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New Jacobsen MP493 helps the Eton team to pull together



Eton Dorney groundsman Pawel Lukoiszewski uses the new Jacobsen MP493 on a daily basis. Standing next to the machine at the 1,750m marker is his colleague Brad Gardener and Phil Beeny from T H WHITE.

The hugely impressive Eton College Rowing Centre, adjacent to the Thames at Dorney, near Slough, was created over 10 years from 1996 at a cost of £17 million, offset by the sale of 4.5 million tonnes of land and gravel from the excavation of the rowing lanes. Fully completed in 2006, the facility has hosted many regattas and was the venue for rowing events in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

No less than 90 acres of the 400-acre site is now covered by water, but the remaining 310 acres – mainly grass and managed woodland – is maintained by a team of just three men headed by grounds manager Paul Outway. More importantly, all the grass cutting is done

using just two machines – a wide area mower and a trailed roller mower. With such a demanding schedule, the reliability of the machines is just as important as the quality of the cut and when the time came to purchase a new mower last year the team had some serious choices to make.



The rowing lanes at Dorney stretch 2.2km from the boating jettys and are surrounded by 310 acres of grass and woodland, all maintained by the small groundcare team.

“We had five mowers on demonstration,’ said groundsman Brad Gardener, “but the new Jacobsen MP493 which Phil Beeny of T H WHITE brought down stood head and shoulders above the others. The mowing decks give a 3-metre wide high quality cut with options of 3.3 or 3.5metres, yet the transport width is only 1.65-metres which suits Eton’s roads, gates and bridges. Running at a speed of 7.5mph it can cut up to 8.8 acres per hour. It will also operate on slopes up to 24 degrees which is ideal where our banks slope down to the water.”

Eton College purchased the MP493 last September, since then it has mainly been used by groundsman Pawel Lukoiszewski. “One of the best things about the MP493 is the zero-turn manoeuvrability which doesn’t scuff up the ground like our old machine,” he says. “It’s proved its worth cutting difficult areas – not only banks, but around trees and signs, and the engine is quiet and fuel-efficient. It’s easy to get at all the parts that need minimal maintenance and there’s no maintenance to do at all on the direct drive decks or the sealed

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rear axle. For me, it scores highly for operator comfort too, with a full suspension seat and fingertip joystick control.”



T H WHITE’s relationship with Eton College goes back quite a few years and the other mower at Dorney – a Wessex RMX Proline 500 was also supplied by T H WHITE. This tri-deck machine is a market-leading rotary roller mower which Brad uses on a daily basis behind the tractor. “The RMX 500 is also good for banks up to 30 degrees and there’s independent float on all decks to follow the contours,” he adds. “On a site like ours you sometimes can’t avoid hitting obstacles such as tree stumps, but the excellent compensation springs allow for that without damage.

“Down time used to be a problem with our old machines, but both the MP493 and the RMX 500 have been extremely reliable. When something does need to be done we have the comfort of knowing that T H WHITE’s technicians are always ready to get us back in action.”

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Notes to editors:

High resolution photographs are available.

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