



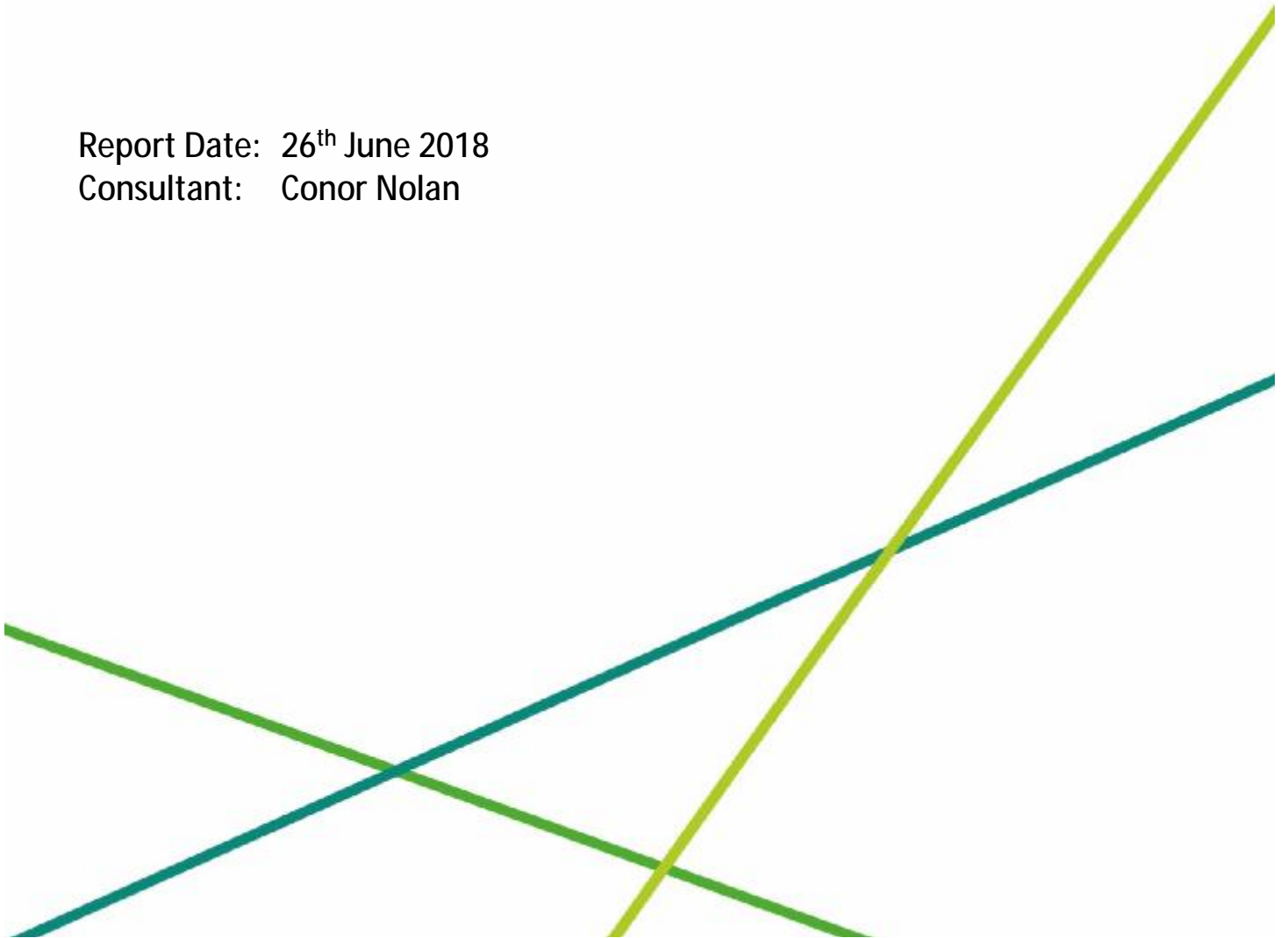
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MONKSTOWN GOLF CLUB

Advisory Report on the Golf Course

Report Date: 26th June 2018

Consultant: Conor Nolan



Monkstown Golf Club

Date of Visit:	18 th June 2018
Visit Objective:	To review overall course condition and to provide general advice on maintenance issues found throughout the course.
Present:	Mr H Madden – General Manager Mr M Travers – Course Superintendent Conor Nolan – STRI Ltd
Weather:	Overcast but dry. 20°C

Headlines

- Ball roll to putting surfaces was good despite the presence of ball marks and some disease scars.
- Recovery of autumn disease scars was slowed by the harsh winter and desire to avoid crowding out seedling grasses.
- The aprons are improving with less drought noted while some obvious new ryegrasses were present.
- The odd tee was affected by drought with the 1st showing slow signs of recovery from winter wear.
- Regrading of some tees was welcome with good levels achieved. The quality of the imported turf could be better.
- The fairways offered good ball support despite the dry spell.
- While 100 trees have been felled/fallen during last winter the most obvious change was only noted to the 6th green complex. Felling trees shall remain an ongoing practice.

Key Actions

- Stimulate some added growth to greens with application of two of nitrogen at 0.6g/m².
- Reduce disturbance pressures on greens further by relaxing mowing frequency and by avoiding rolling to favour the establishment of bentgrass.
- Next autumn make greater use of dew dispersal agents to help combat disease and ensure the disease preventative application interval is no wider than every three weeks.
- Disc seeding of greens with Vredo should be tried in September to reduce risk of disease later on in the autumn.
- Overseed the aprons/approaches with fine red fescues and dwarf perennial ryegrass using the plant pot method in September.
- Increase irrigation run times to any dry tees to ensure moisture content remains around 20% in the upper 60mm of the profile.
- Ideally the tees should be overseeded as the aprons twice per year.
- Application of urea to aprons, approaches, tees and fairways can be considered for next year to enhance consistency, appearance, add control and to save on materials cost.

Photo Observations and Comments



Figure 1: Some small fusarium patch disease scars remained from last autumn on the 8th above, and others (e.g. 6th and 10th). Because of recent overseeding and the desire to favour the bentgrass population nitrogen input was held on the leaner side. In this case it was too lean, a first! Overseeding (while well intended) appeared to have been too early in March to favour bentgrass germination, however.



Figure 2: Most scars on the greens however were due to non-repaired ball marks (e.g. 10th above). Not quite recovered thinner sections were found at times (e.g. 14th and 17th). They will recover quickly with a moderate application of nitrogen. That application will reduce the excellent pace found, somewhat.



Figure 3: Shallow rooting led to droughty turf to the exit on the 10th. Like the small 2nd and most shaded 12th it will prove difficult to promote bentgrass with your current traffic levels. Besides the dry section above, the 3rd was on the dry side too.



Figure 4: The large 4th green. While the bentgrass species (preferred grass) was present in a good population it was not vigorous enough, probably due to the nitrogen levels, but it could also be due to disturbance pressures. Note the highest quality apron section above which is the target quality for all others.



Figure 5: Better uniformity of grass cover found to the 14th apron as twice annual overseeding is a regular occurrence. Some fertiliser granule overspill from the aprons on to the green edges left them quite spotty.



Figure 6: Very dry parts of the 1st tee preventing recovery of winter damage. The 2nd was similar while the 10th was on the dry side.

Photo Observations and Comments (continued)



Figure 7: Regrading of the 18th tee above (and 12th) was as good as could be expected without a laser levelling box grader. The quality of the imported turf can be better as the annual meadowgrass content was significant.



Figure 8: Good ball support on the 17th fairway, which was typical. Uniformity of appearance was affected by the recent dry spell but had no effect on lie quality yet. That one hundred trees were felled most of which occurred during last December's storm was welcome. Strategic tree removal shall be on-going.

Recommendations

Greens

- Apply 0.6g of nitrogen/m² immediately to help stimulate the bentgrass and to recover remaining turf weakness/scars from autumn disease activity. And to help with recovery of ball marks. Repeat 2-3 weeks later, if necessary. Revert then to applications of 0.4 of nitrogen/m² every 2-3 weeks until October sometime. During the low season maintain good sward density with least nitrogen input. Bear in mind that the less growth there is in the autumn/winter the longer fungicides and dew dispersal agents last.
- Maintain a main season height of cut of 3.5mm (triplex). During the off season from November to March sometime a mowing height of 5.5mm (triplex) is preferred to favour overall turf health and the bentgrasses/seedlings.
- Apply the 20% concentration manganese product at 13kg/hectare now, in late July and again in October with your foliar fertiliser applications to help reduce risk of Take-All Patch disease.
- The current approach to topdressing shall continue generally. Only apply sand at very light rates of 3-4 tonnes per hectare during the coming autumn vulnerable months. Submit samples for laboratory testing of organic matter from the three indicator greens (previously on the Programme) sometime this year.
- Additional sand should be applied to lower lying sections where moisture accumulation slows down breakdown of organic matter.
- Make sure to move the flag locations to the sides of the greens, where possible, to favour the better grasses.
- Do as little rolling and grooming as you can get away with if you wish the good grasses to establish. In fact, rolling should be done away with altogether, particularly at a course where traffic levels (disturbance pressure) is already high. Rolling is another disturbance pressure not liked by the bentgrass. And it only introduces inconsistency. Roll if you must after aeration to restore levels.
- Check the tips of the bentgrass at times to determine damage from the main disturbance pressure i.e. foot traffic. It is agronomically beneficial that greens be rested as much as possible during the low season. It is most probable that the time will come when there will be no fungicides allowed for protection and therefore promotion of the better grasses such as bentgrass is a big part of the solution.
- Mow 5-6 times per week during the main season to give the bentgrass an added chance to spread. And bearing in mind the demand on labour during the main season.
- Avoid mowing of the perimeters more than twice per week during the main playing season, as it is a disturbance pressure and inhibits the establishment of browntop bent and creeping bentgrass.
- Closely examine moisture content to ensure that it is not a constraint to the spread of the fine grasses. The target range when irrigating is to maintain a water content of 15-25% in the upper 60mm which will optimise firmness too. Excessive moisture will hamper the spread and establishment of bentgrass. It is likely that the more exposed and sandy 3rd will require a longer irrigation run time to bring it in to target.
- Solid tine every 6-7 weeks or so with 8mm diameter tines to assist with infiltration and reduce ponding.
- Vertidrain with 10-12mm solid tines to 20-25mm sometime towards the end of November. Apply no heave.
- Given that Chipco Green fungicide is off the market from this June (the only curative knockdown fungicide that was available) there is a need to be more prudent with application of sand in the autumn. Bearing that in mind a switch from plant potting to disc seeding with a Vredo (25mm drill spacings) is preferred. Good results have been found once the drills are around the 3mm depth. Deeper settings will prevent the bentgrass seed from germination/emergence. You will have to hire a disc seeder in. Sow browntop bentgrass seed (Arrowtown, Manor or Charles) at 25kg hectare. If none can be sourced in your area, then plant pot but with smaller 10mm diameter tines to reduce the amount of sand being applied at the time.

- If you must plant pot in September apply half of the allowed sand before making holes with 10mm diameter solid tines (tips removed) on the Aercore. Set the tines to reach 12-15mm. Apply the Festuca/Agrostis seed mixture with the fertiliser spreader at 80kg/hectare. Move the seed to the holes with 2-3 passes of the tees mat turned upside down when dry. Sand lightly to apply 2-3mm of sand and work-in in the days afterwards. As the seedlings emerge apply more sand to smoothen. Seeding next spring should not occur before mild conditions arrive in May.
- Choose 40% slender creeping red fescue, 40% chewings fescue and 20% browntop bentgrass seed (by weight) when plant potting. The fescue is added as a carrier, to help against Take-All Patch on the 3rd green and to develop on any droughty spots, while its survival indicates the level of disturbance being applied.
- Apply Coragen insecticide if daddy-long-legs are seen passing over the surface of greens between mid-July/early September. There is a 3-4 week lead in time with this produce which requires application as soon as the adults appear to control 1st/2nd instar larva. Three months of residual control can be expected. Apply at the labelled rate of 0.6 litres per hectare in 600-1000 litres of water. Water-in to supply 3-6mm of water at time of application to ensure effectiveness given the low solubility of the substance.
- Apply Headway fungicide more often to the 3rd green to control Take-All Patch disease. Four applications are permitted according to the label within a 12-month period.
- The importance of practicing cultural controls to reduce fusarium patch disease incidence and the promotion of bents and some fescue should be clear. The use of dew dispersal agents from November through until March while greens are being mown only once per week is encouraged. Apply every two weeks then outside of frosty periods. Best results are achieved when applied to a dry leaf which may require blowing to remove dew first. Apply at 75% of the labelled rate initially. One of the better dispersal agents is Magnum Recoil (Indigrow). Contact David Eager 00447554668064.
- Beginning in early October apply Instrata, Exteris Stressgard, Heritage, Headway or Banner Maxx II fungicides every three weeks through until December. If there is no disease present in early December apply Medallion TL fungicide to help get you through that period. It is a contact material that only works before disease is seen, as it essentially causes disease spores to burst. It has no curative properties. Mow as little as you can during that period to obtain maximum duration of control from the fungicides.

Green Aprons and Approaches

- Overseeding is due again using the plant pot method to both elements in September. Make the holes with 16-18mm diameter tines on your Aercore Aerator, apply the seed with a drop fertiliser spreader ideally before working the seed to the 'plant pots'. Sand when seedlings emerge to restore loss of smoothness. Ensure to treat up to the very edge of the putting surfaces to produce a sharper edge.
- Maintain the height of cut at 8-10mm year-round, if you can.
- It would be my preference that the aprons and approaches be fertilised mainly with the greens and topped up at times with urea in the summer (20kg/hectare in 300 litres of water) and ammonium sulphate (40kg/hectare in 400 litres of water) in the 'winter'. It would avoid the speckling of green edges and approaches during dry conditions.

Tees

- Increase the irrigation run times to tees in dry weather to enhance recovery. Tees require the strongest growth rates of all, especially par threes. Combined with the recent application of controlled release fertiliser made at a high rate they should recover from dryness once watered sufficiently. The 1st tee patches will need to recover from seed, which will take time but needs more damper conditions.
- During the off season the par threes are protected with a loose mat. The same should occur to the 1st tee for the foreseeable future during the off season.

- Hybrid turf should be considered to section of a par three (e.g. 13th) tee next late autumn to combat wear. The technology has been around for 20 years and is gaining increasing use in these islands in various sports. With 5% synthetic grass component the Hero turf option from County Turf is said to increase usage levels of sport pitches threefold. The synthetic grass component is not visible to the naked eye without very close examination. The underside of HERO is a reticulated grid. The structure is 85% open; hence it is not characterised as a backing/carpet. The vertical fibres are anchored to this horizontal grid via knots which allows rooting through and aeration. Expected longevity of the synthetic turf is 10 years. Familiarity with maintenance practices and playability traits is required before more widespread use on a tee. Therefore, a trial section is recommended first. Contact info@countyturf.co.uk
- When regrading tees next late autumn/winter use good quality imported ryegrass dominant turf from a reputable supplier (e.g. Tillers).
- Verticutting of the tees would be a bonus once the vigour is restored. It would help to refine the texture and remove slightest puffiness. Complete 2-3 times each summer, making sure to avoid weak tees e.g. 1st and 2nd.
- Like with the aprons/approaches and green surrounds it would be my preference to fertilise with urea during the summer (25kg/hectare in 300 litres of water) every 4-5 weeks until October. It provides more control and it is much cheaper. From the end of October until April retain sward density with ammonium sulphate applications (50kg/hectare in 400 litres of water). Avoid ammonia applications at that rate on sunny warm days above 13°C, which would cause scorch.
- Apply additional nitrogen as your controlled release fertiliser (26% nitrogen) during the summers to the par threes to speed up recovery.
- Maintain 40-50% greenwaste compost within the divot mixture when adding seed.
- It would be a real bonus if the tees were overseeded as per the aprons using fine dwarf ryegrasses and fine red fescue seed in September. These grasses would enhance the texture and body of grass over time.
- The approach to sanding should remain.

Fairways

- The height of cut should remain at 12mm during the summer and be at 17-18mm for the 'winter'.
- To save on materials cost the option to fertilise with urea as per the tees is given for next summer.
- Sand topdressing each year with 600 tonnes per hectare should remain for the time being to counter thatch and assist firming of damper fairways.

Tree Management

- Tree removal should continue next late autumn through spring to improve airflow, sunshine and interest mainly across the upper holes. Focus should be on removal of the denser evergreen species.

Resources

- It should be noted that the current staff compliment of six during the summer are stretched and will struggle to address dry parts and non-routine operations. An additional member of staff would be desirable for the main growing season under normal circumstances.

Signed

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Conor Nolan".

Conor Nolan B.Agr.Sc (Land Hort), M.Sc, MPBR
STRI Turf Agronomist for Ireland
t. +44 (0)3535 879 584510
e. conor.nolan@strigroup.com
www.strigroup.com