

In the Region – Bairnsdale Golf Club

Superintendent: Craig Rimington – 4 years

Staff Structure

Three full time qualified staff: Myself and brothers, Brian and David Wallace, who in the past 18 months have achieved 40 and 41 years continual service at the Club. We are also fortunate having a local Turf mechanic who helps with fleet maintenance.

We have a dedicated group of member helpers who help with rough mowing, clearing and many other jobs including: vegetation works, turfing and presentation of the Bowls greens gardens and surrounds.

Course Overview / Characteristics

Bairnsdale Golf & Bowls Club is situated on the doorstep of Lake King, part of the Gippsland Lakes in Eagle Point. The Club is located 18kms from the town centre of Bairnsdale, just minutes from the holiday township of Paynesville. The Club currently has around 660 Golf and Bowls members, and welcomes green fee players.

Locally, the district is driven by beef cattle and wool production and also is a major producer of many vegetable crops.

The Club property is situated on roughly 60Ha and included within the property are fenced stock paddocks. The Club's boundaries are surrounded by private farmland. The Bairnsdale Golf Club was officially formed in 1904, however, the golf links had existed since around 1900. The original links site was situated in West Bairnsdale on the old racecourse before relocating to the current site in 1957.

The course - a par 71, 6,033mts - has many unique characteristics including framed fairways of mature stands of predominantly Grey Box, Mahogany and Red Gums, blind tee shots, water features, sandbelt style bunkering, with rolling fairways and elevation changes. The golf course soils are grey/black sand with underlying heavy clays. The fairways when grassed were sand capped with beach sand to a depth of around 400mm. Golf greens are push up method and consist of a local black sand. Turf types consist of Wintergreen couch on tees, fairways and some surrounds (work in progress). Greens are Bentgrass Penn Cross/seaside. We also maintain two full size Tifdwarf bowls greens.



Turf Management/Operations

I'm coming up to four years at the Club and it might sound ironic but weather and water management are always the influencing points on turf management at Bairnsdale. Recently the Club had the opportunity to increase the bore

water licence, now having a licence volume of 70mL. We are very dependent on rainfall and are well structured to collect runoff, storing in irrigation dams. The last three years have been quite challenging with continued drought conditions and extended watering seasons.



What course improvements/alterations have you been involved in during your time at the Club?

Recent course improvements have focussed around couch grass removal from our putting greens and reinstating original greens shapes/size. During these works, we have also changed grass type on the collars to Fine fescue and we have currently completed seven greens. The works undertaken have included sod cut and removal of contaminated Bentgrass from greens and green collars, and digging out thatch layer and contaminated soils, done with a small excavator. We then installed a plastic root barrier product between the couch fairway grass and the fescue collars, back filled with local black sand, shaped and compacted.

We have been very lucky sourcing bentgrass from numerous clubs in Melbourne during these works. We have also upgraded our turf nursery where we are growing Pennecross bentgrass and Fine fescue for greens collars. We hope to complete this program over the next two years.

What is the one piece of machinery you could not live without?

Verti-Drain. So beneficial as part of our programs.

What are the pros and cons about being the Superintendent at your course?

Since relocating from Melbourne to Regional Victoria, it has really become apparent how things are just a bit slower in the country! Great example is how our time sheets operate from 8am, seven days a week. This has been fantastic when doing jobs such as spraying, watering or greens aeration.

The ongoing drought has been a real con, making summers feel endless.



Describe your management style

I try to be proactive and organised. We are a small team and can sometimes go all day and barely see each other. We have developed some great practices and refined others. I'm very lucky to have experienced staff who don't require a lot of input from me. Whether it's fixing a leak, raking bunkers or laying turf, we just get stuck into it! The last few months have made us all think quick. COVID -19 has made us adapt - one minute meeting with management, planning for course upkeep, staffing arrangements and financials. We were one of the lucky Clubs. Jobkeeper kept us working.

If you could change one thing about your job what would it be and why?

I'd love it if all the greens dried out exactly the same and didn't have those two or three areas that are always on your mind!



In reflecting on your career so far, what is most rewarding during your time as Superintendent?

Most rewarding for me at the moment is seeing consistent improvements across the golf and bowls surfaces, and also having involvement in other Club related projects. Recent projects have included construction of an undercover shelter for the bowlers and a new 35 golf cart storage shed. I see all these additional projects beneficial for members and the Club.



Favourite spot on the course

My favourite spot on the course is the top of the 13th Fairway looking down towards the green with Lake King in the backdrop.

Finally, I wish everyone all the best with the current changes implemented in Victoria. Just to let you all know, country Vic is thinking about you all!