Imagine then the undertaking of maintaining 85 greens at a world class golf resort. By “world class” I mean a bucket list caliber golf experience. No pressure, right? How about then adding a 2.3 acre putting course, roughly the equivalent to another 18 putting surfaces to the mix? That’s what Ken Nice, director of agronomy at Bandon Dunes, Bandon, Ore., and his team do everyday.

Bandon Dunes Golf Resort is composed of four 18-hole courses, Bandon Dunes, Pacific Dunes, Bandon Trails and Old Macdonald, along with a 13-hole par 3 course, Bandon Preserve, all designed by some of the leading practitioners of modern minimalist architecture. It is also now the home of the Punchbowl putting course, which will officially open in May after a soft opening this past fall.

The Punchbowl is the brainchild of Bandon founder and owner Mike Keiser, who enlisted architects Tom Doak as the designer and Jim Urbina as the shaper.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Ken Nice about the maintenance regime they have implemented for the Punchbowl, as well as some of the design features.

The Punchbowl is grassed with a creeping red and Chewing fine fescue blend on native sand. Mowing heights for the entire 2.3 acre complex are planned to be in the .200 to .250 range as the slope and contours of the green will not require speeds above eight on the Stimpmeter to be challenging and also to maintain the health of the fine fescue. Speeds in excess of this target will, as you would imagine, likely result in the loss of some of the most interesting pin locations.

The entire complex is mowed with a flex head triplex and rolled with a side-to-side roller. Mowing and rolling take approximately two hours to complete for a total of four man hours. The common practices of alternating mowing and rolling, as well as target rolling (only rolling the area in proximity to the cups) will be employed when appropriate, based on conditions.

The complex is topdressed every three weeks at a rate that matches the current growth. Native sand that is mined on-site is used. As with the other greens at Bandon, the surface will be regularly cultivated, however no hollow tining will be performed due to the native sand construction, regular top dressing and low thatch production of fine fescue. Cultivation practices will include slicing, solid tining and verti-draining.

The routing of the putting course will change each day.

The Punchbowl is the

18 greens in 1

It’s been said that putting green management is the most advanced form of agriculture that exists. That’s probably true when you consider all the variables that we attempt to control and balance with golfer expectations for firm and fast, yet receptive and true putting surfaces.

"If you find yourself complaining that your putting green is too big, I suppose you can be thankful that it’s not 2.3 acres.”

MATT NEFF, assistant superintendent, Wedgewood G&CC, Powell, Ohio