

Inverness Golf Club Builds New, Flatter Practice Putting Green

One of Mike Bavier's first orders of business in 2005 will be a spring grow-in of Inverness Golf Club's new practice putting green. The construction work was done this past fall and now Mike is preparing for the bulk of the grow-in.

The Inverness membership had been considering rebuilding the practice green for quite a while. The majority of the greens on the course are severely sloped, some as much as 4.5%. The old practice green had been built in the same fashion. The feeling among the membership was that it was good for warming up before a round, in that it gave you a chance to practice the kinds of putts that you would encounter out on the course. However, since there was hardly a flat spot to be found, it did not accommodate the golfer who was just looking to work on his/her putting stroke.

During a conversation this past fall with Brent Wadsworth, the realization occurred that Wadsworth Construction Company had an opening in their schedule that could allow them to accommodate the project. With enough money left in the annual budget, the club decided that there was no time like the present and made the decision to begin construction imminently.

The membership had two main goals for the project. First, they wanted to incorporate a greater amount of flat area into the new green while still including some contours. With that in mind, the club enlisted the help of Doug Myslinski with Jacobson Golf Course Design to design the new green. Doug's proposed design called for approximately 60% of the new green to be relatively flat and the remaining area to include contouring between 1.5 and 3%.

The second goal was to have the finished product putt the same as all the other greens on the course. The majority of these greens are original push-up greens and the bentgrass on them consists of Penncross and some of the other older varieties. Mike and Doug decided that seeding with Pennlinks would provide a suitable putting surface, while still mimicking the quality and typical green speeds of the existing greens. As for the root-zone material, a 70% sand/20% peat/10% compost mix was chosen. They believed that the higher organic-matter content of this mix was more consistent with the native soil in the existing push-up greens. Additionally, the decision was made to leave out an underlying gravel blanket as none are present in any of the other greens.

Mike's staff then stripped off the existing turf on the putting green and surrounding areas and completed all of the prep work before Wadsworth's arrival. On October

29, construction began. From coring out the existing soil to seeding, it took four actual working days to finish the job. However, due to some untimely rains, the construction was not completed until November 13. That obviously left little time for any kind of seed establishment. In the hope of encouraging at least some germination and to protect the green over the coming winter, it was covered with two types of mats. First, workers laid Futerra blankets out on the green to help keep the seed in place. Then, they placed an Evergreen cover on top to aid in keeping the Futerra blankets in place and to further protect against any type of winter damage. The plan is to remove the Evergreen cover at the first sign of warmer spring weather. The netting on the Futerra blankets will be removed right before the first mowing.

Mike is happy to report that due to some late fall rain, along with a couple of short warm spells, a fair amount of germination has already taken place. The bulk of the grow-in, though, will take place in the spring and early summer of 2005. While Mike is hoping for a cooperative spring, he is also preparing for the many possible scenarios that he could soon be facing as unpredictable spring weather patterns take their course.

In addition to the grow-in, Mike plans a couple of other projects to tackle in the spring as well. First, an alternate practice putting green requires establishment. The plan is to convert the chipping green into the temporary putting green. The chipping green is normally maintained at 0.156". Mike believes that by slowly dropping the cutting height down to 0.125", along with applying some regular topdressing, the area will soon provide a putting surface similar to those on the course. Also, an existing asphalt cart path adjacent to the new putting green will be widened and redone with paver bricks to match the other nearby cart paths around the clubhouse area. The paver brick installation will be contracted out. Finally, construction of and landscaping around a stone knee wall in the area between the new putting green and the main parking lot is on the docket. This addition will improve the aesthetic appeal of the area and also help screen out the adjacent parking lot.

August 1 is the tentative opening date for the new practice putting green.

—Brian Mores
Inverness G.C.



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