

## A Southwestern Course Switches from Overseeding to Turf Colorants

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**April 01, 2016**

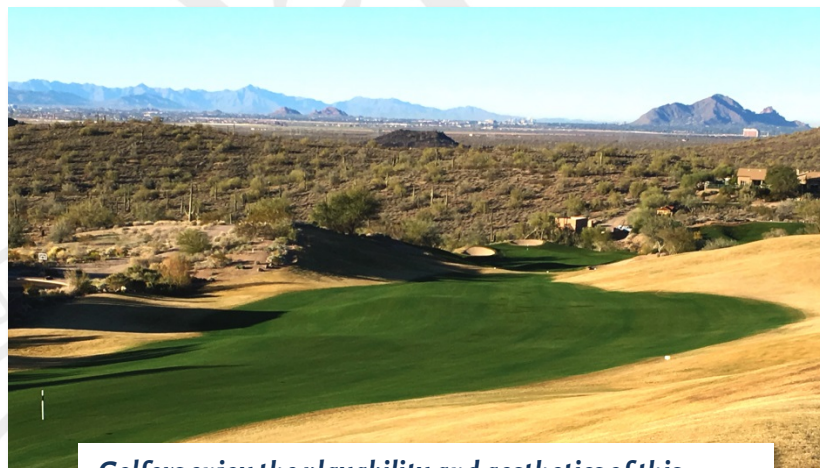
In the Southwest, overseeding bermudagrass fairways is seen as a necessary practice to attract golfers during the primary revenue seasons of fall, winter and spring. However, last year one course boldly decided to forego overseeding due to history of poor overseeded conditions. Highly saline reclaimed water and poorly draining soils resulted in soil salinity that far exceeded what overseeded ryegrass could tolerate, leading to poor playing conditions. Therefore, rather than overseeding the bermudagrass fairways and roughs were treated with a colorant during the fall of 2015.

Did playing conditions improve?

During the fall, winter and spring of 2014 to 2015, overseeded playing conditions did not meet expectations. The course was receiving negative comments from golfers and negative feedback on social media. After switching from overseeding to using colorants, playing conditions have monumentally improved. Golfers now are enjoying a more consistent playing surface and additional roll on their drives, as opposed to the inconsistent and wet conditions previously experienced on the overseeded fairways.

Has the course received negative comments about the nonoverseeded conditions?

Golfers have been very happy with the new playing conditions and aesthetics. In the absence of cart traffic, the colorant-treated fairways remained in excellent condition. The agronomic staff planned to stop colorant treatments with warmer temperatures on the way; however, increased cart traffic in February had an immediate negative impact on fairway aesthetics. Consequently, additional colorant applications were made to maintain the desired appearance.



*Golfers enjoy the playability and aesthetics of this southern Arizona golf course even though fairway overseeding has been replaced with turf colorants.*

What colorant was used and how was it applied?

This course found that Endurant PR® applied at 2 to 4 gallons of product per acre, with a spray volume of 40 gallons per acre, on a two- to four-week spray interval produced good results. The colorant was applied with dual flat-fan nozzles, and sprayed in only one direction due to time constraints. The superintendent estimates that they will spend nearly \$30,000 on colorant to treat slightly over 20 acres of turf.

Would they have done anything differently?

Playing conditions on the colorant-treated fairways were excellent, but the superintendent noted that he had not anticipated the need to continue applying colorant into March, and possibly even April, as a result of cart traffic wearing away the colorant. It is likely that carts again will be allowed on fairways in February of next year and, with that in mind, the superintendent plans to continue applying colorant until the bermudagrass resumes active growth in April or early May of next year.

Has the course saved water?

From October through the end of March, the superintendent noted they have reduced water use by over 20 percent compared to previous years. Additionally, more significant water savings are expected over the next few months now that there is no need for substantial watering to promote bermudagrass recovery from overseeding.

Is this the first of many courses to eliminate overseeding in the Southwest?

Discontinuing overseeding at this course was logical given the challenges of establishing and maintaining healthy ryegrass in highly saline conditions. It is unknown whether golf courses that are able to produce healthy overseeded ryegrass will follow suit, but this course demonstrates that quality playing conditions and aesthetics can be achieved without overseeding.

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