

Greens Report June 2023

Since the last report it really has been a game of two halves! We were unable to cut certain areas due to how wet things still were from the deluge that fell in March and then topped up another 103mm the following month to take us into May, The last rain we encountered was on Friday 5th May, at a rate of 19mm in a 20 min burst but since then we have had nothing for 45days.

This dry period had allowed us to more or less get everything cut on a regular basis, which tidied the course right up. Everything from tee banks sides, green banksides, fairways and especially semi-rough. We have had issues with our X740 compact tractor in several ways, firstly we had a hydraulic failure which John Deere couldn't find the parts on their system as ours was the very first off the production line 15 years ago and since then modifications had taken place rendering ours non-existent. I managed to get Rickerbys to copy and manufacture us the offending hoses, Now the failure occurred due to the main chassis snapping, which has now been strengthened and fabricated. This breakdown was why the corses were not able to be done. I had to, where possible, slalom the 2tonne semi rough machine through the areas that I could and then fixed up an old wheel rotary hand mower for us to do the rest. I'm pleased to inform you all that we now have the X740 back and in full working order.

Now the other side, the greens have suffered with the extremely dry, hot and baking weather, the irrigation has been running on the greens flat out for the last 21 days along with hand watering first thing on a morning and then again on a night before it starts automatically. Wetting agent tablets have been added to the water tank, this allows a distribution and application through the sprinkler heads. We equally have a hand applicator and tablets that fit on our hose and we have applied daily. I have continued to sarel roll the greens to "prick" the surface to allow water to penetrate into the profile.

After last weeks' home team game, I followed the team around with the groundsman tractor mounted spiker, fitted with 10mm tines at a depth of 50mm, again to help the water penetrate into the soil profile. I will continue to carry out these processes to fight against the dry patch and pray for some natural rain to aid the situation. I have also been around and altered the distribution arcs on the sprinkler heads where needed to make them more efficient, replaced a full head back left 14th and oversized the delivery nozzles on several heads, again to increase water delivery, as well as increase water delivery times.

A new valve assembly for the irrigation has now been fitted at 7th green. Upon recommission of the system it flagged as a leak. When they turned on in April the box went very wet again in a week, but again the weather was very wet also. I did however isolate that leg of the system and it did dry out, confirming a leaking valve and watering point. This valve was an original from 1988 so it was sensible to renew it.

Again, it would be helpful if buggies didn't drive over the green box lids. This is another reason why we white line the greens, firstly is to promote a nice lie if you miss a green and secondly to keep traffic away from the hydrant boxes which are all situated at the back of every green. If a box flexes and breaks a valve, then this will disable the irrigation system until its repaired (generally £800 per valve) and financially plus practicality I can't afford that and it's a worry, especially this time of year when we rely on a working irrigation system

Ian mentioned that the sand in the bunkers was too deep, the dry weather has made them all “snuff dry”. We have since removed 2 loads from the 11th and topped up 14th and then removed 1 load from 15 and topped up 14th. The remaining sand we will top up, 7th, 17th and the two bunkers at 1st.

As soon as weather allows, this week I intend to apply more wetting agent through the tractor mounted sprayer, this is way more effective than the irrigation as it can target the areas more effectively and apply our monthly application of seaweed and an application of “ ICL Stress Buster “ to aid with the recovery process.

Regards

David