

The Greenkeeper's Gazette



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4th Green update

The green is currently being mowed at 5.5mm, which is still higher than our usual winter height of 3.5–4mm. Over the next month we will gradually bring this height down to match the existing greens.

We have recently encountered some disease damage caused by Pythium, a turf disease that thrives in wet conditions. We've sent soil and leaf samples to the lab, which confirmed Pythium is present in the root zone. This can be challenging to control,

especially with the extra rain we've had over the last week.

To help the green recover, we've reduced how much water it receives. This has caused some areas to dry out, and subsequently die off in areas. However, it's an important step in controlling the Pythium and if the disease is left to spread, will cause even more damage.

We're monitoring the impacts of the disease and working closely with our agronomist to manage the issue to develop a long-term plan

for prevention and treatment. Some areas of the green are still thin or bare and will need time to grow back before we can open it for play.

Thanks for your patience and support as we work to bring the green into play as soon as possible.

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Winter height of cut adjustments

As temperatures drop during the colder months, turf growth naturally slows. To help protect the grass from wear and tear—especially in high-traffic areas—we'll be increasing the height of cut on our greens, tees, and fairways.

Raising the height of cut provides greater protection to the turf's crown (the growing point of the plant) and adds more cushion to the playing surface. This helps reduce stress on the turf during a time when it recovers more slowly from damage. Over winter, greens will be maintained at 4mm, while tees and fairways will be cut at 12mm. You may notice a slight reduction in ball roll speed on the greens due to the increased leaf height and density.

These changes are an important part of our winter turf management to maintain healthy playing surfaces year-round

Storm damage to irrigation system

Some of you may remember the significant electrical storm we experienced a few weeks ago. Unfortunately, the storm caused damage to our irrigation system, leaving over 50 sprinklers stuck in the "on" position.

Since then, our team has been hard at work repairing the issue by replacing individual electrical components—an intricate and time-consuming job that involves digging up each affected sprinkler.

You may see staff working across the course while these repairs continue. For everyone's safety, please be mindful of their presence and give them a friendly wave before you tee off to make sure they've seen you

Winter Tee Placement Notice

During the winter months, some tees on the course struggle with heavy traffic and limited sunlight. To help protect these wear-prone areas and give them the best chance to recover, you may notice tee markers positioned slightly differently than usual.

In many cases, markers will be placed closer to the green in areas that receive more sunlight and stay healthier through winter. This rotation helps preserve turf quality and ensures better playing conditions for everyone.

We kindly ask all players to respect the placement of the markers and tee off from within the designated area. Your cooperation helps maintain the course for everyone's enjoyment.

Why we sometimes water the 4th green – even when rain is forecast

One of the trickiest parts of growing in young turf is that it simply can't go without water—at all. Even if there's 20mm of rain on the forecast, we often still need to run a sprinkler cycle before it arrives. Here's why:

- **Immature turf doesn't have reserves.** Seedlings can't tolerate even short periods of dryness. If the surface dries out for just a few hours, the turf can wilt and die—and there's no bouncing back from that.
- **Yes, it might end up saturated.** And yes, that can create the perfect environment for disease. But if we don't water before the rain, we risk total loss of turf. It's one of the hardest balancing acts: we either risk disease, or we risk losing the green altogether. Neither is ideal—but one gives us a chance to manage, the other doesn't.
- **It's completely out of our control.** We don't get to decide how evenly the rain falls, how fast it comes down, or whether it hits the areas we need it to. So we have to act pre-emptively to protect the work we've done.

These are the judgement calls we're making daily—based on soil moisture readings, radar tracking, and a whole lot of experience, often learnt the hard way.
