



Newsletter, Spring 2019

The 'golf course edition'

Newsletter now a Quarterly

The Committee will trial a quarterly newsletter, beginning with this Spring 2019 edition.

Member feedback about the newsletter is positive, however it has been noted that much of the

monthly content was a repeat of results already received in post-event emails. As Members receive a lot of communication from the Club, we felt it was worthwhile trialling a quarterly format in which we can concentrate on news rather than repetition.

This introductory quarterly is better titled 'the golf course edition' as it focuses on our most important asset. Please let us know what you think.

Introducing Superintendent Dylan

The times they are a changin'

Our new Superintendent Dylan Knight likes to spend the first few minutes of his working day walking a couple of holes in the dim light of a new dawn.

"The simple things that draws me to golf course management are the early mornings," he says, "watching the sunrise, seeing the course as no one else does and just being at one with nature. Walking a couple of holes prior to staff commencing gives you a great sense of satisfaction knowing that you manage all these different areas."

A Goulburn valley boy, the young Dylan was always drawn to golf. "I have been playing golf since I was six and couldn't be in this trade without the love of the game." He began as an apprentice at Mooroopna golf and lawn tennis clubs 14 years ago and has worked in the industry ever since. Four years at Hilltop (Tatura) preceeded a four-year stint as Superintendent at the highly regarded Sanctuary Lakes course in Point Cook, Victoria, before heading across Bass Strait to Hobart from where he was recruited to head up our Axedale course.

"Golf course management is a very intricate industry. It's not like looking after a football oval of the one grass species - not saying that is easy. We have upwards of three different surfaces on a golf course requiring different management. Then there is the management of the hazards which is putting increasing pressure on a lot of managers due to the 'Augusta effect' of high definition golf on TV.

"But last and not least is the science involved. This has never been a job of just going out and cutting some grass - that's what is performed on the home lawn. We manage turf types that do not want to be doing what we make them do day in and day out and I wouldn't change it for the world."

Keen-eyed Members will already have noticed some changes since Dylan inherited a fine golf course developed under Glen Frewin's stewardship. Our bunkers have always ranked highly - in no small part due to Fred Kath's care - but have seen their margins 'sharpened up' to address that 'Augusta effect'.

"Aesthetics are important to making the course attractive to play," says Dylan.

Further developments are planned. "The course has an enormous amount of potential; I wouldn't have accepted the role if I didn't see potential in the club moving forward on and off the course," says Dylan. "The club atmosphere is the best I have been involved with from a playing and working aspect, followed closely by Hilltop in Tatura."

Dylan has certainly been well inducted into that atmosphere, most recently when accosted by a group of well-primed women Members while hand-watering the 18th green during their Spring Luncheon after party. He joined in the fun by spraying one particular reigning Club Champion as she danced across the green. Such is the life of an Axedale Superintendent.

So why choose Axedale? "Axedale appealed to me firstly due to the location and being closer to my parents as my partner Alice and I are expecting our first-born in late November. Secondly was due to the strong position the Club is in and the potential out on course to make this the best course in the region."

Dylan has some early thoughts he will be talking to the Course Committee about.

"First and foremost was why are we still on a two-grass policy (summer/winter grasses) with the amount of couch grass in the fairway sward. I am aware this is sensitive, though there is honestly no positive to running a two-grass policy. From a turf management point of view it is not sustainable and for me sustainability is key to good turf management. If it is unsustainable, I can guarantee it is affecting the budget in the wrong way.

"Tee levelling and rebuilding of some tee complexes to beautify the course is on my agenda to propose. Also the introduction of some native planting in out-of-play areas - again about sustainability and enticing native wildlife, but also these areas burn through fuel and man hours every year."

Dylan has already been a regular in men's competitions, his rusty swing ensuring he won the Encouragement Award in his first outing! Since then his golf has improved. We asked him about his favorite courses. "I have been fortunate enough to play all of the sand belt courses in Melbourne and would rate Kingston Heath as my number one from a course layout perspective. The way you are enticed to use every shot in the golfing book is the important factor here; they leave so much for your imagination and ability."

In a hint about his plans for Axedale, he continued: "I love all courses in natural settings and on the firmer and faster side of things as this is the sustainable way to manage. Pinehurst number two is a great example with their rebuild now enabling golfers to play all the shots." Members should expect to see our greens sand-dusted more often, firming them up and providing fast, true surfaces.

Dylan has offered to conduct Member question and answer sessions to improve understanding about the course and its management. Stand by for further details.



Our new Axedale GC Superintendent Dylan Knight and best mate Koda. Dylan quickly had our volunteers addressing the 'Augusta effect' by sharpening up our bunker edges (below). .



SEPTEMBER COURSE COMMITTEE

UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

By Course Committee Chairman Lex Johnstone

Each month, your Course Committee will endeavour to provide an update of upcoming course activities. This information will be shared on Monthly Medal Saturdays and the following Wednesday and Thursday competition days.

Your Course Committee is Rod Connelly, Jan Walklate, Ian Kerr, Fred Kath, Stephen Jeffrey and Lex Johnstone. As your representatives, suggestions and ideas can be fed to the Committee via these people.

Members are asked not to feed Course Committee ideas through our Course Staff.

We would also like to say a very big welcome to Dylan Knight, our new Course Superintendent. Dylan brings experience and enthusiasm to the position and has worked with great energy in his first few weeks. As we move into the growing season, we look forward to the development of many initiatives around the course.

FAIRWAYS

- Over recent months, there has been much discussion about our fairway grass of choice. At our most recent Course Committee meeting, the following was discussed and decided upon

- Current estimation is that at the moment, we have around 60-70% common couch cover, 20% santa ana cover, 10% kikuyu, 10% other. Dylan believes it would be difficult to eradicate common couch from our fairways on a permanent basis.
- A decision was taken that in the short term, we seek to eradicate all winter grass from our fairways in the coming months and that we promote warm season grasses (common couch & santa ana) as our fairway grasses of choice. This will allow us to ascertain % warm season grasses on each fairway and plan for future works.
- We are aiming to establish a santa ana nursery on our entire practice fairway. Any of the course fairway patches that require remediation this Spring and Summer will be sprigged, line planted or sodded from the current or future nursery area depending on size of areas being addresses and time of year. Some of our healthier santa ana tees may also be scarified to provide sprigs for patch planting. Scarifying tees is a normal part of turf maintenance practice.
- By using our santa ana nursery to repair bare fairway areas, we will gradually increase the % of santa ana across the course.
- A decision on spraying out winter grasses with a pre-emergent leading into winter will be discussed in early Autumn.
- This approach to grassing our fairways is cost effective, will limit impact to playing conditions and builds on our current coverage. It will allow Dylan a full season to understand our local weather and turf conditions, before we develop long term plans for fairways, greens, tees and rough.
- Our spraying plan (see next paragraph) will have some impact on the playing surfaces for this year's tournament and Club Championships but by the pro-am in late January, we feel we can produce fairway conditions similar to, or better than, last year. Each Spring, we envisage having an increasingly healthier fairway surface each time Winter grass is removed.
- Over the last two weeks, all our fairways were sprayed with propyzamide to remove all grasses other than warm season grasses. A colour change probably won't be noticed by members for 2/3 weeks. Simazine will then be sprayed 4/6 after the propyzamide, depending on weather and temperature. This will further remove unwanted species and within a month leave predominantly only common couch, santa ana couch and kikuyu.

GREENS

- Approx. six greens will be dusted by hand every Monday (weather dependent) –allowing a threeweek rotation across the full course. Dusting will assist with providing a smooth, dry and consistent surface and will regularly add organic matter to the greens. Dusting to be completed with hand spreader to the reduce damage to the green surface.
- A heavier dusting will be completed 2/3 times/year.
- We have a water retention issue on the greens due to our soil profile, so our greens will be solid tyned approx. eight times per year to allow increased water penetration, oxygen exposure and exchange of gases. Solid tyning will likely happen in the week following each monthly medal to develop a routine. The tynes will most likely be 100mm solid tynes. This will usually be completed on a Monday and shouldn't impact playability from the Wednesday on.
- Our greens will be cored and sanded on Tuesday 3 December. Our Ground staff will carry out this coring, reducing costs and allowing Dylan to manage the process.
- Soil test results gathered recently will dictate the level/depth of renovation required and the backfill materials to be smudged into the greens.

TEES

Tee levelling will be completed after the Pro-Am in January. Priority of works is being developed. We are aiming to re-do all women's and men's tees over a 3-4 year period, dependent on the usual variables of weather, water and finances.

Tees will be laser-levelled and sprinkler heads removed from teeing areas where possible.

Please contact Rod, Jan, Ian, Fred, Steve and Lex with any ideas or issues. With thanks,
Course Committee



Everyone's favourite hole, the 9th, showing a definition between fairway and rough.

We don't take things for granted

Your Committee continues to seek external funding to help develop our course while keeping membership fees as affordable as possible.

Work on our Golfing Pathways project is now completed, with around 750 metres of asphalt paths laid on the 4th, 6th, 9th, 10th, 12th, 14th and 18th holes. This work was funded as follows:

Sport Australia (Community Sport Infrastructure Grant)	\$45,000
Axedale Golf Club	\$24,000
AGC volunteer labour (in-kind contribution)	\$12,000
TOTAL COST	\$81,000

The Club has also purchased more than \$3000 worth of golf equipment funded by a grant from VicHealth's Active Clubs program. This gear includes three sets of women's golf clubs plus practice mats, balls, tees, etc. It will be used by Trish Shanahan for her highly successful clinics that have seen some 25 new women Members join over the past three years.

In recent years we have also been successful in obtaining grants from Strathfieldsaye Community Enterprise for the shade sails and Fosterville Gold Mine for 'The 9th Bridge'. (Maybe we could have chosen a better place for the now heavily dented sign acknowledging Fosterville's grant!)

Whilst we cannot take it for granted that we will win funding in future, we continue to look out for opportunities to put our Club forward. If you become aware of grants that might fit, please let Secretary Owen know.



Tickled to be leaving office

Roosters one day, feather dusters the next!

Outgoing president Andrew Watson (left) and outgoing treasurer Peter Andrew wave the symbol of their new-found freedom from executive responsibility.

Not that they will be any less regarded, having served the Club and Members admirably - Andrew in a two-year spell, Peter for six as chief bean-counter. Thanks for your service, gents - now enjoy your golf.

Monday golf to hit off on 30 September

A new Monday competition will start on 30 September with women's and men's Stableford events hitting off at 10am.

Following a positive response to a Member survey, we will mix up groups with men and women playing in the same foursome. This is optional, so let the Captain's Office know if you'd prefer to play in a same-sex group.

Entry fee is the usual \$10, with prizes allocated as per the usual formula for Wednesday/Thursday events. Nearest the pins will be open events on the 1st and 6th holes.

Thanks to those Members who have volunteered to help with send-off and results. We'll issue a roster to spread the jobs around. Please let our Secretary Owen know if you are happy to be part of this - it's helpful to have more Members who know how to help out.

We canvassed Monday golf with Members and had to curtail responses at 100. Here's what you told us::

65/100 were interested in playing (65%)

42 would play twice or more a month (18 said they would play each week they were available)

74/82 who answered said they were happy to play in mixed group

There was a preference for individual play rather than team events, so we will look to conduct one team event every four-to-six weeks.

57/85 (67%) preferred morning hit-off; 28/79 (33%) preferred midday. We have opted for 10am after feedback that this enabled school drop-off and pick-up with a golf round in between!

Women's President's report

A very busy month with the Annual General Meeting and preparation for the Spring Luncheon in full swing.

Thank you to the Ladies who have continued on the Women's Committee. One new member is Marg Kerr who has agreed to take over the role of the Secretary to replace Maureen Connelly due to family health reasons. Thank you Maureen for the work you have done over the past three years. Also a special thank you to Sue Minne who has been the 'caretaker' Secretary for the past few months.

The committee recently set up a "Foodie Group" to share ideas for menus for functions. This has proved very successful and a huge thank you to several ladies, Helen Lindrea, Myrial Pitts, Robyn Weeks, Carmel Harrison, Annette Purdy, Barb Collins and Rosemary Griffin who volunteered for the group. We still require our helpers with the catering, but sharing ideas takes the pressure off individuals and gives us a broader range of options.

Ex-President Raye Fleay continues with her wonderful work as Director of our Spring Luncheon Extravaganza held on ... Friday the 13th of September. What a day it was - a huge success ... well at least the after-party was! Thanks to all who participated.

Congratulations to incoming President Alan Andrews who has big shoes to fill following Andy Watson. Thanks Andy for your wonderful work over the past two years. Best wishes and support to all incoming members of the Executive.

Helen Martin
President.

Stop Press: Mandy Hamilton (below) shot 37 points to win best individual score at the Bendigo Golf Club Bowl on 23 August. Our women's team finished 2nd on the day. Well done, all.



Keeping those home fires burning

Members will soon see the installation of a new fan-forced wood heater to replace the old warhorse that has kept us warm for 32 years.

The new heater was purchased at a heavily discounted price and should prove much more efficient than its predecessor.

We plan to shift the old heater into the maintenance shed, where it will be a much better option than the small pot-belly now in use.

Our Tuesday volunteers recently split and stacked literally heaps of wood that will provide dry fuel for next Winter.



ABOVE: Tuesday volunteers working to keep you warm - from left to right: Greg 'Andy Maher' Hamilton, Lex Johnstone and evergreen Ian Kerr. All together now ... "I'm a lumberjack and I'm okay!"

Aaron's Saturday proves a double hit



Twice the bang for his buck. Aaron Fredericks' win in the September Monthly Medal coincided with the final round of the President's Cup ... which he won as well. Well played, Aaron.



Another OBE inducted

LEFT: Latest inductee to the 'OBE Club', Marg Moore (centre) is welcomed by Women's President Helen Martin and Life Member Wendy Nielsen.

AND IT'S A WARM AXEDALE WELCOME TO ...

Welcome to new Members:

Joe Stanley

Brayden Geyer

Jacob Morrissey

Jason Fisher

Cameron Taylor

Lee Hobbs

Dylan Knight

Upcoming events

NATURAL HAZARDS (Sunday 22 September)

Pinehurst. (Sponsored by Lollies2Go)

CHRIS GIBSON MEMORIAL (Sunday 6 October)

Charity four-person dropout Ambrose. Entries to Hayden Nielsen.

NOEL HONEYCHURCH DAY (Sunday 13 October)

Four-person Ambrose in aid of Mandurang Fire Brigade and the Leukaemia Foundation. Watch for details.

NATURAL HAZARDS (Sunday 20 October)

4BBB Stableford. (Sponsored by Lollies2Go)

AGC ANNUAL TOURNAMENT (Wed 23 October - Sunday 27 October)

Event details have been emailed to Members.



Thanks to Vice-President Peter Hoskin for his continued financial support of the Club. Please try to support Peter and our other sponsors.