



Ultradwarf Bermudagrasses Meet the Real World (Part 3)

TifEagle: Make Sure You Have a Good Mechanic and an Extra Set of Bedknives

(Editor's Note: This is the third installment in a series of in-depth looks at real-world management of the new ultradwarf bermudagrasses.

At Pelican Sound: Loses Aesthetics, Retains Playability During Cold Weather

BY RANDY KORF

Golf Course Superintendent

Routine Cultural Practices

Mowing

We use Toro 3100 Triplex mowers daily with Wiehle front rollers and smooth back rollers. The height of cut is .125 inch, and has not been changed since January.

We also use Toro 1600 26-inch walk mowers from October through April for perimeters. Their height of cut is set to .115 inch to match triplexes. We will raise if perimeter is stressed. The reels are ground every 25 hours or sooner if needed. Bed knives are ground two or three times, then discarded (tournament thin bed knives). Primo growth regulator has not been used.

Verticutting

We use Toro triplexes with verticut reels. We go a minimum of every two

weeks, or weekly if needed, and the perimeter if needed. Depth is typically 1/4 inch but will back off to 3/16 inch from December to April. We verticut in two directions at 1/8 inch. This produces great speed and true roll. Vertigrooming has not been effective. Traded in groomer reels for second set of verticut reels. Frequent verticutting eliminates all grain.

Topdressing

A Vicon spreader is used for light applications although I think a Terra Topper would be better. A Meter-Matic is used after aerifications. We topdress a minimum of every two weeks after verticutting, sometimes weekly but only after verticutting. The sand/soil mix is same as construction material (90/10). A drag brush is used followed by an irrigation syringe.

Fertility Program

Granular products 10-2-20 and 0-0-30 are alternated every two weeks, and applied after verticutting/topdressing. Liquid products 12-0-0 with minors or potassium nitrate and a chelated minor product are alternated between granular applications. Humate is applied twice a year. Gypsum is applied every 6-8 weeks at 10 lb/1,000 sq. ft.

Overall, TifEagle has performed even better than I expected. Response has been favorable regarding the quality of the putting surface... I cannot say that TifEagle is a better choice than FloraDwarf or Champion, but I can say that I cannot ever go back to Tifdwarf.

Aerification

We use a contract aerification service. They use Coremaster aerifiers. Our schedule:

June, 5/8-inch tines at 1.75-inch depth
July, 1/2-inch tines at 1.75-inch depth
August, 5/8-inch tines at 1.75-inch depth

September, 1/2-inch tines at 1.75-inch depth

The cores are collected and topdressing applied. A greens spiker with 1.5-inch solid tines on a drum is used from October to May. This does not disrupt the putting surface.

Irrigation Practices

We have a Rain Bird Maxi Nimbus II control system. A typical schedule applies .2 inches of precipitation daily. We typically apply .5 inches of precipitation after topdressing/fertilizing.

When hydrophobic conditions arise (frequently from March to May) a granular wetting agent is applied. Then the irrigation schedule is adjusted to a 6-minute cycle/30-minute soak and repeated for two or three total cycles.

General Comments

Contours: We see slight scalping on slopes over 2 percent, but verticutting is

Correction

In the Superintendent Journal section of the Fall 1999 issue, the FloraDwarf article titled Ponte Vedra Inn should have been titled The Forest. The author of that material was Rick Tatum and not Jay Reister. Don't ask me how I did that one! JJ