

Senior service

Stuart Stenhouse, course manager at De Vere Mottram Hall in Cheshire, tells *Greenkeeping* how he prepared for a recent PGA seniors' tournament

You recently hosted a PGA seniors' tournament, what special preparation did this require?

Our preparation was no different, just more intense. For our greens we have an intensive Verti-cutting and top-dressing programme. This was carried out weekly from six weeks prior to the event.

For our fertilisers we used a combination of quick release granular, high end foliar weekly and soil products such as Oxy-Rush™. We also used a small quantity of Primo (total 300ml/Ha) over six weeks.

For the tees and approaches we followed a similar programme as for the greens but less intense. For the fairways we Verti-cut and applied herbicides and fertilisers.

Do you work with any particular company and why?

We have supplier arrangements with Sherriff Amenity, Aitkens and Pinseeker. I also use Agronomic Services as it supplies Floratine products which I have used extensively for almost 20 years.

How long have you been using Oxy-Rush™ and for what purpose?

I started using Oxy-Rush™ around three years ago and really it was all down to the fact that I couldn't, and didn't, want to aerate mechanically during a hot dry spell. I spoke

with David Snowden of Agronomic Services, who mentioned Oxy-Rush™. I was very sceptical and decided to go with an application rate of 20 litres per hectare. I can truly say in 30 years of course management I've never seen a product react the way Oxy-Rush™ did. The almost instant 'green up' was unbelievable. I have used the product ever since as a management tool.

Did you ever experience black layer or thatch anywhere that you have been able to tackle or do you use Oxy-Rush™ for aeration?

No, that wasn't the reason why I used it; however I am positive that it would be a great management tool for this condition.

How do you apply Oxy-Rush™ and does this enable you to save money on the golf course?

I apply Oxy-Rush™ with my soil liquid programme, during times of stress (we applied before and after the PGA seniors' tournament) and also during times of heavy rainfall through the summer. It's not about whether a product saves you money; I really don't believe any product saves you money. However it may save money in the sense that you are not mechanically aerating during the playing season as much, thus keeping golfers happy and keeping the revenue up.

What kind of results did you experience over what time period?

It's interesting how people may look at a product and look for results over an extended period. My primary goal is to aerate the soil. If I get any other positive result then it is a bonus.

Did you get positive feedback from the PGA?

Absolutely! Everyone involved was immensely positive, from the PGA, the De Vere Group, our guests and golfers to our members. When I first saw the golf course at Mottram Hall I knew this place was special. I have always firmly believed that we can be the number one inland golf course in Cheshire and I see no reason why we can't be in the top 10 in the north west.

Our aim now is to deliver this vision and maintain the course condition for all our members and guests to enjoy.



Stuart Stenhouse