

## McDivot 2

I refer to the article in January edition of Greenkeeper International, Sand Green Destruction, by Mr Sandy McDivot. I would like now to make a few comments of my own about his views.

My first point is Mr McDivot. I don't understand why you have to be anonymous when writing in a magazine such as ours. Is it that you feel more secure and therefore more able to criticise your fellow colleagues in greenkeeping? I am unclear as to the intention of your article. Is it that you hate all modern constructed greens and therefore

you would have us all revert back to the old turn of the century standards?

Your comments were not without some merit as you did your best to highlight some of the problems that the modern day greenkeeper has to contend with but I am of the opinion that your condescending style of communication was ill thought out and unhelpful. This was the case particularly with your recommendations, however lighthearted, about the use of illegal mercury based fungicide and alcohol.

To Scott and the team. We have an

excellent magazine so let's keep its content at the fore front of our industry and not resort to this kind of destructive unnamed twaddle.

I have a final message to Mr McDivot.

You had a golden opportunity to teach us something and therefore enrich our life as a greenkeeper, but you missed the mark by a mile.

**Billy McMillan**  
 (and proud to say it)  
 Wildwood Country Club

## McDivot 3

After reading "Sandy McDivot's" hatchet job on sand based greens, I felt I had to write to level things up.

After all it is only right to read both sides of the story, especially when one side is so full of generalisations. It makes me think that "Sandy" is no greenkeeper but a fully paid up member of the tabloid press.

I am the first to admit that there are many sand based greens in the UK which have failed for many reasons;

1. Poor quality root zone.
2. The incompatibility of root zone/blinding layer.
3. The incompatibility of blinding layer/drainage carpet.
4. Greens constructed with improper machinery.
5. Greens constructed during difficult weather conditions.

Many of these can be put down to a dilution of specification, for whatever reason (usually financial).

We then move on to management practices. We as Course Managers/Greenkeepers have always had to be adaptable and never more so with the maintenance of free-draining sand based greens.

Fertiliser applications should be little and often. The same can be said for Verti-cutting, top-dressing. A sympathetic cutting height (5/16") should be used for a full season at least, after all we are dealing with a young plant. The use of triple greens mowers should be avoided at all costs due to the weight of these machines and the quick appearance of

triplex rings.

Communication with the members/players is vital to educate the golfers as to why you are doing these things.

Aeration should be carried out as normal but a move to micro-tining would be of great benefit. Over-seeding should be carried out as normal to re-introduce the original seed/turf cultivars.

Pin positions should be changed more often to limit wear. Fertiliser selection is crucial.

No Phosphates and regular use of organic liquids or seaweed from day one should be a matter of course.

Fungicide use should be strictly limited or better still don't use them at all. Why kill millions of useful bacteria when you have spent time and effort building them up. I have not used fungicide for nine years.

It can be done with careful/thoughtful management.

As for spike/divot marks, if you reach a situation where your sward has thinned out these blemishes will obviously become more noticeable.

The STRI uses a wear machine to imitate spike marks, so the league tables for cultivars do reflect a grasses resistance to wear and tear. There are many courses who are thinking of reconstruction due to drainage limitation, small putting surfaces or just plain bad greens.

So why should they re-build and use the old turf as a putting surface when better species are available. True, the old turf will get up to speed quicker but we

shouldn't be looking short term, after all the greens will still be there in 50/60 years if built properly in the first place.

At the moment there are many Greenkeepers who are in the process of trying to persuade their Golf club/committee to start a reconstruction programme. "Sandy McDivot's" (his real name would have been nice) article will have made their job even harder or maybe impossible.

I talk from personal experience when I say sand based greens can be a great success. They have to be constructed using the finest consistent materials available, (not built down to a price) when weather conditions are favourable.

The golfers/members must understand the task that lies ahead and must not pressure the greenkeeper for a quick fix. Finally the greenkeeper/manager must be able to adapt his management practices from green to green.

After all he may end up with 12 soil/6 sand greens and they will never behave the same way. This is something "Sandy McDivot" is obviously incapable of doing.

Maybe he should move aside and let the "village idiot" take over.

**Mark Jones**  
 (real name)  
 Preston Golf Club  
 (real golf club)

## McDivot 4

I am writing to ask you to pass on my heartiest congratulations to Sandy McDivot, of Sludgecombe Pay and Play, on his superb article in the January edition of Greenkeeper International.

I am sure anyone who has had anything to do with sand greens will have had similar experiences and will find it very easy to relate to.

Sandy seems to have this ability to weigh these situations up and when putting pen to paper his thoughts hit the bullseye.

**Richard Heaslip**  
 Chigwell, Essex

## Help needed with wind information

To all Scottish members. If you have any stories or photographs of damage caused during the January 1999 storms that hit the U.K. please let me hear about them, as I think there will be some interesting bits of information to tell our members. So if you have got anything to tell, drop me a line and any photographs. This would be much appreciated and we could put them in a future issue of Greenkeeper International.

**Chris Yeaman**  
 Scottish Region Magazine  
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## Congrats to the mighty Quinn

I write in a personal capacity to congratulate John Quinn, Course Manager at Elmwood for his recent achievements of being runner up in the Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping Award, together, with gaining Master Greenkeeper status. John is an enthusiast and an inspiration to all of us who work with him.

**Colin Mackay**  
 Assistant Course Manager,  
 Elmwood GC, Cupar