

KEEPING DONNINGTON GROVE – THE TECHNICALITIES

AUTUMN MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

Greens

1. Scarify to 5mm depth. Remove debris.
2. Hollow-tine greens using Sisis Varicore.
3. Topdress over holes with 2x25kg Biogroundkeeper (dried poultry manure) to increase bacteria activity in surface + 2x25kg Isolite, a Japanese product which helps to retain moisture.
4. Dragmat these products into holes – get these to bottom of holes.
5. Topdress with 90% sand, 10% peat mixture (RBL double-washed sand/Thameside peat) – 3kg/m²
6. Overseed onto topdressing with fescue/bent mix (60/40) – 30gms/m².
7. Dragmat seed/topdressing into surface.
8. Irrigate.
9. Leave uncut for two days, cut at 5.5mm after this.
10. Apply Rigby Taylor special organic N 8.0.5 0.5 + 2% Fe at 35gms/m² – a half rate

dose. Irrigate in.

11. In late September will apply Rigby Taylor organic feed – A/W2 4.4.8 + 2%Fe.
12. Apply light topdressing – 1.5-2kg/m² some time in September.
13. Raise height of cut to 6.5mm for winter.

Tees

1. Hollow-tine and remove cores.
2. Topdress – 2kg/m²
3. Overseed at 30gms/m² – mix dwarf ryegrass, creeping fescue, bent and smoothstalk.
4. Topdress again lightly – 1.5-2kg/m²
5. Apply Sierrablen autumn feed – 15.0.22 + 1%F
6. Raise height of cut to 12mm. Will rest par 3 tees by using mats.

Due to drought, many areas of fairway, semi and rough require following work:

1. Scarify thin or dead patches. Some of these patches exist

due to extensive kill of clover patches. Use Sisis Veemo behind tractor.

2. Litamiser used to sweep up debris.
3. Overseed using mechanical seeder, possibly a pedestrian overseeder.
4. Topdress.
5. Should not require fertiliser due to Sierrablen feed applied in early spring – 22.5.7 which has an 8-9 month release. If fertiliser is required, will apply Mascot Microfine 4.0.8 + 2%Fe + 2%mg.
6. Divot all fairways in late September/early October.
7. Fairway height of cut raised to 200mm.

Tee/green banks and apron

1. Scarify/overseed any bare areas due to weed kill/drought in places.
2. Topdress these areas with complete topdressing of tee banks.
3. Apply Mascot Microfine 4.0.8 + 2%Fe + 2%mg. 35gms/m²

Other autumn works

1. Prepare areas of grassland for autumn sowing of wild flower seed by a) spraying off grass with total herbicide (roundup); b) cultivate area after removing majority of grass; c) Sow wild flower seed.
2. Mark trees which have died due to drought so they can be replaced in the winter – possibly remove completely.
3. Sow seeds for wild flowers/water plants around the margins of the three lakes on the course.

Feeding the soil

Soil tests showed the lower nine holes to be nutrient rich with fairway pH of approximately 7 and greens and tees at a healthy average of 5.7. "The pH of 5.7 I will try to keep to stop take-all developing in the greens. This will be aided by applying low doses of liquid sulphur and iron every six to eight weeks," says David. *More on Page 29*

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'The majority of local and day members walk the course – a health-inducing 5.5 miles'

Nutrition of the course is as follows:

Greens – approx 350kg/ha N, 50kg/ha P and 240kg/ha K using a mixture of Rigby Taylor feeds, namely Microfine 18.0.0+6%Fe, Microfine 14.4.7 + 2%mg and Microfine 4.0.8 + 4%Fe + 2%mg. They are also spraying a Japanese product called Minox, a liquid sulphur/iron plus micronutrients. In the spring they use Farmura Portcawl and in the autumn/winter Vitax iron and nitrogen and Rigby Taylor SRD, an organic supplement containing foodstuffs for bacteria/fungi in soil profile. They are experimenting with a new Scotsturf product on two greens – 32.3.10 Drill fertiliser. A few other clubs are also trialling this product which will be marketed after analysis of data next year.

Tees – Sierrablen Mini 22.3.7 which gives "excellent results, good sward cover". In the autumn they apply slow release Sierrablen. They also spray with a sulphur/iron mixture and Farmura Portcawl.

Fairways/semi-rough – Use a new Sierrablen product, 27.5.7 – an 8-9 month release. This is spread in February to last the whole growth season. Four fairways have a different feed regime (all Rigby Taylor products) to compare the results. In the spring these receive Microfine 14.4.7 + 2%mg followed in the height of summer by a slow release liquid 18.3.6 + micronutrients, 28.0.0. In late summer they receive 15.0.10 + Fe.

Topdressing

The greens and tees topmix is 90% Roffey Brothers double washed sand and 10% peat from Thameside. Both these products were laboratory tested – the peat for pH and organic matter value, the sand for hydraulic conductivity, particle sizes, pH, lack of lime. "They work very well indeed, having been built on a gravel raft system with a grit blinding layer.

The topdressing now used is exactly the same mixture and materials as used originally. They are sourced the same, bought in bulk loads and mixed on site with



Donnington Grove's own JCB. Tildenet netting is used to establish the more difficult areas, eg banks, rabbit damage areas on the greens and tees.

Bunker sand

There are 68 bunkers on the course which required 2,500 tons of sand. Some of the bunkers are very large. One is 300 sq m and took 200 tons of sand. The sand used is Kingsley fine washed. "An excellent sand, but it requires a year to settle down properly. However, it's good after that," says David.

Irrigation

Installed by TIS, the Toro system uses a SC 3000 control panel, two main pumps plus a booster pump for the upper course. The system is designed to apply 32mm in seven days to greens, 25mm in seven days to tees, and 19mm in seven days to approaches. The greens have four and the approaches have one Toro 658 Series electric valve in head, twin speed sprinklers. The tees use 700 series. there is also a manual hose point by each tee and green.

The reservoir holds 5 million cubic metres of water, filled by extraction from the River Lambourn via a chamber pump underground. It is filled, according to the terms of their licence, between October and March.

One of the most time-consuming jobs has been lowering the sprinklers and most of the control

boxes as the ground shrunk after construction.

Cutting heights

Greens – 5mm in the summer,

8mm last winter, 7mm this winter; fairways – 20mm; semis – 1.5ins; rough – mostly 2.5in, the 5in areas are to become wild flower areas.

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