



# Maesdu Golf Club

Course Policy Document

2015

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# **1. Greens**

## **1.1 Maintenance Objectives**

- The aim of maintenance is to provide firm, smooth and true greens that remain playable throughout the year and are economically and environmentally sustainable. To fulfil this aim, we encourage the finer grasses at all times. Cultural methods and traditional greenkeeping skills are to be applied at all times.

## **1.2 Promoting the finer grasses**

- The club is committed to encouraging the finer grasses such as Bent and Fescue on the greens and the reduction in the population of Annual Meadow grass. This will reduce the vulnerability of the greens to climate change, stricter legislation on pesticides and tighter water use. It will also provide consistent year round golfing surfaces.
- To promote these finer grasses, the following policy for the management of the greens has been agreed.

## **1.3 Fertiliser and irrigation**

- The main aim is to keep productivity as low as possible. This means restricting water and fertiliser inputs to a minimum. Only enough to provide uniformed and healthy growth.
- Fertiliser is only applied to keep surfaces uniformed, and the grass plant health, never to provide good colour.
- Unless otherwise advised by our agronomist, fertilisers in general will be nitrogen based. Spoon feeding with liquid application preferable with granular applications of 3.0.3 in early spring and late autumn with one 8.0.6 during the growing season.
- A maximum of 100KG of nitrogen should be applied in a year
- Watering should not be carried out with the intent of producing soft amenable “targets”. Water will only be applied to keep the surface alive and healthy and not to make greens more receptive.
- To optimise water penetration and provide uniformed surfaces, wetting agents will be used throughout the growing season on a monthly programme.

## 1.4 Aeration and top dressing

- Regular aeration will be carried out throughout the year be an appropriate method. An outline aeration programme is shown below but intensity and frequency of work is subject to weather, grown conditions and growth. Staffing levels may also affect aeration frequency.
- Autumn/winter aeration will consist of weekly slitting. This will be alternate Star slitting (2 Inch depth) and deep slitting (7 inch depth). Verti draining on a monthly basis with solid tines. Half inch and 1 inch tines will be alternately used at variable depths, between 4 and 9 inch. Sarel rolling may also be carried out.
- Spring/summer aeration will consist of weekly sarel rolling and star slitting. Solid tining with 8mm micro tines will be carried out on a monthly basis. Verti draining may be carried out during the playing season
- Hollow coring will only be carried out if deemed absolutely necessary in spring or autumn. Autumn operation should only be carried out during strong growth. No later than mid-September.
- Topdressing will consist of Medium /course partials. A Medium / fine partial topdressing should not be used.
- The aim is to apply 100 tonnes of topdressing over the 19 greens during the growing season. Regular light dressing will be applied in the summer on a three weekly basis and heavier applications at the beginning and end of the growing season.
- Topdressing should only be applied during the growing season so material can be absorbed into the turf. It should be worked into the grass sward using a SISIS topdressing brush so to not damage the turf. Drag mats should not be used.

## 1.5 Surface cutting / refinement

- To promote the finer grasses it is essential to minimise the disturbance pressure on the turf. This means refining the surface gently and not aggressively.
- Mowing will be carried out on a daily basis during the playing season and when required during autumn and winter months. Greens never to be mown during frost conditions.
- The perimeter cut will be missed out twice a week to minimise wear through scalping and turning.
- A sensible height of cut will be used, 3.5mm – 6mm. This will encourage finer grasses, healthier and stress free turf. Height of cut will never be lowered below 3.5mm as this will have a detrimental effect on the turf health and will encourage poor grass (Poa Annua) to invade the surface.

- Brushes attached to the Triplex mower will be used when required to reduce lateral growth and “clean out” the grass sward of any dead grass material and stand up the grass prior to cutting.
- Verticutting will be implemented as required. This can be up to once a week, set at neutral, with more aggressive Verticutting being carried out once a month at -3mm.

## 1.6 Greens speed

- To provide greens of sensible and realistic speeds without imposing undue pressure on the turf we will roll, brush, Verticut and topdress rather than cut low.
- The speed will be controlled by the Course Manager and no other person within the club. Tournament personnel can measure speeds during certain tournaments.
- The objective is to provide greens with a reading of 7-9 feet on the Stimpmeter at the height of the playing season and no slower than 6 at any other time.
- Contoured greens do not require speeds of over 9 feet, as windy conditions can cause movement of the golf ball and slow speed of play.

## 1.7 Hole cutting and changing

- To ensure that holes are not crowned when cut it is mandatory to use a borer to surround the hole cutter. The position of the holes for general play and competitions is at the discretion of the Course Manager.
- A universal hole cup depth setter will be used to set the hole cup at the right depth from the surface to reduce bounce out.
- A general rule is to have 6 easily, 6 medium and 6 hard pin positions.
- During the playing season and times of heavy play holes will be changed up to three times a week. During winter months holes will be moved when deemed necessary by the Course Manager.
- If rain is forecast or during times of wet weather holes will be cut on high spots and near edges of greens and walk on/off areas.
- A three coloured flag system will be used during the playing season to highlight pin positions. Red = Front 3<sup>rd</sup>, Yellow = Middle 3<sup>rd</sup>, White = Back 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **1.8 The growing environment**

- Where vegetation such as trees and shrubs shades greens it is necessary to reduce their negative influence by appropriate pruning or removal.
- If trees are to be removed it is the responsibility of the Course Manager to check for TPO's (Tree preservation orders).
- Root pruning of trees may be necessary if nearby trees are sending roots into the soil profile of the green.

## **1.9 Overseeding**

- To further the aim of increasing the promotion of finer grasses, it is necessary to over seed the greens. If budget allows this should be carried out twice a year with an appropriate seed mix. High quality will be used.
- Overseeding with Bent (*Agrostis*) is desirable at present. The introduction of Fescu (*Festuca*) will be desirable once a good establishment of Bent grass has been achieved.

## **1.10 Fungicide and Pesticide use**

- Disease should be controlled as far as possible by cultural and mechanical means
- When application of a fungicide / pesticide is necessary, i.e incidence is beyond the stated tolerance threshold, spraying must be strictly controlled in compliance with the pesticide and fungicide regulations using approved products.
- Spraying must only be done by qualified persons, PA1, PA2 certification needed.
- Spraying should not be carried out in windy or rainy conditions. Safety buffer zones around watercourses must be maintained.
- A notice must be posted notifying members and visitors of the hazard on each occasion a substance with a health hazard is applied.

## **2. Tees**

- 2.1** The aim is to provide a firm, level, well grassed teeing platform on each hole
- 2.2** To accomplish this objective, the maintenance programme should involve regular aeration, controlled feeding, and controlled water input and topdressing
- 2.3** The height of cut will range from 8mm – 13mm depending on time of the year, tees will be mown twice a week during the playing season and when deemed necessary in winter months.
- 2.4** Divot marks should be restored weekly using a mix of sand / loam / seed. A divot mix will be provided on all par 3 holes for golfers to repair divots.
- 2.5** Other than medal tees, the tee markers should be progressively moved back or forward in a planned fashion so that a teeing area once used can be topdressed, seeded and rested.
- 2.6** Full use should be made of those tees affording an alternate route to the hole (Winter tee areas) so as to minimise wear of the walk off areas. This is particular important in winter months.
- 2.7** Permeant (Index) markers should be maintained such as they are clearly visible. Slate should be added around the base with a frame to keep maintenance down to a minimum.

## **3. Fairways**

- 3.1** The fairway width should be less than forty yards at par four and five holes.
- 3.2** It is desirable to create shape and form on the fairway cutting and so avoid ‘straight lines, edges’. Once the desired contouring has been established it is important that the member of staff cutting the fairway preserves the agreed line. The ‘agreed line’ should be established before with the first cut of the season.
- 3.3** The need for fairway weed control should be assessed on an annual basis. Spot or localised treatment is preferred to an overall application. It is preferable that spraying is carried out at the start of the growing season when climate conditions allow.
- 3.4** Worm control should be assessed on an annual basis. It is particularly important that worm casting be controlled in the autumn if necessary to avoid muddy fairways and weed seed beds being formed.
- 3.5** Lime should never be applied to fairways
- 3.6** In periods of wet weather and vigours growth it may be necessary to disperse grass clippings to provide presentable playing conditions.
- 3.7** Deep aeration will be required on at least an annual basis to improve surface drainage. This will be done with Verti draining with one inch tines and the use of deep slitting. Brushing and scarification may also be carried out.

**3.8** Irrigation may be required in periods of excessive dry weather. Hole 15 has fairway irrigation as does 14. Hole 11 needs all pop ups replacing due to vandalism. Irrigation should only be used to keep turf alive.

**3.9** Fertilising may be carried out at the start of the growing season to maintain a healthy grass coverage, with applications of iron to reduce and remove winter moss build up.

**3.10** Wetting agent should be applied on a monthly basis during the growing to help maintain moister in dry conditions and reduce the risk of burn off and create deeper rooting grass.

## 4. Bunkers

**4.1** Bunkers should be raked three times a week during the playing season and when required and conditions allow during winter months. Stones and debris should be removed and weeds removed.

**4.2** Sand levels and playability should be monitored regularly. Sand level at the base of the bunker should be maintained at a three inch depth. Sand levels on faces and back edges should be one to two inch depth.

**4.3** When bunkers are topped up the sand should be consolidated to reduce the possibility of ball plugging.

**4.4** Approved sand with a controlled partial size from a reputable supply source should be used.

**4.3** The design of the bunker should be in accordance with the characteristics of the course. Links end design may differ to clubhouse side of the course.

**4.4** All bunkers will be provided with at least one “members” rake for players to rake footprints. These members’ rakes will be place half in half out on the least line of resistance to play.

## 5. Semi rough

**5.1** The purpose of semi rough is to punish a wayward shot and so to reward the straight hitter. To define between fairway and rough, outline the fairway and to increase visual presentation.

**5.2** Semi rough should therefore be maintained at a height where there is high expectation to find the ball but to create a slightly more difficult shot than from the equivalent position on the fairway.

**5.3** Semi rough will be maintained at a high in the range of  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Semi rough will be cut twice a week during the playing season and will not be cut during winter months.

**5.4** Semi rough will be scarified once a year to thin the grass coverage and encourage finer grasses to thrive.

## **6. Cut rough**

**6.1** Cut rough is incorporated into the golf course to punish wayward shots and to create definition to the course. This should be done mindful of the searching for golf balls and the impact on the speed of play.

**6.2** For operational reasons rough must be maintained within a range of 2-3 inches. Rough will be cut with a Rotary cutting machine and grass clippings will be left on the ground. If staff levels allow, rough should be scarified (clippings collected) twice a year to thin out the grass coverage.

**6.3** Growth regulators such as Primmo Maxx and Maintain may be used to reduce growth to save on fuel and labour costs. These products will also reduce the density of the grass.

## **7. Eco rough / Out of play areas**

**7.1** It is the policy to minimise unnecessary cosmetic mowing to areas of the course including out of play areas. By doing this fuel and labour costs are reduced. It will also provide a more natural look to the course and provide ecological environments.

**7.2** Where eco rough has been introduced the area will be cut / scarified / collected 2-3 times per year. March / September are stable times of the year.

**7.3** Scarification is carried out to remove decaying matter and reduce the density of the grass sward. This will encourage the finer grasses to thrive, producing a “wavier, thinner” rough area with increased playability and visual values.

**7.4** All grass clippings will be collected to stop self-fertilisation of the area to increase natural grasses within the area.

**7.5** A spring tinne / bok rake attachment may be used to thin out the area but not reduce the height of the grass. This will also encourage air flow and encourage finer grasses to grow.

**7.6** Out of play areas will be cut once a year. Cuttings will be collected to reduce growth rate.

## **8. Trees**

**8.1** To allow full development of growing trees it is necessary to thin out certain trees particularly in dense plantations.

**8.2** Tree management should be considered annually at the setting of winter work programme.

**8.3** Consideration should be given regularly to the replacement of old and dying trees in strategic golfing positions so that replacement trees can be established before the original one requires removal.

**8.4** Care should be taken when planting in the vicinity of tees and greens to ensure that when the tree is fully developed it does not create excessive shade or deny the required circulation of air to the tee or green.

**8.5** Conifer, sycamore, chestnut, cherry and Sitka should be avoided. Native species such as birch, oak, scots pine and beech are desirable.

## **9. Pathways**

**9.1** All pathways should be clearly edged and consist of a material that creates a firm, level surface but does not carry on to the grass. The material must be hold firm when excessive amounts of water pass over it.

**9.2** Crush blue slate with partial size of 3-6 mm is preferable. Half round rails are desirable as an edging. This material also provides an in keeping and appropriate colour and is sourced locally. (Bethesda)

**9.3** Paths are to be regularly cleared for debris and weeds with pot holes filled in.

## **10. Irrigation system and water quality**

**10.1** The prime function of the watering system is to allow survival of the grass on the greens, surrounds and tees in times of relative drought. It should not be used to create soft, target greens.

**10.2** The greens and tees are the only playing surfaces irrigated. This constitutes to 5% of the total playing area of the golf course.

**10.3** Our total average annual water usage is .....

**10.4** It is not advisable to use the system in the cold dry conditions of early spring as the cold wet greens so provided inhibited growth.

**10.5** The system is to be tested / opened up in early spring to ensure that it is working order for the incoming season and any repairs made.

**10.6** To protect the system, it should be drained off at its lowest point in autumn before the onset of frost.

**10.7** Hand watering should be implemented as necessary to minimise the use of the automatic system. Hand watering should be carried out on high / dry spots on the greens.

**10.8** Water quality should be monitored on an annual basis

**10.9** Mains water is the supply of water for the irrigation system

## **11. Winter Golf, traffic management and course protection**

**11.1** Temporary greens should only be used in times of hard frost, thawing conditions and abnormal rainfall.

**11.2** Temporary greens should be prepared on relatively flat areas on the fairways in September / October. They should be progressively cut down and white lined to provide positive definition.

**11.3** A larger winter hole cup size should be used to allow for speed of play.

**11.4** Alternative natural turf winter teeing grounds will be used where possible during the winter period. The use of high quality artificial turf teeing mats will be used on the par 3 holes to protect the main tees.

**11.5** The protection of fairway shall be provided by using preferred lies one the last competition of the season has been played and ground conditions soften. Teeing up on fairways should be a possibility.

**11.6** Rope, white lines, hoops will be placed in areas of high wear and near greens to divert golfing traffic, this will protect the turf and reduce the possibility of “muddying up” the course. White lines and ropes will be moved on a weekly basis to spread wear.

**11.7** The use of Hire buggies should cease on October 1<sup>st</sup> and should not be used again until April 1<sup>st</sup>. If weather and ground conditions are still unstable for the use of buggies it is at the discretion of the Course Manager to prolong the period.

**11.8** The use of personnel / ride on buggies cannot be stopped but users are expected to protect the course and keep in the rough and away from known wet areas.

**11.9** The use of carry bags is preferable. If this is not possible a reduction in weight of trolley bags is desirable.

## **12. Water ways and ponds**

**12.1** Water ways and Ditches are to be dredged in early autumn. Dredging is carried out to create a free water flow therefore improving drainage across the course. This is also reduces the build-up of debris and Alge. All material will be removed and disposed of in a suitable area on the course.

**12.2** Ponds will be dredged in autumn. The removal of Reeds and is carried out to oxygenate the pond, improve regeneration and create an improved habitat for wildlife. Silt removal should be carried out to maintain depth and water holding capacity.

**12.3** Ponds edges will be maintained through the playing season to maintain visibility and presentation. Barley straw will be added when necessary to reduce the build-up of Alge.

**12.4** Over hanging trees will be removed or pruned to increase sunlight and airflow to the pond to improve the habitat for wildlife to thrive and reduce Alge build up.

**12.5** Deep water signs should be visible and life rings provided at the edge of the ponds.

## **13. Additional duties**

**13.1** The greenstaff are responsible for the maintenance of grasses areas around the clubhouse and the Clubhouse entrance.

**13.2** Green staff are responsible for maintenance of the practice nets and the surrounding area.

**13.3** The course should be “toured” on a weekly basis to collect discarded cans, bottles and other debris. Golfers are reminded of their environmental commitment by not littering.

**13.4** Bins around the course will be checked daily and ball washers will be toped up weekly.

**13.5** Divot mix boxes on Par 3 hole and divot top up boxes have levels maintained on a daily basis during the playing season

**13.6** Vermin control will be carried out by a fully licensed external contractor. Mole catching will be carried out by greens staff but if moles get to disruptive and more time consuming to manage, an external contractor will be used.

**13.7** Hazard marker, guide posts and index marker will be kept in high condition, visible and uniformed by greens staff.