

GOLF MAINTENANCE
Members Update – November 2023



**SECRET
VALLEY**
GOLF RESORT

Dear Member, I hope this update finds you well. Please see below a description of works carried out through November and upcoming works for December.

The temperatures are definitely dropping now as we head into winter and throughout November, we have had 62mm of rainfall. The golf course (with exception to the bunkers) has taken this well with only 1 day with golf cart restrictions showing the positive effects of the aeration works carried out in October. We are seeing some heavy wear in the high traffic areas as the Bermuda grass growth has slowed given the cooler temperatures and the high number of rounds throughout November. Over the coming weeks there will be additional ropes and stakes to manage these areas and for those that are using trollies, like last winter, can we please start to keep our trollies 1 – 2 meters away from the greens perimeter to minimise the wear and tear so close to the green and avoid additional ropes and stakes so close to the putting surface.



<<< Damage to the Bermuda grass collar last winter aided through excessive traffic.

Cultural practices have been kept to a minimum on the greens this month with the greens being aerated during the week of the 13th November and then just general maintenance taking place given the high number of rounds and the upcoming greens renovation.



GREENS RENOVATION

On December 10th we will get under way with our winter greens renovation with the 1st tee closing at 14:00 on Sunday 10th and then the course will remain closed on the 11th - 12th - 13th December before reopening on Thursday 14th December. Additional time is required during the winter renovations given the weather at this time of year as it takes a lot longer for the sand to dry out in the mornings and the additional time allows for a high standard of work to be completed efficiently and effectively.

What are we doing and why??

- A hollow tine is a round tube that penetrates into the ground, collects a core and when the tube penetrates the ground again, the core is pushed out through a hole in the side of the tube.
- This allows for the removal of material, such as organic matter and allows water and air into the root zone
- When a core comes out, it needs to be replaced with something. So, when organic matter is removed, top dressing sand is applied to fill up the holes.
- Organic matter and sand are removed, and clean sand is added to aid water movement through the surface and drainage.
- Reducing and managing the % of organic matter is key each year and we must test annually to insure we are in the range of where we need to be for the putting greens.
- The results of continued management of organic levels results in firmer and truer putting surfaces.

We will be doing all we can to achieve full recovery as soon as possible but it may take longer given we are now in the winter months.



On 3rd & 4th December all of the practice greens will be closed as we will renovate these greens earlier than the course whilst we fine tune our settings ready for the renovations to take place on the course the following week.

Herbicide Application

Once we have completed the greens renovation, I plan to apply a post emergent herbicide to all areas of the Bermuda grass. This will target the invasive grass species *Poa annua* that is ever present throughout each winter. You may notice some discolouring to the grass in the following weeks after the application this will be from the *Poa annua* dying off. There will also be some discolouring to the Bermuda grass which is natural when the Bermuda goes into winter dormancy, however following this application it may enhance the dormancy so please do not be alarmed if you start to see the grass going off colour. This application is essential in our battle against the invasive *Poa* grass species.

This product needs to be watered into the soil profile thoroughly to allow the grass roots of the *Poa* to take up the product.

I expect to start this application on the 18th December and have it completed before Christmas. Should time allow I will try to start earlier from the 14th December.

River Cleaning

Since the week of September 11th works were carried out in clearing out the river starting from hole 1 all the way down to the bridge at hole 9. This operation was supposed to be carried out in a much more efficient manner but for reasons out of our control the works were carried out over a much longer period. Nevertheless, the works that took place were essential in removing the excessive growth of Bamboo, removal of excess debris on the riverbed, rebuilding of fallen supporting walls, removal of overhangs which many golfers would stand upon without knowing.

Now I know this work looks unsightly and it is a major visual change as a lot more areas are now open where previously the two nines were mainly separated by the excessive bamboo growth through out the river. It will take some time to clear up a lot of the debris that is situated on the sides of the riverbanks but please be patient we will remove all the debris and additional planting will be made where necessary and this is key. Additional planting will be made above the riverbanks where areas from one hole to another are now too exposed and the screening between holes should not and should not have been allowed to come from excessive growth within the river.

I have heard many comments regarding that the bamboo slows down the flow of the river in turn reducing the amount of erosion to the riverbanks and this is correct but like most things there is a limit. If the river was all lined and it was only water flowing through then the bamboo would be "less" of an issue. Unfortunately this is not the case and when we get heavy rains and the river comes flowing through the valley it also brings with it a lot of debris, large branches etc that get washed into the river now where there was an excess of bamboo a lot of this debris would get snagged up against the bamboo forming mini dams whilst the river built up behind until that force was great enough to clear the debris or eventually finding a route to the side of where the debris has snagged resulting in a greater force pushing on the exterior of the river banks causing erosion which results in a lot of damage like on hole 7. So, the one thing that is great (bamboo) in acting as a filter and slowing down the flow of the river, in excess becomes the main cause of the problem. It is for this reason that if any of you drive down the B-road from Aphrodite hills to Paphos you will see the same work has undertaken amongst a lot of the rivers.



Excess levels of Bamboo: holes 7 & 8

Why was the area to the right of the 6th Tee removed??

This area was cleared out to improve the quality of the par 3 tee's (mainly the black and white tee) with the hillside to the left of the tee and all of the greenery to right of the tee, this created very poor growing conditions as the foliage built up throughout the years this reduces a lot of much needed sunlight the bermudagrass requires for development whilst also increasing humidity via reduced air flow. If you add this to the excess moisture that comes down from the hillside it just creates a toxic combination which is why when you look at this tee especially at the back, you can see the black anaerobic sand. We have planted some olive trees and grasses to the right of this tee which will act as a screen to hole 13 whilst also allowing greater airflow. In case you are wondering the olive trees have now been pruned right back for the trees to focus all their energy on rooting thus reducing the risk of the trees not taking.

The tree at the back centre has been pruned back significantly more, this is because it became apparent when initially pruning the tree it was subject to an insect infestation. This tree has now been pruned back as needed and an insecticide has been applied. In 2024 we will add dripline irrigation to this area and will add some additional plants to bring some colour to the area.



Other Areas

An additional 75 new bunkers have been distributed throughout the golf course, there are an additional 75 on back order. As soon as these arrive, I will have them put straight out on to the golf course.

We have replaced the gravel around the tee stones to freshen up these areas. They will also be topped up after the rainy season to keep a neat and tidy appearance throughout 2024.

New tee markers are ongoing, it will be a push to have them ready before Christmas but hopefully they will be out for the start of January.



December operations:

- Greens Renovation
- River Cleaning
- Solid Tine Tees + Approaches
- Strimming of Natural Areas
- Tee Markers
- Edge Sprinklers
- Edge Cart Paths
- General Maintenance

My Next update will be at the end of December so I would just like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year from Myself and the rest of the maintenance team.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch or stop me out on the golf course.

Regards

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