

Fairway Conversion From Bermudagrass To Zoysiagrass

Atlanta Athletic Club – Riverside Course
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Issue

Atlanta Athletic Club is located in the transition zone, with hot summers and cool winters. Finding a turf species that performs well across this range of conditions is extremely difficult. A renovation project provided an opportunity to convert the fairways to a turf variety that would provide high-quality playing conditions with less fertilizer, herbicides, mowing and irrigation.

Action

The decision was made to convert the fairways from Tifway bermudagrass to Zeon zoysiagrass. Zeon was selected for its high-quality playing surface and the hope that it would require less fertilizer, herbicides and mowing. Zeon was also a fairway turf that was unique to the area.

Once the Zeon zoysiagrass was established, the plan was to reduce annual nitrogen inputs from 2 pounds per 1,000 square feet to 0.5 pounds per 1,000



Zeon zoysiagrass fairways allow for firm and fast playing conditions and a more sustainable management program.

square feet or less. Also, growth regulators would be applied more frequently to reduce mowing requirements and water consumption.

Results

Zeon zoysiagrass has proven to be an excellent fairway turf at Atlanta Athletic Club. The new fairways provide excellent playing conditions and are firmer and faster. They also require considerably fewer inputs. Granular fertilizers have been removed from the agronomic program and now only soluble applications are made, providing improved precision. Growth regulators are applied on an as-needed basis depending on the clipping yield. Low fertility coupled with growth regulation has reduced fairway mowing frequency from four to five times per week to twice per week during the growing season.

There have been considerable financial savings associated with the new fairway turf. Preemergence herbicides are no longer applied, saving \$20,000-\$30,000 per year with no impact on turf quality and no increase in weed populations. Reduced fertility inputs save \$10,000-\$15,000 per year. These resources have been redirected into different areas on the course to improve playing conditions and course presentation.

Converting the fairways to Zeon zoysiagrass has helped Atlanta Athletic Club reduce its environmental impact and save money. The new fairway turf also helps provide the desired playing conditions and aesthetic qualities. The golfers are willing to accept the occasional dry spot or browning in order to achieve the firmness consistently provided by the new fairway turf.