Temporary greens. When any self respecting golf club member hears these two words its rather like Pavlov’s dog, but instead of producing saliva they instead generate copious quantities of bile and venom ready to be used in describing the feelings they have for the resident Head Greenkeeper and the use of the above mentioned “temps” as they are now universally known. Now perhaps I am tarring them all with the same brush but I have to confess that for many years before I was in the noble profession I too was one of these members. I therefore feel I can write such a statement with some degree of inside knowledge of the unenlightened club member. Yes, shamed though I am of my torrid and despicable past, I was one of the uneducated masses generally referred to by greenkeepers as people without fathers. I thought nothing of giving the Greens Chairman of my local club the benefit of my wisdom on the above subject, after all I was seen as possessing total knowledge about all things concerning greenkeeping.

In my defence however, I have to say that the temps in use at this particular course were of the uniform circular type, cut out in early November and measuring about 30 square metres. Add to that a one in two slope, a standard size and overgrown hole and a surface so littered with frozen worm casts that putting on them became more akin to pin ball than golf and one could see my concern on their use. As you can imagine my views on the subject have now taken on a different perspective and I feel I can write on the matter from both sides of the fence as it were. At Sludgecombe Pay and Play I am in the not uncommon position of having to cater for something in the vicinity of Sludgecombe and noted the astonishing condition of its greens. Apart from learning that this course was even busier than my own in that it catered for some 60,000 rounds a year, it was like mine, about four or five-years-old with greens constructed of a sandy growing medium. But where as mine had already started on the slippery slope to anna major dominance these were almost totally free of the wretched stuff. Desperate to find the secret that they were undoubtedly in possession of, I accosted a young greenkeeper who was innocently working nearby and subjected him to remorseful interrogation in an effort to learn the truth. Did they use some sort of chemical control? Were there armies of backup staff hand weeding the greens? Or were they employing some other unknown more sinister means?

Temporary solution

Maybe course architects and course owners alike should think about leaving room for a large temporary green on every hole within their design of a new course.

Well, to my disbelief, it was none of the above. It appeared it was all down to good greenkeeping. But as we continued on our way around the manicured turf we noticed their temporary green preparation was well under way but these were no ordinary temps. These were huge great things equal in size to the main greens and generally placed in the regularly mown approach areas. They were all top dressed with sand and a large hole was already in place. Maybe that was the secret I had been searching for. In vulnerable times remove all play from the main greens and bung them on the temps. With such large and well prepared alternatives the golfers are kept happy while the owners are kept equally happy as play is allowed to continue. The main greens remain allowed to continue. The main greens remain
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