



Golf della Montecchia

OnCourse® Report 2017

A summary of our social and environmental work





Golf della Montecchia is in Padua, 30 minutes by train from Venice and Verona, close to the Abano thermal area, bordering the Colli Euganei protected area. The Board of the club was always oriented to a sustainable environmental management, as confirmed by the national and international awards: the national prize Impegnati nel verde (2007, 2012), the environmental certification GEO (2013,2016), the nomination to the IAGTO Environmental Award (2014) and the IAGTO Environmental Award-Community Value (2017). Results achieved with the great work of dedicated departments: Marketing & Communication, Course maintenance, Montecchia Golf Academy. The collaboration with IGF-Green Section, several Universities, golf clubs of the area and local authorities was essential as well. Most significant actions: studies and applications on turf, flora & fauna, resources and organic maintenance, many national and international conferences and seminars, affirmed international junior and pro tournaments.

Thank you for your interest and time to read our Sustainability Report, which is an overview of the work we do to foster nature, conserve resources and support the community. As a land manager and prominent community business and hub for recreation, we feel a responsibility to play our part in helping address issues that we know are important to local people, other business and groups.

We are proud of our well trained and professional staff, who carry this work through a wide range of carefully planned and implemented operations, supported by many special projects and events, that often involving expert advisors and partners. We are grateful to others who have volunteered and supported our work to date, and look forward to doing even more in the future. And to you, for your interest, as we strive to run a successful local sports facility and business, which also demonstrates how golf is much more than a game.





We are fortunate to have such diversity of wildlife and habitats on the property, and continue to look for ways to increase the total amount of biodiversity and our connections with wider habitats in the area.

Improving naturalized rough adds aesthetic value and helps to enhance biodiversity. Padua University carried out a 3 years study on naturalized rough at Golf Montecchia. After an investigation of botanical composition, 3 cultural practices were compared: 1 cut with biomass removal followed by verticutting 2 cut biomass removal followed by verticutting and supply of hay deriving from a nearby meadow to provide seeds of local species 3 uncut (control) Results: -treatment effect depends on dominant species -spring cut is necessary to increase number of species and complexity of botanical composition -a single cut is not able to break the dominance of high competitive species, even if external seeds are imported -one cut every other year could be the best management decision to contrast dominant species and increase species richness and botanical complexity without raising costs.

 **Good Practices**

Manage landscapes for biodiversity

- Plant native species of varying size and structure
- Take special care to conserve large core areas of habitat
- Create and maintain natural corridors between habitat areas
- Connect habitat on the golf course to surrounding habitats where possible

Species protection

- Record notable species found on the site
- Identify and record protected species on the site
- Identify and monitor select indicator species

Total area of habitat
34.4 hectares

Total number of species identified
63



Our priority is that we manage grasses that are best adapted to the local climate and soils - giving them just the right amount of irrigation and fertiliser to ensure they are strong and healthy. Our policy is always to use chemicals as a last resort.

Golf della Montecchia converted tees and fairways turf from cool-season to warm-season hybrid Bermuda grass. This transition to a better climatically-adapted species permitted a more efficient and environmentally-friendly maintenance. A study from Bologna University confirmed that warm-season grass requires fewer inputs (nitrogen, pesticides and water) and less hours of work, reducing CO2 emissions from machinery fuel combustion, saving the club money on labour costs and resource expenditure.

✓ Good Practices

Considerations for turfgrass species

- Drought tolerance
- Disease tolerance
- Heat tolerance
- Winter stress tolerance
- Wear tolerance

Considerations for fertiliser application rates

- Temperature
- Sunlight hours
- Shade
- Rainfall
- Height of cut
- Stress caused by foot traffic
- Clipping production
- Customised growth curve
- Soils tests
- Soils test - greens, tees, fairways on regular basis

Identify and monitor pest pressure

- Scout the course specifically for disease
- Perform multiple diagnoses for pest and disease identification
- Map and track disease hotspots
- Quantify pest pressure by area of the course
- Establish pest thresholds
- From January 2015 organic management of 9 holes (Biogolf project) in collaboration with universities & environmental organisation

Total area of turf

60.7

Total irrigated area

26.8

Percentage of fertiliser from organic sources

35





Our staff are trained to pay particularly close attention in the storage and handling of potentially hazardous materials. We have strict policies, processes and safeguards in place to minimise risks and meet legal requirements

 **Good Practices**

Reduce pollution potential

- Document measures for emergency spillage response
- Maintain mowing buffer zones around water bodies
- Maintain mowing buffer zones around ecologically sensitive areas
- Maintain spraying and spreading buffer zones around water bodies
- Maintain spraying and spreading buffer zones around ecologically sensitive areas
- Irrigate lightly after fertiliser applications
- Hand weed whenever possible

Mixing and loading of pesticides and fertilisers

- Completed over an impermeable surface
- Prevent cross contamination of fertilisers and pesticides in loading area
- Triple rinse pesticide containers
- Store empty pesticide containers in a water tight bag until collection

Frequency of visual water quality monitoring

Daily

Frequency of biological water quality monitoring

Has not been undertaken

Frequency of chemical water quality monitoring

Has not been undertaken in the last 12 months

Minimum width of buffer strips

5



Our primary aim is to minimise the amount of irrigated turf on the course, to ensure all turf is as drought tolerant as possible and to look for sources of re-cycled water. We also encourage our golfers to appreciate the natural tones and textures of the course.

 **Good Practices**

Considerations for irrigation scheduling

- Weather forecasts
- Wind speed
- On-site microclimates
- On-site soil moisture sensors
- Soil moisture meter (TDR)
- Data from off-site weather station
- Historical climate records
- Data from onsite weather station

Water-saving practices

- Conduct a water usage audit
- Review water bills frequently to look for irregularities
- Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors
- Categorise and track water consumption

Water sources

Groundwater 64%
Surface water feature 36%

Number of irrigation system services per year

1

Percentage of turf that is irrigated

44.15 %

Number of irrigation system calibrations per year

4



Our ultimate goal is to be able to send zero waste to landfill - which means finding ways to reduce, reuse and recycle all materials. To do this we look carefully at what we purchase, and how we handle a wide range of materials from across the course and clubhouse.

✓ Good Practices

Adopt a sustainable purchasing policy

Purchase goods made from recycled or sustainable materials

Request recyclable or compostable packaging from suppliers

Purchase in large quantities when possible, to avoid excess packaging

Consider eco-friendly cleaning products

Avoid purchasing non-recyclable materials (Styrofoam etc.)

Organise menus to use local seasonal produce

Re-use of equipment and goods

Donate equipment and goods no longer required for re-use

Consider purchasing second hand (e.g. furniture and porcelain)

Total number of local suppliers

18

Materials recycled

Glass

Plastic

Metal

Paper/cardboard

Dry mixed recycling (DMR)



Like many businesses today, we are always seeking new ways to reduce energy use, and also to find cleaner and greener supplies – including ways to generate our own. We also aim to buy the most energy efficient appliances, machinery and vehicles.

Good Practices

Everyday energy consumption

- Regularly review energy bills
- Conduct a comprehensive energy audit
- Visit energy provider's website for tips
- Consider installing a voltage optimiser
- Categorise and track energy consumption

Working towards renewable energy

- Determine the source of electricity in the area
- Explore possible green energy providers
- Consult experts on potential small scale renewables including solar, photovoltaic, biomass, wind turbines, micro-hydro, etc.

Lighting

- Sensors (PIR) for indoor lighting
- Automatic timers for lighting (adjusted seasonally)
- Energy efficient landscape lighting (solar, motion sensors, timers)
- Voltage optimiser
- Fluorescent/LED bulbs

Number of electric/hybrid vehicles

27

Number of electric/hybrid mowers

0



We have undertaken many actions to provide even greater value to the community. These include ways to make the landscape and facilities more accessible to non-golfers, extension of local partnerships, volunteering and charity.

 **Good Practices**

Provide multi-functionality

Historical/cultural education

Footgolf

Jogging

Walk of the course sessions with an environmental advisor

Tennis

Golf indoor

Fitness

Walking and nature trails

Connect with local projects and charities

Select one or more charities for the golf facility to support

In between the five selected charities organisations, three are local

Provide resources or donate old equipment to support community projects

The bread not sold is given the same day to an organization of social assistance for disadvantaged people

Total number of charitable events

6

Total number of charities supported

6



As our core function, we are committed to maximising the health, well-being and economic value we generate from the provision of golf and employment – seeking to be fair and inclusive in all we do.

 **Good Practices**

Promote walking

Provide trollies for golfers

Individual and group courses in the indoor structure with expert trainers and nutritionists

Promote golf to all

Promote golf in local amenities such as community centres, libraries, and day centres

Invite representatives from community groups, youth associations, etc. to visit the club

Work with local groups to engage the disadvantaged and those with disabilities who would benefit from playing golf

Encourage children and their families to use the course

Fair and safe employment

Adopt an equal opportunity recruitment and hiring policy

Provide workers with written contracts

Compensate workers with a living wage

Pay workers for overtime

Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for worker safety

Total rounds

35000%

Total hours of golfers active in nature

157500

Proportion of walking rounds

80%

Facility Participation

Male - 70%

Female - 30%

Junior - 25%

Number of full time employees

27



We integrate sustainability into our internal and external communications, to raise awareness and to encourage other businesses and families to get involved.

The Venice Open is an international junior tournament organized by the U.S. Kids Foundation and Golf della Montecchia, involving approximately 300 children and families from all around the world. For the third edition, 2017, U.S. Kids Golf Foundation and Golf della Montecchia decided to collaborate with the GEO Foundation to raise awareness and bring even greater social and environmental value to the tournament that already delivers so much to the players, families and local communities in which it is played.

✔ **Good Practices**

Engage and involve staff in the facility's sustainability commitments

Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments and staff responsibilities in staff handbook/induction or training

Run additional training for staff on relevant sustainable practices (e.g. seminars for greenkeepers)

Include information on the facility's sustainability commitments, staff responsibilities and celebrate progress in staff meetings

Display information on the facility's commitments and updates in staff areas around club (e.g. noticeboards)

Regularly thank staff for their role in the success of our sustainability initiatives the facility's

Create a sustainability committee which is open to all staff

Share sustainability updates and achievements

Produce press releases

Produce club sustainability briefing for media

Organisation and participation at meetings, conferences and seminars

Number of environmental communication activities

357

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Among all sports, golf has a particularly close relationship with the environment and communities. In many ways, from ecosystem services and conservation of wildlife, to health and well-being for all ages, to jobs and economic value through local supply chains, golf brings value to people and the environment. Through a commitment to continual improvement, the industry is also looking at ways to improve its performance further.

At a golf facility, adopting a more sustainable approach is about presenting a high-quality golf course and great playing experience, in the most efficient and responsible way, to a community that feels engaged and connected. At an industry level, it is important for golf to be able to credibly demonstrate commitment and value - fostering nature, conserving resources and strengthening communities.

For our part, participating in OnCourse®, an innovative international sustainability programme, helps us take a comprehensive look at our work, find points for improvement, track progress, and raise sustainability awareness. OnCourse® is managed and assured by GEO Foundation, an international not-for-profit founded to help support golf's sustainability journey, in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders worldwide.

Find out more about GEO's work at www.sustainable.golf