
ESTERO COUNTRY CLUB

Golf Course Maintenance Standards



JANUARY 1, 2022

MISSION STATEMENT

The Golf Course Operations Department at Estero Country Club strives to provide one of the finest golfing venues in southwest Florida appropriate for members and guests of the Club while being courteous to all players, fiscally accountable and environmentally responsible.

We understand that our members are diverse regarding playability and expectations, and we strive to provide an enjoyable experience for all. As some members are low handicap players, our goal is to offer challenging playing conditions regarding putting smoothness, speeds and turf firmness without penalizing most of our members and their guests. Players appreciate aesthetically pleasing conditions, and we make every effort to create a beautiful golf course of healthy color, uniform in appearance and free of debris and weeds.

Note that to provide the results stated in this set of maintenance standards, the members of Estero Country Club must provide adequate resources and unfettered access to the golf course.

The Head Golf Professional must work closely with the Golf Course Superintendent for specific tee times, shotguns, volume of play and tournament events. The maintenance of our golf course needs to take center stage as it relates to member play.

While we strive to adhere to the maintenance standards contained in this document, the Golf Course Superintendent and Management reserve the right to alter these standards to best reflect the needs and condition of our golf course to meet and or exceed the members' expectation.

GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE

The Golf Course Maintenance Department is responsible for maintaining all areas and aspects of the golf course. Tees, Fairways, Collars, Approaches and Greens are not only the focus of our crew. We also rely on training, communication among ourselves and safety. We respect the game of Golf and its players.

SUMMARY

What happens within the Golf Course Maintenance department is more than maintaining the grasses on the golf course. They communicate and work as a team to provide innovative ideas and practices to maintain an exceptional standard of beauty and excellence.

These Maintenance Standards outline the many facets of the department activity:

- Employee safety and training
- Green maintenance
- Tees maintenance
- Fairway maintenance
- Rough maintenance
- Trap maintenance
- Golf Course setup
- Irrigation system & water
- Golf Course Etiquette

Employee Safety, Training & Education

The Estero CC maintenance staff is committed to maintaining the highest standards in golf course maintenance practices and handling the increased demands of the golfing membership. Professional development of its employees through local, regional, and national training conferences and seminars allows them to stay on top of current and future maintenance practices.

Safety is a top priority for the Estero CC maintenance staff. The department will comply with OSHA regulations pertaining to safety meetings and equipment operations. All staff members and supervisors are informed about workplace safety and health issues through internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, video & hands-on training, including the Hazard Communication Standard (Employee Right to Know). Safety glasses and ear protection are required for all tasks where there may be exposure to any hazard to the eyes and ears.

The training of employees is a crucial part of preparing the crew for the golfing season. All new employees start by reading the Estero Country Club Employee Handbook and the written safety program. Employees then begin video training on golf, golf etiquette, and equipment operation. Employees then learn how to check the equipment, operate, and clean. Employees are encouraged to golf when able to experience the course from both the maintenance and a player's views.

GREENS MAINTENANCE

The Greens should be the only surface on the golf course with a pure expectation. A smooth ball roll is the goal for our Greens at Estero CC. Changing climatic conditions will significantly impact 'target green speeds'; thus, daily consistency from Green to Green is the goal. We will employ various cultural, mechanical, and synthetic practices to achieve these goals. It also must be noted that the membership of Estero CC needs to help create these smooth-rolling conditions by repairing all ball marks and lifting, not dragging, their feet when walking on the Greens.

Our goal is to maintain 11'+ Green speeds between November and April. May through October target goal will be 10'+.

Green Standards:

Greens will be mowed daily throughout the year. Heights will vary based on Mother Nature and time of the year. Spring and late fall heights of cut will be around .125 inches with smooth rollers. Summer heights will be approximately .120" of an inch with wiley rollers.

Scouting – Inspected daily by the Golf Course Superintendent, both 1st and 2nd Assistant Superintendent for:

- Disease/Turf thinning
- Quality of cut
- Mower accuracy for patterns and perimeters
- Moisture
- Insects
- Proper hole location
- High/low plugs needing adjustment
- Weeds

Greens will be mowed using triflexes every day of the week. Staff will carry out a double cut to maintain relative speed objectives.

Grooming and/or verticutting will be used as needed to control grain and keep it at acceptable levels.

Greens will be rolled on any day, if needed, to maintain minimum speed objectives.

Green speed will be measured daily from November-April. Summer speeds will be carried out on Monday and Friday using the Stimpmeter to maintain minimum speed objectives.

Growth regulator will be applied to increase green speed, reduce excessive growth, and increase turf density.

Greens will be top-dressed for smoothness, firmness and to control thatch. Additional topdressing may be required for preparation of tournament conditions.

Greens will be aerated as follows: All 21 greens will be aerated in the fall using pencil tines every other week depending on Mother Nature and tournament events. Hollow tines will be carried out during summer closures at 5/8" or larger. Topdressing sand will be fully and carefully incorporated into the aerification holes.

Greens will be irrigated as little as possible to promote deep rooting, drought tolerance, and minimal disease problems. Greens will be firm and the soil dry whenever possible. Greens will be checked, and hole-cups changed daily.

Greens, approaches, and collars will be maintained with adequate and consistent cushion of rough from collar to bunker. Collars will be mowed at .450 inches from spring to fall and will be raised to .650 inches on or about Thanksgiving.

TEES MAINTENANCE

The objective is a teeing surface that is smooth, firm, level and without weeds. Tees will be closely mowed and consist of Celebration grass.

Tee Standards:

Tees will be mowed at .450 inches from spring to fall and raised to .650 inches on or about Thanksgiving. Tees will generally be mowed three days a week during summer, 1 or 2 times in the fall, depending on growth.

The turfgrass quality will take priority over competition from tree roots, shade, and restricted air circulation. Trees will be thinned and pruned on an as-needed basis to ensure the highest quality of turf. Scouting – Inspected daily by the Golf Course Superintendent, both 1st and 2nd Assistant Superintendent for:

- Disease/Turf thinning
- Quality of cut
- Mower accuracy for patterns and perimeters
- Moisture
- Insects

Divots will be attended to daily; accessories will be checked daily for service.

Tees will be aggressively verti-cut and aerated. Topdressing sand will be incorporated into aeration holes.

Tee blocks will be changed daily to utilize the greatest amount of teeing space.

Fertility – Tees are fertilized both with Granular and Liquid Fertilizer for proper color and plant health.

A preventive insecticide will be used in the spring to control Mole Crickets.

A preventive nematicide will be used in the summer to control Nematodes.

Tee leveling – Tees become mounded over time from sand topdressing and, to maintain our standards, occasional renovation of the teeing grounds is necessary to re-establish a level play quality. This practice is outsourced to a golf course builder experienced in earth shaping.

FAIRWAYS MAINTENANCE

The objective is good density, uniformity, smoothness, firmness with a minimum of thatch while exhibiting good drought tolerance. Fairways will be closely mowed and consist of Celebration grass.

Fairway Standards:

Fairways will be mowed .450 inches from spring to fall and raised to .650 inches on or about Thanksgiving. Fairways will generally be mowed 3 days a week during summer, 1 or 2 times in the fall depending on growth.

Scouting – Inspected daily by the Golf Course Superintendent, both 1st and 2nd assistant superintendent for

- Disease/Turf thinning
- Quality of cut
- Mower accuracy for patterns and perimeters
- Moisture
- Insects

Cultural practices are accomplished as needed and are dictated by the Golf Course Superintendent. Fairways are core aerated a minimum of three times, scalped and Verticut once annually to promote new growth. These practices are carried out during our summer closures.

Growth regulators may be used in the summer and fall months to enhance Celebration density and to reduce irrigation and clippings.

Fairways will be irrigated for turfgrass health only, not for color. Fairways may be dormant throughout the fall months.

Sand topdressing will be applied to fairways to improve firmness, drainage, and aid in thatch reduction.

Fertility – Fairways are fertilized both with Granular and Liquid Fertilizer for proper color and plant health.

All necessary chemical applications will be applied as early as possible to cause as little interference with play as possible.

All chemical applications will be applied under the direction of a state licensed applicator.

A preventive insecticide will be used in the spring to control Mole Crickets.

A preventive nematicide will be used in the summer to control Nematodes.

ROUGH MAINTENANCE

The main objective of the rough is to maintain at minimal levels while not compromising the aesthetics, severity of penalty, and speed of play. Roughts will be mowed and consist of Latitude 36 grass.

Rough Standards:

The rough will be maintained in the fall at a height between 1.25 and 1.5 inches and in the summer, heights will vary from .750" and 1" with reels mowers.

Scouting – Inspected daily by the Golf Course Superintendent, both 1st and 2nd Assistant Superintendent for:

- Disease/Turf thinning
- Quality of cut
- Mower accuracy for patterns and perimeters
- Moisture
- Insects

The rough will be mowed at least once a week when actively growing with perimeters of fairways cut a second time if needed.

Cultural practices are accomplished as needed and are dictated by the Golf Course Superintendent. Roughts are core aerated a minimum of three times annually and scalped to promote new growth. These practices are carried out during our summer closures.

Fertility – Roughts are fertilized both with Granular and Liquid Fertilizer for proper color and plant health

All necessary chemical applications will be applied as early as possible to cause as little interference with play.

All chemical applications will be applied under the direction of a state-licensed applicator.

A preventive insecticide will be used in the spring to control Mole Crickets.

A preventive nematicide will be used in the summer to control Nematodes.

TRAPS

The objective is to have Traps with the proper amount of sand and be well distributed without rocks or other loose impediments. The bunkers should aesthetically complement the architect's original design and vision.

Traps Standards:

The Traps will be checked daily for smoothness. Mechanical machine and hand-raking machine will be used to loosen compacted sand and to control weeds.

Greenside and Fairway Traps will be compacted as needed to ensure sand firmness.

The bunker edges will be maintained with a crisp edge consisting of a 2-to-3-inch lip.

Stone and debris removal will be tended to daily with regular maintenance.

The sand depth will be maintained at no less than 4 inches.

The traps will have an adequate number of rakes around them. Large traps will have at least three rakes and small bunkers will have at least two.

Rakes will be placed with the rake inside the trap and the handle will sit on the outside edge on the grass. The rake should also be placed aligned with the direction of the hole. This will help minimize negative interactions between rakes and balls.

The edges of bunkers will be fertilized regularly, along with the rough fertilization program.

A preventive insecticide will be used in the Spring to control Mole Crickets.

GOLF COURSE SET-UP

The objective is to use various flagsticks and tee block placements that will challenge the golfers' thinking while maintaining turf integrity, spreading wear, and reducing stress over various cupping and tee block areas.

Golf Course Set-up Standards:

Greens will be checked with cups being changed daily. The course will be set-up with an overall balance between the cups and tee position to maintain appropriate yardage. On weekends and during special member tournaments, tee blocks will be located at or near the yardage blocks.

Tournament Set-up: Golf Course maintenance team will be given the option of choosing flagstick / hole-cup placements.

Tee blocks will be moved daily and changed as needed to utilize the greatest amount of teeing space. A balance between the tee blocks and flagstick / hole-cup positions will be maintained (6 Forward, 6 Middle and 6 Rear).

Practice Area:

The practice tee will be mowed at .450 inches from spring to fall and raised to .650 inches on or about Thanksgiving. Depending on growth, Tees will generally be mowed three days a week during the warmer months, one or two times in the fall/winter.

The chipping area will be maintained to the same standards as the golf course.

Trees:

Trees and Palms in high traffic areas (Clubhouse, walk paths, etc.) will be checked regularly for weak limbs and hanging limbs and maintained as necessary.

All trees and palms will be fertilized and pinestraw applied annually. Poison ivy, vines and moss will be controlled as needed.

Trees will be pruned as time permits.

Large areas of woods will be thinned to enhance turf quality, aesthetics, and the overall health of the other trees in the area.

Most tree work will occur in the summer months.

Carts:

The course will be developed and maintained to accommodate cart usage.

Wet condition tracks will be developed in out-of-way areas to make it possible to provide minimal cart restrictions because of weather conditions.

Rope/stakes and signage will be used to direct cart traffic wherever necessary.

Clubhouse:

Flowerbeds will be maintained, edged, and mulched as needed.

Grass areas will be mowed as needed.

Entire Clubhouse area will be checked daily for trash and other unsightly debris.

Annuals and perennials will be planted in appropriate areas. Also, an assortment of other planters will be located throughout the site.

IRRIGATION SYSTEM AND WATER

The turf watering system will be maintained in like-new condition.

The system will be programmed to operate during non-play hours as weather dictates.

All leaks will be repaired as soon as possible.

The systems pump station will have a preventative program implemented and inspected by trained professionals.

Sprinkler heads will be inspected and adjusted to maintain proper watering patterns.

Irrigation audits will be performed systematically on portions of the golf course each year to assure system efficiency.

Every effort will be made not to overwater and cause wet areas on the course.

DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

Irrigation restrictions continue to increase each year. The South Florida Water Management District allocates a certain amount of water each month and during times of drought, they severely restrict the amount of water applied to the turf. Irrigation restrictions limit our ability to provide lush green playing conditions throughout the year, especially during our annual dry cycle of March-May. The following phases and accompanying culture practices are implemented to protect long-term turf health during these periods:

- Phase I (15% reduction) – Most playing surfaces can be irrigated as necessary to provide acceptable turf quality. Roughs can sometimes become off-color and localized dry spots occur, but no change in maintenance is necessary.
- Phase II (30% reduction) – Primary play areas (greens, tees and fairways) are kept alive and generally green in color. Wetting agents are necessary to reduce the severity of localized dry spots. Increased mowing heights and decreased mowing frequency are essential to improve the turf's ability to uptake water. Cart traffic management is vital as the turf begins to lose color. Eventually, it may be necessary to restrict cart traffic entirely to cart paths and designated areas.
- Phase III (45% reduction) – Phase III will cause severe loss of turf color. Progression of brown conditions will begin from the outer roughs and work their way into primary playing areas. Greens and tees will be kept alive, and the remaining water is delivered to fairways and landing areas when available. Healthy bermudagrass is very drought-tolerant, and we will do everything possible to maintain healthy turf conditions by restricting traffic as much as necessary. Some areas may die-off from drought accompanied by other stresses like shade, Nematodes, and traffic. We will re-grass these areas as irrigation restrictions are lifted and increased rainfall occurs in the summer.

GOLF COURSE ETIQUETTE

While implementing these standards, efforts by the golf course maintenance staff will be greatly enhanced by members and guests who practice proper golf etiquette. These efforts by all who use the golf facilities include:

Divots made or observed by a player – Sand must be replaced carefully and pressed down.

Each player should repair at least one ball mark on every putting green.

Players should be careful not to scuff the putting green while walking. Upon completing the hole, scuff marks (especially those near the hole) should be repaired out of courtesy to other players.

Remove and replace the flagstick carefully to avoid damaging the hole or the putting green. Refrain from dropping the flagstick on the putting green.

Footprints and club marks made in sand bunkers should be filled and raked smooth. Players should refrain from walking up the face of sand bunkers. Enter and leave sand bunkers from the low or flat side.

Do not litter the golf course. Place trash in the containers provided.

Parents/Grandparents must not permit their children to run at large on the golf course or the practice putting green.

All matters relating to the golf course and its upkeep are the responsibility of the Greens Committee. Suggestions, questions, or complaints should be made to the Committee Chair in writing. Please do not contact the Green Superintendent or his staff directly.

Obey all cart instructions, especially during extreme conditions. Carts should remain on paths on all par 3's. Try to use cart paths wherever they are provided and always exit fairways to the side of the cart path.

Keep carts at least 25 yards from front of the greens. Do not drive carts in areas that are steep and dangerous. Use caution and common sense.

Unlike many sports, golf is played, for the most part, without the supervision of a referee or umpire. The game relies on the integrity of the individual to show consideration for other players and to abide by the rules.

All players should conduct themselves in a disciplined manner, consistently demonstrating courtesy and sportsmanship, irrespective of how competitive they may be. This is the spirit of the game of golf.