



## Course Update November 2022

We would like to welcome you to our Winter course update for 2022. We have had a busy Summer of golf with the course team presenting the course in magnificent order. The majority of time over the last number of months has focused on the presentation of the course to the highest standards. This update will illustrate some of the work carried out over the last few months and outline the plans for the months ahead.

### The Course Staff Team

For our new members, we would like to introduce our Course Team who look after our course and present it to a high standard daily, they are a friendly bunch so don't be afraid to say hi the next time you are on the fairways!

The team is led by the Course Superintendent Damian English. The team that work with Damian have over 100 years of experience between them and are well used to the early starts!



### **Course Superintendent, Damian English**

Damian has been a course staff member in Dundalk Golf Club for over 22 years. He became Course Superintendent in 2015. When not at work he can usually be found enjoying the fruits of his labour on the golf course or whipping up a storm in the kitchen!!!



**Assistant Head GK, Paul (Joe) Lee**

Joe has been on the Course Team for over 30 years and when not at work you'll see him on the sidelines supporting his sons playing football. He is also a handy golfer and is looking forward to getting out to play a bit more.



**Christy Ward**

Christy is the 'creative hands' of the team and can throw his hand to any task. With over 20 years on the course he knows the best spots to hit it to and has a fine golf game to match. He is happiest on his fairway mower ensuring the stripes are as good as Augusta!

**Michael Mc Geown**

Michael is known as the quiet man of the group (he's far from it!!!), with a wealth of knowledge to draw from and share with the team. When not at work his focus is on gardening, farming and reluctantly walking his beloved dogs!!!



**Conor Murray**

Conor joined us full time 4 years ago having come to us for work placement when at college studying landscaping & horticulture. He has become a vital member of the team who has found his voice when it comes to group discussion!!! A real 'grafter' who thrives on the precision cutting/presentation of the collars & approaches and tee boxes. He has recently joined as a member and is 1 to watch in 2023 as he's sure to feature in the winner's enclosure, or so he says!!!

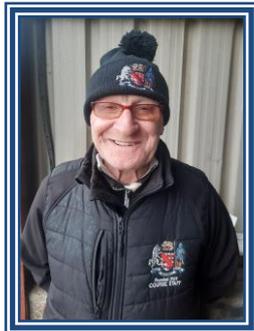
**John Smith**

John has spent 18 years on the Course Team and has developed into an extremely valuable member of the staff. He loves a chat and takes great care with raking the bunkers. He is a keen swimmer, football player and 10 pin bowler with the Louth and Leinster Special Olympic teams. He recently won a Leinster Gold medal for football and a silver for 10 pin bowling. Congratulations from the team.



### **Caolan Rafferty**

The newest member of the course team Caolan, joined us during the pandemic. He has slotted in effortlessly with the team and when not busy at work, you'll find him working hard on his golf game and representing Leinster & Ireland both Nationally and Internationally. If you think he's rating your swing as he passes you by, he definitely is!!! Has a fine eye for detail in any task he carries out and some day he'll be as good as Conor at presenting the collars & approaches!!!



### **Benny Ludlow**

You usually see Benny with a rake, divot bag or a strimmer in hand ready to tackle the next job. Very much a hands on man when it comes to his work and he hates to be idle, apart from when he's sneaking a bar of chocolate out of his pocket!!! When not on the course he enjoys rugby and also following his beloved Liverpool FC or bemoaning the referee that 'gave them nothing'!

## **Works carried out in recent months**

### **Autumn Greens Maintenance**

- Autumn Greens Maintenance was carried out over 2 days in mid September. With the greens in a healthy condition at the end of the busy playing season, and with little sign of organic matter build up in the profile, it was decided to carry out a less invasive maintenance practice on our playing surfaces.
- A preventative fungicide was applied in the week prior to works as disruption to the plant often results in a disease outbreak in the plant.
- Firstly, a verti cut at -3mm in 2 directions was carried out to remove an enormous amount of thatch build up on the surface. Greens were then mown at 3mm to help clean off any remaining debris. The grooves which were created made the perfect seed bed for our overseeding phase.
- This was followed up with a solid 10mm pencil tine at 5cm spacing to a depth of 4 inches, which allowed us to break through any black layer present and aid the next step in our maintenance.

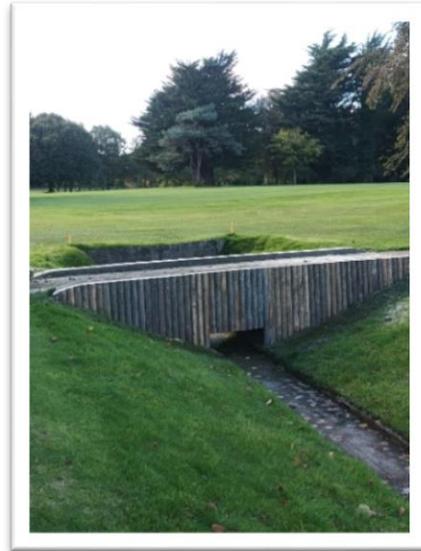
- An Air2G2 machine was hired for the next phase in the process. It is the first time we have used this machine at Dundalk Golf Club. Three tines penetrate the ground to a depth of 9 inches and give out 2 blasts of air at high pressure. This relieves compaction deep in the greens structure allowing much needed water, air and nutrition movement in the subsoil. It was carried out at 24 inch intervals. The previous practice of solid tines allowed some air to escape through the surface, thus avoiding the sub structure from “bubbling up”. The machine allowed us to increase/decrease the pressure of the air depending on the greens composition.



- We followed this up with an overseeding with a creeping bentgrass mix. In some cases entire greens were seeded, if the surface was slightly poorer than preferred, and in other cases some spot seeding was carried out in areas where the sward was weaker. A pedestrian drop spreader was used to carry out this work.
- A washed sand mixed with zeolite was then spread across all surfaces to give the seed some protection and also fill in the holes created by the solid pencil tine and the grooves created by the verti cut. The zeolite helps keep the sand dry which is key for brushing in.
- Zeolite improves nutrient and fertiliser retention in the root zone. The granules absorb soluble nitrogen and potassium, reducing leaching of key nutrients. The porous granules increase aeration resulting in healthier turf and it also improves germination rates. Finally the robust granules resist soil compaction.
- The sand was then brushed into the sward.
- All surfaces were then double ironed with our greens iron to help bed the sand into the sward and also smooth out any remaining disruption to the putting surfaces.
- Following this all greens were irrigated and thankfully mother nature played its part also giving us some heavy downpours of rain in the days which followed.
- To complete the works, the following week, a granular fertiliser, K-Step 6-0-27 was applied at 20 grams per square metre. There is sufficient Nitrogen(6) in this product to drive plant growth and aid recovery for the time of the year. The high level of Potassium(27) present will help make the plant more resilient to the external stresses of the winter period.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Hole Drain

New bridge surround installed. This will be the style of bridge design throughout the course going forward. A moveable foot bridge for the 12th hole's second crossing is also nearing completion and will be put in place in the coming weeks. Further bridge work will be carried out throughout the winter period to achieve uniformity throughout!



## Greens approaches

All foregreens have been solid tined with a 13mm tine to a depth of 6 inches. They were then heavily sanded. The foregreens are used for the majority of our temporary greens in winter. This work will ensure a decent playing surface when temporary greens are required.

## Works on tee complexes

The majority of tee boxes have had the same aeration programme as the greens approaches, with the exception of 9 tee boxes.



Earthworm activity in these 9 tee boxes was extremely high, resulting in poor playing surfaces and aesthetically unpleasant. As a trial, these tee boxes were given a 13mm side eject hollow coring at 5cm spacing to a depth of 6 inches. The cores removed have been stored and will be perfect for repairing worn areas of turf throughout the course. Again these tee's were all heavily sanded.

The idea behind this is that earthworms prefer soils with loamy texture. Coarse sand can be a negative factor either because the abrasive action of sand grains damages their skin, or because these soils dry out more easily. Now that there is a ban on chemical control of earthworms we have no option but to use cultural practices as a deterrent.

## **Plans for the months ahead**

### **Tree removal programme**

We are putting a tree removal programme in place for the coming years to ensure we can provide the best conditions for our course thrive with the changing conditions. This will necessitate the removal of certain Cupressus Leylandii in areas where grass growth is inhibited and shading is prominent. This process will also assist in showcasing the beautiful hardwood native trees on the course. Where feasible, native tree will replace the Leylandii being removed.

### **Re-design of the 18th Tee complex**

The removal of the 2 overgrown Macrocarpa Trees to the left of the tee has created much needed sunlight and airflow. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of this project is to re-design the tee complex and the grinding of the remaining tree stumps.

### **Irrigation of 1<sup>st</sup> tee & 18<sup>th</sup> green**

Irrigation upgrades to the 1st tee and 18th green will be completed over the winter period. The layout of the sprinkler heads in both these areas is not sufficient. The works will be carried out by a combination of Aquaturf Solutions and course staff.

### **Driving Range**

- A new ball dispensing machine has been ordered and will be installed in the green shed at the top of the driving range.
- This new machine will accept 2 methods of payment:
  - Members card – this will be a ‘tap’ card with pre-loaded credits. Once used, these cards can be topped up in the Pro Shop. A limited number of discounted pre-loaded cards will be on sale once the machine has been installed. We would encourage members to avail of these pre-loaded cards which will give members €75 worth of credits for €50.
  - Token system – Tokens can be purchased in the Pro Shop and also in the Bar.
  - Cards already purchased for the current ball machine may be exchanged as appropriate – we will circulate correspondence when the new machine arrives.
- Astro-turf mat – the new all-weather astro turf mat should be installed in the coming weeks. We are awaiting a booking slot from the supplier to install.

### **Course Signage**

New course signage has been ordered for the course. This will include hole signage to be located on the approaches to the teeing complexes (Fig A) and tee box signage to be located on each of the blue, white, green and red tee boxes (Fig B).

**Fig A**

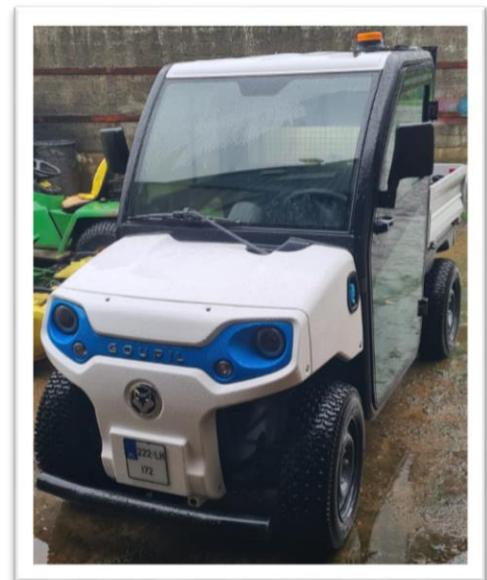


**Fig B**



### **New course machinery**

Some members may have noticed a new addition to the course staff machinery fleet in the last week. We have purchased a fully electric Goupil G2 utility vehicle. We are the first golf course in Ireland to use this type of machine. It is very lightweight and runs off lithium batteries. With zero emissions and our continuous awareness of our ever changing environment we see this as a very welcome addition to Dundalk Golf Clubs sustainability approach.



### **Changing Landscape of materials**

The cost of core materials have increased in recent months (sand, fertiliser, fuel etc.). We have also seen a major shift in the availability of certain fungicides and regulators due to EU legislation. This will be discussed in more detail in the Course Chairman's end of year address for the AGM.

### **Gardening Committee**

The club gardening committee re-formed in September under the stewardship of Pauline Campbell and Mickey Coburn. This group volunteer to assist with small projects that need attention on the course and around the Clubhouse as agreed with the Course Superintendent and Operations Manager. New members are always welcome so feel free to drop Pauline an email if you would like to get involved

Email: [paulinegolf@gmail.com](mailto:paulinegolf@gmail.com)

Thanks very much to Pauline, Mickey and the volunteers for their participation.

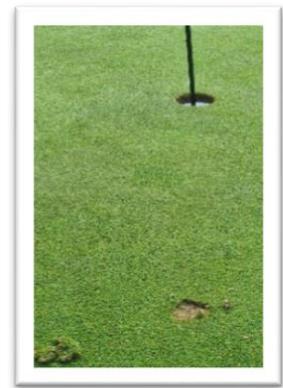
### **Divot Bags**

Can we ask all members to continue to take a divot bag at the first and/or 10<sup>th</sup> tee when playing golf. There is also a divot box on every par 3. Thank you in advance for your support with this. At this time of year, the best course of action in repairing divots is to replace the sod that has been removed. A little divot mix can then be used to fill in small gaps that remain.

### **Pitch Marks**

There are currently a large amount of unrepaired pitch marks on our green surfaces. Can we please ask that members take a few seconds to repair their pitch marks when playing. If you can't find your pitch mark, please repair any that you see. This small action will improve the overall putting surface.

Unfortunately we have had a few instances of intentional damage to the course as seen in the image with a divot taken on a green. We would ask members to be vigilant and to respect the course for us all to use.



We hope you have found this update of benefit. Should you have any feedback on the course please don't hesitate to speak to any of the Course Committee or email [manager@dundalkgolfclub.ie](mailto:manager@dundalkgolfclub.ie)

Best wishes for the months ahead  
**Dundalk Golf Club Course Committee**