

Course Conditions Update  
Updated September 20, 2019

Greens

The greens were aerated on Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> using 3/8" hollow tines. This maximized the amount of surface area to be seeded. Aeration was followed up with top dressing and a heavy bent grass seed application. Both were dragged together filling all the holes and a greens grade fertilizer was applied. The greens are being watered regularly. Growth is beginning to emerge in areas where bare soil existed before the aeration. Additional seed will be applied this week. We are now actively mowing 5 of the 9 greens and waiting to allow more growth on the others before cutting.

Hole 9

The small drainage project on the #9 fairway has been completed. The area has been seeded and is beginning to grow in. The green remains closed at this time and a temporary green is being used.

Holes 2 & 3 – Updated

Holes 2 and 3 have been reopened temporarily as Par 3s while we continue to work on repairs to the underground stormwater drainage pipe. Golfers will no longer skip holes 2 and 3 and are now are to play all holes consecutively. For your safety, follow all posted signage and do not enter the restricted area for any reason. Members are always welcome to play a second 9-hole round provided they check in again at the starter building before walking back to Hole 1.

HOLE 2

- BLUE – 188 Yards
- WHITE – 180 Yards
- RED – 157 Yards

HOLE 3

- BLUE – 210 Yards
- WHITE – 200 Yards
- RED – 186 Yards

Driving Range

The Veterans Administration has not yet secured a new contracted vendor to operate the driving range. They have not provided any information regarding if or when the facility may reopen. The Township and the Golf Course have never been involved in the management or operation of the driving range.

We thank all members for their patience and understanding as we work to improve conditions on the course.



August 8, 2019

Dear Members:

First, we would like to thank those of you who have submitted a Course Conditions Report either online or at the course. We truly appreciate the feedback and your reports are shared regularly with our course maintenance contractor, Shearon Golf.

We listened to your comments last season on the overgrown rough caused by record rainfall. Leading into 2019, we focused on making changes to our maintenance specifications in order to keep the rough at a more reasonable and playable height. We had a Course Consulting Service visit with a USGA agronomist. We diligently reported course conditions and member feedback concerns to Shearon Golf. After a rocky start, our message is getting through and we hope you would agree that today's rough height is much better than last year. However, as you all have noticed, we have a major problem with our greens due to a sprayer malfunction and other contributing factors.

We share your frustration and are as disappointed in current conditions as you are. We are working closely with Shearon Golf to ensure they take the necessary steps to bring the course back to ideal condition. Our former course superintendent has returned, and we are confident his history with Coakley-Russo will be instrumental in improving conditions. Temporary greens will be set up as needed, starting with hole 9. Shearon Golf held a site visit with Dr. Douglas Linde, Ph.D. Agronomy and Professor of Turf Management, and his full report can be found on the next page. His recommendations are being followed and we hope to see full grass coverage on the greens by the end of September.

We have heard the rumors and can tell you they are simply not true. We have not reduced the course maintenance budget, we are not purposefully neglecting the course and it is not closing after this season. We are committed to providing a home course we can all be proud of.

Sincerely,

The Golf Advisory Committee  
& Bernards Township Parks & Recreation

## COAKLEY RUSSO – CONDITION OF GREENS

**Dr. Douglas Linde, Ph.D. Agronomy, Professor of Turf Management at Delaware Valley University  
Visited CRMGC at the Request of Shearon Golf on Sunday, July 28, 2019 at 7AM**

### **Dr. Linde's Report Submitted to Shearon Golf:**

I visited the course this morning (July 28, 2019) with Matt Sullivan. John Meany, course representative, joined us for some of the visit. As part of my visit, I sampled green #7 for a complimentary organic matter test and tested the green for firmness. I'm doing a putting green organic matter study throughout the Philly region and wanted to include a green from the course at no charge.

We visited various greens across the course. I could not determine exactly why large patches of grass have died on some of the greens but the likely causes could be one or more of the following:

1. Sprayer malfunction (confirmed by Matt that there was a leaking hose)
2. Mechanical damage from mowing when grass was saturated and heat stressed
3. High amounts of thatch and organic matter in the top inch which retained too much water during high heat periods. There was some mower scalping.
4. Over-irrigation during high heat and humidity

Briefly, here are my recommendations

1. Service and calibrate the sprayer to make sure it's functioning properly
2. Sharpen and adjust mower blades
3. Keep height of cut where it is currently set
4. Avoid keeping the soil saturated with irrigation water. When trying to germinate seed, use irrigation to keep the surface moist for seed germination
5. Disturb the layer of dead turf to expose the soil with a hand tool like a garden weasel or similar tool. Seed on top of that layer will not establish.
  - a. A slit seeder or vertical mower can be used to create disturbance but be careful being too aggressive during temps greater than 80 , or temps > 80 F in the forecast
  - b. Coring and topdressing would create a good seedbed as well but it's too risky to do until around mid-August when night time temperatures typically begin to drop into 50-60F
6. Seed creeping bentgrass at 1-2 lbs seed/1000 sq ft
  - a. Seed any dead spots asap that have not already been seeded
    - i. Although it could germinate and die with future hot weather, it's worth the risk.
    - ii. Be prepared to reseed as needed until grass is established
7. Make sure soil pH is between 6 and 7.
  - a. May require some soil testing
  - b. A pH < 6 may be contributing to the excessive thatch/organic matter. Low pH discourages microbial breakdown of the thatch.
8. Spray a broadspectrum fungicide about every 14 days to control dollar spot. This could include a fungicide for Pythium prevention when there is a lot of new grass and conditions are favorable for Pythium.
  - a. Green #7 had deep pits created by dollar spot
9. Keep coring and topdressing 2X per year in order to help manage the excessive thatch. Other practices such as aggressive verticutting or aggressive coring (2 passes) could be done as well in order to more quickly reduce the thatch if affordable and golfers can tolerate the extra disturbance

If the weather is close to the historical past in the next 2 months and these practices are implemented, there should be full grass coverage on the greens by September 30.