



Golf Course Policy Document

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this course policy document is to set out the policy for the management of the golf course at Ladybank to promote good communication. It has been approved by the Management Committee and made freely available to members.

Any further changes to the policy will require endorsement of Management Committees. The Greens Committee will conduct an annual review of the CPD and make appropriate suggestions for updates where thought necessary, for final adoption by the Management Committee. The document is there to ensure continuity for future Committee reference.

2 OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to maintain the golf course and grounds of Ladybank to a standard expected from one of the premier private member's clubs in the area. The continued intention is to present a fair test to golfers of all abilities, on a course that is aesthetically attractive, ecologically sensitive, and continues to improve in line with authorised budgets. The Course Manager is responsible for implementing this policy and will work within the policy guidelines laid down in this document. This will include responsibility for effective organisation of all resources on a daily basis together with responsibility of daily management of all staff, equipment and materials and recommendations with regard to personnel educational training. In carrying out these duties the Course Manager will ensure all tasks are undertaken in compliance with the clubs H&S policy.

3 COURSE HISTORY

Ladybank Golf Club was established in 1879. The architect of the original 6-hole course, Old Tom Morris, played in the Autumn Meeting that year as a 'stranger' and won despite his handicap of +3 strokes. In 1910 a circular 9 holes was formed with the holes varying in length from 330 to 400 yards with 'two short sporting' holes at the fourth and seventh. A further 9 holes were laid down in 1958 and incorporated within the existing course in 1961 to form an 18 hole course.

A new Clubhouse was built in 1971 with the existing building becoming the present-day Proshop. The year 1978 was a landmark year for Ladybank with nomination as a venue for Open Championship Final Qualifying. The course of today is still a severe examination of the professional's course management skills. For lesser mortals this is a challenge to relish with accuracy off the tee more important than length.

During the past twenty five years a galaxy of stars have graced the turf including, Darren Clarke, Justin Leonard, Bernard Langer, Sam Torrance, Ian Woosnam and the late Payne Stewart. The Club proudly displays pictures of two honorary members, Jack Nicklaus and Seve Ballesteros, playing in an exhibition match over the course in 1983.

The present Professional record holder is Paul Affleck having scored a 65, on the altered course, to equal the score set by Mark Brooks in 1995. Local heroes include George Will, a Ryder Cup player, and Dale Reid, O.B.E., a leading lady golfer and now forever remembered as Captain of the victorious European Solheim Cup team at Loch Lomond in 2000.

Over the years Ladybank played host to the final qualifying for The Open Championship 1978, 1984, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 & 2010 when The Open was held at St Andrews and continues to attract some big events. The course continues to rank among to the top courses in Scotland and recently achieved a rating of 2nd in the UK for courses under £100.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee is responsible for the management of Ladybank Golf Club in all its aspects. In consultation with the Greens Committee it sets the policy for the course, expenditure for the course and long term capital expenditure plans.

The Greens Committee is responsible for the management of the golf course and is chaired by the Greens Convenor. The Committee will consist of Greens Convenor, Gents and Ladies Captains, Vice-Captain, Professional, Course Manager and Head Greenkeeper. They will meet on a monthly basis during the playing season producing a report and discussing work not forming part of the routine programme.

The Greenstaff is headed by the Course Manager who reports directly to the General Manager and Greens Convenor. The Course Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy in all aspects- planning of maintenance schedules in relation to the fixture lists; liaising with the General Manager on any problem areas; machinery maintenance; planning and long term budgeting; schedules and records; personnel education; training; discipline; health & safety; storage; ecology.

The General Manager should establish management controls to ensure that the policies laid down by the Greens Committee are implemented, and that the in-year course budget and capital expenditure are monitored and approved by the Greens, Finance and General Committee. The General Manager co-ordinates the annual fixture list in conjunction with Match & Handicap and will give due consideration to work on the course.

5 RESOURCES

The optimum staffing levels necessary to achieve the management of the course as defined in this document have been agreed as follows;

- Course Manager
- Head Greenkeeper
- Deputy Head Greenkeeper/Mechanic
- 3 fully qualified assistants
- 1 Apprentice

6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Our main objective is to maintain Ladybank Golf Course to as high a standard possible and continue to be recognised as one of the premier golfing venues in Scotland. It should be maintained for the enjoyment of members, guest and visitors alike and create a fair test for any standard of golfer. We will strive to continually improve the course, retaining and enhancing our unique heathland characteristics where possible. We will offer the best golf facilities we can provide and continually strive to effectively communicate with the membership.

7 TIMING OF WORK ON THE COURSE

It is the responsibility of the Course Manager to time all operations so that minimum inconvenience is caused to members and other players. Our course maintenance strategy is designed to cause the least amount of player interference and golf course inconsistencies as possible. The route we choose is to ensure we stay ahead of the majority of play which results in more enjoyment for the golfer and less disruption for the Greenstaff.

Any work not part of the weekly maintenance routine will be carried out taking into account weather and fixtures. Any mid-season Top Dressing or Solid Tining operations will be carefully planned to ensure minimal disruption and quick recovery. Members are encouraged to read the Head Greenkeepers Blog which can be found on the club website and sent out via email where notification of these practices are advised when possible.

8 THE GOLF COURSE

Ladybank Golf Club is a traditional heathland course and the club is committed to a sustainable approach to maintaining the course, heather and associated environmental features and wildlife both on the course and its immediate surroundings.

The course is built on a natural sand & gravel base the result of glacial deposits which provides a unique environment for an inland course. The soils are acidic sandy/loam, naturally low in plant nutrients and are perfect for producing a traditional heathland golf course with swathes of heather, pine trees and fine grasses. Sustainable golf requires the establishment of a course made up of finer grasses, predominantly fescues and bents, which allows the husbandry of the course to be based upon minimal use of water, fertilisers, pesticides and fungicides and still maintain an excellent playing surface for fairways, tees and greens.

One of the biggest assets on the course is our population of Heather (*Calluna Vulgaris*). Heather thrives in our environment, however there are various factors that can lead to its deterioration. Wear and tear has a detrimental effect on the plant which is evident in some areas after years of high traffic. Heather beetle is a major issue as there is no cultural practice to eradicate it. As there is also no chemical treatment if we were to have another attack it's simply a waiting game to see what regenerates. The most severe damage is caused by any sort of traffic during frost which can wipe any new soft growth on the plant.

It is vitally important to maintain the plant to an acceptable height otherwise it becomes woody and unmanageable. This is done by topping the heather every 2-3 years which also distributes the seeds to encourage fresh new growth to establish.

8.1 AERATION

Aeration is an essential part of course management for all areas of play, with specific attention to Greens, Tees, Walkways and high traffic routes. A majority of the aeration work is carried out during the autumn/winter period, however we have a pencil tine programme for greens throughout the season to counteract any unnecessary surface compaction caused by machinery and general play. This is carefully timed to cause as little disruption as possible to surfaces and is immediately followed by our greens roller for quick recovery.



8.2 GREENS

Throughout the golfing season it is our aim to create true, smooth and firm surfaces with a dense, even sward of fine leaved grasses that will receive a well struck shot from a closely mown area. The main greens will be in play when suitable, and temporary greens utilised when main greens are deemed unfit for play. There should be consistency between all greens in terms of pace and firmness.

The sward composition is a Bentgrass (*Agrostis*) dominant one, underlying Fescue (*Festuca*) and underlying Annual meadow grass (*Poa Annua*). Our long term aim is to gradually increase the population of Fescue throughout the sward and reduce the *Poa*. This is a possibility now that we have reduced our organic matter to our target levels and will be maintained through a sustainable nutritional programme and correct overseeding timings.

The height of cut on greens is the responsibility of the Course Manager and depends on his reading of future weather conditions, upcoming competitions, soil conditions etc. Greens are under the most stress of all the surfaces and have a certain tolerance

level, both physical and biological and to maintain our current sward the height of cut shall be no lower than 3.5mm in the summer, 5.5mm in winter. Mowing below this height can cause unnecessary plant stress and can result in more encroachment of *Poa* which is the opposite of what we are trying to achieve.

All greens will be cut using a ride-on triple in conjunction with the greens roller to keep within our targets for speed, trueness and smoothness. Frequency of cut is determined by weather conditions, however during the playing season we aim to have greens cut & rolled daily providing conditions allow.

Mowing direction is alternated daily to avoid unnecessary wear and for aesthetics. Grooming or Verti-cutting will be performed when required (usually weekly) but more regularly around spring when *Poa* seed heads are visible. We will also focus on brushing during this period where growth can be very inconsistent. Brushing can stand up the lateral growth prior to mowing and reduce surface friction.

Green speed is closely monitored by the Greenstaff using a stimpmeter to ensure we are within our desired routine targets of between 8ft 6" – 9ft 6".



8.3 TEES

The objective is to provide a firm, level playing surface with a sward capable of withstanding constant wear and providing quick recovery.

Mowing frequency will be determined by conditions but tees will be mown at 8mm all year round with 2-3 cuts per week during the playing season using a ride on triple mower.

Tee markers will be moved on a daily basis to distribute wear, encourage recovery and to utilise as much of the playing surface as possible.

Divot repairs and seeding will be undertaken 2-3 times per week with divot boxes filled and tee caddies emptied.

There will be an annual aeration, top dressing and fertilisation programme in place with most work being carried out in the autumn/winter period.

It will be our policy to use as many grass tees as possible outwith the playing season, and this is at the Course Manager's discretion. We are very restricted, on a number of tees, of utilising the limited availability of an appropriate surface. The resting of main tees is not only to save the tee surface from wear during a period of zero recovery, but to also redirect the traffic routes of these prior to the start of the new season.

8.4 GREENS APPROACHES AND COLLARS

The greens approach should be maintained to provide a smooth transition from fairway to green. This will include a closely mown collar, and the green surround will be mown at a height which retains an attractive presentation without risking scalping or encouraging drought or wear stress.

Mowing frequency will be determined by conditions but approaches will be mown at 8mm all year round with 2-3 cuts per week during the playing season using a ride on triple mower.

There will be an annual aeration, top dressing and fertilisation programme in place with most work being carried out in the autumn/winter period.

Collars shall be mown 2-3 times per week using a handmower to reduce wear around the immediate perimeter of greens and these will be mown at a lower height of 6mm and have a similar sward composition as greens.

8.5 FAIRWAYS

We aim to produce firm, fast running fairways which are consistent and have a desirable blend of fine grasses capable of withstanding constant wear from play and from machinery. These surfaces will be mown 2-3 times per week during the playing season at a height of 13mm which will be raised if necessary for any winter mowing.

Fairways will be aerated in the autumn with either a slit tine or a verti drain to relieve any compaction build up.

Fertiliser input will be kept to a minimum to produce the traditional heathland style of golf, and to encourage the finer grasses to dominate.

Due to the nature of our dry, fine grass dominant fairways some divots often fail to recover and this isn't helped by birds pecking repaired divots out. Divot filling is undertaken when there is staff availability but typically working through concentrated landing areas a couple of afternoons after course set up is complete.

Fairways will be protected during the winter period by the use of fairway mats. This is traditionally between December and March when there is little or no recovery.

8.6 SEMI ROUGH & ROUGH

The semi rough shall be mown at a height of approximately 60mm with a rotary mower and this will be done 1-2 times per week depending on growing conditions. Some areas which are thicker or grow faster will require some extra mowing. In general we will have 2 widths of our semi rough machine (12ft) around each hole, with some areas wider where necessary.

The rough shall be mown at a height of approximately 90mm with a rotary mower and this will be done 1-2 times per week depending on growing conditions. Some areas which are thicker or grow faster will require some extra mowing. In general we will have 2 widths of our rough machine (12ft) around each hole, with some areas wider where necessary.

Semi roughs and roughs will be treated with some selective weedkiller when required and this will be done by spot treating specific areas.

8.7 NATURAL ROUGHS

Our natural roughs are what give us our incredible definition and what shapes the holes, but it's important to ensure a ball is findable within them. These areas are very much the focus since the purchase of the Super 500 machine which cuts and collects the long grass. A programme will be in place to manage these roughs from autumn where there will be varied aggression to certain areas that require it. The idea behind it is that the machine removes the dead grass which would ultimately become a natural food source during decomposition, and by doing this it will encourage a thinner and wisper rough.



8.8 BUNKERS

The bunkers should be well presented and defined with consistency between them presenting a fair hazard. They should drain freely and be raked and shaped to keep balls away from the edge.

The type of sand will be determined by various considerations in mind with regards to playability, colour, availability, and meeting the criteria of specifications advised by STRI & ETL.

Bunkers should be checked daily to rake any footprints or rabbit scrapings and should receive a full rake 2-3 times per week during the playing season.

Depth of sand should be regularly monitored by the Course Manager to ensure optimum levels are maintained and topped up where necessary.

A rake to be provided for each bunker with 2 in larger ones and players are expected to smooth out any footprints made during play.

8.9 FERTILISATION

It is the Course Manager's responsibility to ensure optimum nutrient levels are maintained. Through our sustainable approach we aim to use as little fertiliser as possible without having a negative impact and this will encourage the desirable grasses to dominate our surfaces.

Regular soil testing will take place which will provide data and show any nutrient deficiencies which can be corrected.

8.10 TOP DRESSING

Top dressing is an operation where sand is broadcast over the surface to dilute organic matter and to level out any imperfections caused by footprints, pitchmarks, disease scarring or machinery. It is an essential part of course maintenance and helps us achieve true, smooth and firm and free draining surfaces.

Our Top Dressing policy is designed to cause as little disruption to the golfer as possible. Throughout the years we have managed to lower our organic matter levels to our desired targets and now it is a case of maintaining these levels through the dilution method.

Our aim to apply 100-120 tonnes of kiln dried sand to greens per year. This should be done through a programme of very light dressings when conditions are suitable.

During the spring the frequency will be fortnightly to prepare surfaces for the coming season, then will change to monthly throughout the summer.

During autumn maintenance there will be a heavier application of top dressing in conjunction with aeration to ensure the material goes directly into the soil.

There will be a top dressing programme in place for both tees and approaches which will consist of a spring and autumn application in conjunction with aeration.



8.11 PRACTICE GROUNDS

The club has a dedicated practice area as well as a warm up area which are both maintained on a regular basis.

The warm up area is cut 1-2 times per week during the playing season with a fairway mower at a height of 13mm.

The practice area is cut 1-2 times per week during the playing season with a fairway mower at a height of 15mm.

Within the practice area there is a course for the juniors consisting of 5 short holes, greens and bunkers. Greens are mown 1-2 times per week at a height of 8mm in conjunction with tee & approach maintenance.

8.12 TREE AND SHRUB MANAGEMENT

Trees provide essential definition to the course and require ongoing management to ensure the character of the course is maintained and enhanced long term.

Trees which affect the course detrimentally in any way, particularly when overhanging teeing grounds or those which have a negative effect on playing surfaces must be managed to ensure adequate sunlight, moisture and air circulation is available to the affected area.

Almost every year certain trees may start to have a negative impact on the playability of the course due to growth upwards, outwards or even the tree roots. Certain specific trees will need to be managed annually as a result. This may be done by ringing branches, removing selected branches or felling completely as required. This will normally be done as part of the winter maintenance programme at the Club.

It is the clubs intention to agree a Tree Management Plan that when completed will become an attachment to this document. When finalising this plan we are constantly monitoring the tree management of the course with expert advice.

8.13 COURSE FITTINGS, FURNITURE AND ACCESSORIES

The course furniture should be maintained to a high standard, with regular checks to pins, flags, markers, signage, rakes, ball washers, bins, benches etc to inspect for any damage which should be repaired/replaced accordingly.

Bins should be emptied 2-3 times per week and ball washers checked & filled.

At the end of the playing season the greenstaff will remove tee markers, signage and various other furniture which can then be re painted or freshened up for the new season. This will be returned to the course prior to the Captain vs Vice-Captain match which indicates the start of the playing season.

9 CLOSING THE COURSE, TEMPORARY GREENS AND WINTER PLAY

9.1 DELAYED STARTS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of course closure due to inclement weather e.g. fog, frost, rain etc. The following will apply:-

- If the golf course opens at 10.00 am for example
- Any player with a tee time prior to 10.00 am will lose their tee time.
- The first tee off time on the course will be 10.00 am followed by 10.08 am, and so on.
- It is not possible to re-book a time for that day's play until the golf course has opened for play.
- Priority for available tee times (after the course opens) will be given to players on the tee sheet, in time order, who missed their times due to the closure of the course.
- Players may commence play from the 10th tee once the course has opened (only if the Greenstaff allows). Priority will be given to players on the tee sheet, in time order, who missed their times due to the closure of the course. Pro shop staff will operate a 10th tee starting sheet for that day where possible.
- Course condition is available on the club website under course status or via the course report line 01337 830814 (option 4) which give regular updates for play on the course that day.
- Regular updates are also available via the Pro Shop if you have already arrived at the course that day.

9.2 TEMPORARY GREENS AND TEMPORARY TEES

Temporary greens may be used during inclement weather where main greens are deemed unsuitable for play. This will be the responsibility of the Course Manager or duty staff and relevant information posted on the club website and the course report line. The temporary greens may also be used when staff are performing maintenance to the main green, surrounds or bunkers in the element of safety. These greens are typically situated within the approach and maintained all year round, however they will still receive some extra fertiliser, top dressing and aeration so they are suitable for play when necessary.

Temporary tees are required during the winter to give the main tees a chance to repair ready for the playing season. There is very little growth during this period which means any divots would not repair. Not only the tee surfaces need some rest, but traffic routes used all season need to be diverted to allow for recovery. Temporary tees will be used wherever possible and these will be mown down to an appropriate height for play. Mats will be utilised on par 3 tees which will be moved position every 2 days. Tee markers will be moved back to main tees on a Friday until Monday morning which will create variety and spread excess wear.

9.3 FOG, LIGHTNING & WIND

It is our responsibility to ensure the safety of our staff and golfers at all times, which is why the following restrictions are a necessity.

Thick fog could demand a temporary closure of the course until safe conditions prevail which is for the protection of both the golfers and Greenstaff. The club professional will monitor conditions which are determined by visibility from the 1st tee.

An electrical storm would also demand suspension of play and this would be indicated by an air horn sounded by pro shop staff.

Due to the location of our site and large populations of mature trees, it may be necessary to close the course during periods of high winds. This will be via the course report and if this action is taken during play then an air horn would sound.

9.4 FROST POLICY

The frost policy is defined in attachment 1 at the back of this document.

10 GREENSTAFF, MEMBERS & VISITORS

10.1 CONDUCT

Greenstaff shall be polite and pleasant to all members and visitors and should receive the same in return.

Staff should all wear recognisable uniform as part of the approach to good course presentation and for ease of identification by members and visitors.

10.2 WORK ON THE COURSE

The Greenstaff aim to be vigilant so they do not delay play unreasonably, however work has always to be carried out efficiently, this being vital at the start of the day when staff priority is to stay ahead of golfers.

All players are therefore asked to have consideration to Greenstaff by not interfering with their work unreasonably, particularly at the start of the day and to understand it is their best interest to do so.

Players are to ensure that it is appropriate for them to play without endangering the Greenstaff who will move aside wherever possible and signal to allow play.

The Greenstaff have priority on the course until the first booked tee time on the club system, anyone playing prior to this must acknowledge staff are very busy.

10.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Course Manager is responsible for ensuring that the statutory requirements of the Health and Safety act are complied with.

All staff must be trained appropriately on machinery and be up to date with the staff training manual, risk assessments and safe working practices.

10.4 COMPLAINTS

Members or visitors may not complain about the conduct of a member of staff nor about the condition of the course to any member of the Greenstaff. Any complaint should be made to the General Manager or Greens Convenor who will investigate the matter together with the Course Manager. If they cannot deal with it themselves, the matter will be referred to the Committee.

11 IRRIGATION WATER SUPPLY AND SYSTEM

The overall policy is to use as little water as possible, albeit not to the detriment of the grass sward. The main purpose of the system is to ensure optimum moisture levels are retained during periods of low rainfall or warm temperatures.

The irrigation shall also be utilised to wash in fertiliser or top dressings into the profile.

Our system is fed via a borehole with a submersible pump which feeds the storage tank. We have an extraction licence issued from SEPA which allows us to extract sufficient volume per season, it is the Course Managers responsibility to ensure accurate usage records are kept to submit to SEPA at the end of the year.

The irrigation system for the course is the responsibility of the Course Manager and it is advised that at least 2 members of staff are effectively trained to operate the controller.



12 FINANCIAL CONTROL

In October each year the Course Manager, in consultation with the General Manager, will produce a draft course expenditure budget to include all proposed consumable expenditure for the following financial year. This will include a list of capital expenditure that is proposed for lease/purchase and will take into consideration performance and notes on any problems which have shown up. This will lead to a definitive budget for the next financial year. Once approved, they should be discussed with the Finance Convenor and they will then be presented to Greens Committee and Finance Committee before final presentation and approval by the General Committee.

The greens expenditure budget will be closely monitored on a monthly basis where an accurate forecast of spending can be determined.

A periodic review of actual expenditure, compared to budget will be made by the Finance Convenor and the Course Manager may be asked to explain any significant differences.

13 PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

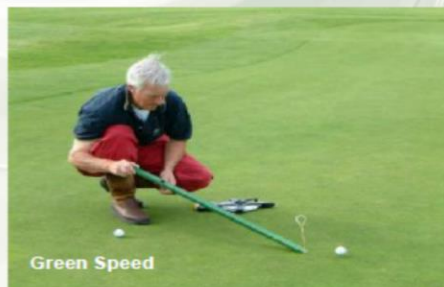
Notwithstanding the confidence that the Committee has in the technical knowledge and capabilities of the Course Manager and his staff, it is our policy to seek independent opinions from professional turfgrass agronomists. This gives an accurate record of progress made throughout the course as well as setting realistic targets.

The Course Manager is also authorised to seek outside professional assistance for analysis of samples such as organic matter, sand and soil.

We have a programme in place with the STRI which includes 2 annual visits where various tests are undertaken and full results included in a detailed report.



STRI Programme - Measurement Tools



14 STAFF TRAINING

All staff are to be trained to or working towards SVQII, NC or higher, and the club will support development to ensure we produce employees of a high standard. All staff are encouraged to take part in various forms of Continued Professional Development, and progress monitored and objectives set during end of season appraisals.

There will be regular staff in house training workshops focusing on specific topics relevant to the course and its maintenance.

All full time members of staff will receive BIGGA membership.

15 COMMUNICATION

We are committed to providing comprehensive details of work programmes and regular course updates which can be viewed on the notice board in the clubhouse. The Head Greenkeeper produces a blog which gives regular updates of ongoing course maintenance and an insight into how the staff prepare the course. This can be viewed on the notice board and an archive is also be available via the members area of the clubs website.

(www.ladybankgolf.co.uk)

Greenstaff have a winter hotline (01334 830814-option 4) which is updated daily to provide details on course condition and any restrictions in place. Updates are also available on the clubs website all year round.

16 THE REVIEW PROCESS

This Course Policy Document will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Greens Committee and approved by the General Committee before December of each year.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Aeration**- Penetration of the surface with a tine to allow air into the root structure and soil profile.
- **Top Dressing**- Applying sand over the surface to be worked into the canopy, diluting organic matter and levelling out any surface inconsistencies
- **Solid Tining**- A form of aeration which focuses on the top 3-4" of the profile to relieve surface tension.
- **Verti Draining**- Another form of aeration which focuses on the deeper part of the profile. This can aerate to a depth of 10" relieving deep compaction, driving excess moisture down and assisting with root development.
- **Scarifying** – An aggressive mowing technique using vertical blades to chop into the canopy and rip out thatch, moss and lateral growth.
- **Verti Cutting** – A less aggressive form of scarifying which chops into the lateral growth and stands the plant up prior to mowing.
- **Overseeding** – Spreading grass seed across an existing surface to be pushed into the canopy and thicken up a sward. This can also be done in conjunction with aeration which creates a hole for the seed.

- **Hollow Coring** – A combination of de-compaction and thatch removal using the same technique as solid tining but this method removes a core from the surface which can then be filled with fresh material. This is required where a lot of thatch is present and can't be diluted effectively.
- **Organic Matter** – Commonly known as thatch this is partially decomposed matter builds up below the surface naturally with mowing and by natural organisms in the soil. Keeping it under control is essential to ensure surfaces don't hold onto too much moisture and become soft and spongy.

Attachment 1 -WINTER FROST POLICY



Green Committee is aware that the 'frost policy' - course closure for frost and damage caused by play during frosty conditions – whilst unpopular with a small minority of Members is perhaps not well understood by the majority of the membership. In order to ensure that all Members are fully informed regarding this important policy, please find below:

Winter course conditions - course closures for frost

Playing golf in frosty conditions can cause irreparable damage to the playing surfaces at Ladybank. The Course Manager or his agreed deputy is responsible for determining whether the course is playable because of frost or not. Every effort will be made to open the course (front or back nine) as soon as possible. The Course Manager shall keep the Pro Shop team informed of the current conditions on a regular basis and update the Winter Course Report on 01337 830814 (option 4)

Damage caused by play during frosty conditions falls into two main categories

a) *White frost.*



When frozen, plant tissues are easily bruised by players' feet. Following a thaw, it is often possible to see brown footprints for several weeks, particularly around hole positions where the grass has been significantly damaged. The greater the amount of play in white frost, then obviously the greater extent of the damage. Affected areas remain thin for long periods, including well into late spring until growth becomes stronger. This affects the trueness of the putting surface but more importantly allows poorer, weaker grasses to invade the sward and makes the playing surfaces more susceptible to disease. This applies to fairways, tees and heather (see below).

b) *Long term damage is caused when play takes place after a sudden thaw.*

In these conditions the top 13mm to 20mm or so becomes soft, while the underlying soil remains frozen. Root damage occurs from the shearing actions as players' feet move the soft, unfrozen surface across the frozen subsurface. This disrupts playing surfaces and causes damage that may not recover until well into the middle of summer.

c) *Heathland characteristics and heather.*

Heathland finer grasses (fescue/bent) are particularly prone to damage as described in a) above. The end result of this damage is meadow grass invasion, resulting in a parkland style course. When frozen, heather is irreparably damaged by player's feet or caddy car wheels. Heather regeneration is inefficient, expensive and unnecessary.



At Ladybank Golf Club our frost policy is to close the course when conditions are as described in a) and b) above. We will open the course on temporary greens when the ground is frozen solid but the grass plant itself is not frozen, but as in b), we will close as the frost starts to thaw. As stated earlier, every effort will be made to open the course (front or back nine) as soon as possible, or going to a two tee start, encouraging member/visitor play in the winter months when possible.

It is our aim to manage the course sustainably and present the course in as good condition as possible at optimum expense. The frost policy is consistent with this aim, the long term advice of our agronomists and also industry best practise for fine grasses. For this reason it is consistently practised elsewhere (St Andrews Links Trust for example) but clearly not universally – the principles tend not to apply to courses that are not fine grass dominant or do not have the location of Ladybank.

The Green Committee undertakes a formal review of the Frost Policy each winter, it being noted that much of what is included can be found in Frost Policies across the country and this was unanimously approved by General Committee going forward.

Greens Committee
December 2020