

TEAM WORK AND TEAM BUILDING

By Melissa Jones



When Head Greenkeeper, Richard Hollingworth, called to say his team were about to put their newly acquired skills into action and complete a project on their parkland course at Rudding Park, I was eager to meet the team and check out the plans.

The greenstaff commenced work on a new hole at their parkland course in September.

“Building the hole is a way of helping our greenkeepers to use the skills they are acquiring through their studies,” explained Head Greenkeeper, Richard.

Building in-house the greenkeepers will be able to construct the hole to the standards they want with no corner cutting. The staff will also be able to view the construction from a greenkeeping and players point of view – as they are all keen golfers. They will be involved in all the decision making processes.”

PLAN OF ACTION:

- End of August '08 – areas have been marked out for the hole and green. Greenstaff have begun to chop down trees, while being sensitive to the environment and only removing those that are diseased or dead.
- September '08 – construction started.
- October/November '09 – seeding (if the weather is good).
- April '09 – seeding.
- April/May '10 – completed and open for play.

As they are in charge of the operation and costs, the greenstaff have the benefit of being able to change things, if needed, as they go along.

WORK BASED LEARNING

Rudding Park prides itself on investing money and time into training its staff.

“The whole ethos here is that everybody should be able to do everything. This allows you to have flexible staff, if anyone is off sick or has an emergency there are no problems. We have 16 year olds joining us and within a space of six months they have been shown strimming, mowing tees and greens, cutting fairways etc, etc. Within six months we then have a member of staff that can do nearly everything,” said Richard.

It's very much the same with education and study at Rudding.

“We push our staff on to cultivate their knowledge, improve their personal skills and the golf course. Their personal development is key to us – the more motivated our greenstaff, the happier they will be.”

The greenstaff are very much into team building and bonding, they go out en masse once a month to play golf, and check out other courses.

“Everyone gets on with everyone,” enthused Richard.

“It's more of a profession for them than just cutting grass. It's not a 9 to 5 job that just generates income, it holds a genuine interest for each of them and is a career.”

Three members of the Rudding Park greenstaff are currently studying for NVQ's and have a tutor from Myerscough College, Preston visit them every four weeks to assess their work and give feed back on their progress to the Head Greenkeeper.

Greenkeeper, David Pinder, as part of his NVQ Level 3 in Sportsturf, has to complete a construction job and gain experience of planning, ordering, getting quotations and quantifying. Therefore, this is the perfect opportunity for him to put his new-found skills into action.

LEARN AS YOU EARN

NVQs and Apprenticeships are designed for employees in the industry who wish to gain competence in their operations and gain a broad understanding of Sportsturf Operations.

They are ideal for greenkeepers in employment as they are delivered in the workplace using qualified, industry experienced assessors, and course content can be tailored to suit the needs of each individual student/workplace.

Tutorial times are agreed at suitable work times and all observations and assessments take place while staff complete their usual work activities.

Achievement of a nationally recognised qualification at NVQ Levels 1, 2, 3 or 4.

“Work based learning is more appropriate to our surroundings and works best for our staff. Rather than be in a classroom, Andrew Kenworthy comes from Myerscough every four weeks to assess the



Head Greenkeeper Richard Hollingworth.



Part of the plans for the new hole.

students' work and works, more or less, one to one with them without any distractions. We are able to monitor and assess the greenkeeper's progress from seeing the lecturer. We can plan jobs so that their job sheets criteria are met and they can use every piece of equipment," explained Richard.

The greenstaff's personal development is key to Rudding Park:

"If the staff are motivated they are happier in their work," said Richard.

"Because the staff are physically doing the job as they go along, they seem to be getting more out

of it and can actually SEE what is happening and the consequences etc. They are looking more at the science and asking questions such as: What fertiliser do I need to apply to get the best out of the plants? What cultural things can we do to stop this disease instead of spraying a fungicide?

"Matters and problems with construction are discussed as a group and I am explaining as we go along with the hole construction. The team are beginning to understanding the depth of greenkeeping and golf course management," concluded Richard.



Left to right: David Pinder, James Kelledy, Brandon Stanford, Richard Hollingworth, Robert Hilton, Danny Millar and Karl Walker.

Rudding Park greenkeeping team are:

Richard Hollingworth, Head Greenkeeper

David Pinder – College student NVQ

Level 2 working towards Level 3

Danny Millar – NVQ Level 2

Robert Hilton – NVQ Level 2

Karl Walker – College student NVQ Level 2

James Kelledy – College student NVQ Level 2

Brandon Stanford – Currently applying for NVQ Level 2. Commencing college course Spring 2009

Liam Williamson - Currently applying for NVQ Level 2. Commencing college course Spring 2009

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