

TRADITIONAL GREENS RESCUED

A Hertfordshire Head Greenkeeper has seen his 18-hole parkland course televised, less than three years after being advised to dig up his greens.

Neil Faubel, who joined East Herts GC in 1988, becoming Head Greenkeeper in 2003, has watched conditions on his traditional, clay based, push-up greens deteriorate over the years. "When I took over most of our greens were poor quality putting surfaces," he says. "They were not rooting and had

sulphur programme for the whole year, and with Neil's approval, suggested Multi K mini prill as a spring starter applied at the end of March, followed by Greentec Organic applied at the end of April. During the summer we switched to Trisert KS Liquid mixed with Seamac seaweed extracts as our main feed, applied once a month with the last application in August."

Given the history of winter disease problems, Crosdale felt that rather than stop feeding the greens in autumn, which had previously been the case, the sward needed to be strengthened. "At the end of September we applied Multigreen Mini, a controlled release, high potash, low nitrogen formulation, backed by Liquid Turf Hardeners applied in equal proportions in October, November and December."

Soil samples are regularly taken in February when fertiliser content should be either non-existent or minimal, with leaf analysis carried out in June/July.

Meanwhile Neil was being advised by various turf consultants to dig up his greens.

"Last year the club were going to dig up four greens and start again which would have cost us around £100,000" he says. "I found that following our new autumn feeding regime the grass stayed in leaf until January or February and as time went on Fusarium was less of a problem. The greens have improved year on year, scaring has grown out over the winter and in spring we've had no marks which meant no over seeding. We've also gone into the winter with better grass quality. I'm not saying this would work with everyone – every course is different, but this year for the first time our club chairman has received letters praising the course."

At the beginning of July, East Herts GC hosted The Western Homes PGA three day event, screened by Sky Sport.



Steve Crosdale (left) and Neil Faubel (right) at East Herts GC

poor grass coverage. We couldn't get through a winter without heavy attacks of fusarium and each spring we had a weak grass sward as a result."

During his first year in his new job, Neil stepped up the aeration regime. "There was a root break four inches down on the sand layer because the roots didn't want to go into the clay beneath," he continues. "We did, and do, a lot of aeration and top dressing, pencil tining every two weeks throughout the year when conditions are right."

Having witnessed widely differing approaches by the two previous Head Greenkeepers, Neil decided to shop around for his nutritional programme. Headland Amenity's Steve Crosdale visited the club and took soil samples from six greens. "Looking at the results, the soil had a very high sulphur content, a very high iron content, and was low on all the major nutrients," he says. "Based on this evidence I put together a reduced

CONTINUED GROWTH

Grass seed specialists Barenbrug, have strengthened their sales team with the appointment of Neil Pettican.

Neil, who will be based in Norwich and cover East Anglia, joins Barenbrug with a vast array of academic and practical experience having worked in the sportsturf industry for the past ten years. After graduating from Cranfield University with a Masters degree in Sports Surface Technology, Neil worked as a Golf Course Manager and Groundsman.



Barenbrug UK Sales Manager James Ingles (left) and Neil Pettican (right)

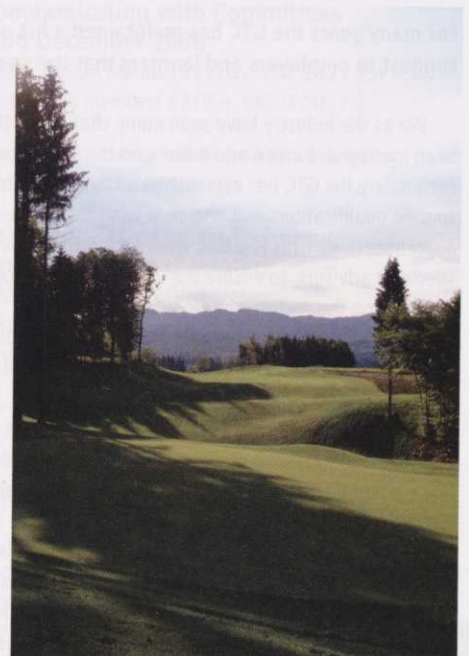
OTOCEC OPENS ITS DOORS

Slovenia's ninth golf course opens its first nine holes for play this July.

Lying in the south east of the country, close to the Croatian border, large greens, stunning mountain views and varied tee locations have created a memorable design.

Designed by Ljubica Jovetic of Swan Golf Designs, Howard Swan's design practice has been strongly represented over the past 10 years in the former Yugoslavia, having been responsible for the design of Croatia's only two modern golf courses.

The building of the second nine holes will commence next year.



PGA EUROPRO TOUR

Peter de Savary's Bovey Castle will play host to golf's brightest young stars this month, when the PGA EuroPro Tour arrives at the club and sporting estate.

Since its major renovation two years ago, the Castle's Old Course has grown in stature and reputation for its beautiful setting on Dartmoor National Park and its challenging championship par 70.

The EuroPro Tour will arrive to give the 'Tiger Woods of tomorrow' the opportunity to gain the necessary experience of competitive golf and the European Tour circuit.

The EuroPro Tour has grown in size over the past four years and in 2005 offered a prize fund of over £1 million.

Bovey Castle Head Professional Richard Lewis said: "This is another feather in the cap for the Old Course - which is now widely recognised for offering one of the most enjoyable yet challenging rounds of golf in the UK."