

Course Consulting Service
ON-SITE VISIT REPORT



HERSHEY'S MILL GOLF CLUB
West Chester, Pennsylvania

Visit Date: June 26, 2017

Present: Jerred Golden, Director of Grounds, CGCS
Neil Andersen, Superintendent
Ed McFalls, Vice President
Scott Martin, Assistant General Manager
Priscilla Burt
Rick Monterosso, President
Mary Ellen Holden
Ray Letulle
Pat Masters
Gene Blessing, Green Chairman
Joe Owisk, Assistant Superintendent
Steve Ashworth, Assistant Golf Professional
Elliott L. Dowling, Agronomist, Northeast Green Section

United States Golf Association

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USGA Green Section Mission: The USGA Green Section develops and disseminates sustainable management practices that produce better playing conditions for better golf.

The continued investment in improving the infrastructure at Hershey's Mill Golf Club continues to pay off. Specifically, renovating bunkers that are slow to drain, poorly positioned for today's game or otherwise unattractive elevates the playability and aesthetic appeal of the golf course. For example, Hershey's Mill received nearly two inches of rain in roughly one hour the Saturday prior to our visit. Mr. Golden indicated that each of the renovated bunkers performed wonderfully following the heavy rain event compared to the other bunkers that required numerous labor-hours to repair washouts and remove standing water. Improvements like these and asking the question, "What to improve next?" helps position Hershey's Mill on the path to a successful future.

With these thoughts in mind, I offer the following report as a summary of the major topics of discussion during our visit.



Investing in infrastructure and the future of your facility are evident on the renovated holes. They continue to be striking and set Hershey's Mill apart from others. Keep up the good work!

GREENS

1. Moss Control. Moss is a relatively common problem throughout the Northeast region. Because of annual rainfall in conjunction with normal summer heat and humidity, putting greens have a tendency to remain wet for extended periods. Moss is a moisture-loving organism that thrives in wet environments. Ultimately, promoting a dry putting surface is the best cultural method to reduce the occurrence of moss. Moss is also found on putting greens that are exposed to direct sunlight and air movement and in particular, on mounds and contours that are the first to dry out, which is counterintuitive. These areas

often experience moss first because supplemental irrigation is necessary during the heat of summer for proper turf health.



Moss can be difficult to control because of frequent rain events or supplemental irrigation needed during the summer. Cultural and chemical controls are necessary to suppress moss.

From a chemical perspective, applying the selective herbicide, QuickSilver, at a rate of one to two ounces of actual product per **acre** every 14 days will help suppress moss. This rate is well below the labeled rate but it places selective pressure on the moss to keep it in check. During the spring and fall (cooler weather), two sequential applications at the label rate (6 ounces of actual product per acre) will place increased pressure on moss, increasing control.

2. Growth Regulation. There are myriad growth regulator options on the market today. Choosing the right growth regulator comes down to available resources and comfort level in many instances. Mr. Anderson reported that he has begun using Primo Maxx® rather than Cutless® or Trimit®. In his opinion — and the opinion of many golfers — the putting greens are performing better under Primo Maxx® regulation. Again, choosing the appropriate regulator is more of a function of your comfort level compared to anecdotal evidence. If the desired results are achieved with Primo, I certainly recommend continuing its use.

3. Growing Degree Day Models. While discussing growth regulators we also discussed using growing degree-day models to [predict](#) growth regulator applications. Recent research from the University of Nebraska suggests that many golf courses throughout the country are simply over regulating putting greens, particularly in the spring and fall. Growing degree-day models have been used for years to predict herbicide and

insecticide applications. Using them to predict growth regulator applications is a relatively new idea but one that is already showing great promise.

TEES



Increasing the size of the seventh tee would help disperse traffic and provide a different angle of play to the green. A new forward tee would also be a good addition to this hole.

1. Number Seven. The seventh tee falls into the “what’s next?” category. The seventh tee is undersized for the play it receives as evidenced by the increased traffic stress and mechanical wear. Increasing the size of the main teeing surface and creating a new forward tee would help disperse traffic and provide more playability options. I am not sure where the seventh hole falls on the priority list but I am confident that it is towards the top.

2. Forward Tees. While discussing the potential placement of a new forward tee on the seventh hole, we discussed the idea of better positioning of the [forward tees](#) to improve player enjoyment and pace of play. Simply put, the distance the forward tee players are required to play from is far too long for the average player. Unfortunately, most players are forced to use a driver on every hole with little expectation of reaching a par three putting green or the intended landing zone for par four or five fairway. While discussing tee renovations, include new forward tees in that conversation.

3. Number 14. The newly constructed tee is an excellent infrastructure improvement. Similar to number 11, the increase in usable space will help disperse traffic and provide more playability options. My only recommendation on the 14th tee is to perform core aeration as often as time and resources allow. Removing the sod layer from the upper one inch of the soil profile will improve water and nutrient management. If left

unchecked, the sod layer will continue to develop to a point where it could hold too much water following a heavy rain event. Excessive moisture in conjunction with high heat and humidity could lead to turf decline. Wet turf is also more susceptible to traffic injury. Aerating once per month with a one half inch inside diameter hollow coring tine is reasonable. Set the aerator depth to 1 ½ inches (just below the sod layer) so that only organic matter is removed.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Number 13. The 13th hole is near the top of the priority list. Everyone on the visit agreed that the fairway bunker is overly penal and actually poorly positioned. Moreover, the tree removal on the left side of the golf hole was an excellent change in terms of agronomics and playability however, the fairway line is a bit awkward. In my opinion, renovating the bunkers, fairway line and increasing the size of the teeing complex would improve the playability and aesthetics of this particular hole.



Renovating this hole will improve the playability, maintenance and positioning of the bunkers, widen the fairway and increase usable teeing space.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for allowing me to visit Hershey's Mill Golf Club. I always enjoy my time discussing agronomics with Mr. Golden, Mr. Anderson and everyone who accompanies us on the visit. Clearly, Hershey's Mill is committed to investing in the golf course so that it remains one of the best in the area.

This concludes my summary of the major points of discussion during my visit and tour of your golf course. If any questions arise concerning this visit, my report, or any other area, please feel free to call our office. We are here to help.

The USGA appreciates your support of the Course Consulting Service. Please visit the [Course Care](#) section of usga.org to access regional updates that detail agronomist observations across the region. Also, please visit the [Water Resource Center](#) to learn about golf's use of water and how your facility can help conserve and protect our most important natural resource.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elliott Dowling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E".

Elliott L. Dowling, Agronomist
Green Section, Northeast Region

ELD: mf

cc: Jerred Golden, Director of Grounds, CGCS
Neil Andersen, Superintendent