

Editorial Focus: Turf & Seed

Lawrence learning to manage TifSport at TPC at Wakefield

By ANDREW OVERBECK

RALIEGH, N.C. — When the PGA Tour was trying to decide which fairway turf to use at the TPC at Wakefield Plantation here, they wanted a turf that would provide the best tournament conditions for the Carolina Classic, a Buy.com Tour event that is held at the course each year in mid-May.

Superintendent Todd Lawrence and

PGA Tour officials decided to go with TifSport after examining zoysiagrass and other bermudagrass varieties because they heard it had improved cold tolerance.

TifSport, which was developed by Wayne Hanna at the University of Georgia's Coastal Plains Experiment Station and released



Todd Lawrence

for commercial use in 1997, was bred specifically to push the northern bermudagrass limits for golf courses.

"Bermuda generally does well in the Raleigh area but about every four or five years, there can be a problem with winter kill, so we thought we should go with a grass that has more cold

tolerance," said Lawrence.

TifSport has performed well for Lawrence and has greened up well for the tournament.

"We have had no problems over the past three years with winter kill and it seems to green up a little earlier than 419 bermudagrass does," he said. "The green up starts at the same time as 419 in about

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Spring Creek Ranch

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after two or three years.

The owners, Dr. David Meyer and his son Rob, decided on Palisades after much deliberation. Dr. Meyer wanted the contrast of green roughs while the Meyer zoysiagrass fairways were dormant in the wintertime and Rob wanted a more playable warm season turf. The two compromised, keeping 20 acres of the fescue mix, which would be allowed to go native, and just replacing 65 acres of rough with Palisades.

AN 'AWESOME ROUGH'

According to Dieckhoff, Palisades, which was developed by Dr. Milt Engelke at Texas A&M, made the cut because of its aggressive growing habits and softer texture.

"It is very fast growing," said Dieckhoff. "We have had sod down on one greens complex for six days now and already the seams are disappearing. It also does really well in the shade."

Winstead Turf Farms, which owns the rights to Palisades in Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas, is supplying the turf for Spring Creek.

"This is the first big job that we have done since planting our first crop of Palisades in 1999," said Winstead Turf Farms owner Bobby Winstead. "It will be an awesome rough for those guys. It has better shade tolerance, is not as prone to thatch and is less susceptible to patch diseases."

Work on the front nine at Spring Creek started at the end of March and Dieckhoff was scheduled to wrap up work at the end of June when he will start on the back nine.

Greens and bunker surrounds and lake banks are being sodded and the rest will be plugged with two-inch-by-two-inch plugs.

THE CONVERSION PROCESS

The first phase of the conversion process involved killing off the old fescue stands. A week after the initial application of Roundup, the crew came in and scalped the turf down to an inch and then applied Roundup again to clean up any turf that was missed the first time. Then Dieckhoff brought in a flail mower to get it down to dirt and expose the sandcap. A three-quarter-inch hollow tine aerifier run in tight circles prepared the seedbed and an application of Ronstar pre-emergent herbicide finished the job.

Dieckhoff brought in Morrison, Tenn.-based the Turf Co. to handle stripping work around the bunkers and other sensitive areas.

With the sodding done on the front nine,

Dieckhoff's attention turned to the plugging process. The club went with plugs because sprigs would have had a harder time establishing since the sandcap would

have diminished water retention.

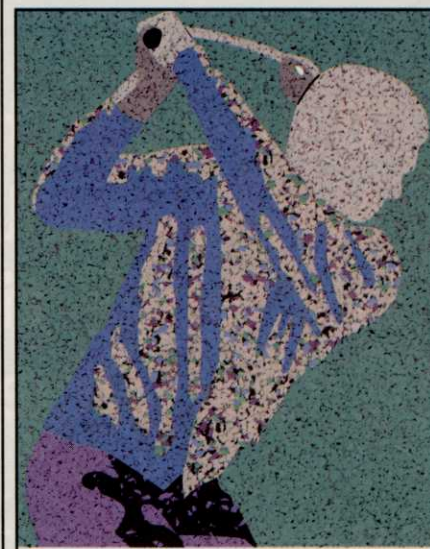
"Establishment is the big thing here, we will keep them wet, but we are already cutting back on the amount of fertilization we thought we would have to

give them," said Dieckhoff. "Instead of half a pound of nitrogen a week, we are going with half a pound every three weeks. It also doesn't take as much water as we thought. Initially we will give the plugs three minutes of water every hour, but after two to three weeks we will back off."

The conversion process will be completed this summer and Dieckhoff expects to have 80 to 90 percent coverage by the end of September and full coverage by the end of the year. ■



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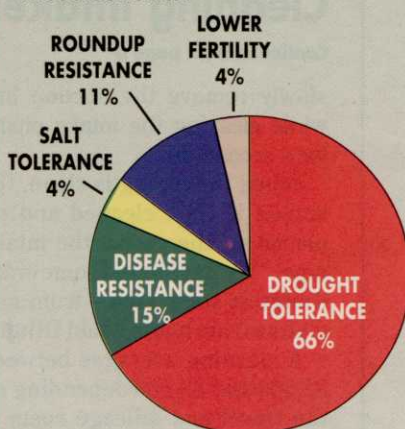
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INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Dow AgroSciences has gained a newly approved federal label for MACH 2 that states that all white grub larvae can be treated at two pounds of active ingredient (halofenozide) per acre. The previous label specified a range of one and a half to two pounds of active ingredient per acre de-

pending on the grub.

“Often it’s a challenge to tell the difference between grub species. With the new label, all labeled grubs can now be treated at the 2-pound rate,” said product marketing manager Chris Wooley. The new rate is based upon efficacy performance from field trials conducted within the last year.

TifSport

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mid-March, but once you hit it with fertilizer, it responds faster and you end up with a better playing surface a couple of weeks earlier.

“We had no problems getting the course greened up for the tournament this year,” Lawrence continued. “Although the roughs

are a bit inconsistent because it is still a bit early in the growing season.”

MANAGING AN AGGRESSIVE TURF

According to Lawrence, TifSport is an extremely aggressive turf.

“It is a tighter growing turf with a more upright growth habit and a



The 18th hole at TPC at Wakefield Plantation.

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finer leaf texture,” he said. “It gives you a better playing surface and darker green color. However, as it matures I see us having to keep this growth habit in check to keep it from getting thatchy.”

Since Lawrence was still treating the course as a grow-in last year, this is the first season

‘I will be a little more aggressive on tees because they are sand-based’
— Todd Lawrence

where he will get into a regular program of core aerifying, verticutting, applying Primo plant growth regulator and reducing fertility.

“I am still finalizing my program for TifSport but I will do at least a couple verticuts and core aerifications this year on fairways and roughs,” Lawrence said. “I will be a little more aggressive on tees because they are sand-based and our fairways are on clay. I want to keep the tee surface really firm.”

When it comes to controlling growth Lawrence turns to Primo plant growth regulator which he applies three times a summer. He will also switch to a slow-release fertilizer and reduce levels from six pounds of nitrogen to four.

“So far the difference between TifSport and 419 in terms of fertility has been hard to tell because we were in grow-in and trying to create a good playing surface last year,” said Lawrence. “Now that we have been open for two years, we can fertilize the TifSport a little less because it holds its color very well and responds to lower levels of fertility.” ■

Cleaning intakes

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slowly remove the suction line while cleaning the intake piping for a second time.

When the piping is clean, the screen is then cleaned and replaced on the end of the intake pipe. “We have found some crazy things at some jobs – from golf clubs to rain boots,” said DiIulio.

A cleaning averages between \$2,500 and \$3,500 depending on the travel and mileage costs to get to the job, said DiIulio. ■