

NOVEMBER - COURSE COMMITTEE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

Since our last Member's Report in August, a lot of exciting projects are starting to take shape around the course.

The warm weather might have taken a while to arrive this year, but it has now done so with a vengeance, and the course is responding accordingly.

Spring rains brought a flourish of growth which proved hard to keep on top of. With the



removal of unwanted species from the fairways over the last month, the couch grass has responded well, our greens have largely recovered their best health and scores have tumbled in the quicker conditions on offer.

Great news, too, from Goulburn-Murray Water - we have received a 100 per cent water allocation for the season, meaning Dylan has plenty of water on hand for the hot Summer ahead. Coliban's recycled water storage dam is also well stocked which has proven very



handy as we heavily water our two new fairways without eating into our river water allocation



Well struck! Relaid fairways are off and running?

The re-surfacing of the 8th and 17th fairways is currently our no. 1 project and has created lots of discussion amongst members as we eagerly await to judge the initial success of the sprigging. Members will be aware that we laid 8,500sq m of tif tuf sprigs on Friday 13th. (an easy date to remember!) We had a great turn out of 35 volunteers who did a great job spreading the grass sprigs - approximately four-and-a-half hours to complete the job. We did hear of a couple of volunteers who threw a bit extra out in the spots where they normally finish on those fairways-just for good luck! Due to the 15-20mm of rain two nights earlier, the fairways were too soft to roll the sprigs in which would have been ideal. Since sprigging, fairways have been watered heavily and with warm humid weather since, we believe we have had an excellent strike rate, although the next few weeks will tell the full story. Watering will now be backed off a little which will allowing for some rolling and fertilising to take place.

A BIG thanks to all those involved and to Members for their support and patience in putting up with the 'short course' for a few more weeks yet.

In consultation with the Match Committee, once the new fairways can be 'walked on', we will look to use these two holes as par threes to the proper greens (approx. 100m) and opening the other 16 holes as normal as an interim measure before we move back to a full course, hopefully by early to mid-February.

Want to find out a bit more about tif tuf? Take a look at <https://lawnsolutionsaustralia.com.au/grass-type/tiftuf/>



Elsewhere, there is plenty happening:

19th hole

Earthworks are completed - thanks Sean and Mick O'Connor. Irrigation is underway, aggregate for drainage is laid and the sand to form the green surface will be spread this week, ready for seeding. Fringes will be solid turfed from practice fairway nursery plots so the green should come together fairly quickly now.



Bunkers

While holes 8 and 17 are closed, we will renovate their bunkers, which will be emptied out, drainage checked/cleared, and bases fixed if required before new sand is spread.

Other bunkers will be topped up with new sand over the next few months, with a few bunkers being identified as priorities.

Tees

The 17th tee extension will be completed while the hole is closed. Fill is being dumped between the front and rear tees to create one 'monster' tee that will give us flexibility to reduce wear by moving tees to new positions. Again, couch grass from our Santa Ana nursery plot will be used to complete this project. Santa Ana will also be used to solid turf the 12th & 14th tees, keeping them consistent with all of our other teeing grounds.

While our par three tees continue to be under a little 'traffic stress', our other tee surfaces are in great condition with a near 100% healthy couch cover.

Greens

You'll recall we root-pruned around greens a few months back. The aim is to reduce competition for water from tree roots. This will ensure the bent grass can drive its roots deeper, reducing water usage and enabling staff to create firmer, quicker greens. Dylan has noted some clear spots where the growth on one side of the cut is much healthier than the other side, an indication of success.

Pleasingly, the bent grass root profile has increased by 20-30mm over past 12 months. Roots are now appearing at the bottom of the hole plug when holes are being changed which is a really healthy sign.

Fairy rings are an ongoing problem and are being monitored and treated regularly.

Greens will be renovated after the Club Championships, with deep tining and sanding. This process will cause minimal disruption to play. Depending on how they respond, we might renovate again in Autumn, which would be a coring rather than tining.

Fairways

Fairways have been sprayed for broadleaf and other weeds. We have had a great result, with the fairway surfaces moving along nicely as the couch starts to take over. Members may also have noticed a nice strip of couch rough developing on each side of the fairways. Spot spraying has begun to remove paspalum, rye grass stalks and parramatta grass from the fairways. The parramatta grass on the 13th fairway will be spot sprayed again and then we will spray the large patch in the rough on the 13th before deciding the next course of action.

Fescue nursery.

Fescue grass will be used for green surrounds across the course. It's a nice playable grass that will also act as a 'moat' ensure couch can't infiltrate our greens. Nursery seeding was completed six weeks ago. The strike on seed was okay, but we suffered some unfortunate wash from heavy rainfall. The grass has received its first cut and fertiliser and bent grass seed has been added. Overall a good result but will be a while until the grass is established

enough for sodding.

Planting program

Thanks again to volunteers who planted trees and shrubs on the hillside behind the 1st/3rd greens. Fortunately, we've had plenty of rain to get them started, although some supplementary watering was needed through an October dry spell.

The Spring rains meant we had significant growth on some of our wilder areas. We had a great roll

up to our October Whipper Snipping Working Bee and managed to bring these areas under control. Thanks to all those who attended. We found 47 golf balls!



Gardens

Yet again, thanks to the 20 or so volunteers who turned out on a Sunday morning to weed and mulch the gardens along the tennis court and on the 15th tee. It was a classic case of many hands making light work, with Stuart Chesher's tipper trailer a big hit. The gardens have been planted with Australian natives including 20 or so Eremophila species (emu bush) as well as Grevilleas, ti-tree, bottlebrushes and others. The garden below the 9th tee is also looking terrific. We intend to involve Members more broadly in tending our gardens and tree-plantings with the formation of a Gardens Sub-Committee - more news soon.

STAFF

On behalf of the members, I would like to thank our staff for all of their work on course over the last few months. We have a lot going on and staff are working hard to both keep up the weekly presentation of the course as well as working on special projects.

Spring growth, some irrigation issues and sand and irrigation supply issues due to COVID backlog have meant the team are a few weeks behind where they would like the course to be.

VOLUNTEERS

On behalf of members, the Course Committee would like to thank our group of volunteers who come out each Tuesday morning and on weekends to complete a range of tasks around the course.

It has been great to have everyone back after a COVID inspired lay off.

Our on-course volunteers complete somewhere between 30-50 hours/week and their work allows staff to focus on course maintenance and projects. A massive contribution.

Your Course Committee is Course Superintendent Dylan Knight, Rod Connelly, Jan Walklate, Sean O'Connor, Fred Kath, Chris Beames, Steve Jeffrey and Lex Johnstone. As your representatives, queries, suggestions and ideas can be fed to the Course Committee via these people.