



## Green Bulletin August 2023 Open Championship Review

Dear Members,

As the last few sections of spectator grandstands and Championship infrastructure are removed from the Links, I thought it would be worthwhile reviewing how the course performed both from a playing and an agronomical point of view. The Spring started well with typical rainfall and temperatures. However, as with last Summer, rainfall became scarce for six weeks until mid-June. Fortunately the irrigation upgrade work carried out last Autumn meant that we could maintain the new and developing turf as well as keep the course agronomy as healthy as possible. Once the rain returned the course responded well and was finally handed over in the best possible condition.

### **Agronomy**

Working closely with Alistair Beggs and the R&A Agronomy team, Bledge and the team had two weeks with no play to refine the course and ensure the performance targets were met. The R&A set a target green speed of 10ft - 10ft 6in, target green firmness of >130 gravities and expected soil moisture target of around 12%. The performance data was measured every day from the week before and the cutting plan implemented. The data and performance is heavily dependent on the current weather conditions and 2023 presented some challenges. Heavy rain during the few weeks before meant the firmness required would be difficult to achieve but overall speed targets were met with a gradual increase each day to a final day of 10ft 7ins despite an incredibly high moisture reading of 31%.

### **Playing Performance**

Data on how holes played is displayed in the table below.



The Open Championship 2023 - Hoylake, England  
Course Statistics (All Rounds)

Hole	Par	Yards	Eagles	Birdies	Pars	Bogeys	Double Bogeys	Other	Rank *	Average
1	4	459	0	36	274	142	12	0	2	4.280
2	4	453	0	46	334	78	6	0	11	4.095
3	4	426	0	31	317	95	13	8	3	4.250
4	4	367	2	69	307	73	11	2	13	4.060
5	5	520	6	200	212	36	9	1	18	4.666
6	3	201	0	38	305	110	10	1	6	3.205
7	4	481	0	57	319	75	11	2	10	4.101
8	4	436	0	56	322	69	16	1	9	4.106
9	3	218	0	59	329	73	3	0	15	3.043
Out	35	3561	8	592	2719	751	91	15		35.806
10	4	507	0	41	278	134	10	1	3	4.250
11	4	392	0	69	314	71	10	0	14	4.047
12	4	449	0	48	301	107	8	0	7	4.162
13	3	194	0	35	357	67	5	0	12	3.091
14	4	454	0	41	253	144	22	4	1	4.347
15	5	620	8	176	233	41	5	1	17	4.703
16	4	461	0	37	294	118	14	1	5	4.241
17	3	136	1	65	304	72	15	7	8	3.121
18	5	609	5	139	232	52	26	10	16	4.978
In	36	3822	14	651	2566	806	115	24		36.940
Total	71	7383	22	1243	5285	1557	206	39		72.746

In summary, the highest scoring hole to par was the 14<sup>th</sup>, as it was in 2014. The 1<sup>st</sup> was the second hardest and the 3<sup>rd</sup> was the third hardest, therefore Hoylake must have one of the most difficult starts on tour! The last two holes had every score from an ace to a ten. The 17<sup>th</sup>, Little Eye, a prominent feature in the global TV coverage as well as a spectator attraction during the week, rated 8<sup>th</sup> hardest. The lowest scoring hole to par was the 5<sup>th</sup> followed by the 15<sup>th</sup>.

The most challenging day was Friday (average 73.4) and the most straight forward Saturday (70.4) helped by the new course record 63 by Jon Rahm. Overall the average score was 72.7, proving once again that Hoylake presents a stern test for the world's best.

### **The Links**

It's hard to put into words just how wonderfully our Links performed. Almost as much rain fell on the final day as it did for three months of last Summer (over 33mm). Play was not affected at all with hardly a puddle on the course. There were no flooded bunkers or need for squeegees, around 50,000 people each day managed to move around the course without it turning into a mud bath and it was fit for play at 6am the next morning. It was wonderful to hear and read the positive feedback on the presentation and condition of the surfaces from players, caddies, the media and officials. Sincere thanks go to James Bledge, our brilliant greenkeeping team and the unpaid, volunteer greenkeepers who have delivered a course in an outstanding condition with a spirit of collaboration and co-operation.



The Captain addressing the team on the eve of the Championship.

Finally huge thanks must go to the Hoylake Members. The fairway protection measures have been long and an obvious interference to normal play. The rough has been roped, bunkers taken out of play or impossible to play from at times, ground under repair and grow sheets prevalent. Members' support and adherence contributed greatly to the presentation of the course and the green committee are sincerely grateful to everyone for your patience and understanding.

Matt Way  
Green Chairman