

Midwest Breezes



Rick Bowden Takes Novel Approach to Putting-Green Expansion at Bob O' Link Golf Club

Rick Bowden has recently completed a remodeling project that included—among other things—the expansion of putting surface on 13 of his greens. Overall, Rick has added 10,000 square feet to his putting surfaces. For the grassing of this work, Rick used aerifier plugs from the existing putting surfaces. Consequently, the texture and appearance of the added putting turf has blended perfectly with the original greens.

Rick developed the following steps for this procedure:

1. Beginning in mid-September, sod-cut and remove the bentgrass collars and bluegrass sod in the designated expansion areas.
2. Aerify the exposed dirt with hollow-core tines.
3. Aerify the existing green with 5/8" hollow-core tines and collect the plugs.
4. Spread the plugs out evenly over the expansion area, at an elevation three-quarters of an inch higher than the putting turf.
5. Apply A-4 seed over the top of the plugs and rake smooth.
6. Lay plywood over the plugs and compress with a heavy roller to match grade.

7. Keep the plugs moist with hand-watering until they develop stolons and leaves.

8. Begin mowing and frequent topdressing.

By mid-May of the following year, the height of cut in the expansion areas is brought down to the same height of cut as the existing greens.

This process has created a variety of great new hole-cup placements at Bob O' Link.

The expansion areas were marked as "ground under repair" in the early stages of their development, but Rick reports that this was never a problem and he never had a complaint from his members. On the greens where more than one corner or edge of the green was expanded, Rick worked on only one area per season.

Rick has had so much success with this method of replicating the texture and consistency of his turf that he has even used this same procedure on a much larger scale for expanding the fairway approaches on par-3 holes.

—Brad Anderson, CGCS, Midlane C.C.

New Construction Poses Fresh Challenges for Coyote Run's Dave Ward

Coyote Run is the first project where Dave Ward has built an entire golf course from scratch, and Dave sees a couple of things in particular about the new construction process as a contrast with his former experiences with the management of older golf courses.

Whereas on an older golf course you are searching and probing for an old farm tile to tie into your drainage work, everything about a new golf course is engineered to shed water quickly and effectively. On the downside, however, the topsoil over the finished product of a new golf course is spread much thinner than the one-to-two-foot horizon of prairie topsoil that you generally inherit on an older golf course. So while drainage is not an issue, fertility and soil conditioning are much more critical.

Coyote Run is one year old now, and while the jury is still out, Dave is very pleased with his choice of grasses. On greens Dave used 50% Alpha, 25% A4 and 25% A2. Throughout the entire 2005 growing season, Dave has

found abundant roots growing beyond the depth of his hole-cup cutting. He has had a pretty good run of play on the greens, but the ballmarks don't seem to be as big of an issue as what is generally reported to be problematic with the newer generation of denser bentgrass strains, even on the greens that receive wedge shots. It is too early to make a strong case for Alpha, but Dave feels that Alpha may be a good putting turf for daily wear and tear.

On tees, Dave specified T-1. This bentgrass has shown great lateral growth for divot regeneration.

On fairways, Dave specified 50% L93 and 50% Southshore. This blend handled the summer heat and drought of 2005 exceptionally well, and Dave anticipates that it will perform even better under dry management, once it has developed a mature live-thatch layer.

Dave is conditioning his greens early on to be accustomed to periodic flushing. Dave flushed his USGA

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greens four times in 2005 by turning his perimeter sprinklers inwards and scheduling them to run in alternating cycles throughout the entire night with his full-circle sprinklers. On one of the USGA greens, Dave uses an open catch basin downstream of the drainage system to

visually monitor the flow of water from his periodic flushings and he reports that this irrigation program really gets the water flowing through the tiles.

—Brad Anderson, CGCS, Midlane C.C.



Benjamin Morales mowing no. 15 green at Coyote Run. The new clubhouse is in the background.



No. 18 green.



No. 13 green.



No. 7 green, banked by one of the five lakes on the course.

At Twin Orchard Country Club, Dave Blomquist Bypasses Conventional Hollow-Tine Core Aeration on Greens

Dave Blomquist is one of the growing number of golf course superintendents who is finding practical alternatives to the inconvenience that golfers associate with conventional hollow-tine core aeration.

On putting greens, Dave is hydrojecting in the up position, several times per season. Dave is confident in the results of this program, and he sees no need for core aeration or deep-tining of greens; however, he hesitates to completely rule out the possibility of deep-tining greens at some time in the future.

On fairways, Dave uses solid-tine aeration and sand topdressing. This summer, Dave topdressed the fairways lightly with the Antioch root zone sand, once every week,

from 100 yards in towards the green. The results of this program were so beneficial that Dave plans to expand on the program next season by topdressing the entire length of his fairways every week. By topdressing every week, as opposed to monthly topdressing at higher rates, Dave feels that he runs less of a risk of layering problems in the future. Also at the light rates, an entire course can be topdressed in one work day.

This fall, Dave is making infrastructure improvements to his shop area: a new wash pad, more parking and expanded office space.

—Brad Anderson, CGCS, Midlane C.C.