



## Course Superintendents Report May 2010

### Greens

Height of cut has been raised to 4mm in preparation for the winter period. The greens are visually appealing at this time with good colour being achieved and the turf is portraying good signs of health. The *Poa* program will be conducted through the winter period into spring this year due to the greens being healthy and strong. This decision was made to give the bentgrass a better chance to kick off earlier in spring. The *Poa* program will cease if the bentgrass thins out too quickly and is showing signs of not handling the program. Plugging of bare areas will continue using turf from the nursery.

Soil tests will be conducted in the coming month to determine the status of required bulk nutrients to be added over the winter period in preparation for the next growing season. Maintenance programs focussing on density and root production will continue as soil temperatures are still conducive to growing cool season turf. Heavily shaded greens, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>, are continuously producing softer surfaces compared to majority of greens on course. A program using a soil penetrent will be conducted to push excess water and moisture down through the thatch layer and soil profile on these greens.

Unrepaired pitchmarks on greens continue to be a problem usually after, but not restricted to, social play. Groundstaff walk all greens in the mornings before cutting to repair pitchmarks and whilst we realise it is part of our maintenance program, there has been numerous times where we feel the number of ball marks is excessive. Maybe a course care hand book needs to be developed and sent to all members, detailing course care procedures and outlining that course care is required at all times.

### Aprons

A herbicide program to deal with couch invasion into aprons began at the start of April and will continue until the couch goes into dormancy. There has been mixed results so far with some areas less affected by the herbicide than others. Larger couch infested areas such as left hand side of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and right hand side of the 15<sup>th</sup> are to be removed and sodded with G2 bent from the nursery. Plugging of smaller bare areas will also be tackled through the winter period.

The same areas each year which suffer extensively from wear through golfer traffic (i.e. RHS 2<sup>nd</sup>, Front RHS 4<sup>th</sup>, RHS 9<sup>th</sup>, Front LHS 14<sup>th</sup> & Front LHS 16<sup>th</sup>) needs be addressed by further education of the membership, of how the traffic should flow through the greens complex.

### **Couch Green Surrounds**

This is an area which continued to improve over the growing season, with fewer bare areas to hit off and an overall greater cover of couch. There are areas still to improve (e.g. LHS 4<sup>th</sup> green behind bunker) but we are headed in the right direction. Fencing off of heavy traffic areas will be conducted through winter to give such areas a rest and preserve the cover of grass for a longer period.

Broad acre pre and post emergent herbicides are complete for the season. Spot spraying of determined unwanted grasses and weeds will continue. Cutting of couch surrounds has ceased for the season. The tractor mounted blower will be used on a regular basis to keep these areas clean from debris and divots.

### **Tees**

Although tee surfaces have improved over the recent growing season, certain tees still struggle to cope with the wear in the environment they are living in. The biggest issue continues to be wear and tear from golfer traffic. The larger tee complexes with good access to light and air flow continue to be the benchmark for the course (e.g. 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> tees). Constant tinkering with maintenance practices and fertiliser programs continue to ascertain the right programs for individual tees, to ensure they withstand the rigors of constant play.

All tee complexes have received a pre and post emergent herbicide application for the suppression of broadleaf weeds and *Poa annua*. Rotation of tee markers, using the whole of the tee, is essential through the winter period to control the wear.

### **Fairways & Primary Rough**

Fairway height of cut was raised to 18mm for the month of April to ensure there was sufficient coverage to combat the rigors of future winter play. Although the turf length is longer and may slightly hinder ball roll, it is essential there is enough thick coverage on such areas due to the soil type that the course resides upon. Moving into the winter period without the longer coverage would provide a muddier, less visually appealing surface during the wetter months. A penetrent program will be conducted on the fairways and primary rough to ensure water movement through the soil profile.

Cutting of all couch areas on fairways and primary rough has ceased for this season. The tractor mounted blower will be used on a regular basis to keep these areas clean from debris and divots.

## **Rough**

The raising of the height of cut in the rough lines ensured the couch had a chance to compete with the shade and tree root issues. The longer the height of cut on turfgrass ensures its stress levels are much lower (length = strength). The slightly longer rough also enhanced the definition of each hole. The couch is improving and moving further towards tree lines around the course and will only improve after future growing seasons. The aim is to have couch cover from tree line to tree line across each hole, not only for visual and playing consistency, but also to simplify fertiliser and pesticide spraying programs.

There are areas around the course which will require turf to be laid next season to speed up the process.

## **Paths**

Non asphalted paths will require maintenance over the winter months to fill in potholes and washouts. Loose bricks on asphalted paths will be attended to over this same period. Entries and exits to paths will require protection from traffic at times over the winter period.

## **Water**

Water used on course to date, for irrigation and billabong environmental maintenance, totals 96.5 Megalitres. Course staff has become more efficient with the water usage over this summer period. A water colorant has been purchased to enhance the visual aspect of the billabongs and to help with algae control.

A meeting has been held with Melbourne Water concerning the erosion of the river bank behind the 14<sup>th</sup> green. Both the causes of and solutions to the river bank erosion were discussed, then correspondence detailing the golf clubs concerns was sent to both Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria. Parks Victoria has replied to our correspondence although no detail was sent regarding a time frame for a solution to the problem. No reply from Melbourne Water has been received to date.

**Mat Poultney**  
**Course Superintendent**