

Using Turf Colorants Instead Of Overseeding

Brunswick Plantation And Golf Resort
Robert Vaughan, superintendent

Calabash, N.C. 28467

Issue

Maintaining a resort golf course in the transition zone can be challenging. At Brunswick Plantation and Golf Resort, one of the major challenges was managing the transitions into and out of winter overseeding. The overseeding process restricted golf carts to paths and negatively impacted playing conditions for a month each fall. In spring, competition between bermudagrass and ryegrass caused further playability issues. The result was very poor fairway playing quality during some of the best golfing weather.

Action

Superintendent Robert Vaughan had been using turf colorants to improve winter color on putting greens and found it to be a very useful practice for maintaining the desired aesthetics and playing conditions. He decided it was time to start using turf colorants on the fairways instead of overseeding. Using turf colorants would provide the desired appearance while eliminating the playability issues associated with overseeding.

Results

Using turf colorants on the fairways instead of overseeding was very successful at Brunswick Plantation. Playing conditions improved and the resource savings are significant. Annual water usage has decreased by almost 30 percent because of the new turf colorant program. There have also been savings in fertilizer, fuel and pesticides. In most years these savings could be as much as \$80,000. Now those resources can be redirected into other aspects of the golf course maintenance operation.



Using turf colorants instead of overseeding has improved playing conditions and created a more sustainable agronomic model.

The majority of golfers could not tell the difference between fairways treated with turf colorants and the conventional overseeding practices. Low-handicap players at the course especially preferred the colorant-treated playing surfaces. Turf colorants provide excellent visual definition during the winter and eliminate the poor playing conditions during the overseed transition periods. Of course, there were some golfers who were not happy with the change and preferred the overseeded fairways, but for the most part the reaction has been extremely positive.