday – Friday, the Course will be re-inspected during the early morning to consider if a change to course status is required to be made i.e., to allow play, to restrict play, or place restrictions and to communicate the decision as above. On weekends the course will be inspected prior to the greenkeeping staff leaving for the day. They will discuss the course status with the Professional and/or General Manager who can make the decision to change the course status following further discussion with the nominated greenkeeping staff.

8.3 Course Closure

The Course may be closed, or part closed as noted under 8.2. Full or partial closure may be necessary when unusual weather conditions have occurred and damage to the Course, or potential risk to players, would result if play were to be permitted. Such conditions would exist if greens were waterlogged, the Course was flooded, during severe frost, ice snow or fog, or when there is a risk of lightning.

During winter months (November to March) a decision to close the Course or the use of the temporary greens will follow the procedure in 8.2.

During summer months (April to October) a decision to close the Course may be rescinded one hour after the conditions which closed it have ceased and after an inspection by the person/people responsible for the original decision.

In support of the above requirement, and as part of the normal early morning inspection, the Course Manager shall decide whether all or some of the Course or greens are unfit to allow play, but, if closure is considered necessary solely to protect the main greens, temporary greens shall be brought into play as the preferred alternative to closure. In the event of full or part closure the Course Manager, or in his absence a delegated subordinate, will update the golf club's website (www.wetherbygolfclub.co.uk) and Club V1 App and telephone message on the golf club's telephone system.

8.4 Use of Temporary Greens

It is the duty of the Course Manager or in his absence the delegated duty-greenkeeper to decide on a day-to-day basis the need for temporary greens to be brought into use. If temporary greens are brought into use, this decision may, exceptionally, be altered during the day if significant changes in course conditions allow.

The decision to move from temporary greens will only be made if an authorised member of the greenkeeping staff has agreed that Course conditions have changed to such an extent that the main greens can be brought into play. If a member of the greenkeeping staff cannot be contacted, then the temporary greens will remain in play for the day.

8.5 Trolley & Buggy Restrictions

In certain adverse conditions it may be necessary in order to protect the Course or in the interests of safety for the Course Manager to implement a ban on buggy and trolley use or to allow only the continued use of trolleys. This will be communicated via the golf club website (www.wetherbygolfclub.co.uk), Club V1 App and telephone message on the golf club's telephone system. Full details of the Club's Buggy Policy are available from the General Manager.

8.6 Course Opening Times

To allow the greenkeeping staff sufficient time to prepare the course and work in a safe environment, the Course will normally be open for play as follows:

Summer Hours

1st April to 30th September, from 06.45am

Winter Hours

1st October to 30th November, from 07.30am

1st December to 31st January from 08.00am

1st February to 31st March 07.30am

9. Winter Golf

Winter golf is defined as the period when preferred lies are in operation. The YUGC defines the Winter Period as lying between 1st October and 31st March. The use of preferred lies outside these dates during competition rounds must be agreed with the YUGC. Tee and fairways mats may be in use for all/some of the winter months.

10. Greenkeeping Staff & Members

10.1 Work on the Course

Players are to ensure that it is appropriate for them to play without endangering the greenkeeping staff and should not play to a green if work is in progress on that green. At all times players are asked to give priority to greenkeeping staff. A code of practice has been established to cover the subject and published on the golf club's website (www.wetherbygolfclub.co.uk).

Greenkeeping staff will, when working on a green, stand aside when appropriate and signal when they are ready for a ball to be played to that green.

Greenkeeping staff are to comply with the Greenkeeper's Code of Practice as laid out by BIGGA.

10.2 Communication

The need for two-way communication is paramount. The Course Manager and General Manager will work closely on the golf calendar and timing of course maintenance work.

In consideration of member patience and understanding regarding work on the golf course information will be imparted by various ways and means, including but not restricted to the:

- Golf club's website (www.wetherbygolfclub.co.uk)
- Club V1 App Newsletter
- How Did I Do Club News
- Golf club's telephone message service (01937 580089 Option 0)
- Appropriate notices at the Professional shop
- Messages on notice boards
- Periodic presentations to members

10.3 Complaints

Any complaint should be made to the General Manager and not directly to the Course Manager or any member of the greenkeeping staff.

The General Manager will investigate the complaint with the Course Manager and engage the complainant accordingly.

11. Irrigation

The overall policy is to use water sparingly to encourage deeper rooting grasses and in sufficient quantities to prevent plant stress.

During certain periods water may need to be applied by hand through hose pipes to localised areas of drying to avert loss of sward integrity.

Water may also be needed to wash in fertiliser and other applications and therefore a guaranteed source is essential for the maintenance of the course.

All water for Course irrigation and treatments is sourced from a borehole situated on the Club's land and taken within the usage parameters of the Club's water abstraction licence.

12. Ecology

It is an important part of the course management activity to preserve the natural habitat of birds, animals, and flora.

A developing Conservation/Ecological Management Policy will embrace all areas.

[NOTHING HERE]

13. Environment

As well as providing quality facilities for the golfing pleasure of its members and visitors. Wetherby Golf Club is committed to respecting the Course environment as an integrated entity by way of:

- An ongoing, properly structured ecological management plan.
- An Estates Management plan.
- Employing turfgrass management techniques based on sound practice and IPM (integrated pest management).
- Careful and responsible use of fertilisers, chemicals and irrigation water.
- Development of rough areas to maximise habitat potential for flora, fauna and the golfing experience.
- Conserving the indigenous landscape character as far as possible.
- Observance of correct Duty of Care responsibilities -disposal of waste: oils, filters, pesticide containers, etc.
- Open communication with the Club membership to expand environmental awareness.
- Maintaining a standard of staff education and training.
- Collaboration with outside bodies or individuals where appropriate.
- Compliance with any legislative regulation relevant to our Golf Course.

14. Professional Advice

The golf club may seek opinions and audits from qualified outside specialists, when appropriate, for the ultimate improvement of the Golf Course and when skills required are outside of the golf club's capabilities.

The Course Manager is also authorised to obtain analyses or seek advice on issues or abnormalities pertaining to the Golf Course.

[NOTHING HERE]