

# TALKING

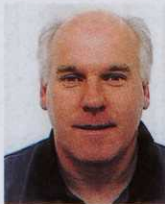
Six of the country's top men give their views on overseeding

## Overseeding

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE



Name: Duncan Gray  
Course: Pines Golf Centre, Dumfries  
Region: Scotland  
Course Type: Parkland and heathland  
Staff: Course Manager plus five



Name: Roger Shaw  
Course: Ramside Hall Hotel and Golf Club, Durham  
Region: Northern  
Course Type: Parkland (27-holes)  
Staff: Course Manager plus nine



Name: David Leatherland  
Course: Kedlestone Park, near Derby  
Region: Midland  
Course Type: Parkland  
Staff: Head Greenkeeper plus five



Name: Steve Chappell  
Course: Woodspring Golf and Country Club, Bristol  
Region: South West and South Wales  
Course Type: 18-holes parkland, 9-holes downland  
Staff: Course Manager plus six, plus driving range man and a part time gardener



Name: Clive Osgood  
Course: Walton Heath Golf Club, Surrey  
Region: South East  
Course Type: Heathland (36-holes)  
Staff: Course Manager plus 16, plus mechanic and a gardener



Name: Iain Harrison  
Course: Bangor Golf Club  
Region: Northern Ireland  
Course Type: Parkland  
Staff: Head Greenkeeper plus five, plus mechanic

# 1

What benefits do you get from overseeding greens, tees and fairways?

I never overseed fairways. Tees are ongoing filling divot marks and if you do your work properly you don't need to overseed greens. It's a waste of time, effort and money.

Better growth, though I have never needed to overseed fairways, apart from the usual divoting. Neither do I overseed tees, apart from the par-3s which get more wear.

We get a better sward basically by overseeding greens with creeping bent and tees with a mixture of dwarf rye grasses.

On greens we increase the stock of cultivars of species we want and get a stronger and better sward. We overseed fairways once every two years. The newer of the fairways, built only five years ago, were getting a bit thin.

A debatable question. You waste a lot of seed when overseeding greens as you cut it out again, so I would say very little benefit. We work on divots on tees and put some seed on the par-3 tees, but they are big tees so we can spread the load. We only overseed fairways after the odd drought.

A better finish. I use a soil and sand mix for the divoting. We overseed tees twice a year and greens once a year. The course is nearly 100 years old and we have 95% annual meadow grass on the greens.



# HEADS

## 2

What species of seed do you use?

We use Barenbrug's mixture of fescue and bent, creeping red fescue, chewings fescue and browntop bent.

I use Providence bent to overseed the greens to compete against the annual meadow grass. We had serious problems with Take-All Patch in the course's early days, but we are all right now. I use Barcrown on greens and a mixture of Lance, Herriot and Providence bent and fescue. But no dwarf rye grass or smooth stalked meadow grass.

We use Providence creeping bent on greens and Lorina and Rex dwarf rye grass on tees.

We overseed tees and aprons with 100% dwarf rye grass, fairways with 70% dwarf rye grass and greens on the parkland course with 30% creeping red fescue, the downland course with a rather higher percentage.

Fescue and bent with no rye grass at all. We use creeping red fescue and Highland bent.

I am experimenting with a mixture of Queen's, Merci and Superstar dwarf rye grass with fescue and bent to produce a hard wearing mix on the tees and Setton, Egmont and Tracenta on the greens.

## 3

When do you consider the best times to do your overseeding?

The only time is the back end, mid to late September when the height of cut comes up and you are not verti-cutting. Doing it in spring is a waste of time in my book.

Generally speaking late spring, though I repair winter damage in early spring.

My main overseeding is always done in late spring, round about mid-April, though I do a bit of repair work if needed after a lot of play in summer at the back end. Tees are always top dressed and overseeded on a regular basis.

Autumn most definitely because with the soil warmer for longer than in spring and a higher height of cut you get much better germination.

Early autumn for fairways and September-October for greens and tees although almost any time for tees.

Greens at the tail end of the year when the height of cut comes up. March would be a waste of time, effort and money, because of verti-cutting.

## 4

How much work do you put into getting your best results?

100% at all times. If you are not giving it your best all the time you are not going to get the best results.

I find I need to put an awful lot of effort in to get the best results. We try to keep to our best standards all the time so we are flat out.

We work very hard, particularly on the greens which we always like to keep at the best possible standard. We keep at it all the time.

100% at all times. The cost of seed isn't cheap and we work hard to ensure that the new seed has every chance by scarifying verti-cutting etc.

100%. We are at it all the time. It's a difficult task as you can't shut down an area when there is a lot of play on the course.

We try our very best and watch carefully how much the of the top dressing goes down the holes made by hollow coring. It's a massive amount of work.

## 5

What percentage of germination are you happy with from your different grasses?

I have strong views on this. Poa annua inhibits germination of other grasses. If you overseed I would expect no more than 5-10% germination. I have 98% fescue and bent in the greens. I have a theory that overseeding is something invented by seed companies as a sales ploy.

It's difficult to judge out on the fairways, but I would look for 90% plus cover elsewhere.

I would be looking at 90% on tees and greens.

I would say 20-30% on the greens and a bit higher percentage on tees, fairways and aprons.

I would be happy with 70-80% germination on fairways. However, overall, I must say that I am not keen on overseeding as a general idea because so much seed is wasted.

I look for 90% strike rate on tees and fairways, but am happy with 5-10% on greens because of the large amount of annual meadow grass which, thankfully, is fine rather than course.