



Northop Golf Club

April 2024

After one of the wettest winters on record, Spring has finally arrived, and our golf course has started to reappear.

Our April newsletter provides an overview of our 2024 plans for the course; these were presented in more detail at this month's AGM.



Jonathan's Update: With the golf season finally approaching and some drier weather at last please see below our latest update. In my first Newsletter since joining Northop Golf club I have focused on providing an update on our greens, and tees. This newsletter also gives more details regarding our Bunkers upgrade program that was initially meant to start last Autumn.

In March, the greens benefited from deep solid and pencil tine aeration followed by 50 tonnes of fine sand top dressing being worked into the holes. This has helped break through the heavy and impermeable thatch layer allowing surface water to penetrate the rootzone. The positive results on the greens from these works have resulted in less standing water and firmer playing surfaces.

The thatch issue will not be a quick fix and will take time to gradually reduce. We intend to aerate (pencil tine) and top dress more frequently throughout the season and to perform more intense mechanical modes of thatch removal in September via scarification and/or hollow coring. Careful monitoring of nitrogen inputs and using thatch degrading soil products throughout the year will gradually decrease the thatch layer and encourage better rooting over time.

Desired thatch levels need to be achieved to:

- Reduce disease outbreaks.
- Encourage deeper rooting.
- Discourage poa annua and moss ingress.
- Improve water percolation (less dry patch in summer).
- Firm playing surfaces.

Over the past 8 weeks we have applying regular liquid feeds, turf hardeners and a fungicide using a walk behind sprayer. We have started to see an increase in turf density and the disease scarring which occurred over winter is beginning to recover.

Our current cutting height is set at 4.5mm and as the season progresses, we could be mowing as low as 3mm. The aim is to have fast and consistent daily green speeds whilst not causing plant stress.

The club continues to invest and upgrade the machinery that we available to use of the course, further details will be provided below. We have also had considerable success in the last few months refurbishing some of our machinery that had been unused in recent times.



The tee boxes have all been realigned and push mowing has commenced. The intention is to use the John Deere Triplex mower as the dedicated tees mower going forward as this will allow for perfectly rectangular tee boxes, collection of grass clippings and closely mown surfaces.

The winter tee boxes are a great help and have protected our grass tees from significant damage. Some of the tees are still heavily saturated and have a large volume of moss and weeds. When weather permits, we intend on scarifying, aerating and overseeding the more problematic areas.

We expect to have our grass tees back in play by early May although this could be a phased approach and remains very much weather dependant.

Clearly, we have a significant amount of work to complete in the next few weeks to return our course back to summer playing conditions but with a relatively drier forecast for the rest of April we are already making good progress.

Hopefully you will enjoy this better weather and get out on our course.



Our latest investments include:

A 600-litre tractor mounted sprayer, this will be used for applying liquid feeds, turf hardeners, herbicides, and wetting agents. This will be far more efficient and removes the need for using contractors for spraying fairways and rough.

Tru-Turf Green Roller/ Iron. This will contribute to improvements in both trueness and green speeds. This certainly created a lot of excitement on Facebook but please note this doesn't remove the need to repair pitch marks!

Hio Hole Changer will create perfectly cut rounded holes and is both quicker and easier to use.



Our greens team have refurbished various items such as the Aircore Aerator which will be used to pencil tine our greens each month. The slitter will be used on tees and fairways.

We are starting on a multi-year rolling bunker improvement. The overall aim is to improve both the quality and playability of these hazards throughout the golfing year.

Our initial phase removes 7 bunkers that were either GUR last year or that have been deemed to be unnecessary.

Greenside bunkers will be dressed and turfed, whilst fairway bunkers will be seeded.

They will be marked as GUR with clear drop zones and should be in play within 8 weeks.

Renewed Machinery



Bunkers Overview

- Currently 51 Bunkers @ 5,400 sq meters
- Resort style , too big , difficult to maintain
- All have drains but some maybe blocked
- Bunker sand is contaminated for soil from faces
- Funding approved for a Multi-year program
- Phase 1 to start in early May
- Phased 2 - Autumn / winter 2024

Bunkers Project Phase 1 2024

7 bunkers will be in filled

- 2nd Right Greenside and Rear Bunkers
- 8th Fairway
- 10th – 2nd Fairway bunker
- 14th – Green side – initial step – feature hole
- 15th – 3rd fairway bunker
- 15th - Back right green side



Additional soak aways will be dug in 2 areas on the 14th hole intended to pull pooling 'flood' water away from the main playing areas.

Additional mole ploughing will start in late August as part of a wider drainage plan.

The 15th will have a new ditch running across the fairway in front of the green. This should remove rainwater from this area of the course.

Bunkers Phase 2 will see a range of bunkers being redesigned, relined, drains upgrade, and filled with clean sand.

We intend to make the 14th a 'feature' hole. Infilling the current bunker and initial drainage work represents an initial step towards this.

Ideas include a pond, ditches, new greenside bunkers, raised tees and mounds.

Spring Drainage works



Bunkers Project Phase 2

Specific Bunker Changes – still under discussion

- Re shape 2nd Left greenside.
- Re shape 8th Greenside.
- New feature on 14th hole (various options).
- 15th Right Greenside – move to left , reduce height.
- 15th – new Ditch in approach to green.
- 15th - Infill left fairway bunkers (approach).
- 15th - Infill left greenside bunker.

Please adopt the 4 R's this year

RAKE Your Bunkers.

REPLACE Your Divots.

REPAIR Your Pitch Marks.

REMIND Your Playing Partners.

Help Us all improve Our Course.