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Falkenstein is one of the older courses in Germany as it was founded in 1906, but the course itself is somewhat younger. It was constructed by Colt and Harrison between 1928 and 1929.

Head Greenkeeper, Master Greenkeeper and BIGGA member Norbert Lischka has a long relationship with Falkenstein – nearly 20 years. When he joined he found a club debating many issues. The members were not satisfied with the push-up greens that consisted mainly of annual meadowgrass, although this was not the main problem which was bad drainage of the greens.

The greens had been built using existing soil with a very poor filtration rate. Norbert said: “It was three to five litres of filtration an hour at most. Several years ago some meetings were held in which the members were presented with the choice of a complete renovation or a partial improvement. The advisors we had at that time were split – two were in favour of a total reconstruction and two advised a gradual improvement!”

The members opted for a more gradual approach, for a number of reasons. The greens at Falkenstein are so uniquely undulating that this would have been lost during a complete overhaul. Furthermore this would have meant a lot of inconvenience for the golfers for a number of years.

APPROACH

Approaching the problems meant a combination of ‘drill and fill’, improving the light and air conditions around the greens and a sophisticated feeding programme for the grasses on the greens. Norbert also intensively tested the best combination of grasses in the woodland area of Falkenstein.

The greens were 100% annual meadowgrass with all its disadvantages, made worse by the combination of poor infiltration and the absence of significant light and air.

He said: “Initially I tried to take control with the traditional bent plus fescue combination. After some years it became evident this had not been successful. The main cause was the lack of sufficient...”
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