

Adjusting Course Conditions To Complement A Restoration

Waverley Country Club
Brian Koffler, superintendent

Portland, Ore. 97222

Issue

Waverley Country Club was built on the shores of the Willamette River in 1898 and the club places great value on the long history and classic design of their golf course. However, architectural modifications and tree planting had changed the course considerably over the years. In 2011, the membership decided to restore the golf course. While most of the greens were not changed, architect Gil Hanse restored the bunkers to the style and location seen in aerial photos taken during the early 1930s. He also added tees to restore shot values and make the course more enjoyable for golfers of all skill levels. Following the successful golf course restoration, the club asked Superintendent Brian Koffler to establish firm and fast playing conditions that would complement the restored golf course and fit with the club's Scottish history.

Action

Two major steps were taken to improve turf health and provide firm playing conditions. First was addressing the issue of excessive tree planting. The golf course had been overrun with hundreds of non-native trees that blocked beautiful vistas across the course and to the nearby river. The trees also created issues of shade and air movement, causing areas of the course to remain soft and wet. Numerous large trees were removed in an effort to open the course and improve turf conditions.



Excessive tree planting had negative effects on playability and turf conditions at Waverley Country Club.

The second important step was focusing maintenance programs on providing firm and fast playing conditions. This involved increasing aeration and fairway topdressing, reducing

irrigation, expanding the use of wetting agents, and utilizing hand watering. The goal of these programs was to provide firm conditions from tee to green.

Results

Removing trees and working to provide firm and fast conditions has been very successful at Waverley. Turf health has improved considerably following selective tree removals. Areas that struggled because of excess shade are now healthy and firm. In addition, reducing root competition has helped decrease overall water use.

Focusing on firm and fast conditions has improved the playability of the course and complements the goals of the restoration project. Since the program was initiated, overall water use has decreased by 11 percent, the equivalent of 2.7 million gallons. Mr. Koffler reports that the membership appreciates the changes and enjoys the additional roll on their shots, especially those that bounce and release onto the putting surfaces. Most importantly, restoring firm and fast conditions has allowed the membership to turn back the clock and enjoy the ground game that was very much part of the original design.



Tree removal was an important part of the restoration project. It helped restore the playability, views and firm conditions that are integral parts of the design.