

Ladner Lawn Bowling Club switching to synthetic turf



Crews prepare the surface at the Ladner Lawn Bowling Club for its new artificial green. The work is expected to be completed by early June.

Philip Raphael photo

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They used to play on grass, a book co-written in the early 1970s by former English National team manager Terry Venables was about soccer. But it could just as easily refer to the sport of lawn bowling and the recent work being done at the club in Ladner.

The Ladner Lawn Bowling Club, one of the oldest in B.C. after being established in 1917, is going with some new technology by having its natural grass surface replaced with a synthetic one.

The work was started last week to dig up the hallowed grass and begin preparing the site for the specially designed plastic carpet that is being imported from a British manufacturer.

Club president Barbara Sutton told the South Delta Leader the decision to make the switch, which is costing roughly \$400,000, was made two years ago when the 110 or so members voted two-thirds in favour of the artificial green.

Sutton said the ban of using pesticides in Delta, plus the annual cost of maintaining the natural grass—about \$10,000 a year—helped tip the scales.

"If we got a fungus, which we've had before, you get these snow moulds in the winter that can completely take over your lawn. And if you can't control it, well. So, artificial was the only way to go."

The club, which owns the property, raised funds over the past four years and is close to reaching the required total.

Crews are now in the process of installing proper drainage and the turf is expected to be delivered in the coming weeks.

The whole project is anticipated to be completed and the surface ready for play in early June.



As with other sports that have had artificial grass installed on pitches for baseball, soccer and field hockey, the lawn bowlers could dramatically increase the number of games played.

"We could go all year round now if we wanted," Sutton said, adding the playing season with natural grass is usually just five months long— May to October.

Still, the new turf will take some getting used to as the bowls run much quicker over the synthetic surface.

"You have to make some adjustments," Sutton said. "It's very, very fast. You just let it go off your fingers and it (bowl) goes. You can't really take a back swing."

That's her experience at some other clubs in the Lower Mainland, such as Richmond and White Rock, which have already made the change.

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