

Working for the Golf Course

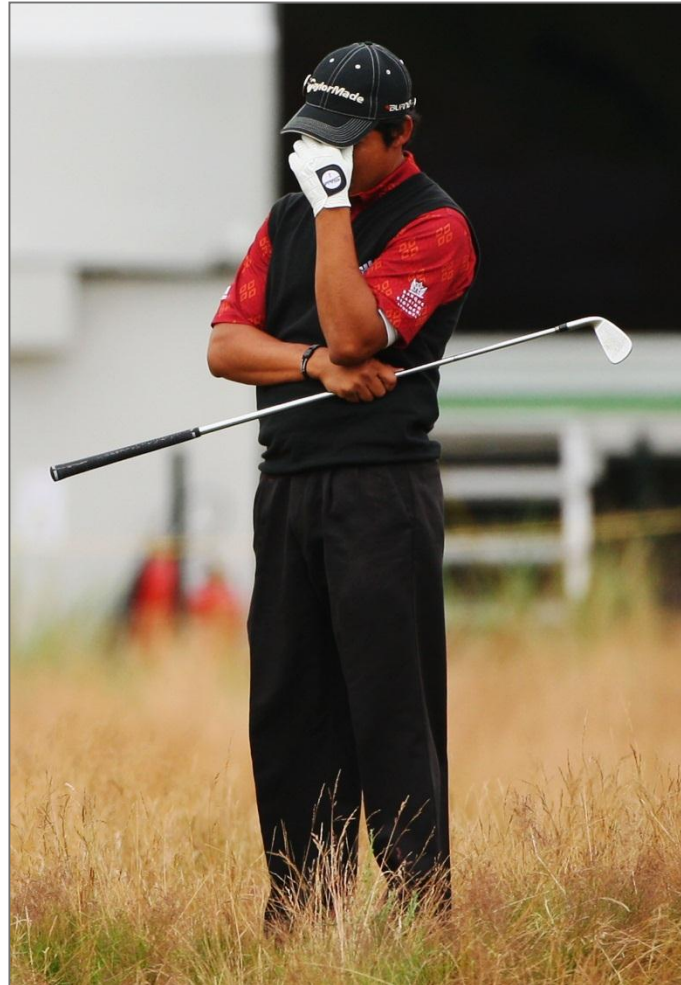
*An interactive debate on sustainable management
at The Home of Golf for representatives of
European Governing Bodies*



Objectives

- Ç To discuss and define the key elements of ‘the golfing experience’ and how/why the golf course itself lies at the heart of golfer demands.
- Ç To discuss and define the needs of the three main target groups within the game:
a) owners/boards/committees b) club/course managers c) golfers.
- Ç To discuss and define which key performance indicators are relevant to each target group.
- Ç To discuss the interaction of these indicators across four main areas: playing performance, economic performance, environmental stewardship and social responsibility.
- Ç To discuss how national governing bodies (R&A affiliates) can create pathways which help their clubs to produce a better and sustainable golfing experience.
- Ç To discuss the threats, such as legislation, and opportunities, greenkeeper training and certification, for example, which will affect the future.
- Ç To discuss how The R&A might further help its affiliates, if required.

The golfing experience



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The golfing experience and its different parts

Five detailed golf consumer surveys* in Europe during 2010/2011 indicated that, when choosing where to play, the main two issues which affect players' choice are:

- Ç condition of greens, fairways and tees
- Ç price of green fees or annual subscriptions.

Golf, however, attracts a very wide range of ages and abilities, whose demands and priorities vary considerably.

Understanding how to get the optimal balance between these demands is at the heart of this conference.

In the surveys 15 factors turn up most often as being key to 'the golfing experience'

**Sources: KPMG, Myerscough College, Sports Marketing Services, STERF, Syngenta*

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The golfing experience and its different parts

1. Smoothness/trueness of greens
2. Speed of greens
3. Firmness of greens
4. Softness of greens
5. Dry fairways ñ cut high
6. Dry fairways ñ cut low
7. Roughs - cut high
8. Roughs - cut low
9. Speed of play
10. No rush
11. Nature experience
12. Weather
13. Good company
14. Quality of the restaurant and bar facilities
15. Cost of round

The golfing experience and its different parts

Questions:

1. How many of these factors are related to the golf course?
2. Which of these factors do you regard as the most important?
(1=most important, 15=least important)
3. Which of these factors cause the greatest conflict of interest
between low and higher handicap players? (1=most conflict,
15=least conflict)

Which golf course at the heart of which golfing experience?



Which golf course at the heart of which golfing experience?

Questions:

1. Low handicap players want true greens, fast pace, firm greens, low-cut fairways, penal roughs but which do they regard as the most important? (1=most important, 5=least important)
2. Higher handicap players want true greens, medium pace, receptive greens, lush fairways, low-mown roughs but which do they regard as the most important? (1=most important, 5=least important)
3. How can we satisfy these various demands at the same time?

Maximising revenue generation from a well-managed golfing experience



Maximising revenue generation from a well-managed golfing experience

Questions:

1. Keeping existing business . How can your existing golfers judge whether they are getting value for money? What performance indicators can they use?
2. Maximising capacity. What factors increase or reduce capacity?
3. Attracting new business. Which indicators can be used when marketing for new business?

Cost control on the golf course



Cost control on the golf course

A. Manpower usage



Cost control on the golf course

A. Manpower usage

Questions:

1. How should clubs analyse time usage on the different areas of the course, i.e. greens, aprons, bunkers, fairways, tees and roughs?
2. Which are the priority areas and are these agreed within a club?
(1=highest priority, 6=lowest priority)
3. Which of these areas costs the most to maintain, inclusive of manpower, materials and machinery costs?

Cost control on the golf course

B. Materials/inputs usage



Cost control on the golf course

B. Materials/inputs usage

Questions:

1. How do clubs assess which grass species will survive in their particular climate?
2. Different grasses have different water/pesticide/fertiliser/mowing needs. How do clubs assess the ongoing costs of the species choice(s) they have made?
3. Which other materials require substantial budget funds?

Cost control on the golf course

C. Machinery usage



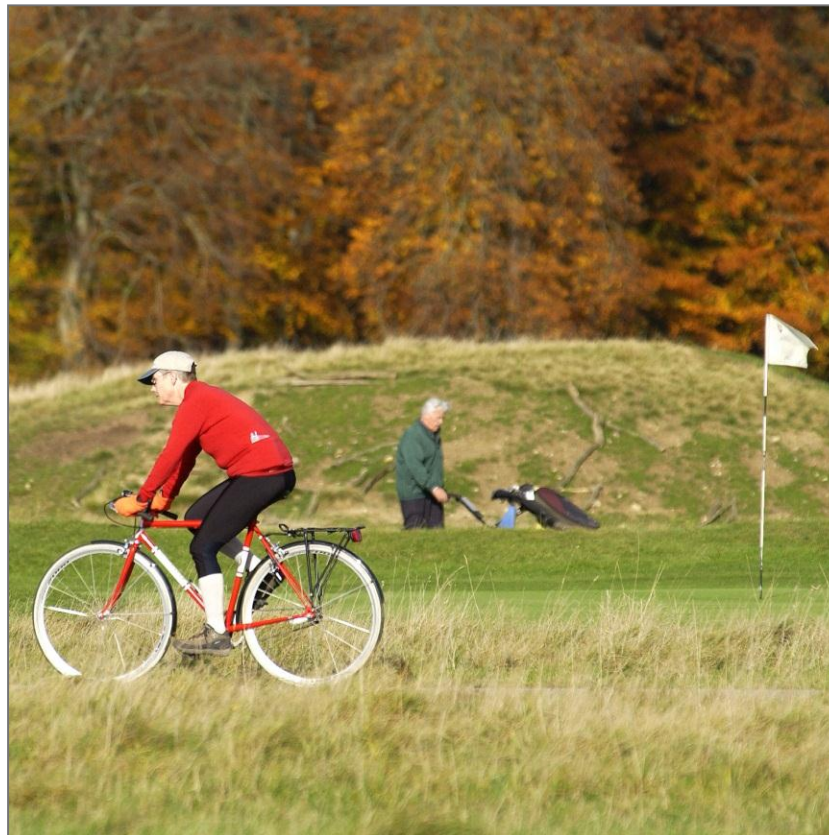
Cost control on the golf course

C. Machinery usage

Questions:

1. Which areas of the course use the most machinery and fuel?
2. Where can such use be reduced ñ and what are the consequences for the golfing experience?

Environmental stewardship and social responsibility



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Environmental stewardship and social responsibility

A. Use of sensitive inputs (water, pesticides, fertilisers)



Environmental stewardship and social responsibility

A. Use of sensitive inputs (water, pesticides, fertilisers)

Questions:

1. In which areas are there threats from legislation in your country?
2. How are these threats impacting on the quality of the golfing experience?
3. How can clubs reduce these impacts without damaging the course?

Environmental stewardship and social responsibility

B. Biodiversity



Environmental stewardship and social responsibility

B. Biodiversity

Questions:

1. How do clubs decide their habitat goals and management plans?
2. Which species lists are compiled and monitored?
3. What sources of help are available and what do they cost?

Environmental stewardship and social responsibility

C. Land use



Environmental stewardship and social responsibility

C. Land use

Questions:

1. What other land uses can be found on courses in your country?
2. How much of an issue will this be in future?

Environmental stewardship and social responsibility

D. Energy use and waste management



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Environmental stewardship and social responsibility

D. Energy use and waste management

Questions:

1. How do clubs ensure that they are efficient and effective in this area?
2. What benefits should they be hoping to get?

Hot topics identified through the day



Based in St Andrews, The R&A organises The Open Championship, major amateur events and international matches. Together with the United States Golf Association, The R&A governs the game worldwide, jointly administering the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status, Equipment Standards and World Amateur Golf Rankings. The R&A's working jurisdiction is global, excluding the United States and Mexico.

The R&A is committed to working for golf and supports the growth of the game internationally and the development and management of sustainable golf facilities. The R&A operates with the consent of 143 organisations from the amateur and professional game and on behalf of over thirty million golfers in 128 countries.



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Tools/services/pathways you can promote for use by your clubs



Tools/services/pathways you can promote for use by your clubs

Questions:

1. Which tools are needed for which performance indicators?
2. Which services are, or need to be, available for clubs?
3. Which pathways are needed to deliver advice to clubs?

Collecting and using objective evidence



The needs of owners, boards and committees



The needs of owners, boards and committees

A simple mechanism for:

- Ç recording important information relating to the financial operation of their golf course
- Ç mapping their business from the past, the present and into the future
- Ç identifying changes and trends while ensuring continuity of management
- Ç quick and clear reporting on the level of return on investment which their golf course is, and has been, delivering
- Ç raising awareness of where the strengths and weaknesses are in the operation of their golf course business
- Ç comparing their business model with other similar golf courses in their country, with total security and anonymity
- Ç ensuring compliance with the latest legislation.

The needs of club and course managers



The needs of club and course managers

- Ç a means of self-protection
- Ç a simple mechanism for recording important information relating to their role
- Ç a means of identifying changes and trends, while ensuring continuity of management
- Ç quick and clear reporting on their contribution to the business
- Ç a means of raising awareness of where the strengths and weaknesses are in the operation of the golf course business
- Ç the ability to highlight the need for investment in resources
- Ç a means to ensure compliance with the latest legislation.

The R&A websites

www.randa.org

www.randa.org/thegolfcourse

<http://thegolfcoursedemo.endavadigital.org/>

Course Health Check

A simple, six question, two minute tick box teaser to raise awareness of sustainability.

Tools to promote – Course Health Check

“The CHC will remind the superintendent of places where they can improve, which usually could have been overlooked.”

“Good spot check as to how the club was performing and a good argument for underpinning future policies.”

Course Health Tracker

- Ç an annual audit by which the net balance of revenue brought into the club by its primary asset, the golf course, is offset by what is spent on the course
- Ç monitors where the greenkeeping teams' time is spent on the course over the year and what efforts are being made to enhance biodiversity
- Ç enables sensible in-country comparisons, with anonymous pooled data so that users are able to see where their course sits in relation to others.

Tools to promote – Course Health Tracker

Developed through a market research programme targeting decision makers at golf facilities with the executive power to initiate and drive change:

- Ç Initial one-on-one day during Harrogate Week 2011 (6 individuals)
- Ç 1 to 9 September, online bulletin board (20 individuals)
- Ç March 2012, quantitative questionnaire revision to clubs in England and Scotland to gauge potential uptake
- Ç September 2012 Beta version, quantitative questionnaire (160 individuals) for final fine tuning.

Tools to promote – Course Health Tracker

“The tracker is simple to use and will be of great benefit to Course Managers at any type of club.”

“It gives me a tool that will help me make green committee members understand what it takes to run a golf course.”

Course Health Check and Course Health Tracker

Simple mechanisms that meet the needs of:

- Ç owners, boards and committees

- Ç club and course managers.

Objective measurement of putting surfaces



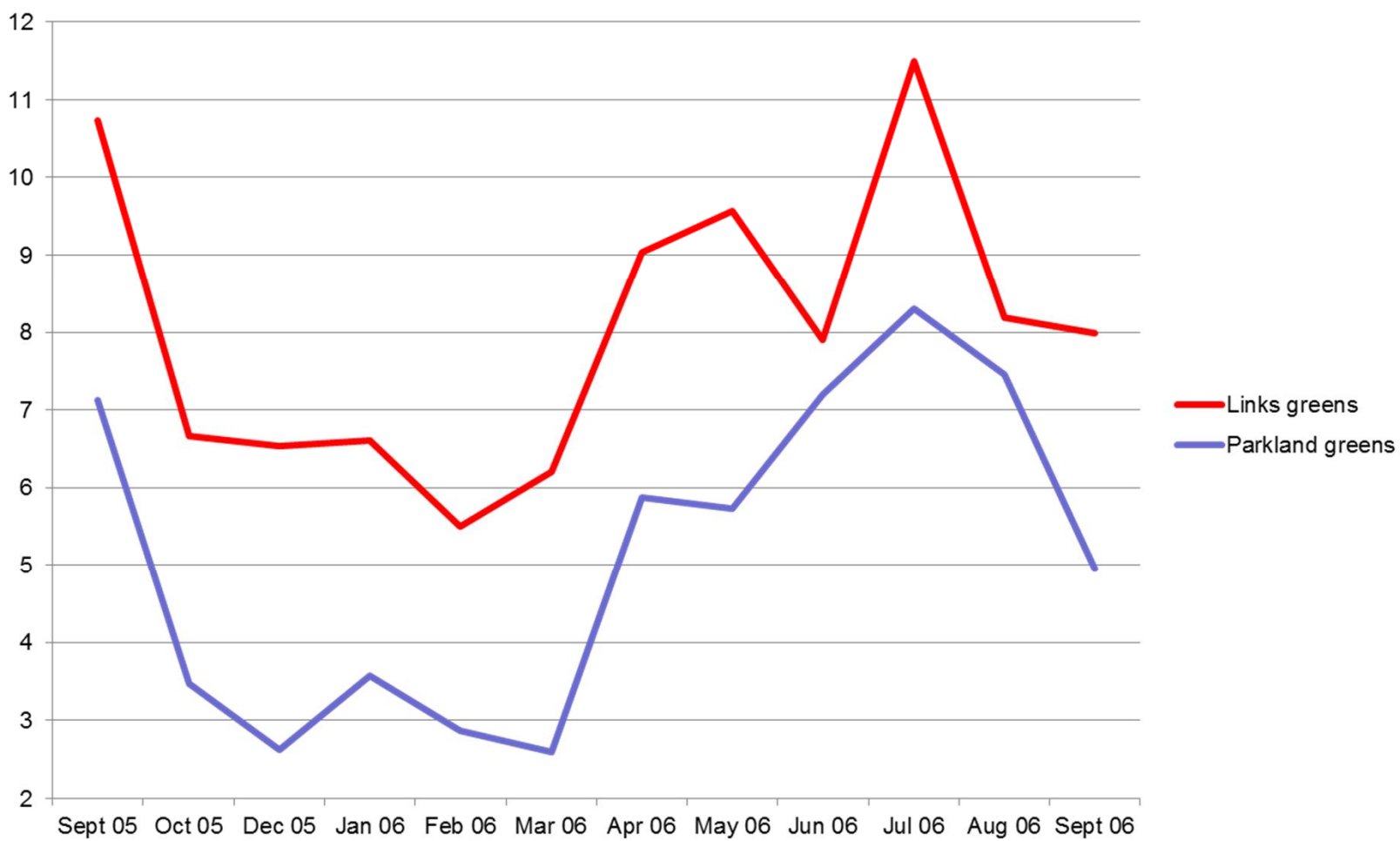
Objective measurement of putting surfaces

- Ç Firmness/moisture content
- Ç Speed
- Ç Trueness and smoothness
- Ç Reliability
- Ç Organic matter
- Ç Grass species composition

Objective measurement of putting surfaces

Ç Firmness/moisture content (Clegg monthly, Theta Probe weekly)





Objective measurement of putting surfaces

Ç Speed (Stimpmeter or Pelzmeter weekly or fortnightly)



Objective measurement of putting surfaces

Ç Trueness/smoothness (Trueness Meter weekly or fortnightly)



Objective measurement of putting surfaces

Ç Reliability (HOT weekly or fortnightly)





Objective measurement of putting surfaces

Ç Organic matter (four depths, at 0-20, 20-40, 40-60 and 60-80 mm, annually)



Objective measurement of putting surfaces

Ç Grass species composition (annually)



Objective measurement of putting surfaces

- Ç key indicators of sustainable performance
- Ç measured at regular intervals to give a true picture, not a snapshot
- Ç demonstrates success of maintenance programme
- Ç shows degree of disruption from maintenance practices
- Ç helps preparation for important events
- Ç self-protection for course managers.

Environmental certification



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Environmental certification

Questions:

1. What benefits are required from certification?
2. How is credibility assured?
3. How are costs assessed?
4. Which schemes are currently used?
5. What essentials are necessary if an international scheme is to work?

Pan-European issues



**THE EUROPEAN GOLF ASSOCIATION GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE
A PARTNERSHIP OF**



egeu
European Greenkeeping Education Unit

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Pan-European issues

- Ç EU legislation
- Ç EGA Golf Course Committee
- Ç Greenkeeper training
- Ç Others?

Ongoing communication between The R&A and national golf authorities



Overall summary, agreed actions and timelines



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