

PROVEN PERFORMANCE

Chart Hills Golf Club



THE **ANACONDA**

*Revitalising one of Europe's
longest bunkers*

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Chart Hills Golf Club, Kent, is an award-winning golf course designed by six-time major winner turned golf course designer, Sir Nick Faldo. Over the past three years, Tarmac's Topsport has been helping the club to re-line its 98 bunkers, including the infamous 200-yard 'Anaconda' bunker.

First opened in 1993, Chart Hills GC has proved to be a highly popular course with members and guests alike, and has hosted a number of high profile professional events. Built in the classic US Parkland style, the course immediately catches the eye due to the sheer number of bunkers dotted around its 18 holes on the High Weald of Kent.

However, despite being one of the course's defining features, delivering consistent playability from each and every bunker has proven to be a major challenge for Chart Hills' course manager and team of greenkeepers.

"Given the sheer volume of bunkers we have here at Chart Hills, we're a very high maintenance course," comments Neil Lowther, Golf Course Manager at Chart Hills GC. "As we're also situated on clay, and have a tendency to suffer significant wash through heavy rain, ensuring our bunkers remain in the best possible playing condition can be a challenge."

In 2014 Neil and his team made the decision to trial a new form of bunker lining from Tarmac's Topsport division and haven't looked back since.

Neil continues: "The Topsport Bunker Lining has gone a long way in enabling us to manage and maintain the bunkers to a very high uniform standard across the course. We initially trialled the solution across five bunkers in 2014, and have subsequently upgraded every one of the courses 98 bunkers over the last three years, including the most recent project – the relining of our 200-yard 'Anaconda' bunker, which is one of the longest bunkers in Europe."

Consisting of a unique modified porous aggregate lining, over 300 tonnes of the Topsport Bunker Lining was delivered to Chart Hills in the summer of 2017 to line the Anaconda, and was stored on-site at the club's hotbox.

Having the hotbox on site increased the product's workability and ensured it remained in a malleable state for the duration of the installation. As such, the Chart Hills team, along with contractors from Fescue Landscapes, could make regular trips and transport manageable loads of the lining to the bunker safe in the knowledge it would remain fully workable upon arrival. Crucially, it also facilitated regular breaks so as not to interfere with anyone playing the hole.




A pre-construction survey identified that the CBR of the bunker's subgrade was sufficient not to warrant a subbase layer, therefore once the original sand had been removed, the lining could be laid directly onto the Anaconda's pre-existing drainage network and subgrade.

Working in stages, the team was able to quickly cover the bunker's 2,500sqm footprint in just five days. The product was raked to a depth of 40mm, before being lightly compacted using modified compaction plates.

Richard Goddings Technical Sales Manager for Tarmac's Topsport Team, commented: "The highly porous nature of the Topsport lining helps to eradicate the risk of ponding in the bunker, as well as reducing the potential for the ball to plug, as the water is able to freely drain throughout the lining and into the pre-installed drainage infrastructure. Given the increasing potential for extreme weather episodes around the calendar, it goes a long way to ensuring the Anaconda will remain fully playable all year round.

"We've been working with Neil and his team for three years now, so we were able to install the lining in well under a week. While the weather was exceptionally hot that week, one of the real benefits of the liner is that it can be installed all year round and in most weather conditions. As such, it's actually ideal for winter repair work when courses are quieter and work can be undertaken with minimal disruption to play."



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*Neil Lowther, Golf Course Manager
at Chart Hills Golf Club.*

Neil continued: "It was no easy feat relining a bunker of that size in sweltering conditions, but it's a testament to how straightforward the product is to install. The Anaconda is without a doubt one of the signature features of the course, and given how imposing it is, it can certainly have an impact on a golfer's thought process when they're lining up their tee shot.

"However, we pride ourselves at Chart Hills on not only the course aesthetics but the playability. After all, while bunkers are there to challenge a golfer, we want to ensure they have every opportunity to make amends for any wayward shots by having a playable lie. The last thing we'd want would be for consistent ponding or ball plugging to tarnish their memory of playing with us at Chart Hills, so having the knowledge that all our bunkers can freely drain during periods of wet weather is a great comfort.

"Since installing the Topsport lining at Chart Hills we have been able to keep a very large volume of bunkers at a consistently much higher standard of play using the same resource, which can only be of benefit to the courses members and its overall reputation. The sand retention has also dramatically improved, particularly on steep faces, which has had a positive effect on overall maintenance costs. We are in the final stages of sanding the Anaconda which should be completed by mid-October and will deliver the same high level of standards our members are experiencing on the rest of our Topsport lined bunkers.

"The bunker lining programme is just one aspect of our ongoing investment into the Chart Hills course, and we have further upgrades and renovation projects planned for the future. While it has taken three years to tackle all 98 bunkers here at Chart Hills, it has been a fully worthwhile exercise. We've had positive feedback from both members and guests, and I think it's certainly contributed to putting us back where we want to be in the marketplace."

For more information on our range of Topsport golf course solutions please visit [**topsport.co.uk**](https://www.topsport.co.uk)