

President's Report

Well “that” time of year is upon us again, Spring is in the air and we all get a little excited but there’s just one thing.....it’s still Winter. From beginning my time on the greens in ‘93’ I’m amazed how times have changed, who would have thought trial games would commence in Late August?! This is just one of the challenges the modern day greenkeeper faces as the battle for supremacy in the local bowls community invigorates us all! It must be said though this is a precarious time of year as a **whole** season of bowls looms ahead for our greens and us greenies can get a little sensitive about traffic on dormant – semi dormant couch with little or no recovery. Play during adverse weather in late winter/early spring can literally decimate your greens health very rapidly and if not will keep your plant dormant for longer. In my opinion “pace” shouldn’t be a high priority this time of year, and encouraging the grass out of dormancy by not “over doing it” is of high importance during a “high risk” period such as Spring. Considering the bowls pennant season is two months away care must be taken not to put too much pressure too soon on the greens and a good balance of decision making must occur as after all any renovation to the surface is a disturbance to the running surface which needs to repair itself. If the plant cannot recover because it hasn’t the energy reserves due to still feeling the effects of dormancy, health will undoubtedly decline including the high possibility of the onset of disease. So therefore it must be said of recognizing expectations of turf recovery at this time of year and biding your time perhaps especially considering the cold winter season we have thus far experienced. I believe a good theory for Spring is “baby steps” i.e. don’t over feed, don’t over renovate, don’t cut too short, etc. after all you can’t undo what you’ve done once you’ve over done it but you can always do it again if you’ve under done it.....make sense to me anyway. This theory obviously goes out the window once the turf is actively growing.

It has certainly been a couple of different seasons with the advent of World Bowls and from what I hear a lot of greenies are already booking their laser level in for the extended break in December. I know with a couple of our clubs this extended break is still when the night owls season is on which can mean all greens are still in use so it is a greenkeepers job to get in early and state your case as to educating your committee and promoting, maintaining good quality greens which will sustain intense loadings for summer and winter use if necessary. Major renovations can be seen as an inconvenience to a club not to mention coming at a cost particularly when trying to maximize income by the use of greens but there is a fine line when if not carried out eventually will result in a decline of quality particularly when trying to keep a green level . Thus the short term inconvenience of 4-6 weeks can in the long term allow longer periods of play and if not done can mean the greens can be out of play for longer periods due to symptoms such as lack of drainage, intense disease relating to thatch issues and a lack of coverage all which can ultimately lead to an exodus of members due to less than undesirable greens. Good greens can undoubtedly contribute to a good club atmosphere, not to mention create a great deal of income so therefore as an asset greens must be invested in by way of renovations be it minor or major, keeping in mind short and long term goals.

On a personal note I have been overwhelmed and inspired by the last two country information days that the South Australian Bowling Greenkeepers Association has held in Lameroo and Ardrossan. The general interest shown by all attendees and the conversations that we have been involved with at

these days supported by Bowls SA only proves how much we all value our natural turf greens and aspire our greens to be their best by attaining “best practice” methods. With our website still building we aim to improve membership numbers in a pro active move to unite as a professional industry genuinely concerned for our futures as synthetic grass companies push their own boats via other ways. I urge all clubs to join their greenkeepers to share on some of the educational and social support that we can offer visit our web site at www.sagreenkeepers.com.au to download a membership form. At this point I wish all greenkeepers the very best for the season ahead, and in particular Brad Porter(Lockleys) and Kevin Lewis(Holdfast Bay) for their World Bowls tournament.

Nigel Ryan,

President of the South Australian Bowling Greenkeepers Association.