



Course Report – June 2024

Current Conditions

I “jinxed” the weather conditions after last month’s report as I opened with the line “We have only had 17mm of rain to date (20th of May). We finished the month with 98.8mm of recorded rain, which was only 0.4mm higher than April’s total. I was also dreaming about applying the sun lotion, but average temperatures only reached 12.6°C, which only meant we could take one of our many layers off and replace the woolly hat with a baseball cap.

Growth potential has been high enough to promote decent growing conditions, however, it has been mixed as well with the low average temperatures. The soil temperature at times has fallen below 10°C which has limited the growth, but this actually helped us leading into Club Championship Finals weekends. For all the rain we have had and many members commenting on how lush the course was looking, the weekend of Tantallons Club Championships where the wind did not seem to drop below 20mph all week helped to draw moisture out of the surface and to firm things up. With this and the drop in temperature, it helped to give better playing conditions ahead of the Club Championships.

Unfortunately, we are still suffering from leatherjacket damage which is most evident on the 1st, 9th, 15th and 18th greens where there are small holes visible from where the grubs have been nibbling on the grass but also where the birds have been pecking. We will be applying a fertiliser to help promote recovery on these greens along with topdressing.



Figure 1: Leatherjacket damage on the 18th green.

The topdressing programme halted for a couple of weeks whilst the Club Championships were on, so we did not have any inconsistencies or sand lying on the surfaces. We restarted this on the 17th of May

on the Fidra side (holes 5-13) with the Bass Rock side (holes 1-4, 14-18) being aerated with a 6mm pencil tine and a roll. This will help to open the surfaces for air exchange and to keep an open channel available to help water move into the rootzone, especially with the wet conditions we have been having. We plan to do this aeration work once a month leaving little disruption to play.

Greens have improved significantly over the last month, which has been pleasing. It is great to see strong roots below the surface and year on year we have seen the roots getting longer and stronger. The photo below shows some strong rooting from the 3rd and 14th greens.



Figure 2: Rootzone profiles on the 3rd (left) and 14th (right) showing long and healthy roots

Club Championships

We are absolutely delighted with the positive feedback received from Tantallon and North Berwick regarding course conditions for the Club Championships. As the “major” events on the calendar for both clubs, it was so important that we presented the course as best as we could and produced good playing surfaces. As I mentioned before, a combination of the high winds and low temperatures helped to firm up the surfaces and increase the trueness and speed on the greens. We were double-cutting greens daily leading into both weekends to help refine the surfaces as well as double-cutting approaches and fairway.

Well done to all competitors that made the finals and huge congratulations to all the winners:

Tantallon:

- Club Champion – Nic Peoples
- Silver Champion – Alan Waite
- B Champion – Andy Edwards
- C Champion – Tom Gill
- Sligo Medal – Joe Lockie

North Berwick:

- Gents Champion – Mike Gray
- Ladies Champion – Louise Martin
- Gents Seniors Champion – Nial Gemmell
- Gents Plate Champion – Graham Elliot
- Ladies Plate Champion – Fiona Maciver
- Gents B Champion – Ivor McArdle
- Ladies B Champion – Alison Di Rollo



Figure 3: Club Championship set-up

Burning Bunker Faces

We have started a programme of burning bunker faces out on the course which will be completed in the next few weeks. Once the face has been burned off, we will apply a weedkiller to kill all the remaining vegetation on the faces. This will leave a clean face which will look a lot sharper and will show off the revets on the face. Some faces have quite a thick coverage of grass on them that will take time to strip them back and other faces are quite worn with a lot of the revets eroded. The bunker work that had been done over the winter shows the finished quality we are looking to achieve so it is frustrating to see some very tired bunkers on the course which will take time to rebuild. This work will help to improve the aesthetics of the bunkers in line with the rest of the course.



Figure 4: Bunkers on the 6th hole with the faces burned.

Mowing Lines

Now that the Club Championships are over, we will be turning our attention to some of the mowing lines and definition around the course. Some will have noticed that we have added an extra band of rough. We now have a band of 2.5” semi rough off the fairway, followed by a band of 4.5” semi rough before going into the fringing/eco-rough. We are not planning to massively extend the widths of fairways but instead, just improving the existing cutting lines around bunkers. We also acquired a new mower from Royal Porthcawl which we will use to cut areas between greens and tees such as the 6th green to 7th tee, as well as tee banks. This will make a huge difference to these areas and help to better define them.

We have also cut down the bank behind the 5th green which will improve the runoff on the back of the green tying into the new semi-rough down the right of the 6th carry.



Figure 5: New semi-rough mowing lines in the Quarry at the 6th with the islands of rough.

Training Update

On the 4th of June, Stuart Hall from Bernhards, who manufactures grinders for cutting units, spent a day with Ryan Yuill and me showing us how to grind units using their grinders. This was something neither of us had any experience of doing and it was great to understand the breakdown of a cutting unit, why it is important to have sharp blades and correctly sharpening and setting the cutting unit for best results. We have now had 6 members of the team complete this training which helps strengthen the skillset of the squad and to help our Workshop Manager, Steven, when some of the units need to be sharpened. We will continue to send the rest of the team on courses like this to develop their skills and knowledge.



Figure 6: Ryan Yuill getting ready to grind a fairway unit.

Rainfall Chart

As of 17th of June 2024

	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	80.0	20	26.2	48.1
February	51.0	66	33	47.2
March	24.0	19	78.4	73.6
April	3.0	41	34	98.4
May	69.0	48	24.39	98.8
June	38.0	24	43.6	31.2
July	39.5	36	48	
August	44.5	21	37.4	
September	39.5	67	50.4	
October	155.0	56	152.6	
November	23.0	94	89.54	
December	109.0	23	108.4	
Total	675.5	515	725.93	397.3