

In the Region – Devilbend Golf Club

Superintendent: Trevor U'Ren

Course Staff structure

Four full-time staff: my assistant, one other qualified groundsman, a mechanic/groundsman and myself. We also have a dedicated team of member volunteers who help cutting rough, raking bunkers and blowing off fairways.



Course overview

Devilbend Golf Club is located in the middle of the Mornington Peninsula midway between Mornington and Hastings. The district is covered with vineyards and farmland. The course has rolling hills and many waterways. It is also a flora and fauna reserve. The course is located on Crown land which is managed by the Shire. The Club signed its third 21 year lease a couple of years ago which gave it some certainty going forward. The ground is a clay base with silt on top with a small amount of organic matter. The Club is 45 years old and has a small loyal membership base and green fees are a big part of our income. The course has an abundance of bird life.

Take us through your turf management operations and how they may have changed during your time as Superintendent?

When I started in 1995, we were cool season fairways with no irrigation in the fairways. Over the early years, we installed automatic watering through all fairways and converted all fairways to Santa Ana. This was when we raised the turf quality standard big time and good fairways became the norm. As the years have gone on, as golf has declined in popularity, the reduction in budgetary inputs and staffing levels finds us



now always chasing our tails - never seeming to get on top of things.

Course improvements / alterations

We have recently rebuilt our third green which is a short par 3 down a hill. The old green was only 285m² and the new one is now 440m². All was designed and constructed in-house, bringing larger machinery such as the excavator / posi track with operators. All turf was grown in-house at our own nursery using McKenzie bent. We let the *Poa* come in. Over the 25 years as a Superintendent, the Club has rebuilt 13 greens and six tees.

One piece of machinery could not live without

My Toro HDX boom spray unit. Still love spraying and a good unit makes all the difference.

The pros and cons of being a Superintendent at your course

I live onsite at Devilbend so, at the end of each day, I cannot switch off from work. When I wake up, I look out the window and see the work sheds. I like the convenience of being onsite but it's human nature - you cannot help looking at what is going on.

Having a very limited budget and staffing levels, knowing what you could be giving, used to frustrate me but you can only work with what you have. I have amazing staff with an abundance of experience and we are all on the same page, which is great.

Management style

After coming from two sandbelt courses in my younger years with big budgets and large staff levels, I've always been a hands on person anyway but, since I've been a Superintendent, I always lead by example whether I'm on the shovel fixing the irrigation leak or repairing a blocked drain. I do a lot of the spraying but all

the staff do all jobs where possible. I want the staff to always be part of the planning process and are confident to move on with the next job. I like the guys to bring ideas to the table.

The past three months have tested everyone in the community and it's been no different for our Club and the staff. I tried to keep the staff informed, as best as I could, of any changes that came about. We were only having two on course each day while under the Jobkeeper payment. This made planning from my end really difficult as you just don't get anything other than the basics done each day.

If you could change one thing about your job

Would love to have town water on the course. We are totally reliant on our catchment dams to irrigate and our water quality is poor.

The most pleasing / rewarding moment during your time as a Superintendent

Bringing a young apprentice through from the start of their career to be qualified. To see them move on to a big course is satisfying, knowing you have set them on the correct path.

Favourite spot on your course

I love sitting on the 2nd tee looking over the main irrigation lake late in the afternoon.

