

COURSE COMMITTEE

JULY 2022 UPDATE FOR MEMBERS



STAFF

- On behalf of the members, I would like to start by acknowledging the amount of work currently being done on the course and thank Chris, Roger and Joe for their efforts in improving our golf course every single week. We are spoilt to have our greens mowed or rolled and prepared for play every day.
- Our staff are very committed to providing members and visitors a great facility every time they play.
- As well as daily course work, Chris is focusing on a number of irrigation upgrades, repairs and adjustments to sprinkler locations to ensure we are ready for the upcoming watering season.
- As well as his on-course work, Roger is doing some great work servicing and maintaining our machinery.
- Joe has completed his first-year apprenticeship on course and continues to demonstrate great potential. Joe attends TAFE at Melbourne Polytechnic each Monday.
- We are pleased to inform members that we have also employed Noah Warfe as a first-year apprentice in school-based apprenticeship arrangement. Each week, Noah will spend one day on course, one day at TAFE (Monday with Joe) and three days at school completing Year 11 & 12. Noah's father Rowan and grandparents Graham and Joy have all been members, so like Joe Fiske -Kealy, it is great to continue our connections with those families.



INSTRUCTIONAL CLIPS

We have put together some short clips to outline our preferred method for raking bunkers, fixing divots and repairing pitch marks. The clips are too big to email as attachments, but can be accessed by clicking on this google link or pasting it into your browser.



https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qPO9J8kn6G7c60_Y6ALeE7yvH7dZCE6B?usp=sharing

(apologies for the 'cinematography'!!)

GREENS

- Chris and the team have the greens in great condition. Even though they are a little damp with recent rains, they continue to putt very truly. The speed and roll is very consistent from day to day.
- Our greens have been 'mini-tined' at the end of June to allow better dispersion of moisture through the soil profile. Within a day or two, they were back to normal playability. We are able to do this work with our procore machine purchased last year. The greens will be mini-tined a number of times between and the November coring. We will aim to do this work on a Monday so by Wednesday comps, it will be almost unnoticeable.
- The front of the 3rd green has recovered well from the bare patches that occurred during Summer. It continues to be our patchiest surface and will be put on a 12-month program slightly different to our other greens. Chemicals will be used to reduce the impact of pythium, and regular tining will allow new soil to be added to the soil profile through regular dusting and top dressing.
***Pythium is a highly destructive disease of turf grass. First reported in the United States in the 1930s, pythium blight was at first considered a problem only on golf greens. In more recent decades, however, this fungal lawn disease has become recognized as a problem for athletic fields and backyards, too. Bentgrass and ryegrass are particularly susceptible to the fungus. (our greens are bentgrass)*
- Frost damage. Over the coming weeks, we may have mornings where severe frosts can potentially cause damage to green surfaces through machinery use or foot traffic. On these mornings, greens won't be cut or rolled until the frost has thawed. There may also be some Saturday mornings where we will need to hold golfers from starting until the greens are thawed. We will communicate this via the Office on a Saturday morning.
- Greens Renovation. Coring and sanding of our greens will occur on Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th November. Works will likely begin late on the Sunday afternoon. (6th November) We are looking to change how the sanding is done this year and we will be looking for a team of around 10 helpers to brush the sand into the greens after coring and clearing is completed. The sand will be put out by the spreader, but then hand brushed in to maximise the recovery process. We hope that by December 1st, the greens are back to near normal surfaces.
- Keep an eye out in October for a call out to members to help with the brooming process.

PRACTICE PUTTING GREEN

As members will likely be aware, the lower end of our practice putting green gets quite wet through the Winter months.

Members are allowed to practice their chipping prior to a round of golf, but if you want to hit 20/30 chips as a bit of a practice session, then we ask that you use the 19th green. During the next couple of months, when chipping, please try to avoid the very wet patches at the bottom end of the green.

19th GREEN

- Our 19th green is now well established.
- Members are reminded the 19th green is open for chipping practice from the closely mown area around the green

PRACTICE FAIRWAY

- A garden bed has been established around the back of the hitting area of the practice fairway. In the coming weeks it will be planted out with Viburnum Emerald Lustre that will form a 1m high border around this area. A cart path and 'entrance gaps' will be established along the shed side of the hedge.
- Kikuyu is gradually being removed from the hitting area and the irrigation trenches are being filled with the aim of having a full and consistent coverage of couch across the whole practice fairway area by the end of next Summer.
- The tif tuf nursery (where the dirt piles used to be) has been sprayed for broadleaf weeds. This will be repeated again soon to ensure the area is 'clean' and ready for the tif tuf to begin running once the weather and soil warms up.
- The nursery area behind the cart shed has been sprayed out and we will re-establish a bent grass nursery there. This will allow us to plug patchy areas of greens from the nursery rather than from the back of individual greens.

MACHINERY

- We have recently purchased two new Toro hand pushed greens mowers. These two mowers, added to our existing one, means we can now cut greens 5 days a week **by hand** through Winter, significantly reducing the heavy machinery traffic on damp and soft green surfaces. We will only need to put the big mower over the greens on Saturday and Sunday when time is critical. If the staff cut 6 or 7 greens each, a full, hand pushed mow, can be completed on all greens within 90 minutes. (**We cut 20 greens each day incl. putting green and 19th)
- Peter Elvey has done a wonderful job building us two new trailers to transport the two new hand pushed mowers around the course. Peter's work meant we haven't needed to buy commercially produced trailers and has saved us a few thousand dollars. Thanks Peter.



FAIRWAYS

- Fairways have recently been sprayed with iron and pigment, which has given them a dark green tinge. This will help to carry them through the Winter with a bit of colour, and provides great fairway/rough definition.
- In regard to **future fairway resurfacing**, through this coming Spring, Summer & Autumn growing season, we will focus our attention on the 4th, 7th & 11th fairways. We will not be resurfacing these fairways with tif turf at this stage. Instead, come Spring, we will be removing all grass species other than couch, heavily coring all three fairways, top dressing as required, sodding as required, heavily fertilising and using increased wetting agents to maximise the couch growth in all three fairways. We have allocated approx. \$8,000 to this project and will watch closely to see what improvements can be achieved using this approach.

Our aim is to produce a 100% couch cover, building on what we already have and to minimise impact to golfers (ie no need for temporary greens for now). If this is successful, it will likely be replicated across other fairways in following years. Tif turf will be used to sprig or sod bigger areas where possible.

Choosing the 4th and the 7th fairways, means we have a large base of information to watch and learn from. The 11th hole means we have an 'across the road' sample to observe as well.

During the last few months, kikuyu has started to be removed from the 4th & 7th fairways, which will be an ongoing project from now until next Easter.

Kikuyu will be left to grow on the 11th fairway as this might be part of the solution for the 'across the road' holes.

- Parramatta Grass. We have had a couple of Working Bees to remove parramatta grass from areas on the 3rd, 9th and 13th fairways. The plan is to remove individual plants where possible which will allow the surrounding grasses to cover the sanded areas. Larger mass growth areas will be sprayed and monitored. A plan for re-grassing these sprayed areas will be developed once we see what happens. It's a tough grass to eradicate. A big thanks to all those who turned up to help out and to Jan for the sausage rolls. It was great to have both male and female members involved.



TEES

- Rye grass was oversown onto tees in Autumn to provide Winter colour and a bit more strengths to the surface area. The rye grass will happily chug along through Winter and will naturally die out once the warmer months hit, allowing the santa ana couch to prosper again.
- Our tees will be cored and top dressed during Spring time this year. This will allow water to penetrate the surface and encourage the grass to develop a deeper, stronger root systems.
- This process will provide minimal disruption to play and will soften and improve our teeing areas.

CARTS

- Cart drivers are reminded that when travelling from the shed to the clubhouse and return, the expectation is that you follow the path beside the 3rd tee to the 6th tee then follow the asphalt path past 3rd green, 4th tee & 1st tee. Please do not travel back to the shed via the 18th/17th/9th holes.
- On the 11th hole, carts have been re-directed to the left of the green, following the 'ditch' around to a turning area near the 12th tee. At some stage the pathway that has been worn to the right of the green will be re-grown to improve the aesthetics of the hole and to stop balls going out of bounds.
- Carts have also be re-directed to the left and rear of the 4th green to join up with the path on the 5th tee.
- Please be mindful that the cart paths are there to protect our course. Where there are no paths, please be thoughtful where you drive.
- Black lines indicate areas to be free of carts. Thanks in advance for your support.

IRRIGATION

- General Committee has made a substantial investment into our irrigation system over the last twelve months. We have added variable speed controllers to our two pump stacks, replaced the mainline from the pump shed to the oncourse system and have installed safety valves to stop the system from over heating at any stage. (\$30,000)
- We have recently had a new foot valve and water intake system installed in the river. Operating from a flotation device, our filtering screens now gather water from 0.5 -1.0m below the surface, meaning we take flowing water and stay away from dirty silty water closer to the bottom. We hope this further reduces issues in our pumps, valves and sprinkler heads. (\$4,000)
- We have had a few leaks from tee/fairway/green & surrounds sprinkler heads and valve boxes are working to rectify these issues asap.
- Our irrigation control system upgrade is still on the radar, just awaiting the final financial tick off from Committee. These works will begin in Spring.
- Coliban Water have recently installed a wireless connection from the Treatment Plant to our main pump station. The system is close to being fully commissioned. It will allow Chris to program an overnight cycle the uses both treated water and river water, an option we have had before. Previously, we have had to use one or the other for a full night. It allow us an option such as watering greens and surrounds with river water and then tees and fairways with treated water. Thanks to Chris for all his work with Coliban on this.

TREES

- At our next Course Committee Meeting, we are focussing on areas of planted trees and identifying unhealthy trees and overcrowded areas.
- Ken Morrison's tree planting has been very successful and we again thank Ken for his persistence and determination in helping to make our course a beautiful one.
- As many of these trees now grow quite tall, they are competing for light and space, as per the photos. These trees will become unstable and dangerous as they grow taller and likely need removing while still within our capacity to do so. There are a number of areas that need to be thinned out, leaving original, established and dominant trees to prosper.
- As some trees continue to grow, overhanging branches are having an increased impact on the playability of holes. Course Committee is looking to identify these and remove them where possible.
- We are continuing to establish garden beds around the course and will continue to plant out areas in bird attracting plants that add colour to our course. Areas to be planted out will be in non-golfing areas.



BUNKERS

- Chris has packed sand into some bunkers using a vibrating plate, then topped up with a loose covering. This has been successful in providing a much better texture to hit from.
- Topping up sand is a constant task, please notify a Course Committee member if you notice an area of a particular bunker needs some attention.
- Members are asked to use the teeth of the rake to rake the base area of the bunker, and then the back of the rake to smooth off the bunker faces. This will allow the ball to always run to the raked base area of the bunker.
- Rakes should be left in the base of the bunker, in the direction of play.
- Please see the google link on page 1 in regard to bunker raking.



SOIL STORAGE

- With the tidying up of all of our dirt piles on the practice fairway, Course Committee is beginning to look at options for formalising and separating our storage areas for bunker sand, top dressing sand, soil, gravel etc

COURSE CARE

- Members are reminded to carry a sand bucket with them for every round. Try to use a bucket per hole! Divots are not hard to find.
- The best repair method is to chip the edges of the divot in, squash down with your foot, then top dress with your sand bucket and smooth over so it doesn't affect other golfers.
- This method applies to teeing areas as well.
- Please carry a pitch reparer each round. The best repair method is to try and find all of the original grass cover, turn the pitch mark in on itself then level the area down with your putter. Just lifting up dirt and roots and smoothing off the surface doubles or triples the time taken for recovery.
- Bunker care – as per Captain Rod's recent email, if everyone leaves the bunker as, or better than they found it, we all benefit. If you are playing the night before a competition round, the bunkers will likely have been prepared that day, so raking becomes even more important for your fellow members. Faces should always be smoothed off with the back of the rake.

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.
- Our on-course volunteers complete about 50 hours/week and their work allows staff to focus on course maintenance and projects. A massive contribution.
- A special thanks to Rob Minne who is spending lots of time on the rough cutter, to Peter Elvey for bringing out his rider mower each Tuesday and to David Ivey for his planting and mulching work on the hill beside the 3rd green

FEEDBACK

- It's always great to receive constructive feedback from members as we look to continually improve our course for you.
- Member feedback needs to come through the Course Committee, not the course staff. (They are however, always happy to take compliments!)
- We have hundreds of sets of eyes on the course each week and we are happy to consider and follow up suggestions/observations from members.



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