



CLUB SUPPORT COURSE REPORT

PRESENTED TO SINGLETON GOLF CLUB

22ND FEBRUARY 2024

PREPARED BY PHIL BEAL



GOLF NSW CLUB SUPPORT PARTNERS



PROJECT OVERVIEW

SINGLETON GOLF CLUB
COURSE REPORT
THURSDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 2024

IN ATTENDANCE Steve Kellner – Superintendent Singleton Golf Club
Nathan Bagnell – Vice Captain Singleton Golf Club
Phil Beal – Golf NSW

INTRODUCTION The visit to Singleton Golf Club was to assess the current condition of the greens and suggest ways to improve the surfaces in the future.

OBSERVATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

Steve Kellner

- In my experience the role of a good superintendent is vital for a good green and ultimately a good golf course. They need time for observation and planning.
- The role of a superintendent is twofold. First, he/she must understand the agronomy in relation to golf courses. That is the experience of how the grass grows and second how products are applied.
- A good superintendent will have not only have the theory in these two areas they will also understand the climate, soil and other factors that makes the surfaces perform. The challenge is not only to grow healthy turf but also to produce consistent playing surfaces.
- Steve has the knowledge and will improve all the surfaces with the backing of the club management and board.
- Steve probably needs more time on the greens, with the broadacre mowing to be completed by volunteers.
- Later in the report I will talk through applications, sprayers and other equipment required to help the club maintain the greens to a better standard.

Greens

- In my opinion, the greens are the number one priority on golf courses as this is where the final shot on the hole is played and the ball needs to roll across the surface without deviation. The quality of the greens will have the most impact on the playability of the course. In my experience, the golf player will be most critical of the quality of the greens in assessing the standard of the golf course. For this reason, in my experience, superintendents will prioritise the maintenance of the greens over all other areas. The processes required to produce a good surface requires adequate staff and diligence to all programs whether it be mowing, top dressing, spraying and aeration techniques.
- It is interesting when assessing greens that all the focus is on the greens with troubled areas. When looking at the greens at Singleton the surfaces have more than 80% good grass cover and I understand all greens were in good condition in the spring. The damage on the greens will be hard to recover until the weather cools down and the club can get a full renovation completed using hollow tines and applying sand top dressing.
- Soil samples should be taken before the renovation and any nutrient imbalance in the soil can be adjusted with soil amending products.

- The soil tests will probably show the need to amend the soils with calcium and magnesium. The club need to pay special attention to the Ph of the soil as the calcium source will be dictated by the acidity or alkalinity of the soil. If the soil Ph is below 6.5 it is safe to use Dolomite, I say this as the calcium source of Dolomite is lime which will raise the Ph in the soil. If the Ph rises too much, then nutrients in the soil will become unavailable. Dolomite has a calcium percentage of 38% and has a magnesium content. If the Ph is above 6.5 the club are advised to use Gypsum which has a calcium percentage of around 20%. The takeaway from this is that the club would like to use Dolomite as you get more from your investment in the product. There are multiple products on the market, and it would be advised for the club to use a granulated product that can be spread easily, some products are very fine and are difficult to apply.
- There are many good plugging techniques to remove bare areas. The best tactic is to use good grass from the back of the greens and plug the areas through other areas of the surface. This means that once the areas have been plugged there is only one larger area at the back of the green to seed and recover. Plugging is an arduous job but needs to be completed properly to ensure the surface is as even as possible.
- The club could also consider using the turf on the current putting green to patch up larger areas on the course as I believe the current putting green will be replaced soon.



The plugging on this green could be completed using the good grass below the line at the front of the green and the large area then turfed out using the putting green.



Smaller areas on greens could be plugged from the back of the green which would be a better result than now.

Below are critical operations to produce healthy green surfaces.

Mowing

The grass on greens is mowed with a cylinder mower which is used only to mow greens. To the untrained, cutting grass is a basic process. However, that is not the case as mowing greens is a specialist skill because it requires knowledge of the mowing machinery, health and safety training and the ability to monitor and report turf issues. Only the trained members of staff will be programmed to cut the greens. Regardless of other practices, proper mowing is required for good putting greens because the grass is continually growing, and the surface needs to be consistent. Proper mowing includes daily mowing, changing the mowing directions, mowing at the correct height, precise adjustment of mowers, daily cleaning and sharpening of mowers, training of mower operators and visual inspection of results. Mowing is the single most important practice in greens maintenance.

Cultivation Practices

In addition to mowing, there are other practices that must be performed on the grass to maintain it. I refer to these as “cultivation practices”. Cultivation practices include spiking, coring, brushing, verticutting (cutting the rhizomes or horizontal growth of the grass) and topdressing. These practices are necessary to aerate the soil and maintain healthy greens. Brushing, verticutting and topdressing reduce graininess and thatch accumulation and improve the uniformity, trueness, and speed of greens and ultimately improve the putting surface. Experience is required in determining how often to perform these operations, how

severely to verticut, how much topdressing to apply and what materials to use for topdressing. These operations should be performed often enough to maintain the health of the plant but avoid too much disruption to the putting quality of greens.

Fertilising

Fertilisation practices affect growth rate, density, colour, drought tolerance, disease activity and putting quality of golf greens. Nutrients should be available to the grass in amounts needed to maintain growth and colour without increasing susceptibility to drought and disease and without increasing grain and thatch. Realistically, the superintendent should maintain adequate levels of phosphorous, potassium and minor nutrients in the soils and provide nitrogen and iron as the grass requires.

Soil testing and plant tissue analysis helps the superintendent monitor the amount and availability of phosphorus, potassium, and minor nutrients. However, visual observations of colour and density and clipping removal are essential for estimating nitrogen needs. Overuse of nitrogen will encourage disease at different times of the year.

Pest and Disease Control

Pest and disease control is an important aspect of maintaining a healthy golf course. If pests and disease are persistent on the greens, they can produce bare areas and cause the golf ball to deviate when the golfer hits their putt. Integrated pest management programs are implemented to control pests and diseases in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner. The programs will be a combination of cultivational, biological, and chemical control methods to manage pests and diseases. Chemicals can be used as a last resort but are often used as a preventative measure.

However, even where recommended and cultivating practices are routinely followed, problems may occur when environmental conditions are favourable for insect, disease or weed development.

For these reasons, preventive applications of pesticides are recommended on golf courses when environmental conditions favour pest development. For example, fungicides should be applied under humid conditions in the spring through to autumn for pythium and brown patch. Insecticides should be applied also to combat Argentine stem weevil and billbug.

Nematodes in golf greens are microscopic roundworms that cause damage to the turf by feeding on the roots leading to poor grass health and decline in turf quality. It's important to monitor nematode populations and take appropriate measures to control their amounts. Old control chemicals are off the market for environmental reasons, so early and ongoing applications of chemicals such as Indemnify and Agador are vital.

The club should encourage Steve to put together a program which includes:

- Preventative Fungicides
- Preventative Insecticides
- Herbicides

- Fertiliser
- Wetting agent
- Sand top dressing
- Cultivation practices

Steve could then put a budget together for the programs required and the clubs' greens would be in a much better position throughout the year and especially through the hot and humid weather of the summer and early autumn.

Weed Control

Weed control on Bent/Poa greens can be hard and needs to be a consistent approach. The club need to be aware that herbicide applications through the summer are not advised as the plant is under stress and the chemical could harm the grass. Oxalis is a very stubborn weed; the leaf is very small and waxy and the product struggles to dry on the targeted weed. The use of a fine nozzle on the sprayer would help and the water volume should be as little as possible. If Couch grass and Kikuyu is a problem on the greens and the club are advised to use a product called Pylex which is a new chemistry and very effective. Pylex is better used in the autumn with two applications, the label should be followed when using all products. When using any chemicals, it is always advised to use lower rates to avoid turf damage.

Spraying

Spraying of chemicals requires exact applications which can only be achieved using suitable machinery.

- All products require proper placement, some will be sprayed and stay on the leaf and others will need to be irrigated into the soil.
- The leaf application will require a fine nozzle with less water volume and soil applications require a larger nozzle with more water volume. If the correct application is not made the club will be wasting money as the products will not be effective.
- The club should consider purchasing a spray vehicle as in the picture below to ensure future applications are made accurately.



Top Dressing

- Top dressing or dusting of greens is vital to control thatch and keep the surface smooth.
- The Dakota top dressing machine below will top dress the greens quickly and accurately so that the process can be completed at renovations and multiple times throughout the year.



Irrigation

- Irrigation will define the golf course. The placement of sprinklers will water areas that require moisture and then other areas under trees and bushland can be left to dry. This will also save a massive amount of water. Water pressure is vital to allow the sprinklers to apply the water accurately.
- Water quality is very important and water tests are advised throughout the year. For example, if the water has a high salt content, then the club will need to offset the sodium with products on the greens.
- The damage to certain greens on the course would have had sporadic irrigation at times throughout the summer and when the grass is under stress a day without water can be catastrophic.
- The irrigation of the course is undertaken using an irrigation system comprising of underground pipes, cables, solenoids, and sprinkler heads. This system must be maintained to ensure its proper operation. At Singleton the system is old and really needs an upgrade. Steve will spend large parts of the day setting up sprinklers which will take him away from other vital work. The club could investigate the possibility of a grant to complete this work, the staff at Golf NSW can help with the grant process if needed.

New Greens

- The new putting/chipping green will be a great addition to the club.
- The club should consider using the green as a putting green for the first 18 months to allow the grass to mature before the golfers use it as a pitching/chipping green.
- The green should be built to USGA specifications with special attention to the sand or root zone being used.
- The root zone is vital to allow roots to thrive but also for the surface to be firm.
- The picture below shows the USGA green profile, and the different layers required.

- Dusting or top dressing is vital for new greens to control thatch.



Trees

- Before the club start building new greens, trees should be a major consideration. Tree roots will destroy good grass and the removal of trees is vital for good turf.
- The club could consider a full audit of the trees on site and decide what needs to be removed. This will take care of the roots and shade issues on the surface.
- Council will always be an issue when tree removal is required, and the club should consider a full landscape plan.
- The landscape document is a massive help when removing trees as the club can show the council or members exactly what will be planted in place of the trees.
- Tree canopy is good, but the establishment of low native planting will often attract far more native species of birds, insects, and bees.
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In closing I would like to thank Steve and Nathan for their hospitality and wish the club all the best in the future. Please do not hesitate to call if there are any questions about the report.

Phil Beal
Golf NSW



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INSURANCE

CeeJaze Management and Consulting P/L is a corporate Authorised Representative of Insurance Advisernet Australia P/L. Operating since 1999, CeeJaze provides insurance management and advisory services to golf clubs, credit unions, affinity groups, caravan and villa park owners and other niche market participants. CeeJaze's principal, Craig Fretwell, and his team have extensive experience working with golf clubs and has a keen understanding of their risk management and insurance needs.



As your appointed general insurance broker CeeJaze is committed to undertake the following activities:

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- Recommend the appropriate insurer to match the risk;
- Only recommend financially secure and stable insurers;
- Provide alternatives on risk retention through various excess options;
- Provide prompt and timely servicing to ensure that Clubs are adequately informed of issues that may affect their business;
- Provide documentation in accordance with the Financial Service Reform Act; and
- Assist Clubs through any claims management and loss assessment process that may arise

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PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

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TURF IMPROVEMENT

Irrigation water's purpose is to carry oxygen to the roots of the plant. Higher oxygen levels in water improve the plant's ability to photosynthesize, develop roots, resist pests and diseases, utilise nutrients in the soil, and withstand environmental and mechanical stress.

Nanobubble Technology's Sports Turf Solution is a proprietary system that can increase oxygen levels in irrigation water from all sources, by creating nanoscopic-sized bubbles of oxygen gas in the water. Due to their incredibly small size, the bubbles are able to remain stable in the water without bursting, meaning better uptake of oxygen by the roots of the plant. This gives nanobubbles the unique ability to hold more oxygen in water, and to hold it for longer than traditional methods like jet aerators and paddlewheels.

Other benefits include pest reduction, pathogen reduction (eg Pythium), improved fertilizer efficiency, and wastewater treatment.

For more information on the system and how it can work for your course, contact Olivia Kerr as per the details below.

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LEGAL SERVICES

Thomson Geer are leading corporate lawyers who have serviced golf and the general club industry for over 25 years.

Their extensive knowledge and experience with registered clubs is unequalled in all areas of legal services.

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PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

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