

Links Report – April 11, 2025

The Links Crew at Rivershore has been hard at work maintaining the golf course since late February, getting everything setup for our mid-March opening day, as well as our first tournament of the year (“The Icebreaker”) this past weekend. The tasks that the Links crew have been working on range from putting out course accessories (bunker rakes, benches, ball washer stations, signage, rope fence, etc.) to re-shaping/redistributing sand in the bunkers, charging up the irrigation system, irrigation repairs and improvements, spraying fertilizer on greens, and deep tine aerating our tee boxes. The following sections will define some of our maintenance tasks from the past month in more detail, as we move further into the start of what should be a successful 2025 golf season at Rivershore.

Irrigation

The Links Crew has charged up our irrigation system – which involves turning the pumps on while several quick couplers are installed at 4 corners of the golf course. Some golfers have noticed/reported water coming out of these brass spigots during this process. This is by design. You cannot charge a “closed system” without incurring breaks in the lines, and there isn’t enough pressure early on to run sprinkler heads, so this is a necessary step in the process. During “charge up” of a 45-year-old irrigation system, it is normal to expose weak points, and as such the crew had 8 irrigation repairs to begin the season. Pictured below are a few examples of the repairs. Our new Assistant Superintendent, Jason Thompson, is in a couple of these photos – say hi if you see him out on the course and welcome him to the Rivershore team – we are happy to have him!



Bunkers

The Links Crew has been hard at work moving sand around in the bunkers to improve playability for our golfers. We have added sand to several bunkers so far this spring, as well as

fixing lips, weeding, etc. to get them into shape. Bunkers are a very labour intense maintenance activity, but the aim is to improve the sand traps overall to improve the golf experience for our members and greens fee players alike. Please note, do not enter/exit a bunker from the high side – doing so results in damage to the bunker edges. Pictured below is one example of many that have occurred so far this season. If we are going to have such a long golf season here at Rivershore, it is very important to adhere to this to avoid more bunker reconstruction projects in the future. This photo is an example of a bunker that has previously been reconstructed and now will require more substantial work to get it back into a good condition. If you see any golfers in your group doing this, please politely remind them to enter/exit on the low side of the sand trap. Another note, **bunker rakes are to be placed inside the sand traps**. Any member found removing rakes intentionally from bunkers and placing them in the rough will be open to discipline from management.



Greens

Our greens have been consistently getting rolled, nearly everyday so far this season, to smooth out any surface imperfections to have the golfers' putts rolling as smoothly as possible. The greens have also received two fertilizer applications to date, and as such their growth is ramping up accordingly. Most of the core aeration holes from last fall have closed significantly, and Rivershore will have better conditioned greens moving forward as a result. As a note, our 2025 core aeration is scheduled for August 26-28 this year. Completing this task earlier in the year will ensure recovery of the greens approximately 2 weeks after pulling cores.

Tees

The Links Crew has performed a deep-tine aeration on our tee boxes this spring, which helps fracture the compacted soils beneath the rootzone, and allows the roots to stretch down deeper into the soil profile. This also allows water to penetrate more deeply into the soil and will make for a strong & healthy turfgrass plant moving forward. Our new grow-in tee box on Hole #11 has received two fertilizer applications as well. **It is not yet ready for play, and as such we ask that golfers stay off it in the meantime.** The par 3 mats have been a success thus far – helping reduce excessive wear on our par 3 holes in the form of divots during the shoulders of our golf season – a time where there is little growth/ability for them to recover. These mats will be removed relatively soon, when overnight temperatures stay consistently above zero & turf growth/recovery truly begins.

New Equipment

As some of you may have heard, our large area rough mower, a Toro 4700D with over 13,000 hours requires substantial repairs, and as such it has become time to look at other options to mow bulk rough areas on the golf course. The previous Superintendent, Alex, had foreseen this occurrence and purchased a tractor PTO-driven tow behind rough mower, a Progressive Pro Flex 120. The issue we had with running the piece of equipment was our only tractor, a John Deere 3039R, was a bit underpowered in terms of PTO hp to drive that rough mower attachment. Not to mention that smaller JD tractor would be tied up mowing rough for 5+ days/week, making other maintenance tasks like verti-cutting fairways, deep tine aerating, top-dressing, etc. difficult to achieve. I found us a gently used 1990 John Deere 1070 tractor with 1380 hours (average use of 39 hours/year) and turf tires already installed. This new tractor has more PTO hp than the smaller JD 3039R and should handle the rough mowing task handily. Our mechanic, Mick, is currently servicing the used tractor – changing all fluids, filters, etc. as well as ordering a few needed parts to get this tractor to 100% but overall, it is in great shape for the age of the tractor, and I hope it will serve us well.



Having two tractors in our equipment fleet will be essential for improving productivity and efficiency in the maintenance of the golf course. Most quality golf courses have at least two tractors, and these two units should complement each other nicely.

Frost Damage

On mornings when the temperature is 3 degrees Celsius or below, frost is likely to occur. Driving/walking over frosty grass damages the plant on a cellular level. This leads to discoloration, wilting, and stunted growth. Weak turf with stunted growth leaves a turfgrass stand more susceptible to higher pressure from weed plants. It is extremely important on these colder mornings, that homeowners drive their golf carts to the pro shop via the community roadways and do not cut across the golf course. It is also important that the dog walkers (at this point that the course is open there should be none) and golf ball hunters stay off the grass when there is frost. Fescue grass is just as susceptible to frost damage as creeping bentgrass or Kentucky bluegrass – so walking through the native grass/fescue areas during frosty mornings looking for golf balls is a good way to infuriate the Links Crew. Picture below is a recent example of the damage that driving a golf cart over frosty grass can cause. Please be respectful of frost delays on these cold mornings and stay off the putting greens as well as the driving range. I understand everyone is eager to start their rounds, and that no one enjoys these delays, but if the goal is to foster a better conditioned golf course this is imperative.

