

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

NEW HIGH PERFORMANCE TURF SYSTEM

A NATURAL system with outstanding wear properties has been developed by BritAg Industries Ltd, a subsidiary of ICI.

The system, called Tecturf, is an important new product as golf courses everywhere face increasingly heavy usage.

Tecturf consists of a sand and fertiliser growing medium which is reinforced by small pieces of plastic mesh. The mesh is mixed within growing medium and forms an interlocking matrix through which the grass roots can grow. This growing medium - 100mm thick for golf courses - is laid on a well drained nutrient holding base. It is then turfed or seeded as required.

The design of the Tecturf system brings improvements in three ways: better drainage, greater resistance to damage in the root zone, and almost nil compaction. This results in stronger root growth and a top surface which recovers from heavy wear far more quickly than conventional turf. For example, divot marks are smaller and show a 80 per cent recovery without divot replacement within eight days.

Once installed, Tecturf requires minimal maintenance, no spiking, verti-cutting or sanding, just normal mowing and top dressing.

The structural properties of Tecturf are

particularly suitable for constructing spectator banking. An angle of repose up to 72 degrees can be achieved with complete stability - there will be no slumping or erosion.

Tecturf is based on patents originally conceived for civil engineering purposes by Netlon Ltd, a plastics technology company. ICI has used its own extensive expertise to develop appropriate grass varieties and fertiliser regimes to develop the system for the leisure industry.

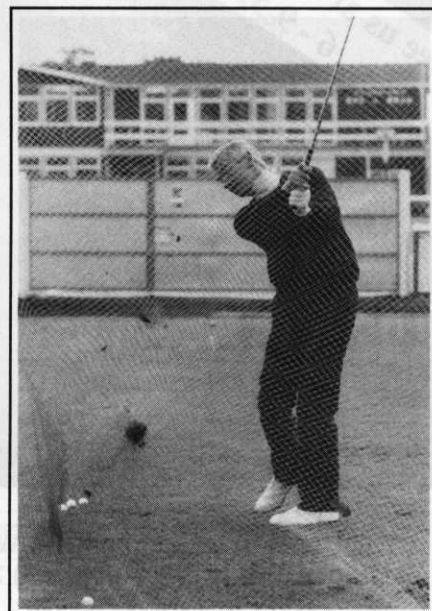
Special machines have been developed to mix the mesh, sand and other materials together and then lay the mixture on the sub-base. Variable proportions of these components are used, depending on the application involved. The thickness of this composite layer is also designed to meet the requirements of each project.

The top layer of the Tecturf system is high-quality grass selected from ICI's extensive list of varieties to suit customers' requirements.

Costs depend on the type of contract involved and the condition of the proposed site. An all-in contract would normally cost about £25 per m² - cheaper than most artificial tees and far more attractive.

A major new development planned for Weston Hall, Crewe, will be the first new golf course in the world to be designed with Tecturf surfaces.

The new course is to be developed by Watco Ltd., a consortium comprising the



Ex-Ryder Cup golfer Brian Waite plays off the Grand Ring at the Royal Show Ground, which has been surfaced with Tecturf, at the Golf 2000 event organised by BritAg Industries

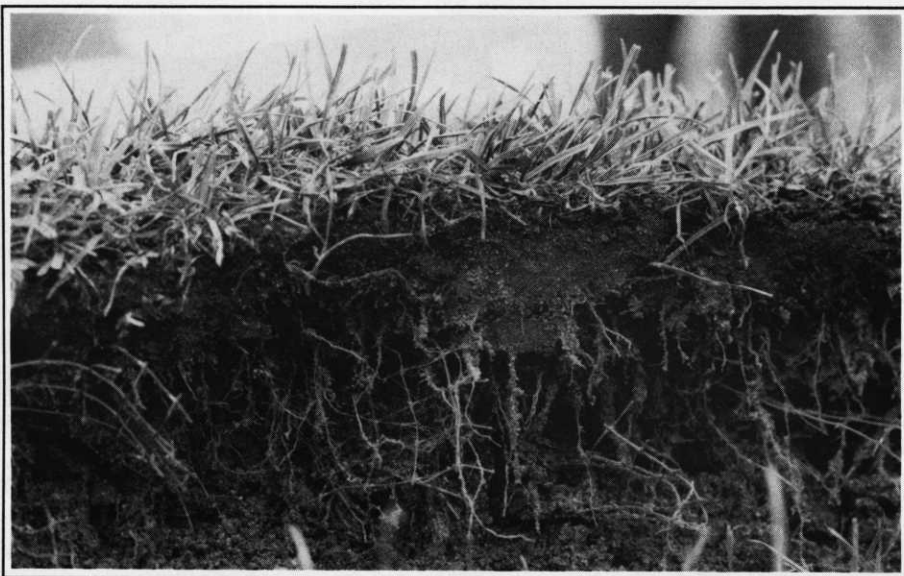
CWS (which owns the land at Weston Hall), Alfred McAlpine Management and the European PGA Tour, and is the first of a series of major new golf courses planned by the consortium for the UK.

The result at Crewe will be an exceptionally 'green' golf course which can cope with all the heavy demands imposed by a major tournament and thousands of spectators, hospitality units and television crews.

One of the first applications for Tecturf in British golf was at Woburn where it was used to build a new tee for the 17th hole in time for last year's Dunhill British Masters. This was necessary in order to extend the 18th hole but would have been a lengthy business using normal turfing methods. With Tecturf the job was completed in one month, about 12 weeks before the event.

During the tournament nearly 600 iron shots were played from the tee and at the end of the week, the surface had suffered very little divoting and recovered its green within a week.

BritAg Industries has also installed Tecturf tees for some of the short holes at Wilmslow Golf Club, Cheshire, with similar success. Tecturf is a registered trademark of ICI plc.



The Tecturf growing medium of sand and fertilizer reinforced with plastic mesh

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

HELLIDON LAKES - A GOLFING NATURE RESERVE IN THE WARWICKSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE

Electronics expert, Stuart Nicoll and his attractive wife Jackie are both dog lovers. A mere glance at their two fine retrievers, Sam and Sally and one can see why.

A year or so ago a semi-wild wooded valley, within a mile or so of their elegant house in the village of Priors Marston came on to the market and the Nicolls thought it an ideal place for secluded country walks with the dogs, never thinking at the time of its potential as a golf course.

But now, under the direction of David Snell, a former tournament professional and later club professional at Lindrick, this secluded nature reserve has been transformed into a ten lake, 6676 yard golf course.

Hellidon Lakes as it has been named is within eight miles of Daventry, reached by a minor road off the A361 to Banbury. It promises to be one of the best courses in the Warwickshire area when it opens for play in 1991.

Greens, tees and fairways are already laid out to a design by David Snell, the golf director at Hellidon Lakes. The construction of the course and day to day maintenance is in the hands of Les Shaw previously at Ullesthorpe Court, near Lutterworth.

All the greens have been built on a six inch deep base of 40mm gravel covered by two inches of quarter gravel and finished with a ten inch sand/soil mix, with a drainage system running into one of the lakes. The irrigation for tees and greens was installed by Cameron.

The whole course was seeded to a specification from the STRI, using a Chewings bent/fescue mix for the greens, fescue/ryegrass/with a touch of smooth stalk annual meadow grass and bent for the tees, with a similar mixture but slightly different formula for the fairways.

Les Shaw has bought a set of Beaver gangs for the fairways but is making do with a second hand Hahn for his greens until he feels the time is right to purchase a new triplex. During the next few months he will let the course grow in, aerating when necessary and employing the usual cultural techniques.

"It is our intention to have a golf course



Stuart Nicoll (right) and golf director David Snell

playable for the full twelve months of the year", said David Snell. "We will play off the tees not mats, to the regular greens. I am not a subscriber to the shortened course to temporary pin positions in the winter months. The course has been set up to test and reward all classes of player, from a choice of tee position. Most holes offer a challenging and dangerous line of approach or an alternative safer route.

For example a generous sponsor has put up a Cartier watch for the first lady to drive the green at the last. It is a par-4 of 470 yards, but there is a short tempting route over the largest lake on the course."

The clubhouse, yet to be built, will overlook the 18th green with a two tiered members bar giving views over the splendid Hellidon Lakes. As well as a restaurant, conference room and professionals shop, the clubhouse complex will

incorporate 20 ensuite bedrooms, for overnight guests.

"Hellidon Lakes will be a members club, limited to a ceiling of 500, plus 50 junior members, said owner Stuart Nicoll." The subscription has been set at £500, with a joining fee of £2,000 for a member and their partner. Although we have only just opened the lists, around a hundred have already applied, most being established golfers."

To launch the new course, on a fine clear sunny day in February, ex-England footballer, Bobby Charlton flew in by helicopter to plant the first of thousands of new trees and christen the course by hitting golf balls into the major lake.

It was no surprise that he chose the right day to perform the opening ceremony, Bobby's girl is none other than BBC weather forecaster, Suzanne Charlton!



Bobby Charlton and Stuart Nicoll with dogs Sam and Sally

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

INTERNATIONAL GOLF COMPLEX PLANNED FOR BLACKPOOL

Golf Commentators, Peter Alliss and Clive Clark have joined forces to design a new championship course at Blackpool. Blackpool Borough Council are instructing the international construction, engineering and development group AMEC p.l.c. and The Boddington Group plc to develop a 205-acre wasteland site near the resort's Stanley Park, to include the golf course, tennis courts and four-star hotel as well as the construction of 368 homes on the site by Fairclough Homes.

The council endorsed the recommendation of its Policy and Resources Committee to select AMEC to carry out the £45 million project.

The championship golf course, sited on

123 acres, will provide a wide range of golf facilities for Blackpool residents, although it will be open for visitors.

It is envisaged that the course will accommodate up to 50,000 rounds a year, with 30,000 of these being played by visitors.

Right: Herons Reach, Blackpool, will include a championship golf course, a 164-bedroom hotel and 368 homes on the 205 acres east of East Park Drive



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