

Greenkeepers Training Committee

David Golding, GTC Education Director, looks at club investment in training



There is little doubt that whether it is golf course playing conditions in Britain, or the "other" sports turf playing surfaces, great strides have been made in recent years to maintain and present both sustainable, all year round playing surfaces and pleasing on the eye.

Not always easy, with increasing restrictions on water use, increasing costs of products, all of which are designed to assist the Course Manager meet the demands for his or her course, to attract members and visitors and to keep the business healthy.

We often focus on how continual greenkeeper education and training is a must for any golf course to survive. Few can argue with this statement, however, what about the employer's continual education and training?

The GTC continues to maintain its Quality Assured Scheme of Centres and Training Providers, where apprenticeships, workshops, seminars etc. are all available to ensure golf clubs can access greenkeeper education, training and qualifications.

Colleges and private training providers all carry out a vital role to deliver quality education and training courses but they would all pay tribute to the increasing number of Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers, many of whom have gone through the modern training system in recent years, and who now are willingly sharing their knowledge and experience with their staff and at local and national events.

There was much criticism when vocational training appeared in the Sports Turf industry, but I believe the campaign that commenced in the early nineties is really paying dividends now.

Formal and informal on the job training is now very much taken for granted at golf clubs and carried out to National Standards, which are freely accessible for all to see.

Take a bow all of those Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers

who host in-house training sessions. Knowledge is so much more accessible and the suppliers, dealers and manufacturers are all there to support you with information, website links and attendance at seminars and workshops.

BIGGA local section, regional and national have all played a major role in educating greenkeepers as well as the formal qualification route. Turf Clubs are appearing, all driven by passionate, knowledgeable greenkeepers and I am sure these will also grow from strength to strength.

So, if we are relatively content that greenkeeper education and training standards are in safe hands why don't we also collectively look at how best we improve the Course Manager/greenstaff relationship with their employer?

Surely this relationship is crucial for the business to be successful?

We could add the Professional, Secretary Manager, and Catering Manager into this debate as they surely are the Management team at any golf club?

All the various Professional bodies from the PGA, GCMA and BIGGA in Britain, also have seen European Organisations emerge in recent years, all striving to ensure their members and member bodies are well educated, trained and qualified to the highest standards.

But what about the employers?

We all would like to think all golf club employers will recruit professional staff to manage their facilities and many do, however we have to respect the Proprietor and Committee person(s) who have the overall responsibility for the business.

During the last twelve months, the GTC with the excellent support of England Golf, has hosted seven

employer-led workshops with Laurence Pithie MG, Turf Master One, delivering the training on behalf of the GTC.

These pilot workshops were designed to give employers an overview of all aspects of course maintenance and management.

We report that all workshops had a mix of delegates from Chairman of Green, Secretary Managers, Golf Professionals and Course Managers!

Credit must go to Laurence for pitching all the workshops at a level that all delegates enjoyed the day.

The GTC Board of Directors are continually looking at engaging golf club employers into improving their business through investing in greenkeeper training



The GTC is funded by:



The feedback from all 100+ delegates has been very positive and plans are in hand to extend the workshop into Scotland and Wales with the support of the Scottish Golf Union and Golf Union of Wales.

The Home Unions are all working very hard to support the golf clubs and golfers they represent in many areas and Chairman of Green, Green Convenor workshops hosted in association with the GTC are proving very popular.

Now we are past the original pilot workshops, and taking into consideration feedback from delegates the GTC has already hosted a Health & Safety workshop courtesy of The Mere Golf and Spa in Cheshire.

Jon Allbutt, the respected Health & Safety Consultant and Toro were the QA Training Providers and were supported by the local Toro dealer Cheshire Turf Machinery.

Further employer focused Health & Safety workshops are being planned as well as the subject of Improving Communication within the golf club and Renovation and Design of the golf course being delivered by Frank Newberry and Swan Golf Designs respectively.

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