



Knighton Heath Golf Club

Greens Report

June 2023

Graham Hastie
Course Manager

Greens

Maintenance carried out-

Greens cutting height now reduced to 4mm
Greens cut minimum 5 days a week
Greens rolled once or twice a week to ensure smooth surfaces
Greens brushed to clear dew on days of no cutting or rolling
Summer fertilizing regime continuing
Bio stimulants applied to improve soil structure and condition
Summer wetting agents applied to retain some moisture and prevent extreme dry down
Holes changed twice per week
Greens blown of leaves and debris every morning
Pitchmarks repaired when spotted
Greens spiked with 8mm tines to a depth of 200mm
Light top dressing applied to maintain firm and smooth surfaces

Course

Tees cut at 12mm at least twice per week
Approaches cut at 10mm at least twice per week
Daily bunker raking
Full rake, distribute sand in bunkers at least once a week
Full sand redistribution this month
Strimming of bunker edges as and when required
Strimming of yardage markers as and when required
Rough cut twice this month
Long rough maintained with our own Rytec cut and collect machine
Fairways cut four times this month
Semi rough cut once a week to encourage definition and improve presentation
Semi rough around greens cut twice per week to improve playing conditions
Blowing of all areas, greens, tees and areas on fairways
Wetting agent applied to approaches and tees
Lots of hand watering to top up overnight irrigation

Data-

Rainfall recorded:- 16.5mm (June average is 39.9mm)
Max temp:- 28.5°C (13/6/23) **Low Temp:-** 9.1°C (3/6/23)
Course closures:- 0

Weather update

First month of true summer really didn't disappoint. We moved into June on the back of some dry weather at the end of May and the mercury kept rising through the month of June with a maximum temperature recorded at 28.5°C. While this did give us some great golfing conditions it pushed us hard on water usage and highlighted the areas which are rather dry and in need of more than just some extra moisture. This could be top dressing with some compost to allow the soil to retain more moisture or adding some different grass types which are more drought tolerant into the area. These are processes which will take time and areas we will tackle as and when we can and when they become evident. One area we have tackled this year is the 4th approach. I can't speak for the years previous but last year and the start of this year showed signs of a drying strip and patch on the 4th approach. I'm led to believe the line across the approach is a drain line which dries quickly due to the drain pulling moisture down through the soil and away (as a drain is supposed to do of course). Earlier this month we hollow cored (physically removing a core of soil rather than the usual solid spiking which just creates a hole without pulling the middle out)



Shown to the left is an example (not from KHGC) of how the hollow coring process looks once coring has taken place. The soil cores are then swept up to leave the open holes.

On the 4th approach we filled these holes with our divot mix which consists of 60% sand, 40% compost. Sand is to ensure these areas don't become soft and the compost is to ensure the area can hold nutrients and moisture when required.

Once these holes were filled, we then overseeded the area and look forward to the results.

Weather at the end of the month was fairly similar other than the 12.5mm of rain we received on the 20th. Any rain is always welcome through the warmer months but this represented 76% of June's recorded rainfall. These heavy and sporadic rainfall events show large amounts but unfortunately when this amount falls so quickly, only a small amount of that actually penetrates the surface and becomes useful in the soil. Any of this rain which doesn't penetrate the ground where it lands will run to a low-lying area or already soft soil. Meaning dry areas are becoming drier and wet areas are becoming wetter. Again, and as always, we have some ways to rectify this cycle. Once we get a period of wetter weather at the end of the summer, we will begin to apply a wetting agent to our driest fairways-initially we will start on the 6th, top of 9th, 10th, second half of 15th, 16 and 17th. Applying this product will aid the rainfall to actually penetrate the upper layers of soil and move to a more useful area, hopefully allowing our fairways to withstand more of the drier conditions we will no doubt experience during the warmer months of 2024.

5th Green

Many have noticed and asked about what the plan is for the old 5th green. Another area which we feel can, should and will be a much more aesthetically pleasing and certainly more useful area. In an ideal world we will get this area to a standard where it can either be part of the existing green, be used as a spare green or maintained to be a turf nursery so that any damage out on the playing areas can be repaired quickly. This process will take time but I hope you can see that we are moving in the right direction already. So far, we have reduced the cutting height from 3.5" (rough height) down to 25mm (semi rough height), we will maintain at this height for the rest of this season to build up the strength of the turf then as we move into next season, we can think about getting that height down to 10mm (approach height) then if we are still happy with the thickness of the grass sward then we can look at lowering again down to greens height.

During this process we are top dressing this area on a regular basis as to make a smooth surface and to build up the best growing medium possible. A granular organic fertiliser has been applied and every time the tees or approaches are sprayed the old 5th green gets the washings sprayed on it also. When the irrigation system was installed, we had sprinklers added to this area and so they have been used as and when required. We hope you can see the improvement already and this little explanation shows what we are trying to achieve.

Bunkers

Through the month of June, we made a conscious effort to improve the sand distribution in our bunkers. I always find bunkers one of the hardest playing areas to get right. Some golfers prefer firm sand so they can pick a shot off the surface while some prefer soft sand, having too much sand runs the risk of too many plugged lies and I personally prefer firmer sand so my club doesn't get pulled down into the sand if it is too soft or deep, but that is just my personal preference and certainly not saying this is the way bunkers should be. We're happy to be guided by a majority as to how our bunkers play-within reason of budget constraints, weather and staffing numbers.

They require daily attention to keep them playable and realistically they require major sand redistribution on a weekly basis, this is very time consuming but a job we are trying to include more regularly on our morning set up. What seems to be the most common of scenarios in the bunkers is that sand is always moved from the face and raked towards the back edge of the bunker. As seen below.

This is the front righthand greenside bunker on the 4th with a large amount of sand built up at the very back edge of the bunker. If it is not clear, there is about 5 inches of sand build up, meaning we can move around 3 inches forwards.





Above shows that we are moving some of the excess sand from the back edge of the bunker towards the front and where a large number of balls come to rest.

When we are out raking now, we will take notice of where there is an abundance of sand in each individual bunker and also where there is a shortage of sand. We can then either push sand with the back of rakes or shovel this excess sand into the area which is too low. Some of the worst effected bunkers seem to be right hand green side of 4th, front right of 10th green, left of 11th green, front of 14th green, front right of 17th green and the bunker at the front of the 18th green. I believe these are regularly used bunkers and also bunkers where balls end up in a similar position regularly too. Once a shot has been played from these areas and sand then dragged back as a player leaves the bunker.

If it is possible for golfers to push the sand away from them and back into the bunker as they are leaving rather than dragging the sand behind them as they exit this would also help, we will continue to do our part but just some advice on the best way to rake a bunker.

Thanks as always for reading, look forward to seeing you all out enjoying the course in the near future.

Graham Hastie

Course manager



Another monthly aeration performed in order to keep pushing the greens to achieve current performance levels

- 8mm tine
- 150mm depth
- Very little surface disruption
- Greens iron behind to smooth



Another familiar sight for the entire month. With the northerly winds continuing through the days and into the nights we had to keep on top of certain areas with the hand hoses to ensure we don't lose any turf coverage

