



*Jay Spurl
Agronomist, Competitions*

AGRONOMY TOURNAMENT REVIEW

Panama Claro Championship
Club de Golf de Panama, Panama, Republica de Panama
January 25 – 31, 2016

Report Date: March 4, 2016

To: Laureano Vallenilla, Golf Course Superintendent

From: Jay Spurl

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Advance Book

Dear Laureano:

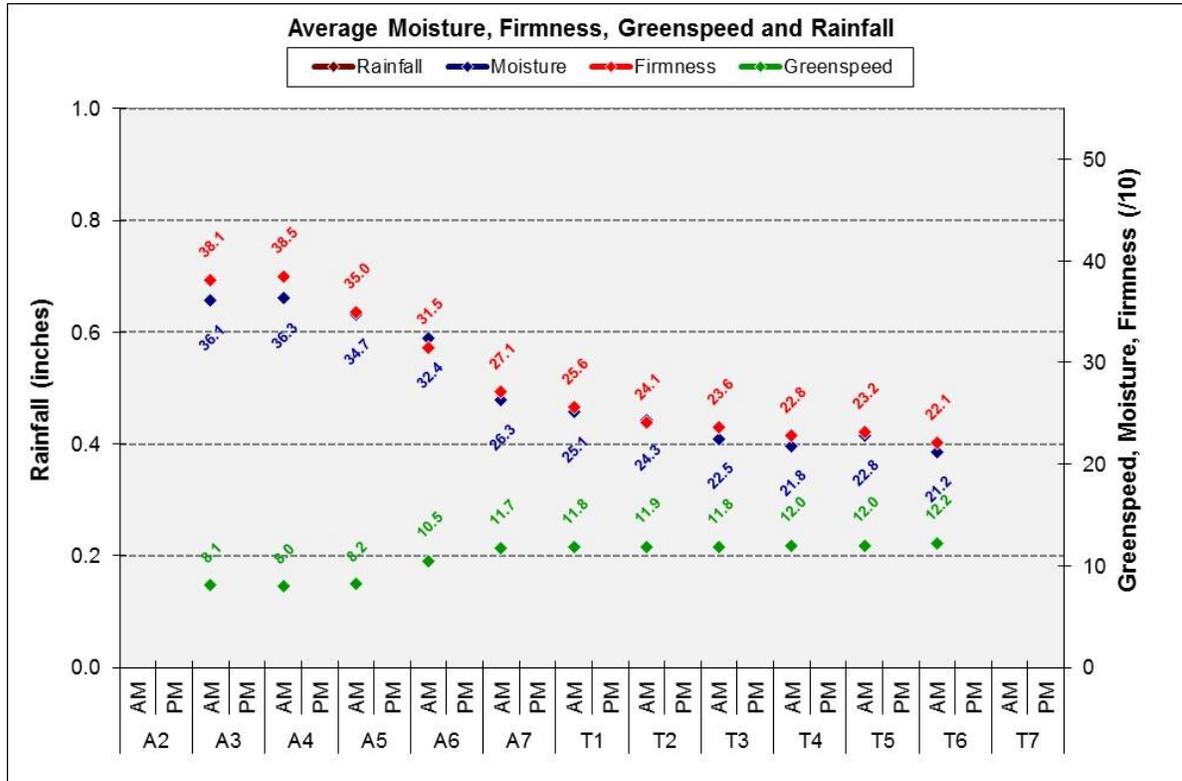
Thank you for the efforts you and your staff put forth for the 2015 **Panama Claro Championship**. It was great to meet you for the first time, and I was truly impressed with what you have been able to accomplish with the golf course in a relatively short period of time. The golf course was in good condition and we appreciated the efforts that went into getting ready for this important event.

The following brief summary will recap tournament playing conditions any suggested improvements, many of which were discussed with you and the Rules Staff during the event itself.

Greens

The Tifdwarf bermudagrass greens were some of the best we have experienced in the history of this event. With the exception of #7 green, that was only 4-5 months old, the remaining greens possessed a full turf cover with no thin areas and a uniform ball roll throughout. The greens performed well and responded to the spin mowing activity leading into the competition itself. The average greenspeed daily was just over 12 feet on the Stimpmeter and fell off 4-5 inches over during each competitive day. We maintained a good surface firmness while retaining reasonable

soil moisture in the low 20 percent range, without stressing the turf itself. Simply put, ideal playing conditions given the windy, low humidity afternoons we experienced.



Action Items:

- As we discussed, a core aeration procedure during the dry season would go towards removing organic matter content (thatch) and improve your root density going into the rainy season. Typically, aeration activity has been held off until the golf season is completed and the rainy season is well underway, making root development problematic with reduced sunlight intensity. Hopefully, you can get several core aeration procedures done before the end of June timeframe.
- As you are well aware, the sand topdressing sand used previously is less than ideal possessing too many fine silt particle sizes and elevated sodium content. I would urge you to continue looking for an alternate USGA approved topdressing sand and consider additional screening and/or washing activity on your existing sand to make it more useful.
- The green at #4 is severely contaminated with coarse texture, off-type bermudagrass in the back two thirds of this putting surface. I recommend you close this portion of the green and consider killing the contaminant coarse grass with multiple applications of a non-selective weed killer, like glyphosate. When you are confident the contaminating coarse grass is thoroughly dead, re-grassing from your greens nursery can begin. From beginning to end, this work should take roughly 80-100 days to full recovery. Once you refine your methods look to other putting surfaces with similar turf contamination like #14 and #17 greens.

Tees

The teeing surfaces were consistent with a good turf cover and provided firm footing for the Players throughout the event. The first tee turf coverage was enhanced by the removal of the tall hedge framing this tee. We historically struggled with this tee to grow grass in a self-inflicted shade situation.

Action Items:

- Several tees could benefit from leveling activity to improve their playability. Please consider leveling tees like #4 and #13 where the edges are starting to slope off due to repeated triplex mower activity on the cleanup passes around the perimeter edges.
- Removal of the large tree behind #4 tees is recommended, if you ever hope to grow a strong turf cover at the back of this key tournament tee.
- Installation of a drainage line just behind #10 tournament tee will improve Player footing and intercept any rainwater coming off the clubhouse roof. This tee can barely handle a week of golf play given its restricted size. Being damp in the back section forces the tee placement forward only making the tee size that much smaller.

Fairways

The bermuda grassed fairways provided excellent ball lies and optimal ball run on the tee shots. The new sand capped fairways at #7, #9 and #18 performed well and required additional irrigation watering as Tournament Week went along, while the remaining native soil based fairways received no water at all during Tournament Week. I was impressed how far the golf course has come relative to weed eradication and control of grassy summer weeds. Hopefully, another two fairways can be sand capped and re-grassed for the coming 2017 tournament. I would recommend sand capping #10 and #11 fairways as part of your Master Golf Course Improvement Program.

Action Items:

- We had to identify the quick coupler valves in the fairways to provide the caddies with a reference point to obtain their yardages from. I recommend you consider formalizing the quick coupler locations with small valve cover boxes and lids that sit flush with the fairway turf, like sprinkler heads. You can then order yardage plates and attach them to the 4 inch diameter valve box lids for easy identification for future events. Of course, the ideal situation would be to replace the quick coupler valves with actual sprinkler heads from a new irrigation system.
- The shortly mowed areas around the putting surfaces and fairway green approaches added another element to the short game and were well conceived for the most part. I recommend you consider additional core aeration and sand topdressing activity to keep these tight turf areas firm and smooth for mowing reasons during the rainy season. Also, the equipment acquisition of a new triplex mower with AWD and 14 bladed reels would increase the overall turf quality of the fairway approaches, year round.



Rough

The rough is much improved relative to weed control and the turf density improves each passing season with added fertility inputs. The use of supplemental irrigation watering via hoses off the fairway quick coupler system adds turf vigor and green color to a golf course that has gone 6-7 weeks without any rainfall at all.

Action Items:

- None

Bunkers/Hazards

The bunkers were consistent and uniformly raked for each competitive round. A few stones were present in the bunker sand and required constant attention to remove them. The bunker sand itself is marginally acceptable for playability and is slow to firm up once disturbed. Hopefully, better bunker sand can be sourced from some of the newer golf course construction projects being developed in Panama.

Action Items:

- The use of a reciprocal bunker edger like a Red Max Trimmer SGCZ2401S would be more effective than using machetes to edge the bunker lips. Please go to www.redmax.com to order this machine for improved bunker detailing.

Operations/Miscellaneous

The maintenance staff is highly trained and motivated to present the best playing conditions possible throughout Advance and Tournament Weeks. The cooperation from yourself and the staff was flawless during the event and greatly appreciated. I cannot recall any instance when an issue arose that you and your staff was not readily available to handle the situation.

Action Items:

- None

In closing, it was my great pleasure to work with you and your outstanding staff. I truly appreciated the opportunity to return to Panama and visit with my old friends. The golf course has come a long way since the first tournament and I wish you great fortune going forward. Please keep in touch, and feel free to call anytime. Thanks again for a job well done.

Sincerely,

Jay