

FEATURE ARTICLE

Samuel MacKenzie, CGCS, Olympia Field Country Club

Basimid Kills – Tips and Techniques

This past fall Olympia Fields Country Club embarked on a historic renovation of its South Golf Course. Opened in 1916, the South Course was one of the first two courses built on the property. This Tom Bendelow course has for a great many years played second fiddle to the Willie Park designed North Course. Since its completion in 1923, the North Course has held the bulk of the championships and gotten all of the glory. This year that all changed for the track that is considered the “Members Course” at OFCC.

In the fall of 2005 the club enlisted the services of Steve Smeyers and his associate Patrick Andrews to develop a master plan. Work began in July of this year. We have just completed constructing 49 new bunkers, 76 new tees, a completely new practice facility, and installing a new irrigation system. We grassed nearly 75 acres, including 31 acres of bentgrass on tees, fairways, and target greens as well as sodding and seeding 44 acres of rough. With the exception of the third hole, which is totally new, the greens were enlarged to historical sizes and shapes only using sod grown on site. Thanks to the extended Fall we were able to complete all operations by late October.

In the original concept the fairways were not to be renovated. They were going to be re-contoured using a combination of sod relocation and seeding. As we developed our schedule and spoke with all of our contractors, it quickly became apparent that keeping the fairways alive during construction was going to be extraordinarily difficult at best. It was decided that renovating the fairways had both financial and practical advantages. The burden of maintaining the old irrigation system as well as the maintenance of the fairways was lifted. It also allowed the architect a free hand in shaping the fairways, without being limited by the existing contour.

We looked at a number of ways to accomplish renovation and decided to use primarily Basimid®. Roundup® was also used where it made better sense, but sixty percent of the fairway turf was renovated using Basimid. This soil fumigant has been around since 1981, and is widely used world wide in other green industry sectors from tree nurseries to vegetable and fruit

farms for controlling a broad spectrum of pests that include weeds, diseases, and insects. It has also seen success on golf courses for renovating turf. Our primary goal in its use was to reduce the amount of *Poa annua* invasion after seeding.

Seed bed preparation was the most important part of our operation. The first step was to lay the fairway shape out within the existing corridor. Roundup was then applied to all areas other than the new fairway. The entire area, including six feet around the new fairway, was then mowed using a fairway mower set to 3/16 of an inch. We mowed and verticut multiple times to remove as much thatch and mat as possible.



Scalping

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Verticutting

Next, the fairway was aerified one time. The plugs were broken up using a heavy drag mat. The thatch was blown off the fairway and picked up. Aerification plays an essential role as it allows the Basimid to penetrate the soil. Anyway you can enhance exposure of the product to the soil is imperative, and since we were not tilling and regrading this was the best method.

One of the biggest concerns with using Basimid is preventing its contamination of water. With that in mind, we then

went to all of the drainage basins on a given fairway and covered the lids with plastic. The larger basins were covered with both plastic and a bale of straw. Ten holes on the South Course cross Butterfield Creek, so we also lined the creek in drainage swales with bales of straw to prevent any washing. Precautions should also be made to protect trees, because the surface feeder roots will absorb the product, and damage as well as death can occur. However, in our case, since new irrigation was installed, root pruning was done on every fairway. This seemed to do the trick since no trees were damaged.

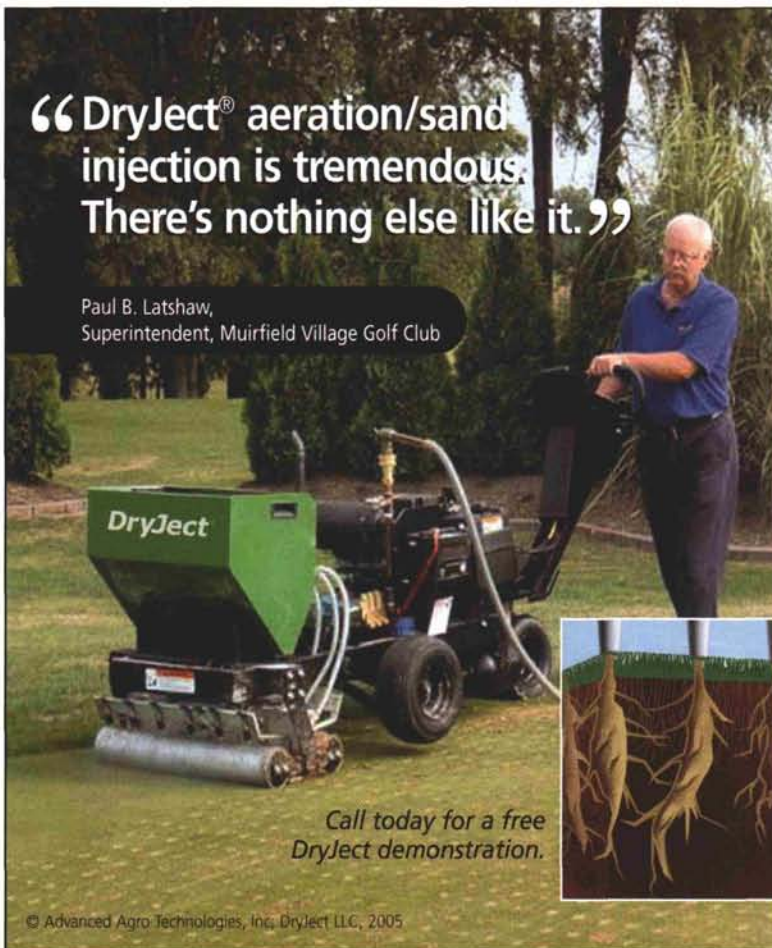


Aerification

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Irrigation

The Basimid application then followed on the new fairway and six feet of rough surrounding the fairway. Depending on who I spoke with the generally accepted rate of application is between 350-450 lbs. per acre, we settled on 400 pounds. Watering is the most crucial step in any Basimid application. It is what converts the product to a methyl isothiocyanate gas and is the "tent" that traps the gas in the soil. We soaked the ground during initial watering to bring the fairway to field capacity. Water was then applied, as needed, throughout the day until dark, to maintain this moisture level for three days. On the fourth day all watering ceased and everything was allowed to dry. As the soil dries the gas is released to the atmosphere.

Typically it took one day for the fairway to thoroughly dry, and then it was ready to seed. We used a blend of Penneagle II and Pennlinks II which was applied through a drop spreader at a rate of 1 lb. per 1000 sq. ft. in two directions for a total of 2 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. The fairway was then lightly verticut to mix the seed into the remaining thatch and soil from aerification. Starter fertilizer was not applied to areas where we used Basimid; it was however applied to the areas treated with Roundup. Watering commenced immediately and was done on an as needed basis.



Basimid Application



Seeding Operation

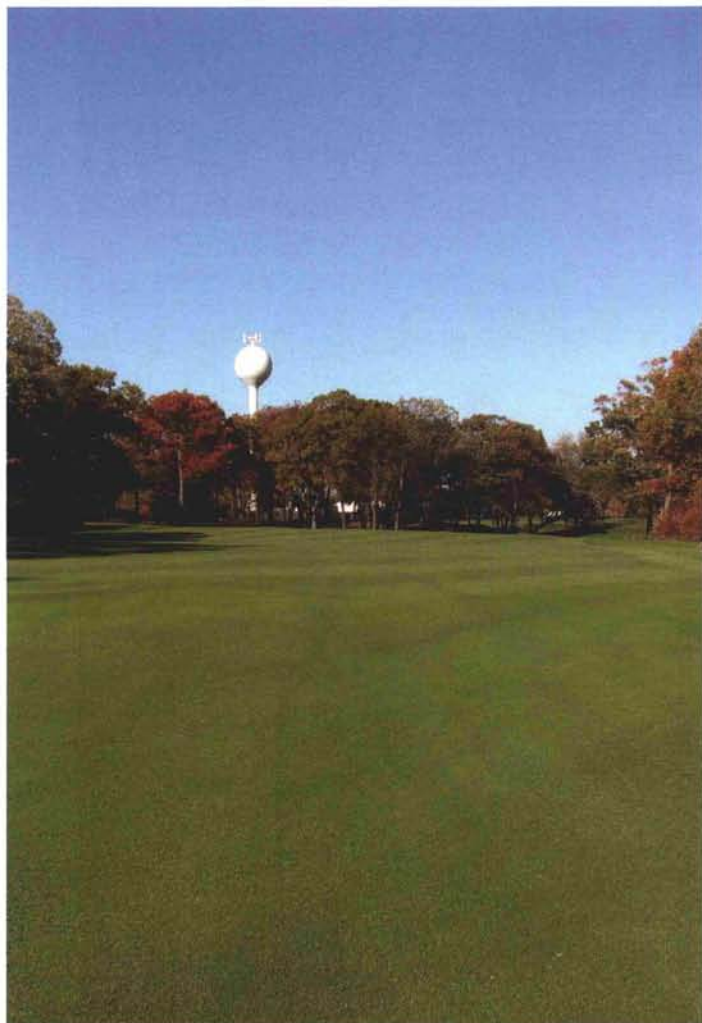


10 Days After Germination

Germination occurred within five days after seeding. Depending on the hole, the first mowing took place about seven to ten days after germination. We made our first application of fertilizer about thirty days after seeding. One of the unique benefits of Basimid is that it causes a tremendous level of nutrients, approximately a .5 lb. of N-P-K, be released into the soil and readily available to the new grass plants. We saw a huge difference in areas where Basimid was used as opposed to Roundup. Growth was much better and sustained longer. Six to seven weeks after seeding, the fairway and rough were both for the most part completely grown in and regular mowing was occurring.



First Mowing



Eight Weeks

Overall we were very pleased with the establishment of the fairways and rough where we used Basimid. The application of the product is a little bit cumbersome and precautions must be made to prevent any unintended or offsite damage. The cost of the product is considerably more than Roundup, but in my mind is easily justified, because the establishment rate is much better and *Poa annua* invasion is inhibited. I would use it again and would consider using it on greens if given the opportunity.

-OC



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