

Members Update – March 23



**SECRET
VALLEY**
GOLF RESORT

Dear Member, I hope this mail finds you well, please see below a summary of some of the works that have been carried out throughout the month of March.



First let's start off with the large irrigation burst that occurred on the 9th of the month. Some of you early morning players may have seen this from the road along hole 13 on your commute to the golf course and I guess your face was just as surprised as mine at 5:00am that morning. Irrigations bursts are obviously unwanted but unfortunately they do occur and a lot of credit must go to Spyros Georgiou our Assistant Superintendent / Irrigation Technician and the rest of the maintenance team that help with quickly draining away the water and fixing the burst. Secondly I would like to thank you all for your support and understanding for the disruption and golf buggy diversion you would have encountered during your round.



Mark Cole

Temperatures are starting to rise as we move through spring and towards the summer months, we have had some very strong winds this month along with a period of some heavy rainfall, Overall I feel the course has taken this well and although not it full growth the Bermuda grass is starting to "wake up".

We have used this opportunity to carry out some cultural practices such as scarifying the roughs (Twice) and the tees (Once) to remove some of the dead plant material and encourage new growth. In conjunction to this you may have seen that the fairway and approach perimeters have been marked out with yellow paint. This is to try and aid in establishing a clear definition between fairways and roughs. This is not necessarily the final shape that the fairways and approaches will be going forward but more to get a rough idea and perimeters will be adjusted as needed. The tee perimeters will be marked out during the month of April where I will try to square out the tees a little in order to get them to direct in the line of play.



Natural Areas:

I know the natural areas are an area for concern to some and I can understand your frustrations. With the temperatures increasing and the heavy rainfalls we have had this does not just provide optimum growing conditions but further enhances the rate at which these weeds grow. It takes around 3 weeks for all the natural areas to be cut down, I know in previous years the natural areas were cut down lower and the reason for this was because we had an old machine "Toro 325" which when the machine was coming to the end of its life span and the replacement machine had been ordered, lowering the height of cut and hit the rocks and allowing damage to the blades and parts of the machinery were tolerated as the arrival of the new machine was imminent. This machine is now no longer operational, and the new machine is now in use, The design of the new machine is that it is hydrostatically driven what this means is that when larger rocks get lodged under the cutting blades this puts a lot of strain on the clutch and other mechanical mechanisms which can cause significant damage to the machine. Secondly you have to understand that when we have heavy rains like this month and the temperatures are warming up these slopes are wet and slippery and the machinery struggles for traction on these areas which could result in severe injury or worse to the operator should the machine lose traction and begin to slide down the slope such as the left side of 2 and is something which I will not risk!! Going forward I will adjust maintenance practices to target select areas on a more frequent basis and these areas will be sprayed of when time allows. One more month and the weeds in these areas will naturally begin to die back and ahead of this coming winter we will look to manually remove a lot of the larger rocks in order to lower the cutting height and avoid damage to our machinery. (Maybe we could organise a "Members Help Day" towards the end of the year to assist with the maintenance team in carrying out this process.)

IMPORTANT ANOUNCMENT

From Monday 3rd April we will be applying the 2nd application of our pre-emergent herbicide on all bermudagrass areas

I expect this procedure to take approximately 9 days – Monday to Friday.

This is crucial and is the foundation of our weed control program to help prevent the germination of undesirable weed seeds that would like to grow on the golf course as we have seen with the poa annua this winter.

This product has been known to cause some discolouration to shoes, particularly for morning players.

It is advisable to wear some old golf shoes if possible during this time and apologies in advance for any inconvenience.

Other cultural practices which I will look to pursue during the month of April are as followed:

- Scarify Fairways (Week of the 10th)
- Scarify Roughs (Week of the 10th & 24th)
- Light dusting to the greens (19th April)

These dates are subject to change depending on weather, turf health and course conditions.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to send me an e-mail or stop me out on the course,

Regards

Mark Cole

Golf Course Superintendent

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Mark Cole