Turf Science goes live

Over 100 greenkeepers, turf managers, agronomists and golf club managers attended the first ever Turf Science Live, held at the STRI at the end of July. The event, included an innovative approach of live demonstrations of some of the latest developments in turf agronomy.

Organised by Syngenta, Botham Professional and STRI, the practical topics covered ranged from surface conversion techniques, demonstrated by Keith Kentett, to establish desirable fine grass species on greens, to management of environmental features around the golf course for increased biodiversity value and application techniques to get spray treatments on target. The new format gave the opportunity for small groups of greenkeepers to engage in active discussion and debate on the merits and potential for different techniques.

Six Stations were set up on the trial fields with another in the STRI laboratory with a huge magnapop acting as base and catering centre.

The weather held off but for a small shower and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day which featured several breaks between Station visits and opportunity to network with colleagues.

Hatcher at Headland

Headland has boosted its technical sales force with the addition of Darren Hatcher, who takes responsibility for serving current customers and developing new business in Hampshire, Dorset and West Sussex.

Following 10 years in greenkeeping, and the post of Course Manager at Alvechurch Golf Club in Hampshire, Darren and his wife took a year out to travel the world, before joining Headland’s distributors, Sheriffs. Amenity for six years on the area’s covering now.

“I was familiar with Headland products and wanted to focus exclusively on them,” he explained.

“I also wanted to become more knowledgeable technically and Headland is one of the most agronomically advanced companies around.”

Headland’s Sales Director Andy Russell says that Darren’s greenkeeping and on-the-road experience make him the ideal candidate for the job.

Turf Science Live

This year’s Captain at Chippenham, Quentin Grandison, has served on the Greens’ Sub Committee for four years and it was his idea to run the Sealey’s Revenge - a fun competition, allowing me to set up the course just the way I wanted it!

After several meetings when some of my more extreme ideas were discounted, we came up with a full plan. The surprise for me was that Q insisted I play in the competition and present the prizes. That would give our members the opportunity to “abuse” me face to face rather than through the committee.

The course was set up with:

- Plas on steep slopes with greens rolled up to ten times (we managed to get several up to 18-19 on the stimp meter). Some were so severe I had to put in a winter hole cup as it was the only way to get the ball in the hole.
- We placed huge logs on the 2nd green
- We also installed two large Blue tarpaulins in the 18th bunker to make two ponds, complete with yellow plastic ducks.
- The 12 hole (Par 3) is near our shed
- Heads cut on the edge of the bunkers, holes cut on temporary greens at fairway
- We placed tee markers behind trees
- Holes cut on collars so they had to putt back dressed in a high-viz jacket, helmet and ear defenders!

We raised £1,000 on the day for a very worthy cause under the circumstances.

Most importantly we designated the competition as a charity day for Help for Heroes. Twelve soldiers back from Afghanistan played, and stayed for prize giving to thank the Club for our support. We raised £1,000 on the day for a very worthy cause with support from the local press.

The downside is that they want me to do it again next year so I’ll need to invent alternative way of ruining their game.

Chris Sealey

NEW GTC QUALITY ASSURED SCHEME ON THE WAY

The GTC has contacted its current network of Approved Training Providers, mainly Further Education colleges, inviting them to apply to join a new GTC Quality Assured Scheme.

Following the recent announcement that an agreement has been reached with City & Guilds Land Based Services (formerly NPTC) to offer from 1st September 2010, jointly branded Work Based Diplomas (WBD’s), the GTC is now looking to direct golf club employers and greenkeepers to Centres that have met a criteria designed to ensure quality education and training programmes match the standards within the Work Based Diplomas.

The GTC is currently looking to have a similar agreement with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

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