

Humpty Doo Golf Course Greens Report 11/12/2018

Problems

Since my last report a few things have been happening. The worst of these being that we had a big outbreak of Pythium two weeks ago. This has unfortunately damaged even more of our green's surfaces. It has been treated and will be monitored. I am also still fighting black beetles which damage the grass. They were sprayed a few weeks ago which resulted in a good kill, but I will also spray again this month to see if we have any remaining grubs or adults.

The Hydrophobic conditions I have been treating have been resolved, and I will now start to use a different wetting agent to pull the moisture away from the top surface and lower into the soil profile, so hopefully we won't have too much of a soft surface in the wet season.

Having done all of this, we are still not seeing any satisfactory progress or recovery on some of the greens. As it stands, we are using the best products on the market and treating several different problems as they occur. The fact that after sorting these issues we still have poor recovery is very worrying.

My main concern is for the 4th and 7th greens. I feel that after all of the work that has been done with no great success, more drastic action is required. I think both of these greens will need to be replaced in the near future and obviously have some major problems with the soil and grass that is there at present.

I would recommend, as soon as possible, the 4th green is replaced. I am taking immediate action on the 7th green. I have stripped the top layer down to the original sub-base and can see why we are struggling due to the condition of the soil that is present at this level. This week I will get the area tidied and also replace the green with approximately 100mm of new sand. Next week the 5th green will, yet again, be cored and these will be used to produce the new green's surface. This may only solve the issue for a short while, as we will still have the big problems buried underneath, but I am hopeful this will at least help to regain a decent playing surface. While this takes place the 7th green will remain on

temporary. The remaining greens with issues will recover once we get through the Build-Up and I am able to get more control of them into the wet season.

I believe, with all the issues that there have been over the years, we should concentrate on changing the grass on the problem greens - 328 Tiff Dwarf - to Novatech, which is on the 2nd and the 5th greens (and also now on the new 9th green). I think everybody can see how well this grass can handle the environmental conditions compared to 328. This would not be a quick process, but I think it would be very worthwhile over the next few seasons.

Complaints and Comments

As much as I know that I am shielded from most comments made, and as much as I would usually shrug them off when I do hear them, I feel now that I should respond.

Although it is most definitely not the majority of people, I am aware of remarks made in regards to the condition of the course. I try to see things from each and every point of view and know people would like to turn up to a golf course that is in pristine condition every day. I would love this to be the case as well, this is unfortunately not a realistic situation for this golf course, given the ongoing problems it has had for years.

I will point out that I have only had 9-10 months to try to sort out all of these inherited issues, (and there are many), which have had many years to take hold. These are not easy things to overcome.

Over my time so far, I have had to repeatedly respond to and treat things such as disease outbreaks, hydrophobic soil, water logged soil, couch mite, black beetle, not to mention the abundance of weeds that have been removed so far.

On top of this, I am constantly keeping fertilizer and fungicide programs going, where I must have an understanding of the chemistry involved to avoid adverse reactions and the possibility of further damage.

Many hours of my 9-10 months have been spent on sorting out a variety of problems with machinery.

I am sure some people are unaware of most of the above-mentioned issues and feel that I am not doing much with my time. I assure you, if I was not doing what needs to be done, you would probably not have any greens to play on at all.....

You have a new green on the ninth and I intend to build others to rectify some of the problems mentioned above.

I do not often rise to, or respond to, negative comments. I would like to ask the people who make these remarks how they think I feel - after all of the effort that has been put in to produce a very good golf course throughout the dry season - only to see it go backwards at this time of year due to problems that I have inherited.

All this said and done, I will yet again this year endeavor to produce the course to the same standard, while continuing to try and rectify the problems that we face. I look forward to doing so.

At this moment in time we have lost some grass cover on some of the greens, we have not got the whacking great craters that we had when I started!!!

Apologies for the rant, but it is not as simple as watering and feeding grass to make it grow, as some do in their yards at home.

I do thank all of those people who are supporting me and being patient, and to those who continually complain I will say this:

I want what you want, I want you to have a golf course you can be proud of.

I will always do what I can to achieve this, it will just take some time.

Many thanks

Danny