Vandalism – What can you do?

The day after Easter Monday Jon Selwood, Course Manager at Abridge Golf Club in Essex, returned to work after his Easter break. It started off as a normal day but during the afternoon Jon walking past the 13th green, the nearest to his sheds, noticed a zigzag strip of discoured grass right through the heart of the putting surface, one end to the other. A closer inspection made it obvious that the green had been sprayed with an unknown chemical which turned out to be paraquat. Jon hoped that as the green was quite close to a country lane with easy access to the course that the 13th was the sole victim of the attack.

Jon and his Deputy, Geoff Smith, did a tour of the course and the full extent of the attack was slowly revealed - 11 greens, seven tees and three approaches plus various other areas of fine turf on the golf course had been attacked by a person or persons unknown using a knapsack sprayer full of paraquat. Generally all of the spraying had been done in a zigzag although some across the tees were in a broad straight line. Was it responsible for this attack? The fact that whoever did it was well equipped and without some knowledge of the equipment and the chemical he was using probably rules out "spur of the moment" vandalisms finishing up a good night out on the beer. But, of course, the deeper that you look into this the more sinister it becomes.

Abridge Golf Club is a Jewish Club and last year's vandalism may or may not have been relevant. Ever since 1933 it has been the passion of golf into a career. The Club is about to undergo considerable changes which have been widely reported in the local press. A deal has been struck with Tottenham Hotspur Football Club whereby Spurs will be entitled to 35 Corporate Members. Spurs have bought land adjoining the Golf Club and are planning to build new training grounds, soccer academy and other facilities there. The name of the Golf Club is to be changed to Tottenham and Abridge Golf Club and the Club will receive a substantial amount of money. These changes alone provide a motive for another several thousand rival football fans!

There are also other possibilities. The lies go on and on. Not knowing the source of this attack on the course is one of the most worrying to the Course Manager. Will they strike again? When will they strike next time? It is impossible to know the answers and almost impossible to guard against any future attack. As all connected with golf realise a golf course in a rural area is an extremely valuable resource, a very tidy target for delinquents.

Jon has been Course Manager at Abridge for five years. Each year the standard of the golf course has improved and it would be fair to say that it was following a "lottenable" period for the FC. Golf Day at the club a year or so ago that the Football Club including the Manager, Glen Hoddle, were so impressed with the course that negotiations were started culminating in the current deal between the two clubs.

Technically Jon is qualified and experienced enough to get his course back in pristine condition as quickly as possible. If this course doesn't survive some of the key factors to the fact that the Football Club including the Manager, Glen Hoddle, were so impressed with the course that negotiations were started culminating in the current deal between the two clubs.

In defence of the Higher National Diploma

With reference to the April issue of the magazine. I was pleased to read the letter written by Ian Cheifley. I fully endorse Ian's comments and wish to portray my experience in trying to fulfil an ambition of making my passion of golf into a career.

At the age of 18 and on completion of my A levels I attended a full-time Higher National Diploma in Golf Course Management at Canning College. The three-year course consisted of six monthly study periods followed by an assessment period of four months on the GC course to gain valuable practical experience. In reading Ian's letter it is disappointing to learn that BIGGA does not offer this course. Maybe I should not have expected to be offered something on the same level.

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