

GOLF COURSE REPORT / AUGUST 2022

Weather

July 2022 broke records for rainfall. 544 mm of rain, whereas our ten year average for July is around 241mm. On the very few days without rain, clear blue skies were followed by morning frost.

The heaviest rainfall event was a sequence of 60 - 110 - 24 mm over three days. This massive amount of water gave puddles and running water in all the usual swales. It was not possible to drive the course in a golfing order, 1 to 18, let alone Backwards, without having to cross mini rivers. Carts were not allowed for a few days. If we damage the swales with wheel ruts and traffic, they will not perform next time we get heavy rain. These running streams, across holes 1,4,7,12 and 16 took several days to complete their job, while the rest of the course dried up quickly. It was still just possible for the green staff to plot a dry route around the course, but there was one day we walked the course, carrying shovels and rakes, to reinstate the washed-out bunkers. The rain had stopped, but the water continued to flow.

Greens

Our soil putting greens can handle any amount of rain, once the rain stops falling. To maintain this, we plan to shallow - less than 25 mm - slice aerate the greens a couple of times before spring to speed up the surface drainage. This will be followed, on September 4,5,6 with the scheduled verti-drain deep aeration, more shallow slicing, and if dry, a soil top dressing.

Winter greens maintenance is always weather dependent. There were a couple of days with no frost or flood, mild temperature and light wind. This time was used to spray soluble fertiliser to greens, surrounds and approaches, to encourage a little growth before spring.

Greens mowing was two or three cuts per week and with minimal growth they are running quite fast for Waihi - 9 ft 6 inch This happens as a natural response to cool weather. With slow growth, we did as little mechanical disturbance, including mowing, as possible. Only mowing when conditions were good.

Tees, Fairways and Roughs

The rest of the course is holding up well this winter, a little growth, plenty of rain, plus a little fertiliser has encouraged a fuller sward. This does also include too much poa annua. To give the seeded browntop bent a chance to establish, we have continued deep slicing through the cold winter months. So far ten passes on fairways, and seven or eight on tees. All to favour deep rooted, drought tolerant, low and slow growing bent.

On the few days with no rain, it was possible to complete some selective herbicide work. Tees were treated with Conquest selective, and the distorted broadleaf weeds are apparent. The fairways, and roughs, were sprayed with Associate, a slow acting, less dramatic, economical chemical. We sprayed

from tree line to tree line on each hole. Not quite the whole property, but around 30 hectares.

Paths and Trees

The concrete path at no1 tee has settled in well, and now looks like it has always been there. The complex path at no 18 is growing in nicely, as well. The refurbished bunker at 17 will be open soon, once the soil banks are more mature and golfer tolerant.

We plan to build a path at men's no 4 tee and clean up the surrounding turf where trees were removed. Some ground tree stump areas in the rough at 3 and 5, have been raked and seeded. Others will be re-grassed soon. White paint lines indicate GUR.

Summary

Greenkeeping is still in damage limitation mode. Real growth will not start until the Tulip tree on 18 has leaves, but it does feel promising.