

TALKING

Greenkeeper International's new bi-monthly series featuring Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers from every Region this month starts with Temporary Greens.

Temporary Greens

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE



Name: Huw Morgan,
Wilderness Club Park
Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent
Type of Golf Course:
Woodland and heathland
Number of holes: 18
Staff: Course manager
plus six



Head: Graeme Macdonald
Club: Newark Golf Club,
Coddington, Newark.
Type of golf course:
Heathland
Number of holes: 18
Staff: Head Greenkeeper,
plus five, plus gardener.



David Goodridge
Club: Denbigh Golf Club,
Denbigh.
Type of golf course:
Parkland
Number of holes: 18
Staff: Head greenkeeper
plus three



Robin Greaves,
Club: Thornbury Golf Centre,
Thornbury, Bristol
Type of golf course: Parkland
Number of holes: 36
Staff: Head Greenkeeper plus
five, plus gardeners and
wardens. Student help in the
summer months



Chris Yeaman,
Club: Swanston Golf
Club, Edinburgh,
Type of golf course:
Heathland
Number of holes: 18
Staff: Course Manager,
plus three.

1

1. Do you use temporary or alternative greens and if so do you use them in exceptional circumstances or as a matter of course?

2

2. How much time do you spend in preparation?

We have alternative greens but only in extreme weather. For example we used four temporary greens on one day in November following heavy rain.

We cut the temporary greens in September and keep them at the correct height. They are verti-drained, top dressed and fertilised and we normally cut them weekly. We move holes occasionally to relieve wear and tear.

We have temporary greens only in exceptional circumstances. The course drains well and we try to keep on normal greens as long as possible, hopefully all the year round

Temporary greens are cut into the fairway and are cut once a week. We also change holes once weekly and the greens are treated just like the normal greens with a dressing of iron sulphate, weedkiller, and aeration.

I like to stay on normal greens all the year round and use temporaries only in exceptional circumstances. That might cover a total of two weeks in any one year.

We cut the alternative greens out in September, but we have a lot of work to do keeping the course cut down with a small staff, so we don't do very much on the temporaries.

We try to stay on usual greens all the year round, but we do have some temporary frost holes. We are lucky in that the course drains quickly.

The temporary greens are cut out in September when the mowing slows down. They are then cut when necessary depending on rate of growth given some winter fertiliser.

We are lucky in the sense that our course is on the side of a hill 1,200 feet above sea level and higher than Edinburgh Castle from the 14th green, so we only use temporary greens when it is absolutely necessary due to frost or wet conditions. We had snow recently so we had to go on to them then as well.

The temporary greens are in place all the year round and we treat exactly the same as the normal greens except that we cut to seven mil rather than four.

HEADS

3

3. Are they permanently positioned, or do you choose the site on an annual basis?

We use the same site every year and keep the holes all the year round, covering them in summer.

We cut them out on an annual basis, not necessarily in the same spot but within a certain area near the normal greens

They are permanently positioned because we have only 85 acres on a par 69 course so there is not much room to manoeuvre.

The temporary green sites are chosen on an annual basis and not set in stone. But they are usually in approximately the same place adjacent to the normal greens.

Our course only covers 90 acres so there is not a lot of room to play with. This means they are on the same site each year.

4

4. What is the general view of them within the membership?

Our members are very supportive and there are no complaints or problem. I am very lucky to work for such a superb golf club.

No complaints. Our members see a need for them and we protect our normal greens for the members' good. Once the frost has gone we go back. Members would rather play on temporary greens than have us close the course.

Certainly a mixed bag of views, but it is very much depending on the weather. We have a very well supported winter league which is run throughout the week rather than just Saturdays and Sundays as at most clubs.

We don't have too many problems, although the members naturally prefer the proper greens. However, they understand the reasons when we have to move members off the normal greens occasionally.

We get a few moans and groans, but it's not too bad. When we explain to our members why we have to move on to temporaries - after all it's for their own good in the long run - they are quite good about it.

5

5. What is your view of the larger size cups in the winter?

In my view there is no need to use larger cups. In any case we have club competitions which are run throughout winter and the members play a lot of medals and Stablefords, in addition to knock-out events, so larger cups wouldn't be appropriate.

We never use larger size cups on our course, nor have I used them elsewhere. What we do use in winter, however, are fairway mats and the last two years they have been mandatory. They are a big help heavy conditions in saving the course from divots.

I am not keen on winter cups and we never use them. We may get a few complaints, but of course in our profession we cannot do right by everyone

We never use larger sized cups at this club, although I have used them at other clubs where I have worked. I had ten years at Bristol and Clifton and the six-inch holes looked as big as buckets'

We don't have larger cups and when I have attended meetings with other greenkeepers I haven't heard of any in Scotland. However, I believe they are quite common in the North East of England in winter. We are perfectly happy with normal size holes.

6

6. Do you ban trolleys and buggies when necessary due to weather?

I cannot justify a trolley ban because we move over the course with a truck with three tonnes of soil in it which would obviously do more damage than a trolley. However, I am lucky in that although the course hardly has a drain on it, the course drains extremely well.

We allow trolleys and buggies. We have a "yes and no" box and if it is 'no' then it is total with no allowances for bad backs etc. If we did have an allowance I could see about 300 people with sudden bad backs!

A trolley ban has been talked about, twice in recent years, but we have never brought a ban in. I find that a white line system in front of greens which we move from time to time as the line wears out is very effective. We don't have ropes. I would like to add that the banning of chlordane for worms is one of my biggest regrets because worms are back and we haven't anyone who can breed worms that don't cast.

We don't have buggies, but we try to keep trolleys as long as possible and try never to ban them completely. A thought for the future. I can see machinery improving along with better computerised watering systems and also more attention being to computerised budgets.

We never ban trolleys and we don't have buggies because it would be too dangerous owing to the fact we are situated on a hillside. There are one or two more electric trolleys these days, but many prefer to carry. Our average age of member is perhaps slightly lower than many - probably 47-50.