

GreensKeeper Report Preston Lawn Bowling 2026

As the season winds down the time to repair and improve the surface is upon us.

I have reseeded the worn areas from the heavy foot traffic on Sept 8th. This year in particular with play every night and many weekends the walk on areas have been hard to maintain and keep grass alive. I call it the Wimbledon syndrome. Everybody has seen the tennis played on the grass surface very similar to ours. The matches only last for 2 weeks and by the end of those weeks the grass is dead along the service lines and heavy play where the athlete is changing direction. A few years back I had a chance to have a walk through of the venue when no one was playing. I asked the staff member what do they do in response to all the wear areas during play? His response is we can't do much to slow the turf decline, for the players need to play in the same areas over and over. He continued to say the simply try to maintain a level surface by adding a little sand. The grass just simply cannot withstand all the wear and ends up dying. We have the same syndrome here, with one BIG difference. We could stop walking on it, especially in that area by the corner of the building. Simple and challenging I get it, for even when we had the caution tape up we still saw footprints in the sand. I have thought of a few ideas for you to ponder.

1. In that corner do we remove all turf and place a golf range artificial tee surface. It doesn't have to be rectangular in shape we could make it halve moon shape with the round edge of the surface along the turf play side and the straight edge along the ditch.
2. Once we find that artificial turf possibly could work then do we take it down that whole side as say a border the becomes sort of a step on area of a 1 m in width along the length of the screen in porch or for consistency along that entire side.
3. Another idea is to have better foot traffic patterns. Create more options like opening the fence along Queenston road to allow people to walk along or even across the middle part of the green and fence the corner worn area. I know some people will need the hard surface to roll their bowl bags but if say half the people arrive to the bowls room a different way we will have less impact.
4. Why does play have to start from the same end? Make players walk along the benches, off the playing surface to the other side and start play the opposite way. Proof is on the surface now, the grass on the bell driveway side is fine and can withstand the wear because it has less people stand-in on it before play.
5. Or do we have a movable fence which I can move along that ditch side to provide a walk on area at different areas different days of the week. To force people to only walk on the surface in that area for that day, sort of a doorway.
6. Different play directions more often, I have seen the members nights do it a few times but not as often as last year. Playing the long way would allow that side along the screened in porch to have a day off of foot traffic completely. Put up a fence and force the members to walk on the playing surface from the other ends. I understand like for numbers when all rinks need to be used like on Thursday nights, there is no choice there to play long ways.
7. OR the easiest thing would be to train the members to stop walking on the turf along that side.

As for the rest of the turf quality we managed to do a better job preparing for play and managing the different times of play pretty well. We found the rhythm of 3 cuts a week and 2 or 3 rolls a week kept the surface viable and playable consistent enough that I didn't hear any concerns

throughout the season. Other than tournament prep where we cut and double rolled the players seemed to be happy with the surface.

I also liked the new chemical Heritage in the rotation of fungicides for its better against other diseases not just dollar spot. I did miss some of the spray windows which led to turf loss like this past 2 weeks when I am away on holidays. There is no telling when its going to flare up only the weather forecast really, which as we know can change any minute.

As for the nursery it grew in well and was used but I would make a better one for next year and use it more. I also thought back to our first year as greenskeeper I placed a turf plug from the unused corners into the sprinkler head in the centre of the green. It provided a seamless transition and was hard to find to remove before watering. Would this be something we would like in the up coming years?

Thanks to all the people who went out of their way to give me their opinion and advice. Many great minds and your expertise in the bowl rolling is what leads to us providing you with a better playing surface each and every year. With the upcoming MTE contour map we have our work cut out for us to get you a more level surface. A challenge we look forward to.

Enjoy the rest of the season and PLEASE stay off any sanded areas out there for the seeds are trying to join the rest of the grass out there.

King regards

Greenskeeper Willy, Liam and Dave