France boasts some long-established golf clubs in superb settings which have large memberships but also attract visitors and holidaymakers. As a result, these courses are worked extremely hard and many experience long, hot, dry summers. This, together with visitors and holidaymakers.

Thanks to the continuing strength of the Euro, French Clubs are taking advantage of British specialist turfcare companies to make improvements to their courses.

French sand, kilns dried to ensure complete hole-filling. The operation on La Vallée was similar, with three aerators and two SQRLs. Despite being hampered by fine greens, requiring a late start in exceedingly cold weather, the French greenkeepers were extremely supportive.

"Although we injected 60 tonnes of material, the job was very smooth and efficient," reported Head Greenkeeper, Guillaume Girard.

It was felt that the local sand used in the first job had been a little fine, so for La Vallée, the backfill was imported from Bespoke Blending and Bagging(HBH) in the UK. It was a 95:5 mix of 80Kilo Dryed sand and Sportstite, which has the additional benefit of retaining water in the rootzone - important in France where water used for the irrigation of sports grounds is rationed.

"The results have been very satisfactory," said Jean-Franck.

"At La Boulie there has been a nett improvement in the drainage level and also from being able to introduce sand into these clay greens. This has resulted in a 'tightening' of the greens and they are now much firmer with better grass growth. The greens are already firmer and draining faster."

Golf de Chaumont is another club, which decided to carry out work this summer. The club offers two courses, the elder, is 100 years old. There is a team of 15 greenkeepers and normal turf care includes verti-draining and the John Deere Aero Spike which goes to a depth of 3-4cms.

"Although our soil conditions are good, greens are constructed from Loire Sand to a variable depth," said Director Remy Dorbeau.

"We had a problem with water not moving off the surface because, at 30cm down, there is a layer of chalk and a lot of organic matter. We needed to get down to the gravel drainage layer at 30cm deep which is why we used Drill n Fill."

The whole of the old course was treated, grass growth has already improved and surface drainage performing well after the first rain of autumn.

Golf de Pourqueux is in the environs of Paris, which offers 27 holes - three sets of nine which are interchangeable and so offer different 18 hole challenges each week. Superintendent Jean-Marie Pardo contacted neighbours Chaumont about the deep aerator and backfill process, liked what he saw and booked four greens, 20,000m², for treatment.

"We had been struggling with compaction and poor drainage because we have old clay push-up greens."

Jean-Marie also decided to import the sand/Sportstite backfill from the UK.

"It was of a higher quality and more suitable grade than I could get locally," he said.

"Two weeks after the treatment, we had heavy rain and could see that the treated greens were firmer and draining more quickly," said Jean-Marie.

Another club, close to Paris, Golf St Cloud, can lay claim to a bloody battle having taken place on the site of the now 15th green and a view of the Eiffel Tower from the 14th. Course construction at St Cloud is again push-up greens out of clay, topped with fine native soils. As with the other courses, Director Denis Couture was experiencing slow drainage off the greens due mainly to build-up of top dressing on top of the clay base as our photo shows, heavy rain had the entire older course, Vert, Drill n Filled this summer and has booked in the Jaune course for autumn.

"I have seen good results from this process at other clubs and feel sure it will be the answer for us. Paris has experienced some very hot summer weather recently and the greens have had a lot of use, so draining down to around 30cm, completely replacing the rootzone and leaving a network of ducts will aid water percolation and improve grass growth," he said.
France boosts some long-established golf clubs in superb settings which have large memberships but also attract visitors and holidaymakers. As a result, these courses are worked extremely hard and many experience long, hot, dry summers. This, together with the topographical features such as trees and mountains which make the courses so attractive, add to the courses’ appeal and make the courses so popular. Such as trees and mountains, topographical features, which have large memberships, worked extremely hard, and as a result, the courses are appealing and attract visitors and holidaymakers. This, together with the topographical features such as trees and mountains, which make the courses so attractive, add to the courses’ appeal and make them popular.

Manager’s challenge.

Attraction, poor grass growth and old push-up greens out of clay mean that surface drainage is a problem. And increasingly, French clubs are turning to specialist aerators for help. Their machines can establish drainage ducts to a depth of 31cm and backfill with a sand/soil amendment mixture to improve rootzone and allow surface water to percolate through to the drainage layer below. Golf de Chantilly is another club, which decided to carry out work this summer. The club offers two courses, the older, is 100 years old. There is a team of 15 greenkeepers and normal turf care includes verti-draining and the John Deere Aqua Spike which goes to a depth of 3-4cms.

"Although our soil conditions are good, greens are constructed from Laire Sand to a variable depth," said Director Remy Dorbeau. "We had a problem with water not moving off the surface because, at 10cm down, there is a layer of clay and a lot of organic matter. We needed to get down to the gravel drainage layer at 30cm deep which is why we used Drill n Fill."

The whole of the old course was treated, grass growth has already improved and surface drainage performing well after the first rain of autumn.

Golf de Pourqueux is in the environs of Paris, which offers 27 holes -three sets of nine which are interchangeable and so offer different 18 hole challenges each week. Superintendent Jean-Marie Pardo contacted neighbours Chantilly about the deep aeration and backfill process, liked what he saw and booked four greens, 2000m² for treatment.

"I have seen good results from this process at other clubs and feel sure it will be the answer for us. Paris has experienced some very hot summers recently and the greens have had a lot of use, so drilling down to around 30cm, completely replacing the rootzone and leaving a network of ducts will aid water percolation and improve grass growth,” he said.