



Greens & Grounds Newsletter

August 2019, Vol. 01

CHAIRMAN UPDATE

Billy Meredith—Chairman

Hello membership, I hope you're enjoying the summer and the wonderful, albeit hot conditions we have had for the past few months of this season. Despite the heat I think most would agree we have had good weather since we've been able to get out on the course and play plenty of golf.

I'd like to start this newsletter by trying to add some context on why it's being distributed to the membership. The goal, and with future editions, is to try and keep the membership up to date and informed about what's going on, both now and in the future, with our golf course. These items may include upcoming projects, current course conditions, projects currently being executed, a Superintendent's update, and other content the Greens and Grounds committee sees as appropriate to disseminate to the membership. This newsletter will be put together by the Greens & Grounds committee and is fully supported by the Board of Directors who will review and suggest necessary changes and updates prior to distributing to the membership.

Many members have probably started to notice several trees have been removed from around the golf course, this tree removal project is the primary catalyst for wanting to get some sort of newsletter out every other month. While I won't go into detail regarding the tree removal project here, please see page 3 for a detailed summary of the tree removal project.

For those of you unfamiliar with the Greens and Grounds Committee, this is a volunteer based, open to all full members of Bon Air committee that meets on the Monday before the second Tuesday of each month at 5:45pm in the ball room. The committee covers a wide range of topics, all of which directly affect the golf course and surrounding grounds. We discuss potential changes to the golf course and grounds, ideas for larger projects, organize member work days, as well as many other items that relate to the golf course. If you have any questions about the committee please don't hesitate to email me at wcmeredith@hotmail.com, or find me at the club.

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PLEASE REMEMBER TO...

- Fill your divots with provided divot mix.
- Repair ball marks on greens.
- Rake bunkers and leave rake towards bottom of bunker.





SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

Brendan Howard—Superintendent

I hope everybody is enjoying the golf season and has gotten out and played plenty of golf at Bon Air. The golf course has seen it's share of stressful weather this season. Members have probably noticed some bare spots in certain fairways, high heat and humidity immediately followed by thunderstorms has caused the Poa in our fairways to die. This causes varying conditions in the fairways mostly dependent on how much Poa a given fairway has. Closer to fall we plan to overseed the fairways which will help to fill these voids and allow for a more uniform strain of grass across our fairways. #10 fairway suffers from poor drainage, low air movement, and no morning sunlight which causes prolonged saturation. Please see the upcoming projects table for a description of how we plan to fix this.

Overall the greens are in good condition and will be aerified just after Labor Day. Aerification is vital to our putting greens, it helps to control thatch and create a smooth surface. It also helps to relieve compaction caused by the high foot traffic that putting greens see. We appreciate our members patience during this process.

The golf course continues to be an always evolving project that forces us to prioritize our projects and personnel on the fly. We will continue to put our best effort into maintaining a playable and beautiful course for our membership.

"If you are caught on a golf course during a storm and are afraid of lightning, hold up a 1-iron. Not even God can hit a 1-iron."

-Lee Trevino

Current & Upcoming Projects

| Description | About | Estimated Completion |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Greens Aerification (upcoming) | Butch & Crew will aerify and top dress all putting surfaces on golf course. | September 2019 |
| Fairway Overseeding (upcoming) | Butch and crew will aerify and overseed all fairways on golf course. | September/October 2019 |
| Bunker Work (current) | Butch & Crew have been edging all bunkers on golf course throughout the season and adding sand to each to create more consistent playing conditions. | Fall 2019 |
| #6, 13, 17 Forward Tee Box (current) | Butch & Crew will be constructing a new forward tee box on #6, 13, and 17. 6 and 17 will be constructed on a similar line of play as the current white/blue tee boxes, while 13 will be offset to the right side of the current white/blue tee box. | Spring 2020 (open for play) |
| #10 Drainage Project (upcoming) | Butch & crew will be adding additional drainage lines to #10 in order to allow for better removal of excess surface water. #10 suffers from black layering within the turf as well as a build-up of sulfide gases which are toxic to turfgrass. Both of these items are caused by prolonged saturated conditions and quickly lead to turf decline. | Winter 2019-20 |
| #10-11 Approach (upcoming) | Butch & Crew will be removing the top 4-6 inches of soil and replacing to repair the withering damage that has occurred in this area. Additional drainage in this area will be installed as well. | Winter 2019-20 |
| #12 Sink Hole Repair (upcoming) | Butch & Crew will be levelling the sink holes that have formed over time to create better playing conditions. | Winter 2019-20 |
| Tee Box levelling (upcoming) | Butch & Crew will continue with tee box levelling over this winter. The first tee boxes to be levelled will be the forward boxes on #1, 7, and 11. | Winter 2019-20 |





Hole #12 post tree removal. Most trees right of rock wall from 130 yards and in have been removed. These trees negatively impacted turf conditions, the cart path, and air flow in this area, as well created a narrow chute where green was obscured from the left side of the fairway.

TREE REMOVAL PROJECT

Over the past several weeks many members have probably started to notice a significant number of trees being removed primarily on the back nine holes of the golf course. These trees are part of a tree removal project that was proposed to the board of directors by the Greens and Grounds Committee for removal based on the following criteria: playability, maintenance considerations, and impact on other assets of the golf course. I'd like to spend some time discussing how this plan was created and the effort that went into it.

During the 2017 golf season the club had two representatives, Paul Jacobs (BS, Crop & Soil Science, Michigan State University) and Addison Barden (BS, Agronomy & Soils; MS, Entomology, Auburn University) from the United States Golf Association come out and evaluate all aspects of the golf course. After a thorough course evaluation a report was given to the club with recommendations on putting greens, tee construction, fairway acreage, and resource management. One aspect of resource management suggested was coming up with a tree management plan with a focus on tree removal. Some specific points that the USGA made regarding tree removal were:

- Rough mowing will become more efficient
- Give golfers more options when playing
- Labor costs (extended mowing, leaf cleanup, etc.)
- Surface root damage to maintenance equipment
- Extra cost of maintaining stressed turf due to shade and root competition

The Greens & Grounds committee took this information and began to formulate a tree removal plan to present to the board with the intent of improving the course for future play. The plan itself was put together (cont'd on page 4...)



Hole #15 post tree removal. The Norway Spruce in this area had severe surface root issues, making balls that came to rest just several yards off of a sloping fairway nearly unplayable. Over time, the size of the tree forced the maintenance staff to narrow the fairway, just beyond the tree golfers will find yardage makers in the rough!





Hole #18 post tree removal. Two pine trees, one suffering needle cast, were removed from inside corner of second dogleg. Golfers now have options on their shot when within range of the green.

TREE REMOVAL PROJECT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

...(cont'd from page 3) by the members of the committee along with additional board members and involved evaluating trees or areas of trees specifically cited by the USGA, or evaluating trees based on the criteria cited by the USGAof where to focus tree removal efforts and coming to a group consensus on whether the tree or area of trees should be targeted for removal. Some examples of trees and areas specifically cited by the USGA were all trees right of the cart path on #12, the large tree at the outside of the dogleg on #11, and the tree in front of #8 green. Additionally, Al Taylor (BS, Biology, Western Maryland College) of Sam's Tree Service accompanied us during the evaluation to give us input regarding tree health as well as safety concerns some trees presented to golfers and the golf course itself.

A formal plan was created and was first presented to the Men's Golf Committee as Greens and Grounds was seeking funding for the project from money that the MGC raises from tournaments run throughout the golf season. The MGC discussed and approved the plan via a majority vote. At this point the plan was taken to the board of directors meeting, discussed, and was approved for funding and execution by a majority vote.

Tree management will continue to be a primary focus of the Greens and Grounds committee with the hopes of continuing to improve playability and maintenance. Below I've included a few articles of interest regarding tree management within the golf industry, some of these articles were specifically cited to us by the USGA:

- [The Hidden Cost of Trees](#)
- [The Right Tree in the Right Location](#)
- [The Truth About Trees](#)



Hole #11 post tree removal. Large Oak at corner of dogleg removed. This tree caused severe ground conditions and made growing grass difficult.



BUNKER RAKING AND RAKE PLACEMENT



This bunker was not properly raked and the rake was left hanging over the edge. If a ball comes to rest in a footprint players are not entitled to relief.



The same bunker as above, properly raked with the rake left towards the bottom center of the bunker.

Bon Air County Club's golf course has approximately 32 bunkers spread across 16 of its holes, with #12 and #18 being the only two holes on the golf course without a bunker. As members of the club there are several things we can do to keep the golf course in good condition as well as lower maintenance time. Proper bunker raking and placement of rakes once you are outside of the bunker helps to keep the sand surface within the bunker smooth and decreases the possibility of lies near the edge of the bunker as well as decreases maintenance time.

Proper smoothing of footprints, divots, and pitch marks within the bunker will keep the sand surface smooth over time. Upon playing a shot, players should use the provided rakes to smooth and fill all depressions within the area of the bunker that they played. Avoid just dragging the rake behind you as you exit the bunker, also consider pushing sand from the edges towards the middle upon exiting to keep the slopes as smooth as possible for the next player, downhill bunker lies are no fun!

Rakes should be placed towards the bottom center of the bunker. Rakes that are left hanging near the edge of the bunker could prevent a golf ball from rolling towards the flat area of a bunker. Rakes left outside of the bunker must be moved and replaced by maintenance staff during their daily maintenance tasks which, over time, can increase total maintenance time on the golf course.

All players should be aware that if your golf ball comes to rest against a rake you are free to move the rake, if your ball moves no penalty is assessed. The player needs to only move their ball back to its original place of rest after the rake is moved. Rakes are considered a movable obstruction and are covered under USGA rule 15.2.

"I'm about five inches from being an outstanding golfer. That's the distance my left ear is from my right."

-Ben Crenshaw

DID YOU KNOW?

Bon Air County Club's outward 9 was opened for play in 1954 and was designed by architect William Gordon (pictured left).



After serving in the United States Navy during World War I, Mr. Gordon worked as a salesman and sold grass seed. Willie Park Jr. (Maidstone Club, Olympia Fields North) and Donald Ross (Pinehurst #2, Seminole) are just two of the world renowned architects that were clients of his.

Mr. Gordon would eventually come to work for the design firm run by William Flynn and Howard Toomey, the former known for his work at Lancaster CC and Shinnecock Hills. Here Mr. Gordon learned the ins and outs of golf course architecture and engineering.

Some years later Mr. Gordon opened his own design firm, eventually designing Saucon Valley's Grace Course in Bethlehem, Sunnybrook CC in Plymouth Meeting, and of course our very own Bon Air CC outward 9.



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