

GOLF BUSINESS NEWS

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A team for the greens at Machrihanish Dunes

Machrihanish Dunes has chosen Barenbrug grass seed for its greens and tees. The new 18-hole links course, currently under construction by DMK Golf Design, is using two mixtures selected for their compatibility with the natural surroundings and proven performance in harsh conditions.

Situated on the Kintyre Peninsula, Machrihanish Dunes is the first 18-hole links golf course to be built on the west coast of Scotland in over a century, and the first ever to be built entirely within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Links manager Euan Grant said, "The site has an extremely rich variety of flora and fauna, specifically some rare orchids, so we have to comply with some strict guidelines. The aim is to create a links course which goes back to something very traditional, very basic in its construction and management.

"It's an exciting challenge and has taken three years of planning and working closely with Scottish National Heritage. We are now 10 weeks into construction and we'll be opening late summer next year."

As part of the project, Scottish National Heritage has 'sacrificed' the greens and tees to Machrihanish Dunes. This means the organisation has accepted that these areas – three per cent of the site – will be sown with new grass and managed with a range of turfcare products, albeit a very restricted one.

When it came to selecting the grass seed for the new greens and tees, Euan was in no doubt that he wanted Barenbrug. "I worked at St Andrews for five years, where Barenbrug is an exclusive supplier, and I have completed two grow-ins with Barenbrug seed at other courses in Surrey and Kent. I have total confidence in their products and technical knowledge."

Euan contacted Barenbrug's Jayne Leyland and, with advice from Gerard van 't Klooster, from Barenbrug Research, she assessed the requirements of the course – taking into consideration the restrictions of the SSSI – and created two special mixes. "For the tees we selected a fescue mix with five per cent browntop bent, and the greens will be sown with a pure fescue mix – 50/50 of slender creeping red fescue and Chewings fescue," said Euan.

"These grasses are more akin to the indigenous species found on the course, which is what we are trying to achieve. They also have excellent drought tolerance and perform well in sand. We needed to select grass that could withstand the very harsh conditions here and thrive in the wet and windy winters and very warm summers. We've seeded four greens and five sets of tees, and hope to complete the operation late October this year."

As the grass seed grows in Barenbrug will continue to monitor its progress, and work

closely with Euan to establish the turf he requires. “We are confident that with Barenbrug’s technical know-how we will achieve the best possible links tees and greens and that they will be on hand to give us long-term advice.

“We receive excellent advice from everyone involved in this project including the course designer and constructor DMK, associate architect Paul Kimber, and our ecologist Carol Crawford. Decisions need to be made daily and we are very grateful to everyone involved, Barenbrug included.”

The Machrihanish Dunes greens mix contains: Barbirdie, Barcrown, Bargreen, Barpearl and Barswing. The tees mix is composed of Barcrown, Barpearl, Barbirdie, Bargreen and BarKing.

Barenbrug UK www.barenbrug.co.uk