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Grass roots support for new Scottish golf course

The new 18-hole Machrihanish Dunes links course has chosen Barenbrug grass seed for its greens and tees.

Currently under construction by DMK Golf Design, the course is using two mixtures selected both 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 says:

"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'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, albeit very restricted, range of turfcare products.

Taking into consideration the restrictions of the SSSI, Barenbrug created two special mixes. For the tees they selected a fescue mix with five per cent browntop bent, while the greens will be sown with a pure fescue mix - 50/50 of slender creeping red fescue and Chewings fescue.

These are more akin to the indigenous species found on the course, which is what Grant is trying to achieve.

He commented: "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."