Six of the country’s top men give their views on how course closures can affect their club

Course Closures

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE

1. Under what circumstances does your golf course close?

1. Severe flooding and heavy snow. Our course is in a valley and if we get excessive rain it tends to flood.

1. We close because of flooding or snow. Really the course closes itself in these circumstances. We go on temporary greens in very frosty weather.

1. Snow is the only reason we really close. The course is well-drained and takes water well, while we play on temporary greens in frost.

1. We close because of adverse weather conditions or waterlogging, snow and sometimes heavy frost. We have seven temporary greens on the back half of the course so members can play some golf when the rest of the course is closed.

1. It floods regularly, particularly at high tide when the sea comes over the boundary wall. We had 100 acres under a foot of water at one time.

1. We close mainly because of waterlogging as we are on heavy ground. Also because of snow and when we spray.
2. Is the decision left solely to you or do other people have an input?

2. It is mainly my decision, although I have to inform my greens committee Chairman about the closure.

2. It is solely my decision whether to close the course. I tell the professional who informs the General Manager, or vice versa.

2. It is solely up to me on whether we close. I am responsible to the Directors so I would inform one of them and also the pro shop.

2. Closure is left solely to me, or my Deputy if I am not there. We get no committee interference. In our case closure is self-explanatory.

2. I decide when we close because of flooding, but if it is 50-50 on a frosty day the Manager has an input and we decide between us.

3. On average how many days is your course closed per year?

3. We were closed for five days in 1999 and there have been times when snow has caused us to close for a week. I would say it is five to 10 days on average over the last eight years.

3. I remember we closed for five weeks because of heavy snow a few years back. I would say we are not normally closed for more than 10-12 days each year.

3. Our course is only three years old so we protect it whenever we can so that it doesn’t suffer. At the moment we are closed on average 25 days per year but I would hope that this will be reduced to 10-12 days when we get thoroughly established.

3. We closed for 17 days last year, but haven’t been closed yet this year. I would say 15 days is the average.

3. We closed for 17 days last year, but haven’t been closed yet this year. I would say 15 days is the average.

3. Because our course is on clay land it tends to get very wet after heavy rain and we have been closed 14 days during one year. Quite often we close a number of holes and leave some open.

3. We closed for seven days last year, but I would say the average is five to 10 days each year.

3. We were closed for five days in 1999 and there have been times when snow has caused us to close for a week. I would say it is five to 10 days on average over the last eight years.

3. Our course is only three years old so we protect it whenever we can so that it doesn’t suffer. At the moment we are closed on average 25 days per year but I would hope that this will be reduced to 10-12 days when we get thoroughly established.

4. What arrangements are made to inform the membership of a closure?

4. We have a general notice board next to the pro’s shop and near the 1st tee where we can slot in course closures and also when there is any disturbance such as spraying, verti-cutting or top dressing.

4. We have "Course Closed" signs at the entrance gate to the course in the car park; next to the pro shop and also at the back of the 1st tee. I also use a mobile phone to inform the pro shop.

4. We announce closures on the noticeboard in our car park near the changing rooms and also telephone the Seniors’ Captain on Mondays or the Lady Captain on Tuesdays if we have to close.

4. We inform the pro shop by 8am on the day of closure. Similarly if there is a need to ban trolleys or buggies.

4. We have a “Course Closed” sign at the entrance to the course and also halfway up the driveway. Reception is informed so that members can telephone in and be told of the situation.

4. We have a “Course Closed” sign at the entrance gate to the course in the car park; next to the pro shop and near the back of the 1st tee. I also use a mobile phone to inform the pro shop.

4. We have a “Course Closed” sign at the entrance to the course and also halfway up the driveway. Reception is informed so that members can telephone in and be told of the situation.

4. We have "Course Closed" signs at the entrance gate to the course in the car park; next to the pro shop and also at the back of the 1st tee. I also use a mobile phone to inform the pro shop.

5. Is there any one main reason why your course closes and if so what is planned to improve the situation?

5. Kingsknowe has a drainage programme for the next three years where we will upgrade everything. The low lying areas are verti-drained weekly and overall there is hardly a day goes by when we don’t verti-drain.

5. The main reason we close is flooding after heavy rain. We verti-drain a lot and have drained every bad spot on the course in the 10 years I have been Head Greenkeeper. But we are luckier than many because if we have had heavy rain in the morning and it stops by noon, then by 3pm it is playable once more because of the good drainage.

5. Snow is the only major problem, but we also occasionally close to do hollow-tining and top dressing for a day. When everything looks a bit tired in winter we might give one of the courses a rest for a day or two.

5. Flooding is the main reason why we would close. We have a schedule of aeration, solid tining and slitting in spring, summer and autumn to improve matters. This is done on a frequent basis, particularly on the walk-on, walk-off areas near the greens and tees.

5. Our course is very flat and it floods regularly near the top end close to the sea. We have 11 kilometres of dykes and have created 16 ponds in the eight years I have been there. We also have a new reservoir and we can pump 3,000 gallons of water a minute off the course. Occasionally we get tide-locked.

5. As I said our ground is very heavy and we are doing all we can to improve matters by installing an improved pipe drainage system. We also aerate, slit and solid tine as often as possible.