



Knighton Heath Golf Club

Greens Report

January 2023

Graham Hastie
Course Manager

Greens

Maintenance carried out-

Greens cutting height raised to 8mm as winter sets in
Hand mowers used to cut greens
Greens brushed to clear dew on days of no cutting or rolling
Winter turf hardening applications (non pesticidal) to prevent disease occurrence
Holes changed twice per week
Greens blown of leaves and debris every morning
Switching and blowing of worm casts everyday
Daily checks to ensure greens are playable
Pitchmarks repaired when spotted
Greens slit to allow oxygen into soil profile

Course

Tees cut at 20mm with hand mower to reduce footprint on tees through winter months
Approaches cut at 12mm
Daily bunker raking
Full rotavate, distribute sand and rake of bunkers when we had a break in the weather
Strimming of bunker edges as and when required
Strimming of yardage markers as and when required
Rough cut once this month
Fairways cut once this month
Semi rough cut twice to encourage definition and improve presentation
Side of chipping green maintained at 8mm cutting height and opened for play
Blowing of all areas, greens, tees and areas on fairways
Winter mats which are being used were brushed once a week
Tree work to right hand side of 5th hole in progress
Scrub clearance to the left-hand side of 5th hole
Vertidrainage of Fairways continues

Data-

Rainfall recorded:- 129.5mm

Max temp:- 12.7° (4/1/23) **Low Temp:-** -3.6° (23/1/23)

Course closures:- 5 days closed. 11 days of a reduced course due to ice.

Weather update

As we set off into 2023 on the back of a very wet end to 2022 the weather was still not on our side. 72mm of rain fell in the first two weeks of January meaning the change of the year did nothing to help our struggle in producing a fine golf course for you all to play. It also meant there were more course closures which is far from ideal. With the wet weather also came some more cold weather. Majority of the closures in January were because of ice which had formed in fairways and pathways. This was incredibly frustrating as the majority of the course was absolutely fine but hidden and patchy ice meant it wasn't safe for these areas to open. We did put our heads together and managed to get (firstly) 10 holes open for play, starting on the 2nd as a par 3, finishing on the 11th hole. Holes 1 and 15 were the worst effected as they had huge patches of ice covering large proportions of their fairways. Each and every day we assessed these holes and opened more holes as and when it was safe to do so. This took 11 days for the full course to open again but we felt it was absolutely necessary to keep everyone safe. Once again thank you for your patience during these frustrating times.

With the weather as it was, we carried on with our woodland management work. We decided, after checking the forecast, we had enough of a cold and wet period (where we would need to stay off the playing surfaces) to make an impact in an area which was desperate for attention, the right-hand side of the 5th fairway. This area was targeted for both playability and ecological reasons. We saw many golfers (including myself) searching for balls within the undergrowth creating slow play, lost balls and had basically become an overly penal area. This bank on the right of the 5th hole should look similar to the bank on the right of the 4th hole-mainly covered in Heather, Gorse and just a few Scotts Pines and Silver Birches. For now, we have taken all of the Holly, Bracken and Brambles away which make for a more playable areas but also one which shouldn't create such slow play. We have also scraped some of the dead material (leaves, Bracken and grass) in areas to expose the Heather seed bed in the hope we will see some new Heather generation. In some areas this Heather seed bed is around 6 inches below the surface due to the build up over many years. To encourage more regeneration, it may require some more tree removal which in turn will shed more light onto the ground. This work would be far less noticeable as we can work on the trees behind the first row and therefore not effect the tree line at all.

Also, on the 5th hole we have taken a couple of Scotts Pines and Silver Birches down in front of the tee to allow the use of the righthand side of the tee through the golfing season. With this work completed it is wonderful to now see the beautiful suns rays shining though the trees and lighting up the 5th fairway.

All of this work has been completed in-house, was hard work and I hope we can agree it has been completed to a very high standard and so I would like to express my thanks to all the team.

Greens have wintered very well, we have had plenty of comments from our membership which is always nice to hear regarding their appearance, grass coverage and playing performance. From our point of view the most impressive quality this year has been the complete lack of disease scarring. This not only prevents any unsightly blemishes on the greens which would affect ball roll but mainly prevents us having to use expensive Fungicides. Our last Fungicide spray was at the end of October. We will most likely still need the use of Fungicides through the year, but if we can reduce the amount we use then it is better for our budget and also the wider environment. This can be put down to a few factors, we adjust our mowing height in accordance with the ground conditions which ensure we never scalp the greens, meaning we have maintained good grass coverage and so strong healthy grass able to withstand any disease pressure. We have also used fertiliser produces which are tested to reduce disease pressure on the greens by building strong barriers within the grass plant as well as promote a small amount of growth to help deal with golfing traffic. Simple tasks such as removing dew each and every morning help to keep disease at bay. With all this in mind it not just allows for some good winter surfaces but as we approach spring it means we are in a great position to produce some wonderful surfaces earlier in the season.

Calendars have been updated in the office and now show our working year with all important events marked.

Always an exciting time as the mind wonders towards Irrigation cycles, fine golfing weather and a terrible t-shirt tan. Just a few of this year's highlights include:

4 Counties Boys Tournament (11/4/23-13/4/23)

Club Championships (1/7/23-2/7/23)

Andy Nichols Scratch Open (3/9/23)

Dorset Ladies (12/9/23-13/9/23)

Always worth mentioning our Maintenance weeks 6/3/23-10/9/23 and 14/8/23-18/8/23 an update specifically on these will come out before the weeks work begins but we hope to follow a similar schedule as last year.

Graham Hastie
Course Manager



Vertidrainage Fairways continues, this is a very slow process but absolutely essential in order to improve our Fairways



Knighton Birdwatch will be back soon. John has been busy producing birdboxes which will go up all around the course. More on this will come in the near future



A familiar sight across the course in January and the reason we kept some of the course closed



The two pictures to the left show how dense the woodland was to the right of the 5th fairway. Very little light was able to reach the fairway aiding to the tunnel like effect while playing the hole.



Below shows the amount of work undertaken. This area will also have a mulching machine run through it to ensure all bracken and brambles are removed. These are likely to regrow through the season but we can keep them down and look at ways to eradicate them in the future

