

Course Blog

March 2021

Now that the new season is underway, I thought that it would be a good time to update you with the current situation with the new bunkers and surrounding run-off areas.

We have now started filling the bunkers with sand, concentrating initially on the greenside bunkers, and have also marked out the proposed cutting patterns around these bunkers as we look to give these areas their first cut in the next week or two.

Also, on speaking to a few members, and from feedback received over the weekend, it would appear that there is a little confusion as to what areas are in play at the moment and I will try and clear that up in this blog.

Filling Bunkers with Sand

We are conscious that members are eager to get the new bunkers in play as soon as possible, as are we, but we are mindful that some of the turf around these bunkers has only been laid in the last few weeks and requires time to fully knit together. We deliberately left a length of overhanging turf into the bunkers, as when the turf dries out it does so from the edges first. Once we get some root growth into the bunker edges these bits of turf will be cut off prior to filling with sand. We were hand watering on a daily basis prior to the recent much needed rainfall, however with the cold easterly winds that we get at this time of year it's been an effort

to get sufficient water onto these areas to stop them drying out. Unfortunately we don't have any irrigation points close to any of the new fairway bunkers so they really are in the hands of Mother Nature in terms of turf establishment.



Some of the turf edges that are drying out

The turfing around the bunkers at the 7th and 9th greens was finished before the end of last year, and with good turf establishment here we have completed the task of filling of these with sand. We will also be looking to get the greenside bunkers at the 1st and 2nd completed this week and all these bunkers will then be back in play. This will then leave us with the greenside bunkers at the 3rd, 5th & 6th holes to complete as well as all the new fairway bunkers. These were the last areas to be turfed and will require a little more time for root growth on the bunker edges.

When filling the bunkers on phase 1 of the project we were under a bit of pressure to get sand in once the course reopened following lockdown and as such probably rushed the job a little which gave us some inconsistencies with the sand levels. This year the process we are using is to compact 4" of sand in the base of the bunker first, after which we are putting 2" of sand up the slopes. By taking a little more time filling the bunkers we are confident that we will get the consistency that we are looking for from the outset in terms of sand depths and playability.



Greenside bunkers at the 9th completed

Green Complexes

All the newly turfed areas that form the green complexes and run-off areas are now sufficiently rooted to allow foot traffic on them. These areas are now all in play and although the grass is slightly longer than fairway height they should be treated as fairway whereby the player may take a preferred lie.

All these areas were marked as Ground Under Repair over the winter months and as these markings were still clearly visible we chose to cover this white paint with green paint to effectively "remove it", but I think this is perhaps where some of the confusion lies. ALL turfed areas that are marked within green lines are in play, only areas marked with white paint are G.U.R. We have also now blanked out any lettering with green paint as this was also perhaps a little confusing.

As temperatures increase and we start to see a bit of growth we will hopefully be able to cut out these lines fairly soon to help avoid any further confusion.



Any area marked with green paint is in play

Had everything went strictly to plan with the bunker project, all of the construction work would have been completed before the Christmas break and all the bunkers filled with sand early in the new year. We are always at the mercy of the weather in this country and unfortunately the weather we got in January and February meant we were always going to be up against it for getting all the work completed prior to the start of the season. We are in that transitional period at the moment as we finish off filling the bunkers with sand and start to form new cutting patterns around these bunkers but it won't be long until all areas of the course are back in play.

In Summary

Any area marked with GREEN paint is IN PLAY and a ball should be played from where it lies (preferred lies are in operation and any new turf is to be classed as fairway).

Any area marked with WHITE paint is G.U.R. and appropriate relief should be taken under the rules of golf (there are no drop zones in operation).

Any bunker that is filled with sand is in play and the ball should be played from where it lies (again there is a local rule for preferred lies in bunkers).

Bunkers without sand or are only partially filled with sand are deemed G.U.R. and appropriate relief should be taken under the rules of golf (ball should be dropped at the nearest point of relief).

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