

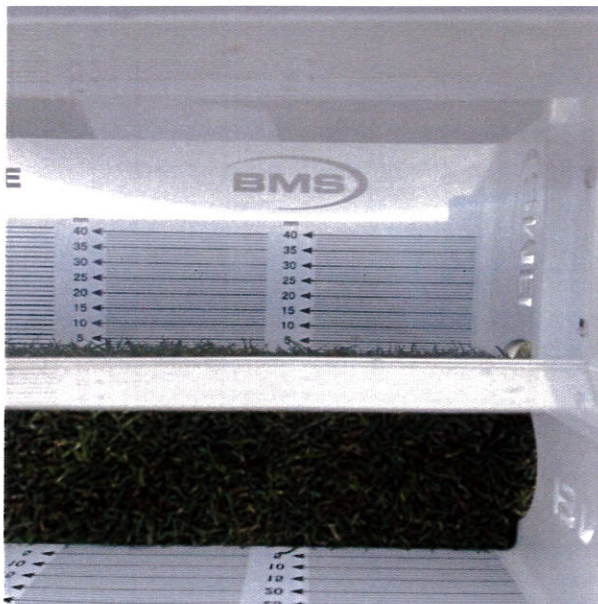


Ball Roll on Green

Variable Grass Species

I talked a little last week about growth and how the lack of adequate temperature can impact the rate at which the grass grows. Limiting factors such as temperature and moisture also affect the rate at which different grass species grow on the same green. This has a hugely negative impact on the consistency of smoothness and trueness of our greens.

The visual below is a **prism gauge** which we utilise to accurately determine the height of cut on our greens. As you will see from the picture along the 5mm line where our mowers are effectively cutting, there is a huge inconsistency between the main species of grass on our greens. Most of the grass sward is below the 5mm line. **Poa annua, bent and fescue** all require varying amounts of water and nutrition to function. This is especially true when coming out of winter dormancy where our dominant species (poa annua) is stressed.



So why don't we just mow at 3mm?

If we are to be producing greens on the West Links which putt true and smooth on a consistent basis year round then we must strive to produce a consistent and better performing grass sward. By shaving our greens to 2.5mm-3mm this plays into the hands of the very grass we striving to reduce – poa annua. Poa is a notoriously high input grass which requires high levels of resource which in turn can lead to soft, slow and inconsistent greens. See below for a picture of poa annua flowering under the height of cut on our putting green.



1832



Grass species in any given golf green are all competing for five major resources, **light, water, space, temperature, and nutrition**. All our maintenance practices are planned around giving the more desirable species such bent and fescue the competitive edge in these areas over the poorly performing poa annua.

This will not happen overnight, however the end result will be greens which are more consistent from morning till night, week to week and month by month.

Darren McLaughlan, Course Manager