



PROJECT SUMMARY

Royal Norwich Golf Club

ARCHITECT

- Ross McMurray,
Designer, European Golf Design
and President of EIGCA

ESTATES DIRECTOR

- Peter Todd,
Royal Norwich Golf Club

GENERAL MANAGER

- Phil Grice,
Royal Norwich Golf Club

PRODUCTS USED

- Profile Porous Ceramic
(PPC) Greens Grade

BACKGROUND

One hundred and twenty-five years in the making, The Royal Norwich Golf Club (RNGC) has been undergoing what is believed to be the first relocation of a Royal club in Britain. Founded in 1893 and earning its Royal status with the patronage of the Duke of York, who later became King George V, RNGC is in the process of moving to a 300-acre site at Weston Park – a location which will boast an 18-hole championship course along with a shorter six-hole academy course.

Nestled in idyllic East Anglia, the new site features beautiful, mature trees, offering a stunning setting for the new and improved RNGC. Aiming to make the course a benchmark for golf in the region, General Manager Phil Grice and Estates Director Peter Todd worked with golf course architect Ross McMurray of European Golf Design, to create a course that will provide an exciting new home for Royal Norwich. The objective has been to design a genderless golf course that can be challenging to the best players but will provide an enjoyable game for other golfers by using multiple teeing areas

CHALLENGES

To achieve the desired results, Royal Norwich first had to address a number of challenges posed by the natural environment. With a Preservation Order protecting all trees within the site the team had to work closely with the local authority's Tree Officer, both during planning and throughout construction. In the end only a handful of trees were removed for golf reasons with most needing to be felled as a result of poor health.

Where possible, the final design has utilized the existing tree corridors and woodland edge to create strategically-



High quality design coupled with advanced agronomics provides a modern foundation for the course while maintaining the heritage of Royal Norwich’s historic past. When complete, the new Royal Norwich will be a stunning and stylish course with impeccable playing surfaces, blessed with the characteristics of an established course set within a beautiful mature parkland.

exciting holes that use trees as hazards; “well-positioned golf shots will be rewarded on this course,” claims McMurray.

Beyond preserving the incredible selection of mature trees in Weston Park, Royal Norwich wanted to be mindful of the wildlife in the area, and so the club commissioned an ecological survey to ensure the design of the course wouldn’t interfere with any natural habitats. Several bat species, including significant numbers of the barbastelle bat, a species protected by European and UK legislation, were found to be roosting within Weston Park and the golf course layout had to ensure that these important habitats were not disturbed.



Roots had developed 9" (26cm) deep 12 weeks after planting the green with the Profile/Sand mix.

After tackling the flora and fauna challenges, Todd and his team moved on to planning for the greens. Situated in one of the country's driest regions—receiving less than 700mm of rainfall a year—the team needed agronomic solutions that would enable the greens to battle droughted rootzones and deliver in the long-term with more predictable maintenance requirements.

THE SOLUTION

The relocation of the club proves to be just one of many national firsts for Royal Norwich. Todd is modernizing the construction of courses in the U.K. by using Profile Porous Ceramic (PPC) rootzone amendment in both the greens and the tees. Profile's Greens Grade mix has been used for maintenance and renovations for over a decade in the U.K., but Royal Norwich is the first course that has chosen the product for a new build.

"When Peter and I sat down to discuss the rootzone, we looked at a few different amendment options," comments McMurray. "We discounted using peat pretty early on, because sustainability was an important part of this project, and we looked at green waste and other inorganic amendments."

"I recalled a presentation that Gavin Kelly from Profile Products gave in 2016 during a CPD Seminar for the European Institute of Golf Course Architects (EIGCA) and was really impressed with what he shared and demonstrated about Profile's capabilities. Peter Todd was determined to provide the highest quality green and tee surfaces, and we agreed that Profile, in terms of what it can achieve and value for money, was really the only way to go," adds McMurray.

The PPC particle found in Greens Grade is 74% pore space with 39% capillary (water) pores and 35% non-capillary (air) pores. Blended with sand in a greens mix, it can improve water- and nutrient-holding capabilities, increase oxygen levels at the root zone, and facilitate drainage when soils are saturated.

"The folks at Royal Norwich are dedicated to creating a course that's going to excel in the long-term," adds Gavin Kelly, International Manager EMEA, Profile Products. "Using approximately 480 US tons of PPC in its greens, RNGC will see an improvement in filtration as well as air and water porosity. In the end they are going to see some very health deep rooting root zones."

RESULTS

Three short weeks after seeding the first greens, the results were impressive. Todd states: "the take has been fantastic, superb, generally the greens are doing really, really well." Todd, McMurray and Grice also anticipate seeing consistent playing surfaces with predictable maintenance in the long-term.

This anticipated success is already driving up memberships, not only bringing members from the original club but attracting new members from throughout the region. Focusing on creating a family-oriented course that combines a modern design with traditional elements, RNGC's relocation is proving to be a huge success.

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“Profile has played a very important part in developing healthy turf grass, our choice to use Profile was a very sound decision in the end.”

— PETER TODD, ESTATES DIRECTOR AT ROYAL NORWICH GOLF CLUB

"Royal Norwich is becoming a model in the U.K. for other clubs to look at," adds McMurray. Looking beyond the course, Grice is taking steps to make the club a "turf care center of excellence" with conference and event rooms to create a facility that not only performs as a course, but one that drives education, innovation and collaboration within the industry.