



Carolinan Golf Association

Coharie Country Club



AGRONOMY REPORT
Bill Anderson, CGCS Agronomist
Carolinan Golf Association
Date of Visit: 3/16/2021

The Carolinas Golf Association is an educational organization founded in 1909 to promote and protect the game of golf in the Carolinas by providing competitions, education, support and benefits to golfers.

The CGA is the second largest golf association in the country with 685 member clubs represented by over 150,000 individuals. With its rich legacy, championship traditions and commitment to the future of the game, the CGA has been a steward of golf in the Carolinas for over one hundred years.

The activities and services of the Carolinas Golf Association are governed by an Executive Committee consisting of Carolinas golfers who wish to serve the game and the association through service.



Carolinan Golf Association

To: Kevin McCamy, Golf Course Superintendent

Richard Kimble, General Manager

Fr: Bill Anderson, CGCS Carolinas Golf Association Agronomist

Re: Site visit on March 16, 2021

Dear Gentlemen ,

On behalf of the Carolinas Golf Association, we thank you for the opportunity to assist in your golf course maintenance and overall improvement program. I would like to say thank you for the great welcome and hospitality.

Our site visit consisted of a morning meeting to discuss current topics that were identified as questions coming from the membership. This meeting was followed by a morning tour with numerous stops to discuss certain conditions. The overall theme of the day was to offer recommendations for the on going improvement now underway. Listed below are the topics and my suggestions.

Golf Course Topics of Interest:

- 1. Current Conditions**
- 2. Greens**
- 3. Collar Dams**
- 4. Herbicide Program**
- 5. Fertilizer Program**
- 6. Storm Drainage**
- 7. Closed Days**
- 8. Conclusion**



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1. Current Conditions



This is my fourth visit to Coharie Country Club, and my first visit with Superintendent Kevin McCamy. I commend the club on this decision, and find the conditions continue to improve and a sound golf maintenance plan in place. I predict that the overall maintenance program and resulting conditions will only improve, as time and budget support stay on this current path.

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2. Greens



The current greens are still grassed with a majority of the greens in TifGreen 328. Holes 1, 9 and 15 are turfed with the newer MiniVerde Ultra Dwarf. With this current make up, Kevin must manage dual turf types. And cater to the well-being of the older, majority TifGreen 328 greens and accept it's limitations.

Tifgreen 328 grass is a very old cultivar, is out of date, and no longer sold as golf course greens grass. Developed in 1956, it is now considered obsolete. It will still provide a good surface, but cannot be mowed as low as the current Ultra Dwarfs. Tifgreen 328 will thin and eventually succumb to the low mowing stress. It would be a mistake to mow lower than the current heights, as the long term results will be a loss of turf. The current heights of cut, in these circumstances, are sound and correct for the current grass on most greens.

If the club wants faster green speeds, then a re grassing program should be considered using one of the newer Ultra Dwarf Bermuda grasses available. I suggest if this plan is pursued, that the club consider Sunday UDB and have all 19 greens re grassed at the same time.

Sunday UDB has shown great performance, with a somewhat less need for intense cultural practices like vertical mowing and sand topdressing than other UDBs require. A great way to see the UDB Sunday in action, is a committee golf trip to a course that has done the conversion. Modern Turf should be able to supply you a list and introduction from courses in the area, to go visit and play. And review greens.

2. Greens continued Management of Bermuda Putting Greens

Management of Bermuda Putting Greens is both an art and a science. The implementation of these specific practices is critical for your ongoing success. Some of these practices are counter-intuitive, and have been developed over the years to this evolved list of best procedures. *All with one goal in mind: To create healthy, firm and fast greens surfaces. This program will provide the best greens with the existing TifGreen 328, but will not produce an UDB surface: but it should help with increasing some speed and smoothness.*

1. Topdress weekly/bi weekly during the growing season with a high quality fine sand of a #65 grade. This fine sand will incorporate in the turf canopy readily and create a firm, smooth surface. Do this whenever the turf is growing. Reduce the depth of vertical mowing, and the amount of sand during slow growth periods, but continue the practice as often as possible. Match rates and frequency to applications. If the turf is scalping, increase the topdressing amounts and frequency.
2. Weekly/ bi weekly backtrack vertical mow prior to topdressing and alternate directions each time. Set the blades at 0.065 to 0.070 inch below the rollers. The goal is to just cut the Bermuda Grass stolons, but *not* to verticut deeply. Use thin blades (1/16 in) without carbide tips spaced at 1/2 in. centers to do this procedure. This practice is key for the success of any Bermuda Green, and is a critical part of the overall program. *Do not verticut* weak areas until recovered. But then resume the complete program.
3. Use plant growth regulators, and wetting agents, throughout the year to control moisture and excess growth.
4. Watch for excess wear on the outside green clean up circle. When you detect, then stop procedures (verticut) until the worn/weak areas are fully recovered. Continue to topdress.
5. Fertilize weekly/bi weekly with a high quality greens fertilizer at 0.10 –0.25 - equal parts of nitrogen and potassium, along with a complete micro nutrient package, during the growing season. Monitor growth and adjust as necessary. Nitrogen total for the year should be less than 5lb.1000 sq. ft. Test for pH and other nutrients on a yearly basis, and correct deficiencies as required.
6. Follow a preventive fungicide program for year around protection. Most all significant diseases are soil born. These pathogens need to be kept in check throughout the year by reducing the soil inoculum to control outbreaks. Try to prevent disease. Get ahead of it, as opposed to curing the disease.
7. Mow at a height of cut of around 0.135 or higher in the fall prior to dormancy.
8. Roll the day after topdressing to avoid picking up sand to save sharpness of mower.
9. Aerify during the peak of growing season, impacting 20% of the surface area on a yearly basis. This can be done on two occasions, or one if desired. Back fill aerification holes with original construction sand like #45. Add soil amendments as determined by a soil test at this time. This is a minimum amount of surface compaction, as we need to reduce existing levels. I recommend large 5/8 in. tines, on as close of centers, as the greens will allow without heaving.

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3. Collar Dams



Golf courses are an ever-evolving piece of ground that changes daily due to both outside and man-made influences. Over the years, the staff has been on a sand topdressing program for greens. This has the agronomic benefits of thatch and organic matter control. This process of applying sand to fill aerification holes, and periodic topdressings accumulates to several inches of sand depth over time.

This procedure has a tendency to create a dam ridge effect at the edges of the green, which must be corrected for proper surface drainage maintenance. The dam effect is starting to show in numerous areas. This creates a low area and the excess water puddles. This ponding situation after a rain event, or irrigation cycle, will kill the turf over time.

Lowering the collar, and filling any low areas prior to re sodding will make success more likely. This can be corrected by lifting the sod, and lowering the edge area by removing material, to produce positive drainage off the green. Less severely affected areas, can be aerified numerous times, and the cores removed and the area rolled to lower the collar. Surface drainage is critical for older push up constructed greens with no internal drainage, as are these. Correct any other areas holding water as necessary, prior to re sodding.

4. Herbicide Program



The current *Poa annua* herbicide program for greens is sound, with only some late break thru on a few greens. This weed has been an issue throughout the Carolinas this spring. The wet weather starting last fall and thru out the winter, has made the herbicides less effective. There is also increased development to herbicide resistance at many locations, and it has created a control issue, with available herbicides at many golf courses.

At this time I recommend another application of Revolver at the 17 oz. acre on the areas with the break thru of the *Poa annua*. Another option to consider is a late post-emergence product with an alternative mode of action is Xonerate. With this product, temperatures should be above 60 degrees and follow label recommendations. Rates are 6-10 oz. ac.

The recent spray application of Ronstar is now complete, and a little later that Kevin's original plan. The wet weather all of January and February, has made applications with tractors and sprayers difficult throughout the area.

This application is complete, with 10 acres of the total output spread by hand, using a granular product and a small push spreader. This is commendable, and beyond expectations. With the cool weather of late, and no very warm periods to date, there should be no issue with the level of control, in regards to the later than desired timing, of application of the pre-emergent.

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5. Fertilizer Program



The increase in overall levels of fertility since my last visit in 2017 is evident. The turf is healthy and more dense than previously. I recommend this treatment be continued, with the goal of 2-2.5 lbs. Nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. per growing season.

If you can afford, make the spring application a 50% slow release product that will feed the turf over an 8-11 week period. At this application, you can apply about 50% of the yearly total, or about 1 lb. N per 1000 sq. ft. The remainder during the summer, use a less expensive product like ammonium sulfate or urea, at no more the 1/2 lb. N per 1000 sq. ft. per application.

Last summers application (instructed by a committee) of 1.5 lbs. fast release Nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. is just way too much, at one time, considering the small staff and limited mowing equipment. Producing excess grass growth and grass clippings, it will only frustrate golfers as they lose their golf ball in the thick lush rough.

I suggest you mow your roughs at 1.25in– 1.50 in. year around. I see no need in changing rough heights during the year. Fairways are usually mowed at .5 in and allowed to grow to around plus/minus .75 inches in late summer/early fall to help provide a better playing surface in late winter after all the winter cart traffic has 'ironed' the turf.

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6. Storm Drainage



On the day of my visit it had rained all morning, and the need for more drainage is evident. I realize that this is an expensive undertaking, but improving the storm drainage system will only make for a dryer, more playable course.

As suggested in the February 2017 report, I recommend a drainage master plan be developed. I suggest that Kevin contact Dennis Hurley at Turf Drainage of America and discuss ways to develop a comprehensive drainage plan. Dennis is an expert in the field and would be a great asset in correcting these chronically wet areas observed on many locations.

They will develop a master drainage plan that can be used for numerous years as the club's finances permit. Dennis can provide a detailed plan along with accurate cost estimates, for each area. <https://www.turfdrain.com/>

There maybe other local engineering options to investigate to help remove and control the surface water as it moves and leaves the course. Right now, most all water is just sheeting across the turf, with little to no storm water drainage which causes long term wet areas and erosion.

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7. Closed Days

Assign a Maintenance Day: the Course is Closed – a *No Play Day*

Presently at Coharie Country Club there is no block of time that the course is closed for weekly maintenance. Actually, it's never closed. Most country clubs close for a day every week. Golf rounds then populate the scheduled remaining open for play days.

A closed day is reserved for maintenance practices that greatly interfere with playing golf. It allows more staff, more equipment to perform efficiently. *Think:* Messy, dirty, loud equipment, sprayers, pesticides, fertilizer spreading, sprinklers. Closing one day a week benefits not only the staff in performing these mandatory maintenance duties; it benefits the golfing members during the remaining six play days each week with a quiet, peaceful round of golf.

Closing on Mondays (or any preferred day) will allow golf maintenance staff to perform the required cultural practices that are now performed while the course is open for play. Current attempts to stay ahead of golfers causes the staff and labor to rush through many tasks and projects. Or must patiently wait, with equipment, for an opening to perform duties between play. Examples of such activities are greens vertical mowing, topdressing, fairway spraying, fertilizer applications, etc. Many chemical products need to dry, or have label-required, re-entry periods.

Designating a ***No Play Day*** is good for BOTH the staff and golfing members. You may then extend the same closing day to the golf shop, turn room, and snack bar staff resulting in lowered hourly staff wages, less overtime, and easier scheduling.

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CONCLUSION

It was a pleasure to visit **Coharie Country Club** and spend the day with you. I hope you find the report useful as you improve the care and conditions on your course.

Again, please call me at 704-363-1381 if you have any questions. I hope to return soon, as I look forward to a continuing working arrangement with your club.

Sincerely,

Bill Anderson

Bill Anderson, CGCS Agronomist

Carolinas Golf Association

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