

SPEEDCUT NEWS

Sportsturf project news from Speedcut Contractors

Spring 2011

Busy year for Speedcut teams

SPEEDCUT CONTRACTORS had one of their busiest years in 2010 working on a wide range of sportsturf projects across the UK.

Major golf projects were completed as the severe winter weather approached with other high-profile sportsturf assignments carried out at major football clubs including Exeter City FC and Brentford FC.

As well as constructing five tees and two new bunkers at Sundridge Park Golf Club in Kent, they also sand-grooved approaches to seven greens.

And at Lee-on-Solent Golf Club they installed pipes and surface gullies to solve a major drainage problem on the 18th fairway as well as cleaning ditches and doing repairs to damaged culverts that were affecting the efficiency of water removal from play areas.

Chislehurst Golf Club, Kent, had surrounds drainage installed to three greens with 10 greens deep-probe aerated by the Gwazae injection system.

Speedcut's specialist tee laser-levelling equipment was busy at Ham Manor Golf Club in West Sussex. The team has also been assisting the club's greenkeepers with finishing tees they constructed themselves.

At Royal Ashdown Golf Club they improved and resurfaced paths around the clubhouse while at Castle Royle Golf Club in Berkshire a second large lake was dredged and re-lined by Speedcut with spectacular



Speedcut's Gwazae aerator in action at Brentford Football Club

results. The lake and adjoining holes have been "transformed" according to Chris Brookes, the course manager.

At Foxhills Golf Club and Resort in Surrey, Speedcut has been carrying out complete reconstruction of bunkers on the first nine holes at the Longcross Course and undertaken further laser-levelling to tees on the Bernard Hunt Course.

On other sports surfaces, Speedcut has Gwazae-aerated a total of eight rugby pitches at Harrow School and Dulwich College, including treating some with their specialist soil injection process adding calcium, humic acids, wetting agents and oxygen booster.

Kings College School in Surrey has had phase two of

its massive sports facilities development completed with sand-grooving of their two new rugby pitches.

Speedcut teams have also completed major sports pitch construction projects at Rowley Lane Sports Club, Barnet, North London, and Southend-on-Sea's Futures Community College in Essex.

Speedcut managing director Dick Franklin said: "We had a very busy year in 2010 and the New Year looks equally busy with various projects to undertake. We are delighted that so many clients have asked us to do more work for them, which is a tribute to the professionalism of all our staff."

● **News on some of these projects and others appear within this latest issue**

Brentford FC gets Gwazae treatment

SPEEDCUT CONTRACTORS have completed the treatment of Brentford FC's pitch at Griffin Park with their Gwazae aerator and soil improvement injection system.

The Gwazae, which injects compressed air to break compaction, also incorporates soil treatment products.

Brentford FC head groundsman Phil Fifield, who has been at the club for three years, saw the Gwazae in action at Portsmouth FC where he was assistant to Bob Jones for three seasons.

"The results have been remarkable and it is a great way of improving pitch conditions without massive upheaval," says Phil, whose deputy Dan Carter looks after the Brentford training ground.



Dan Carter and Phil Fifield: "Impressed"

"Speedcut's machine has been remarkably effective and Barry Pace did the whole pitch in one day."

The 600cm-deep probe enters the pitch at .9metre centres and at Brentford also incorporated a mixture of calcium, humic acid, a wetting agent and Oxyrush – all products from Floratine.

Says Barry: "It normally takes about five to six hours to do an entire football pitch, using compressed air only. With the products added it takes about eight hours."

SPEEDCUT CONTRACTORS are specialists in sportsturf construction, drainage and renovation. The company was established in 1977 and has a long record of major projects in every type of sporting venue, including golf, football, rugby, cricket and racecourses. Clients also include local authorities, schools and colleges.

New football pitches for top London sports club

ONE of London's leading sports clubs, the Rowley Lane Maccabi Sports Association in Barnet, has had its extensive sports facilities increased by two football pitches, built by Speedcut Contractors.

Home to London Maccabi Lions FC, winners of the Herts Senior County League last year and promoted to South Midlands Division One League, the club is also base for London Maccabi Vale Cricket Club.

Sportsturf consultant Gordon Jaaback said: "Building the new pitches was an interesting assignment and not without problems because of delays in getting planning permission due to various issues, including moving trees. Speedcut Contractors carried out all the work in a very professional manner."

As well as the two new football pitches, Maccabi Sports Club has a full-size 3G artificial football pitch, two full-size grass pitches, two junior grass pitches and a cricket pitch.

They also have a bowling green and hard-surface tennis courts for what is a very active sports club for both seniors and juniors. The club has an excellent reputation for developing young sportsmen and women.

London Maccabi Lions have more than 30 senior and junior football teams and Rowley Lane Maccabi Sports Association is one of the leading sports clubs in the outer London area, being close to the M25 and A1. Immanuel College, Bushey, uses Rowley Lane for both football and cricket for its students.

To create the two new football pitches, on land which had been fairways for an old nine-hole golf course, more than 20,000 cubic metres of earth was moved. Several trees had to be transplanted and relocated.



Speedcut in action building pitches at Rowley Lane Sports Club, Barnet



Then the heavy London clay sub-soil was ripped and disc cultivated before gypsum was incorporated, to encourage particle aggregation. Speedcut then graded, replaced the topsoil, stone-picked and installed main and lateral drainage.

The top surface was then given a final grading by Speedcut before sowing with a Barenbrug BAR 9 ryegrass seed mix in early July.

A 100 cubic metre water tank and a travelling boom and sprinkler irrigation system was installed by Maddison Water Technology using Javelin rain-guns.

Severe dry weather in July meant that irrigation was required constantly, the travelling boom applying 8mm of water on each pass.

This year the pitches will be sand-slit and a sand dressing applied before heavy use begins.

Adam Solomons, chairman of Rowley Lane Maccabi Sports Association, says: "This is an exciting time for the club."

Speedcut managing director Dick Franklin said: "Rowley Lane's pitches were a challenging project and we are pleased with the results."



Speedcut working on the first stage of the clay ground at Rowley Lane



Rowley Lane's new football pitches with grass coming through

Sussex greens get top results

WEST CHILTINGTON Golf Club's 27 holes have been aerated with Speedcut's Gwazae deep-probe aerator.

The machine, one of only a few in the UK, provides deep soil and subsoil decompaction through the injection of compressed air.

Course manager Adam Hartley says: "The results have been fantastic, both on the main course and the nine-hole course. We took the decision to do every hole after the terrible winter we had last year, not being able to get on the course for several months with snow and ice."

Following the Speedcut treatment the greens have been playing consistently well and Adam, who has been at the club for 10 years, is delighted with the results.

"I just cannot fault the Speedcut team, always efficient and helpful with great advice and attention to detail," says Adam.

Being on clay at West Chilmington – within sight of Chancetonbury Ring, the famous West Sussex landmark – Adam has



Barry Pace in action at West Chilmington

his work cut out with aeration and drainage. He carries out regular hollow-coring and surface treatments.

"It's a constant battle on this sort of soil but we get very rewarding feedback from the members and other players about the condition of the course," says Adam, who was previously at the RAC Golf Club in Epsom and at Kew Gardens where he was a specialist in rhododendrons.

"We do not have any temporary greens, making the

Gwazae treatment ideal for us and leaving no damage to the surface because the fissures are filled with 'Breaker' soil penetrant material which cover over naturally.

"Because play is 12 months of the year and we have 500 members and welcome green fee players the pressure is on to maintain perfect conditions – particularly as we have three different types of soil here . . . clay, sand and loamy.

"We get a lot of praise for the course which is incredibly

rewarding for myself and the team."

Barry Pace, Speedcut contracts manager, said: "We were pleased with the results at West Chilmington and it was a delight working with Adam and his team.

"The Gwazae is proving more and more popular on golf courses, particularly those with compaction problems, as clubs are starting to recognise the process and its benefits can have lasting effects on playing conditions."



Wild about heather at Piltdown

HEATHER regeneration and biodiversity have been passions for head greenkeeper John Shepherd since he first encountered Piltdown Golf Club's heathland golf course in 1981.

Now, with the help of Speedcut Contractors and his own staff of five, he has brought the course back to its former splendour with natural heather and wild flowers.

John began serious heather

regeneration about 13 years ago, and it has been a long hard struggle for his team and the supportive club officials.

"Biodiversity was hardly talked about in the early days," says John (46). "But I knew that we had to reintroduce heather if we were to attract birds, butterflies and insects.

"The heather had been wiped out, but the seed lies just under the soil waiting for an opportunity to flourish, which it

cannot do without help.

"We had to remove a good number of silver birches, which we regard as the enemy, before taking off the topsoil and laying down heather bracken which we obtained from Ashdown Forest, with their permission.

"This encourages the seed to germinate and gives the young plants protection. It takes from four to five years for heather to get established so this is not a

short-term project."

Speedcut Contractors, under contracts manager Barry Pace, have carried out a lot of other work at Piltdown in the last two years, including building a new ladies' tee at the 18th and a new green, plus recontouring around the men's tee and a new winter tee at the 9th, and building five other new tees.

John Shepherd said: "We are delighted with the results."

Exeter City FC pitch rebuilt



BEFORE: Exeter City Stadium June 5th - Ready for turfing by Speedcut Contractors



AFTER: Exeter City's new pitch on July 26th

EXETER CITY FC's stadium pitch was completely rebuilt last year by Speedcut Contractors.

Head groundsman Clive Pring, who has been at the club for four years, first called in Speedcut after Exeter was promoted to League One to renovate the training grounds after their second promotion in two years.

But the main St. James ground has been on the same site, a former pig farm, for 105 years and levels were suffering – plus the pitch needed to be moved by six metres for future development of the stands.

The 9,000-capacity stadium seats around 4,800 with standing room for about 4,200.

"It had got to the stage

where we needed to have a well-drained and irrigated pitch with decent levels and a better surface," says Clive. "Speedcut were completely professional throughout and did a brilliant job between May and June, working fast because the first game was due only five weeks after the pitch was finished."

On July 26 Exeter City beat Bristol City 3-1, the first game on the new pitch.

Exeter City FC supporters revelled in the club's promotion twice in two years (from Blue Square Premier to League Two and then League One).

Clive was previously at St. Peter's School, Lymington, for four years and at Woodbury Park Golf Club for eight

years. "Thanks to Speedcut we are looking forward now to the next few seasons," he says. "These are really great times for Exeter City."

Exeter, managed for the last four years by Paul Tisdale, is aiming to be in the Championship League by 2015.

The job started in mid-May when Speedcut took off the top 200mm of surface and stored the topsoil (60 per cent sand) while they regraded the surface underneath.

The topsoil was respread and laser graded to create a 0.5 percent fall from centre to sides and the pitch moved by six metres from one end to allow for future development.

New drainage was installed with a 150mm ring drain round

the perimeter and 80mm pipes installed at diagonal intervals of three-and-a-half metres down the length of the pitch.

Then a full Rainbird irrigation system - with 16 pop-ups on the outside and eight down the centre - was installed.

Speedcut then applied 300 tonnes of blended sports sand before grading the surface for perfect levels.

Washed turf from County Turf was then laid - which included ryegrass with a small fescue content for early rooting. Kevin Smith of Speedcut says: "This has been a major job and we are delighted at the results, achieved by working within a tight schedule. Clive and his team have been great to work with."

Essex college facilities boosted at Southend-on-Sea

SPEEDCUT CONTRACTORS have completed a major project at Futures Community College, Essex, during which they built two new football pitches, a cricket square and three artificial cricket wickets with nets.

The Southend-on-Sea college is undergoing massive development having just opened a state-of-the-art building.

Sports facilities are an important part of the college, which has a reputation for excellence. Futures College has joined with Prospect College to increase opportunities for more than 700 students aged from 11 to 22.

Speedcut Contractors worked with sportsturf consultant Gordon Jaaback and David Burridge, project manager



Speedcut seeding the new pitches at Futures Community College

for the HBW Partnership.

They built the two natural turf football pitches which involved removing the existing topsoil, adjusting the levels and laser-grading the subsoil before replacing the topsoil.

A comprehensive primary drainage system was then installed which will be overlaid with secondary drainage following satisfactory grass establishment.

The prepared surface was laser-graded, stone-picked and fine-graded before applying fertiliser and drilling with a ryegrass seed mix.

Speedcut also built a natural turf cricket square over a gravel carpet with a blinding layer of indigenous loam sub-soil.

Finally 100mm of approved cricket Essex loam was applied before laser-grading, fertilising and seeding with a BAR

Extreme ryegrass mixture.

Adjacent to the cricket square Speedcut built an artificial cricket wicket using a Verdigrass surface over a stone base covered with a shockpad. They also built three artificial practice wickets with nets.

David Burridge, the project manager, said: "We've had an excellent working relationship with Speedcut and their continued attention to detail and maintenance is most impressive."

Speedcut contracts manager Kevin Smith said: "Despite working within a short contract period, we completed the project in time for the start of the new school term and were delighted with the results at this prestigious college."