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PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL
GOLF COURSE VISIT
REAL CLUB DE GOLF DE SEVILLA
1 DECEMBER 2011

Subject: Venue for the 2012 Spanish Open

Present:	Eugenio Escribano de la Rosa	Real Club de Golf de Sevilla
	David Gomez	Spanish Golf Federation
	Luis Casado	Spanish Golf Federation
	Eugene Hennessy	European Tour

Report:

The purpose of this visit was to evaluate the condition of the golf course at Sevilla and identify any issues which needed to be addressed for the preparation of the course for the tournament in May of next year.

In general the course was in good condition apart from the greens which had areas with poor grass cover. Overseeding had been carried out 5 weeks ago and the results were very good. Here are my finding and recommendations regarding the golf course.

Greens:

Greens had both areas of good grass cover as well as areas which were quite poor. There was significant grass loss on certain greens, which occurred late in the season. Eugenio puts this grass loss down to nematode activity and felt improvements were visible after the application of a nemacide. Recovery in the last two weeks has been quite good with surfaces getting stronger and grass cover improving. The worst of these areas have been returfed by Eugenio and his team and the turfing job has been carried out to the highest standards and surfaces should be excellent once the turf has knitted in.

My only concern would be that the Pencross turf that was used was bought in from a turf supplier and is not totally compatible with the existing bent/poa turf that is on the putting surfaces and is not mature enough. For this reason I have suggested that any further turfing that is required should be carried out using turf which should be taken from the putting or chipping greens so it is totally compatible with what is on the course. The purchased Pencross turf can then be used to repair the utility green.

I would recommend that once the turf has taken root sufficiently that some light aeration work be carried out on these areas of new turf to encourage deeper rooting and healthier grass cover.

Passing the Toro Pro Core over these areas using a star tine or 8-10mm pencil tine would be ideal. The turf guards on this machine should ensure that the new turf is not lifted during the process but obviously great care should be taken while carrying out the operation and a second person standing behind the machine would be helpful to alert the operator of any problems that he may not be able to see.

Regular topdressing and the gradual reduction in height of cut should result in surfaces improving greatly. There were areas on some greens that were still quite thin on grass cover due to the damage but did not merit returfing and these areas should be overseeded regularly. Continued hand overseeding and topdressing on these localized spots should result in total recovery by the tournament.

Currently Eugenio's main goal is to achieve total grass cover and establish newly turfed areas on all greens and once this has been achieved he can then work on preparing surfaces for the tournament and carrying out verticutting and grooming procedures.

Surfaces are firm at the moment and thatch levels are at an acceptable level. Currently height of cut is 3.5mm and I would recommend that the height be raised to 4-4.5mm for the winter months to offer added protection when growing conditions are not so good.

In my opinion the frequency of light topdressing applications have not been adequate and this is an area which needs to be improved. Regular light dressings should be applied every 12 to 14 days going forward and this will help to maintain levels. These light dressings could be carried out in conjunction with light aeration work such as micro spiking, slitting and verticutting which will help surface aeration.

It was discussed and decided that no aggressive aeration would be carried out on the putting surfaces until early spring next year to allow recovery and avoid major disruption during the winter months. At the end of February a 10mm solid tine will be passed over the greens and this will be followed in the first week of March with a Sand Injection Graden using a 1mm blade to a depth of 30mm in one direction. This will allow sufficient time for recovery and surface grooming and preparation before the tournament week in May.

It should be noted that no TGR's should be applied to the greens before the aeration work or after during the recovery period. Applications should only be made once full and healthy grass cover has been achieved.

Obviously good water management is hugely important to healthy turf and overwatering should be avoided at all costs. Monitor water usage very closely using as little water as possible without stressing the plant. Use a good mix of automatic irrigation and hand watering to avoid over watering the lower areas of the greens. As the tournament approaches in May, by occasionally not watering with the automatic system at night and hand watering in the early morning or late evening, it gives the greens an opportunity to dry out a little and encourages root development.

The wetting agent programme which is in place should help with water usage and control. Hand watering dry patch areas with wetting agent tablets will be an additional help and avoid broadcasting of water with the system to treat a small area.

At all times turf health should be the primary goal in the preparation for this event and daily checks should be carried out, monitoring such things as drought stress, disease outbreaks, over watering or any other issues which may occur.

Collars & Approaches:

Approaches are very good and overseeding and establishment has been excellent.

The collars on the other hand are not so consistent due to a mix of *Poa annua* which is actively growing and *Bermuda* which is dormant. This leaves the collar and edge of the green very pitted and it is quite difficult to clearly define the edge of the green. For this reason I have suggested that the collars and the 12 inches of the edge of the greens be overseeded with bentgrass seed to establish a more consistent grass cover in this area. The area should be solid tined and spiked as much as possible prior to the overseeding and followed with a solid topdressing. Limiting the amount of turning of pedestrian mowers on these collars will also help with establishing good grass cover and the use of turning mats should be considered.

Tees:

Overseeding of tees has been very successful and surfaces have very good grass coverage and levels are good.

It should be noted that professional tees in general suffer from being under played and can become soft and thatchy under foot so additional aeration and topdressing is vital to keep them firm and thatch levels under control.

A solid fertilizer programme and topdressing will leave tee surfaces in good condition for the event.

All tournament tees should be rested in the run up to the event to ensure clean surfaces with full grass cover.

Fairways:

Again overseeding has been successful in this area although a combination of reducing height of cut too quickly and poor quality of cut has resulted in the fairways being a little thin with grass cover when compared to other overseeded areas such as roughs, tees and approaches.

The current height of cut of 14mm is too low for fairways that were overseeded approximately 5 weeks ago and I would recommend that the height of cut be raised to 16-18mm until the ryegrass has matured and become stronger. Then the height of cut can be lowered slowly.

In regards to the poor quality of cut, Eugenio needs to work with Hiper Golf to get to the bottom of the issues that he is having with his new fairway mowers. They are ripping and tearing the grass plant instead of cutting them cleanly which is not helping grass quality. In my opinion 11 blade cylinders are not ideal for achieving a good quality of cut on five deck mowers while cutting Ryegrass and I would recommend trialing a 7 or 9 blade cylinder machine to establish whether or not the cut would be better. The soft growing nature of young ryegrass plants would also add

to this issue. It is vital to get on top of this problem as soon as possible to ensure fairway quality improves.

Roughs:

The semi rough and rough are excellent and overseeding has been a huge success in this area. After only five weeks there is very healthy and consistent ryegrass throughout all areas of the roughs.

Bunkers:

The bunkers were in very good condition and sand quality was good. In general bunker faces were good after overseeding and establishment was strong although Eugenio is aware that there are some bunker faces that need to be overseeded again to improve coverage.

It was discussed that the height of cut of the bunker faces was too high and should be lowered and flymoing carried out more frequently to avoid thinning out and yellowing after mowing as well as grass lying over.

Sand depth should be checked and approximately 3-4 inches of sand on the bases of the bunkers is satisfactory. On the faces of bunkers, particularly those facing the direction of play a half an inch of sand is sufficient and this will prevent a ball from plugging in the bunker face and allow it to roll back to the base of the bunker. Sand should be firm but not compacted and any drainage issues should be addressed and rectified before the event

Water Hazards:

The surrounds of all water hazards should be regularly maintained and be ready for painting which will be carried out by the referees the week before the tournament.

If possible it would be ideal if there could be a sufficient number of hazard stakes available, approximately 40 red, 40 yellow and 40 white, on site and ready to be put out by the referee. These should be freshly painted and in good condition.

Practice Facility:

The putting and chipping greens are well located and in good condition and should be maintained as the greens on the course are.

The putting green is a good size and should have approximately 18 cups cut in it for the week. These can be spread evenly around the green and be as close as two feet from the edge of the putting surface spreading the wear as much as possible. Fresh holes should be cut for Monday practice, and then changed again on the Wednesday evening after play and practice, and finally changed on Friday evening after play and practice. No small pins are necessary on the putting green as they are removed by the pros and left lying around the area.

The range will also be overseeded including the fairway and roughs which was not done in previous years which will add to the aesthetics of this area.

I hope the information in this report is of benefit and if there are any issues which you would like to discuss further or questions which you would like to ask please do not hesitate to contact me at ehennessy@europeantour.com or on my mobile 00353 86 1975237.

Finally I would like to thank Eugenio, David and Luis for their time and hospitality during my visit and wish them every success for the tournament and the future.

Eugene Hennessy
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