



Forward speed can be absolutely critical for some jobs, so it is important to choose a tractor with the ability to deliver the right pace at rated PTO speeds. Equipment manufacturers can often suggest a good tractor for the job.



The dual range hydrostatic 23hp Iseki TXG23 from Ransomes Jacobsen just shows how much you can do with a modern compact; a detachable front loader can be fitted with the front linkage still attached.

FEATURE



MF 1547 with Dyna QPS transmission is ideal for course operations such as deep-tine aeration, mowing, trailer hauling and front loader work.



Developing 29hp, the Iseki TH4290 is another hydrostatic drive model that can readily be specified with a mid-mount deck. Hydrostatic transmissions are ideal for mowing work.



(MF Dyna QPS dash)  
MF tractors with Dyna QPS transmission have an enhanced dash panel with combined digital/analog read-out.



Developing 44hp, the John Deere 3720 has an easy to use hydrostatic transmission. A tractor of this type can be used with fixed speed kit, but a manual shift is often the preferred choice for this type of work.



(JD Power Reverser)  
A shuttle forward and reverse lever makes changing direction much faster and is recommended for front loader work. The Power Reverser power shuttle on John Deere tractors allows the shift back and forth to be made without using the clutch.

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NEW

make, model and possibly transmission options selected. It pays to have a speed that will go a bit lower than is normally required to allow for a degree of flexibility

Next up is synchromesh. It tends to be assumed that most modern mechanical transmission tractors will have synchromesh as standard. This is not necessarily the case, simple 'crash' boxes still coming as part of the standard package on many sub-40hp tractor models.

Following on from this is whether a forward/reverse shuttle is offered. These allow the tractor to typically switch between a speed-matched forward and reverse ratio using a shuttle simple lever and the clutch pedal. A power shuttle will do the same, but electro-hydraulics take over the de-clutching to allow the shuttle lever to be used on its own. This can help speed manoeuvring and is a real plus when using a front loader.

Sticking with mechanical transmissions, there are models that offer a mechanical 'splitter'. This essentially allows the speeds of the selected ratio to be reduced by perhaps 15 to 20%. This can be useful when working a machine in changing conditions, but may not be a feature that will be of great value on a golf course. The exception may be when a desired ratio proves just a little too fast when doing the same job but at different times of the year; the selected ratio is fine when working in normal or damp conditions but the split ratio may be the right speed when it is really dry.

With hydrostatic drive, matters are typically less complex. Most professional compact tractor models will offer two- or three-ranges, these essentially allowing the speed to be varied between say 0-15kph, 0-20kph or 0-25kph, the lower ratio offering more flexibility when operating at lower speeds. For mowing, a hydrostatic drive is widely accepted as the best bet for varied conditions, the easy ability to slow the machine without reducing the engine or PTO speed having obvious advantages.

One alternative to simple mechanical and full hydrostatic transmissions is Massey Ferguson's Dyna QPS transmission. Available as an option on

its MF 1533 (32 DIN hp), MF 1540 (38 DIN hp) and MF 1547 (46 DIN hp) compact tractor models, the 12x12 transmission incorporates both Power Shuttle and Power Shift.

The Power Shift function enables clutchless change-on-the-move in each of the gearbox's three ranges. All the operator has to do is change up or down the four speeds within the range using switches mounted on the side of the range-change lever. This can be really handy when there is a need to increase or decrease the working speed without having to lose momentum to change gear. This level of mechanical transmission sophistication is rare in the sub-45hp sector.

With a number of 'entry level' compacts now arriving in the UK, it may be tempting to go for something with a low sticker price. In terms of what a tractor will do, some of the 'cheap and cheerful' offerings are actually not a bad investment. The problem can be that these tractors often do not have the refinements that many users now take for granted. These can include heavier than expected operating controls, a reluctance to shift gears, particularly when cold, front-driven axles with differentials that can prove a bit 'sticky', this in turn leading to tyre scrub in a tight turn and less than wonderful rear lift or oil flow and pressure capacity.

More important is the spread of available speeds with a manual transmission. If you cannot match the tractor to the jobs you need it to do, it follows the tractor is not the right one, regardless of how much was saved by buying it over a 'premium' tractor brand. You get what you pay for.

As always, the best thing to do is to take your time choosing the tractor you need and specifying the right transmission for the job. By the time a set of nice turf friendly tyres are fitted, even a cheap tractor can start to look expensive.

As a tractor will have to earn its keep over perhaps ten years or more, it is well worth holding out not just for the right transmission spec but also for what you want in terms of comfort, ease of operation and good local support.





# STUDENT LIFE: CAREER PROGRESSION

As part of GI's student-based series of articles, Melissa Jones paid a visit to Myerscough College, just outside Preston

After a rather windy journey along the M62, making my way to Bilbottle, I was greeted by the cheery face of Stewart Brown, Team Leader for Sportsturf at Myerscough College. With a history of grounds management and teaching, Stewart actually studied at Myerscough in the early 80s when, as he puts it "sportsturf education" was pioneered by such lecturers as, Martyn Jones, and John Hacker.



With the growing popularity of both amateur and professional sport, turf management has now become big business and Stewart, whose first teaching job took him to Otley College in Suffolk, then on to Writtle, and eventually to Myerscough in 2006, was keen to open my eyes to the facilities that the college has to offer.

The college, with 10 dedicated sportsturf members of staff, offers a range of sportsturf qualifications from further to higher education. Available as either full or part time options are: Level 1 Introductory Diploma in Sportsturf; Level 2 National Certificate in Sportsturf and a Level 3 National Diploma. Offering the option of online study too are the Foundation Degree Sportsturf; BSc Hons Turfgrass Science; and new for 2008 is the Foundation Degree in Sportsturf and Golf Course Management, a course of which Stewart seems particularly proud.

"We have over 300 students studying sportsturf and the bulk of them want to be golf greenkeepers, we've recognised this and come up with

a course that links sportsturf with golf course management, providing aspiring course managers with human resource, event management and marketing skills."

The Foundation Degree in Sportsturf and Golf Course Management has been designed to enable students to achieve a higher education qualification, with a practical focus specifically for those who want to pursue a career in golf course management. It has been developed in partnership with industry experts and is an ideal choice of qualification for people already working in the industry, as well as those without experience hoping to start a career in Sportsturf and Golf Course Management.

All students will gain the relevant practical and technical skills needed for positions of responsibility. Subjects studied include golf course design and management, cultural practices in sportsturf, construction irrigation and drainage, golf club operations, human resource management and business planning.

The acquisition of practical skills and experience is an integral part of the Foundation Degree course. Full-time students can undertake periods of industry experience at a range of prestigious golf clubs in addition to the option of taking a 12-month paid work placement should you wish to further develop your skills.

Myerscough's sportsturf courses are designed to equip you with the necessary skills to build, maintain and manage quality surfaces to high specification standards. Students learn the science behind how grasses grow, as well as soils, rootzones, drainage and a wide range of cultural maintenance practices. You will gain an understanding of the demands of sport and what players need or expect from turf surfaces. You will also be taught how to provide these conditions all year round and in all weather conditions.



Work-based courses have become another viable option for greenkeepers already working at a club. Greenkeepers nationwide are able to study for NVQ 2, 3 and 4 from home keeping in contact with the course assessors. Training is designed for employees in the sportsturf industry who wish to gain competence in their operations and a gain a broad understanding of sportsturf operations as well as technical updating.

The "BSc Hons Turfgrass Science is the only degree in Europe you can study completely online," claims Stewart.

"Our online provision has proved to be a big success story so far and is the leading provision of its type today in the UK and Europe. It has been particularly suitable for those in the industry that have come up through NVQ 2 and 3 who then find they want to do something at a higher level. This is particularly true for The FdSc Sportsturf course which is also available completely online.

"We currently have in excess of 100 students from such places as Spain, Japan, Scotland and Ireland studying online. The courses are completed in much the same way as Open University, with correspondence being via email, post etc."

The college itself is set in 600 hectares of open, green surroundings and boasts a 9-hole golf course, putting green, driving range, pro shop and eight winter sports pitches. "The golf course and pitches are first and foremost used as a practical resource to help students develop their skills, but they also bring in funding with the course having over 400 members and pitches raising money through hire," explained Stewart.

The college provides a wide range of maintenance equipment and tools and students get the chance to operate sophisticated machinery and equipment and to develop the practical skills needed to maintain, present and repair sportsturf surfaces.

"We work closely with Ransomes Jacobsen, Kubota, and most recently Bernhard's & Co. The companies teach us about their machinery and provide us with the latest kit – an invaluable teaching resource - and in return, we are working on providing agronomy training for their sales reps, with the hope that they will start in July," Stewart informed me.

The last piece of the puzzle as far as equipment goes for Myerscough, is a new irrigation system. Stewart is looking into setting this up at present.

The most popular team and individual sports played outside today involve the use of turf or grass surfaces. There are fantastic opportunities both in the UK and overseas for people who are trained and qualified in sportsturf. Careers exist at all levels, from assistant groundspersons and greenkeepers to managers of international sports facilities such as Premiership Football Clubs and major elite Golf Courses.

For more information on courses at Myerscough College and how to apply call: 01995 642211 email: enquiries@myerscough.ac.uk or visit: www.myerscough.ac.uk

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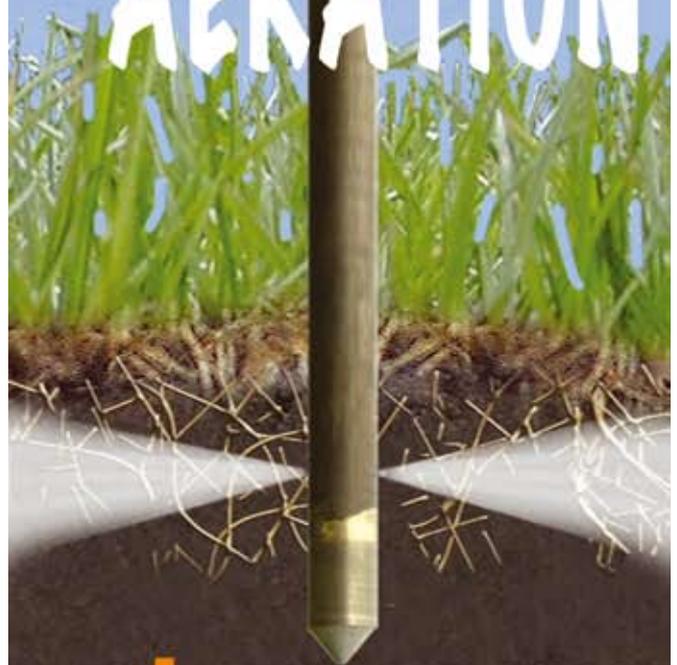
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# IT CAN BE DONE!

*In a series of articles following the development of a new golf course, currently under construction in the South East of England, Peter Jones looks at the decision making processes involved in getting a new golf course established, so that it has every possible chance of being a financial success.*

**When the R&A produced its “Demand for Golf” document in the mid ‘80s and suggested that hundreds of new golf courses were needed in the UK to satisfy demand, the floodgates opened and dozens of new golf courses sprung up all around the country. It was a boom time for new jobs in Greenkeeping, and also for sales companies, but many of the hopeful entrepreneurs that had taken the plunge to move into the golf business, had to sit back and face the grim realisation that the initial targets had been and overly optimistic and too generalised, and there simply weren’t enough golfers to go round.**

Many of the new golf clubs went on the market and some were bought and sold once, twice and even three times before owners could turn the business into a going concern. The impact on many of the greenkeepers employed on these courses was often a tightening of the purse strings, as prudent owners attempted to make the clubs viable.

So who in their right mind would consider developing a new golf course today, especially around the M25 corridor, where golf courses are already in abundance?

And if there were such people, what sort of golf course would they choose to build? A Pay & Play? A Private members course? A 6-hole, a 9-hole, or an 18 hole course?

A long course? A short course? A simple course with plain, natural features, or a dramatic course with man-made lakes, eye-catching mounds and bunkers?

If you, (the Greenkeeper) were a stakeholder of the business, and involved in the decision making process, what decisions would you try to influence to make the course a success in financial terms?

Would you want a lot of staff and very high standards of presentation? Or would you choose fewer staff, safe in the knowledge that their jobs would be “safe”?

How about your choice of grasses on the greens, tees, fairways, and roughs? Would you choose Bentgrass on the greens? If so, would it be Creeping Bent? Colonial Bent? Velvet Bent? Some may even consider dwarf Ryegrass; – would you?

If fairway irrigation was not a financial option, would you choose ryegrass on the fairways to help cope with wear?

Or would you be determined to choose a seed mixture that suited the natural environment and natural soil in textbook fashion, irrespective of what its performance characteristics?

And when came to working out your maintenance regime, what would be your recommendation be to streamline your costs for the future success of the business? Long rough, or no rough between fairways? Semi-rough or not? Fast greens (8’6” for regular play) or Medium pace greens? (6’6” for regular play). One hole cup on the green, moved three times a week? Or two hole cups on the green, moved twice a week?

All these factors and many, many more are open for discussion when embarking on a new golf course project, and the decisions that are made could make all the difference in the world to the cost of maintaining the course, and whether the golfer enjoys their game of golf.

Over the next few months, a series of articles will follow the development of Clandon Park Golf Club, a new Pay & Play course under construction near Guildford, and sandwiched in between two other existing 18 hole courses, one of which is just the other side of the fence.



The site of the 1st green, which was arable farmland.

It is of course possible that this may be one of the last ever new courses to be built in the South East, (with the exception of those linked to new housing developments) and it will therefore be interesting to see how it fairs commercially, and what it will have to offer golfers in terms of fun on the golf course, and value for money.

Planning permission for the course was approved several years ago, but it is only last year that the planning conditions were signed off and the project was given the go-ahead.

A total ban on the felling of trees on part of the site which was originally earmarked for the course meant that another piece of adjoining land had to be utilised instead. An old flint & chalk quarry was therefore taken into the curtilage of the site to provide sufficient acreage for the course, and with it came a string of environmental issues and what seemed like a mountain of paperwork was required by the Local Borough Council that must have taken the felling of a small rainforest to provide the paper they needed.



Quarry floor – Protected area. Home of the Cudweed – Globally endangered plant



Tree protection fences and Ivy covering trees

### The Quarry

The inclusion of the Quarry area into the golf course allowed two holes to be designed providing interesting and unique views of the flint seams in the Quarry face and the chalk floor, plus the opportunity to have a tee shot which plays over a nine metre high sheer face to an elevated fairway landing area in the middle of the quarry. The majority of the quarry, including the sheer faces, was found to be colonised by butterfly bushes (*Buddleia* spp.) providing cover for resident rabbits and deer, and an embankment on the south facing edge of the quarry was found to be the home to Badgers with a fairly extensive sett with five entrance holes. No work would be permitted near here either.

The floor of the Quarry was also found to be the home to the Broad-leaved cudweed (*Filago pyramidata*) a globally threatened/declining plant categorised as 'Endangered'. Large areas of the quarry floor were deemed as Protected Areas, and no work would be permitted near here.

The local 'Bat man' was deployed to visit the site and carry out a bat survey on the trees before work could start. No bats were detected, but an instruction was given that work must stop if a bat was found to be roosting behind the ivy on the trees earmarked for felling.

Protection of existing trees during the construction phase was a prerequisite which involved several kilometres of protective fencing to be erected before a start could be made on site.

Closer inspection of the trees found that some had decayed inside, and these were felled. A question as to whether the Ivy was to blame for the condition of the trees was asked, and remains open for debate.

Last but not least, the local archaeology 'Time-team' were deployed to check the site for traces of ancient activity and valuable artifacts. It was determined by another local authority department that topsoil would be removed from test strips amounting to no more than 4% of the site, and an estimate of some £7,500 was budgeted for to carry out the work. The final bill exceeded £50k, which is possibly another reason why there may not be any new golf courses built around the Guildford area in the future.

In the next issue, the article will look at the decisions made in relation to the design, agronomy, and future maintenance objectives for the course to help ensure the financial success of the project.

These will include: The construction budget, maintenance budget, choice of grasses, ease and speed of play, ease of maintenance, the Quarry, landscape design, soil type, flora & fauna, & conservation requirements



Archaeology investigations

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