

NEWS of COURSE

May 2010

The recent cooler weather combined with shorter days and some early rain has resulted in the development of some algae in most of our greens. Daryl Sellar of Turfwise Consulting was engaged to advise on the possible cause and to recommend treatment to address the problem.

Mr Sellar has advised that the presence of algae in greens was consistent with at least one of the following :

- Shaded areas
- Excessive water
- Lack of turf density
- Entry/exit points
- Moisture retention at soil surface

During his inspection of the green profiles Mr. Sellar noted the accumulation of organic matter, interspersed with sand top dressing from annual renovations. He further noted that the combination of the age of some greens and the aggressive growth of the bent cultivars used on some of the new greens has resulted in a thatch layer that impedes water movement initially and then holds moisture close to the green surface.

During warmer weather this water is quickly removed from the surface and does not present a problem. However, in the cooler weather as experienced recently (particularly the much cooler nights), the ability of the green surface to dry out is reduced which provides conditions conducive to the development of algae.

The management of organic matter and moisture at the surface of greens is critical to the reduction of algae, however as with all turf management issues there are multiple elements to be addressed.

We have taken advice on how to manage all of the areas listed above which may cause algae growth. We have also been advised that to reduce or eliminate the current algae growth we should :

1. Raise the height of the cut as this will provide greater leaf coverage at the surface. This has already been done with the cut raised from 3mm to 4mm. This has had no effect on the speed of greens with stimpmeter readings remaining above 10 on the greens tested.
2. Mini tine frequently to a depth of 25-50mm which will provide a physical passage for water to move away from the surface and increase air movement in the top section of the soil profile. This will assist the green surface to dry, improve turf vigour and help prevent the conditions most favourable to algae development.

Having received this advice it is proposed to mini tine all greens commencing Monday 3rd May and completing on Tuesday 4th May. The effect on greens will be minimal and have little to no effect on playing conditions. Full recovery is expected after three to five days.

Fred Tobin
Chairman, Match & Greens