

Shifting Sands –

A Spotlight on Queensland Golf Course Projects

PACIFIC HARBOUR GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

Project: Construction of an 18-hole golf course

Location: Bribie Island

Project Manager: Rick O’Loughlin

Comments:

After a prolonged period of planning and development, the 18-hole golf course at Pacific Harbour Bribie Island has started construction.

Bribie Island is located off the coast from Caboolture where it forms the northwestern perimeter of Moreton Bay. It is 14,300ha in size and with a maximum elevation of less than 10m much of the island is either just above or below the water table, creating an extensive system of wetlands.

Designed by Ross C. Watson, the golf course will use wetlands, lakes and native trees to fulfil strict environmental guidelines. The Urban Development Institute of Australia and the Environmental Protection Agency have chosen Pacific Harbour as a ‘Champion Demonstration Project’. One of a select few projects to be honoured in this way, the course will be showcased for its sustainable environmental practices.

The course site presents the development and construction team at Pacific Harbour, headed by Rick O’Loughlin, with a whole new challenge. The general principal and design philosophy for developing the site as a golf course is to utilise the natural soils on the site and to develop a typical links style course that has minimal inputs in terms of nutrients, water and pesticides.

The gently undulating site has sandy ridges that run approximately north-south and is typical of traditional sand belt type conditions. The natural coastal plants and bracken ferns are typical of well-drained sandy soils that are strongly acidic making it an ideal site for a links style course.

The soil profile comprises a sandy topsoil layer with a low to moderate organic matter content overlying strongly bleached, sand subsoil. Underlying much of the site is a layer



Preparing the site for the new Pacific Harbour course at Bribie Island has begun

of ‘coffee rock’ occurring either as a dark coloured, solid cemented layer or a dark coloured partially cemented layer. Soils on the site can be broadly classified into three groups.

Deep Sands

The deep sands are characteristic of the high points on the sand ridges with at least 2m of sand, no sign of ‘coffee rock’ (i.e. deeper than 2m) and no free water seepage. The topsoil layer has low organic matter content.

Shallow Sands

This soil group is the predominant soil group within the site and occurs at the mid-point of the sandy rises or in depressions on the sand ridges. This soil group consists of up to 2m of sand overlying ‘coffee rock’ with water seepage occurring at 1-1.6m. The topsoil layer has low to moderate organic matter content.

Swamp Soils

The swamp soils are confined to the low, drainage points of the site. The soils are characterised by wet, dark organic topsoil over

a saturated sand layer and ‘coffee rock’ at about 1.5-2 metres.

Soils are medium-fine to fine sands with a narrow particle size distribution and generally have a moderate to high drainage rate (hydraulic conductivity). The topsoil from the swamp soils is the only soil type that has more than 1 per cent silt plus clay and in combination with a very high organic matter content has a very low drainage rate.

Turfgrass species utilised will be Wintergreen couch for tees, fairways and roughs, while the greens will be built to USGA specifications and seeded with TifEagle couchgrass. The golf course and landscape areas are to be fully irrigated utilising the Toro LTC plus satellites and Toro SitePro control system.

As an aside, all construction, grassing and grow-in staff involved with the project are to have undertaken a course in General Safety Induction (*construction industry*) or commonly called in Queensland a ‘blue card’.

VICTORIA PARK GOLF COURSE

Project: Hole reconstruction

Superintendent: Fred Davies

Location: Brisbane

Comments:

For the 20-odd months leading up to May of this year, Victoria Park Golf Course in Brisbane

has resembled more of a construction site than a municipal course.

Located bang smack in the middle of Brisbane, just 2km away from the city centre, the course was reduced to nine holes during construction of the Inner City Busway which now ploughs directly underneath the course.

As a result, the course, designed by David

Burrup, went through an extensive redesign with four new fairways (*Wintergreen couch*) and greens (328) constructed and slight modifications made to several existing holes. The new-look 18 holes opened on 29 May.

NUDGENE GOLF CLUB

Project: Hole reconstruction, South Course

Superintendent: David Brushfield

Location: Brisbane

Time Period: November 2003 - July 2004

Approximate Cost: Under \$300,000

Comments:

Ask Nudgee Golf Club superintendent David Brushfield to sum up the last half year in two words and you'll get a succinct response - "bloody busy".

Not content with maintaining 36 holes at the Brisbane-based club, since November 2003 Brushfield has rebuilt six holes (2, 14-17 and a new par three) on the South Course and when ATM spoke to him in mid-June he was putting the finishing touches to the project.

The works complete an ongoing course reconstruction program which has stretched out over the past 20 years. The old straight up and down, flat layouts that had little appeal have been wiped out, replaced by newly

contoured fairways, additional bunkers and five brand new greens. A new irrigation system has also been installed.

Brushfield says that works have helped to improve the overall playability of the South Course, which in the past has been the poorer sibling of the North Course. Members preferred championship and pennants events on the North Course, with the South course used for green fee paying players.

The club also made the decision to go ahead with the changes to the South Course due to the proposed Gateway Arterial upgrade project which is expected to get underway within the next five years.

Such a project was going to slice a considerable chunk out of the South Course so the club took a proactive stance and ever since November Brushfield and his staff have been flat tack.

The Gateway Arterial project proposes to reduce growing congestion on the motorway by widening it between Mt Gravatt-Capalaba and Lytton roads, constructing a second

bridge across the river, and building a northern deviation through old and new airport sites to Nudgee Rd.

As an aside that second bridge is likely to dramatically impact on Kelly Hyland's Royal Queensland layout, which already has one Arterial bridge through the course. While plans are in the formative stage, Royal Queensland could stand to lose five holes on the eastern side of the existing bridge (holes 12 to 16) if the second bridge gets the go-ahead.

All new tees on the Nudgee South Course have been turfed with Wintergreen, the new 328 greens are now 60-100 per cent bigger than the originals, while the common couch fairways have been overseeded with a rye/couch 90-10 mix. A smallish lake has been added as well.

"I'm actually looking forward to having a hit myself," says Brushfield, superintendent at Nudgee for the past eight years. "I haven't played for a while and I'm quite eager to tee up." 🏌️

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ROYAL PINES

Project: Construction of Riverside course
Superintendent: Stuart Laing
Location: Gold Coast

Comments:

Home of the Australian Ladies Masters for the past 13 years, Royal Pines will be extended to a 27 hole facility upon completion of the new nine-hole Riverside course later this year.

Designed by Graham Marsh Golf Design, the course boasts a different character to the existing 18-hole layout. The course has smaller greens and less forgiving fairways and with surrounding natural lakes will also see water come more into play than on the existing course.

Wintergreen couch has been used on the tees, fairways and surrounds, while the greens are all 328. With an overall length of 2950 metres, the course boasts 44 bunkers.

It is expected that once the Riverside course is complete, work will begin on revamping the existing 18 which will take place over the next three years. 🌱

REDLAND BAY GOLF CLUB

Project: Hole construction
Superintendent: Max Laverty
Time Period: Summer 2003-04
Approximate Cost: \$45,000-50,000

Comments:

Redland superintendent Max Laverty has been in the business long enough to know the vagaries of golf club committees, so the current situation he finds himself in comes as no surprise.

Ensnared at Redland Bay for the past 16 years, the savvy super has rebuilt 13 holes on the par 72 course and is now in the frustrating position of waiting on the committee and budget constraints to press on with the remaining five holes.

Last summer Laverty and his staff recontoured the 7th fairway. Although reconstructed five years ago, it was initially built on a salt floodplain which has proved difficult to grow turf on. The fairway was raised and recontoured to make a more attractive hole. 🌱

TEWANTIN NOOSA GOLF CLUB

Project: Hole construction/reconstruction
Superintendent: Jon Penberthy

Comments:

As part of an ongoing course improvement program that has been in effect for a number of years, recently appointed Tewantin Noosa superintendent Jon Penberthy has just finished constructing a spare hole.

The par 3 hole will allow the club to keep 18 holes in play while work is then started on the 17th and 13th holes respectively. Both par fours are to be completely redesigned with new 328 greens. 🌱

The next edition of Australian Turfgrass Management magazine will highlight projects in South Australia and Northern Territory.