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President's Message



One of the problems which every President faces, particularly around the time of annual elections is when to leave the presidency. When is the work finished? Listed below are a few guidelines for use in determining when one should go.

When for Christmas The Board presents you with a gift certificate to the local U-Haul Company.

When a selected committee papers the walls of your office with road maps.

When the GCSAA selects you to lead a tour of foreign golf courses . . . and you don't want to go.

When at the annual picnic during playtime you are invited to play the part of Custer.

When you walk into the annual meeting and the song being played is, "If We Never Meet Again."

When during the elections the song being played is, "I Feel Like Traveling On."

When you and your wife have a son and a member suggests that you name him Samsonite.

When a committee recommends that The Board set a mandatory retirement age for the president, and the membership votes it at 30.

These are some of the more subtle indications that it may be time for a president to move on. **HOWEVER**, your President did not receive any of the above guidelines and I would like to thank our members for their support and understanding this past year.

Now it is time to look over the new horizon ahead. As The Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association looks forward to a great year I pray that God will be with our leaders and that He will head us all in the right direction.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam Jones".

The South Florida Green

The Official Bulletin of the South Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association

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18th Hole Gulf Stream Golf Club. Howell Anderson, Greens Committee Chairman; Robert Dixon, Past President; Stanley Carr, Supt., and Dave Bailey, visting Supt.

Cover photograph by Harry McCartha

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OVERSEEDING IN SOUTH FLORIDA



Dave Bailey

Now is the time to plan your winter overseed program. With temperatures at ninety degrees daily the most current pressing problem is keeping pace with the healthy bermuda greens. Overseeding winter turf may be your last worry. Or is it? Today's superintendent must plan work programs months in advance. You need to place the order now to secure your seed selection.

Many subjects do not have a right or wrong answer. In golf course maintenance no single subject is more controversial in southern Florida than winter overseeding of putting greens. Each side is convinced their opinion is correct for their club, and there lies the key to the answer. The Club.

Just what does the club want and need? Is the seed money worth the benefit? Will the members tolerate the several weeks of putting surfaces in a transition period? Does an overseeded green give a better putting surface? Or does it just look nicer to the member here only in the winter. What speed do the players demand? How much play is the course receiving and what is the green size? The single biggest question is does your turf type need seed to stabilize the color. Most overseeding is decided on this question alone.

The area from Vero Beach to the Keys was studied along the Florida coastline twenty miles westward. Phil Gardner, regional manager of Lakeshore Equipment and Supply Company, compiled the following data. His survey covered 201 eighteen hole courses. Complexes were counted per course. The results showed 102 courses were overseeded on the putting green surfaces. The 102 total was broken down as follows:

9 Penncross Bent, 2 Emerald Bent, 2 Kentucky Bluegrass, and 89 used Rye or a Rye Blend. The rye breakdown was 31 used Pennfine, 7 Manhattan, and the remaining 51 courses used a rye blend. Medalist was the most used rye blend. Phil Gardner says, "the figures have changed from 1/3 the courses using seed to 1/2 in the last two years." He attributes this to, "The increased play of our courses, improved seed quality and the cold winters of 1977 and 1978."

Seed prices vary with the seed type but please understand the numbers game. The bent prices will range from \$6.00 to \$6.50 per pound. Four pounds per 1,000 square feet is recommended. Thus a cost of about \$25 per 1,000 square feet. The rye prices will be between 95¢ and \$1.25 per pound. With 25 pounds per 1,000 square feet recommended. The total price again comes out to about \$25 per 1,000 square feet. Remember that is the main cost. The total cost is from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per eighteen holes. Is it worth it?

Superintendents in favor get to answer first. Brad Kocher, Inverrary Country Club, says, "Overseeding is a good insurance policy to protect against potential damage to bermuda greens from the cold temperatures characteristic of the past three winters. It also protects against traffic stress during December and April." George Cavanaugh, President Country Club, overseeded one course and not the other. He says, "Old greens after seven years are harder to carry through the winter and should be overseeded. If I were rebuilding greens they would not be overseeded the first six years." Fred Dickson, Quail Ridge Golf and Tennis Club, overseeds because of club policy. He says, "After seed is applied they run the dragmat in five directions for uniform coverage. The greens mower height is raised to 5/16 for a month to let the seed become established." Dan Jones, County Club Aventura, says, "During the cold winter months overseeding gives our greens the day to day beauty and putting quality that our members demand. This cannot be achieved consistently with bermuda grass alone." Jack Cunningham, East Pointe Country Club, says, "If the club can afford the relatively small expense to overseed I think it is well worth it." Kevin Downing, Atlantis Golf Club, says, "Next year I will seed at two different times. The rye will be used first at 18 pounds per 1,000 square feet and a second seeding three weeks later with 10 pounds per 1,000 square feet but using no topdressing." Bill Cahill, Port Malabar Country Club, near Melbourne, said, "I need to overseed to

continued on page 6

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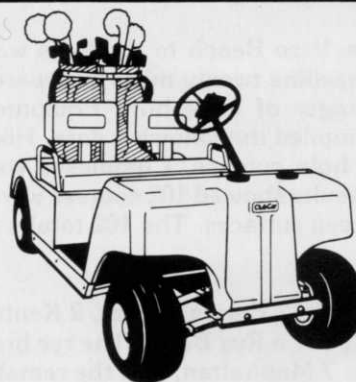
provide good color and good putting all winter season. Selective verticutting of overseeded greens can provide fast or slow greens that hold shots and putt true." Steve Basumel, Pompano Beach Golf Club, said, "Overseeding has been a life saver at our club. It provides an excellent putting surface and holds up under tremendous traffic. Medalist V Rye was used." Robert Hurst, Jupiter Island Club, says, "Overseeding to our course is a must in case of a severe winter. It gives us better color and insures a good putting surface." Paul Turcotte, Melreese Golf Course, says, "I plan to overseed in the latter part of December. This will give us a good strain of grass for the winter months of January, February, and March." Ben Auld, Vero Beach Country Club, said, "Overseeding is a must from Vero Beach northward. It is an option to the south. It's a necessary gamble with the weather, but only the superintendent that takes the pains to see that its done right will ever be successful." Carl Smith, Palm Beach Country Club, said, "I think with overseeding you will have a super quality turf of blue ribbon condition." Carl thinks every private club should overseed with bent grass and that public courses should use rye grass. Carl also points out an often overlooked simple rule. "You must have a sharp mower when cutting overseed." He uses a walk mower at all times. The first cutting will be at a 1/4 inch. The second week lowered to 3/16 inch. The fifth week 5/32 inch. And if possible be down to 1/8 inch on his Pencross bent greens. Scott Sincarbeau, Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club, summed it up best for those in favor of overseeding. He said, "Ninety percent of the golfers think the course is great if the greens are a pretty green color. Good overseeding will give them something to relate to."

Those in favor of not overseeding greens at their club are Stanley Carr, Gulf Stream Golf Club. He says, "located next to the ocean, with little play and Tifgreen 328 it is not necessary." Alan Weitzel, Dade County Golf Courses, says, "We cannot justify the expense." Paul Frank, Wilderness Country Club in Naples, summed it up best for those against overseeding. He said, "Members do not like the way overseeding disrupts the putting surface for several weeks coming in and also several weeks as it goes out. In the southern part of Florida south of a line between Fort Myers and Palm Beach the few days of extreme cold do not merit the expense and inconvenience to the golfer. Beef up with liquid fertilizer and a light touch of good dye during the few off color days." David Bailey, Atlantis Country Club, agrees with Paul Frank. Bailey says, "As a golfer I am 99% opposed to overseeding, as a turf man I am 75% opposed to overseeding, and as a photographer I am 99% in favor of overseeding." Billy Wright, Villa Delray, says, "I definitely believe overseeding is a good insurance. However if cost is a factor and the course will be played to maximum capacity overseeded or not the seed money deserves some consideration." Bill Kriegel, Lake Worth Municipal Golf Club says, "I feel that the greens properly maintained will be much better than overseeded greens. Being a municipal course with Everglades I & II greens I feel that overseeding will cause more problems than it will solve." Mike Berger, Biltmore and Granada Golf Courses, says, "We are not against overseeding but believe it does not suit our circumstances. The cost of overseeding is expensive and for us it does not warrant the short period gain. On an average our

greens will be off color between ten and fifteen days each winter from cold damage. Since the putting quality is only slightly impaired I am not in favor of overseeding." Bob Strait, Boca West Country Club, said, "We overseeded one course and not two. It is a pain to establish with extremely heavy play but contamination of foreign bermudas forces us to overseed. It may be a necessary evil." Bill Wagner, Tequesta Country Club, has not overseeded but is changing his opinion as his greens age. He said, "When you consider cost versus benefit I have seen no real need. After several cool winters and a total life of more than five years Tifdwarf must be overseeded to provide a good putting surface." Lou Oxnevad, Riviera Country Club, said, "I do not feel we need to overseed here. We did overseed our tees in November with a rye mixture."

As stated at the beginning of this article there is no correct answer for all clubs. Whichever way your club decided it takes the dedicated work of many individuals for the course to look good. And only you the golf course superintendent knows what is best for your club.

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PREVENTIVE FUNGICIDES INSURE OVERSEEDING SUCCESS

By STAN FREDERIKSEN*



Relatively safe from severe fungus disease onslaughts (though not always) are Florida's bermudagrasses. The fine-leaved hybrids (T-328, Tifdwarf, and the like), and the native "common" varieties, being normal to the Florida "turf scene", all have a degree of natural resistance to most fungus attacks.

In North Florida, bermuda's beige-grey winter dormancy brings automatic fall cool-season overseeding, to assure that green winter putting turf so attractive to winter-month tourists and half-year Florida residents. Many South Florida superintendents, on the other hand, have sought to "get by", through winter, by avoiding those frustrating fall and spring "transition" periods and trying to carry their fine bermudas through the cold months *without* benefit of overseeding.

No more! Sub-freezing temperatures and snowy blasts of the past several winters, even in the Miami - Ft. Lauderdale - Tampa - St. Petersburg sector, have convinced them that "it isn't worth the risk!" Grey putting greens are "out" — entirely unacceptable! Green putting turf is "in" — a real "must" — and *all* those greens likely will be overseeded annually, from now on.

Great! *But* — while healthy and well-managed bermudas are only rarely attacked by fungi (usually the easy-to-control types like brown patch, dollar spot, the leaf spots and others in the "mild" category), the cool-season overseedings (perennial ryegrass, seeded bentgrass, fine-leaved fescues, *Poa trivialis* and mixtures of these) bring with them a "whole new ball game", captained by the most devastating of all known turf diseases — Pythium blight! While Pythium has been known to "cross over" and attack the bermudas (this is fairly rare), it is literally "death" on

unprotected cool-season overseedings, particularly in the tender seedling stages. Strangely, Pythium *seems* (no hard statistics on this) to attack most viciously the highly-prized perennial rye grasses. Paradoxically, the new improved ryegrasses happen to be the most desirable of all overseeding grasses, and for a myriad of reasons. They are fine-leaved, beautifully emerald green colored, quick germinating (5 days or less), make the "transition" periods well, and form the absolute ultimate in turf "cushion" on bermuda putting greens, permitting continued play on green winter putting surfaces, with only minimal "wear" on the dormant bermudagrass beneath.

The "key", therefore, to effective overseeding, is *prevention of fungus diseases* on the overseeded grasses — prevention, especially, of deadly Pythium blight. Fortunately, Pythium prevention is now a well established procedure, and readily attainable by superintendents, including those South Florida turf managers who have just discovered, during the recent several years, that green putting surfaces on bermuda greens through winter can be assured only through well planned cool-season grass overseedings.

Timing will vary, of course, with latitude — earlier (September or October) in North Florida, and later (mid to late November) in extreme South Florida. Ideally, the program will be initiated as soon as the air and soil temperatures have cooled enough so that bermuda growth has diminished, and the wilting of tender emerging seedlings of the cool-season grasses does not occur.

With optimum timing established, here are two simple programs, either of which will produce excellent winter green putting surfaces, based on whether ryegrass or a different cool-season grass or mixture is selected: *continued on page 8*



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1. **PERENNIAL RYEGRASS OVERSEEDING** (*Annual* ryegrass, though cheaper per pound, is of inferior quality, requires heavier overseeding rates, and is now seldom used or recommended).

1.1 As the determined overseeding time approaches, maintain adequate disease prevention on the not-yet-dormant bermuda with weekly fungicide treatments, alternating between the contact fungicides (KROMAD, Daconil, etc.) and the systemics (FUNGO, 1991, etc.) to avoid infestations of brown patch, dollar spot, leaf spots and other diseases to which the bermudas are a natural host.

1.2 When the weather has cooled sufficiently to preclude sun burn-out of cool-season overseedings, aerify and verticut the greens, "dragging" the cores and debris sufficiently to expose enough soil to assure its good contact with the seeds to be planted.

1.3 Be sure that the soil is adequately fertilized to support ready germination and growth of the new overseeding.

1.4 Choose a good weed-free and *Poa annua*-free perennial ryegrass seed that has been *KOBAN-treated!* Northrup-King's Medalist II is excellent, as are *KOBAN-treated* perennial ryes from Loft, Bingham and other reputable seed companies. Make sure the seed bags are tagged "THIS SEED HAS BEEN TREATED WITH KOBAN BRAND "FUNGICIDE" (or other terrazole-containing fungicide.) **NOTE** — as of now, *KOBAN/Terrazole* is believed to be the only chemical labeled for grass seed treatment against *Pythium* disease, and it is limited by its registration *only to ryegrasses*.

1.5 Evenly and uniformly apply the treated ryegrass seed, at the rate of 20 to 25 pounds per 1000 square feet. If your seed is *not* treated, or as an extra precaution (though not normally essential when *treated* seed is used), apply a *KOBAN* spray to the area just seeded, following label recommendations.

1.6 Lightly topdress the area with *sterilized* topdressing (to further insure good contact of the seeds with the soil). Use a topdressing of the same physical and chemical consistency as the upper putting green soil, to help avoid undesirable "layering".

1.7 Irrigate frequently and lightly, making sure that the soil surface *never dries* prior to complete germination of the cool-season overseeding.

1.8 While the *KOBAN-treatment* of the seed will assure maximum (usually almost 100%) germination, rapid growth of the ryegrass will help to dissipate the residual *KOBAN*. *Therefore* — begin weekly

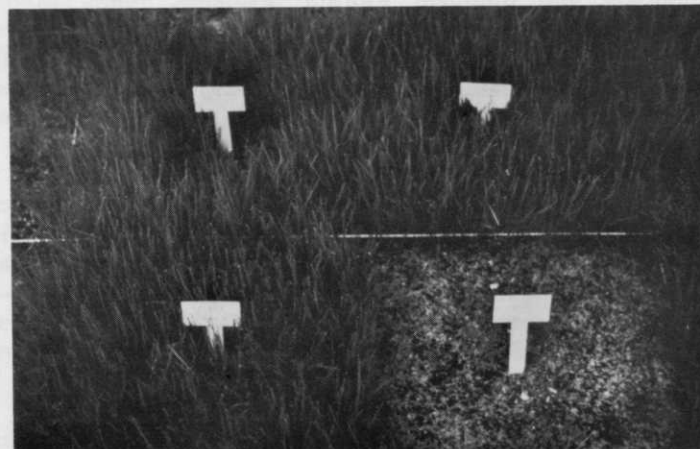


Figure 2. Four plots, all on *Pythium*-innoculated soil, and all ryegrass-seeded at same time. Lower left and upper right plots show full germination and development of healthy ryegrass in the two plots treated with *KOBAN* just after seeding. Compare with untreated check plot at lower right (with no grass at all), and with inferior fungicide-treated plot at upper left, where some grass is developing, but where *Pythium* is attacking the grass right around the plot identification tag.

(Photo from Dr. Edw. Freeman, of the University of Florida)

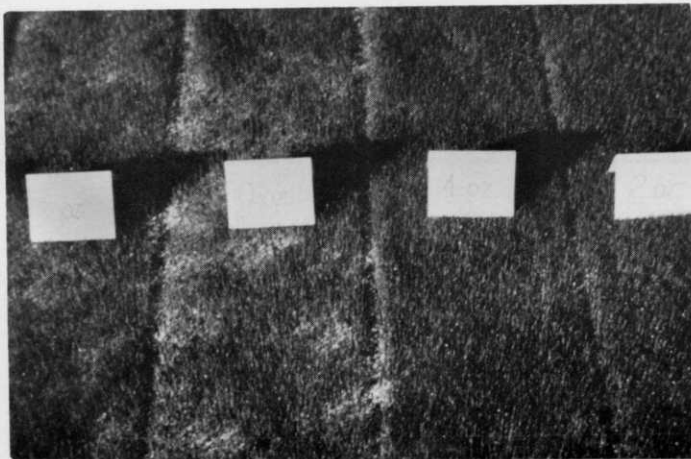


Figure 1. Shows excellence of *KOBAN-treated* Medalist II perennial ryegrass. Two plots on left are ravaged with *Pythium* because *non-treated* ryegrass couldn't develop in *Pythium*-infested soil. Compare with *KOBAN-treated* Medalist II ryegrass seeded two plots on right — *KOBAN* has prevented *Pythium* attack, and ryegrass is developing normally, even in the *Pythium*-infested soil.

(Photo courtesy of Northrup-King Seed Company)

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KOBAN sprays, at label rates, within one week after the new seedlings sprout, and continue until the weather cools and the Pythium threat has passed.

- 1.9 Continue the KROMAD, Daconil, FUNGO and 1991 alternate sprays routinely to prevent other turf diseases (brown patch, dollar spot, the leaf spots, etc.) from invading.
2. **OTHER COOL SEASON GRASS OVERSEEDINGS** (Seeded bentgrasses, fine-leaved fescues, *Poa trivialis*, or recommended mixtures of these)
 - 2.1 Preparatory to overseeding, follow precisely the same initial steps as set forth above in sub-sections 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 under Section 1., "PERENNIAL RYEGRASS OVERSEEDING".
 - 2.2 Select the overseeding grass or mixture to provide the desired end results and characteristics, in terms of germination time, disease resistance, "turf cushion" (to protect the bermuda base), color, climate adaptability, etc. Regardless of variety, choose a *good* seed that is weed-free and *Poa annua*-free.
 - 2.3 Evenly and uniformly apply the seeds or mixture, at recommended rates.
 - 2.4 *KOBAN-spray the newly seeded area at once*, making sure to use the full recommended rates for this special preventative treatment. **REMEMBER** — unlike the KOBAN-treated perennial ryegrasses, these "other" overseeding varieties are *not* usually treated against Pythium disease, so that *this* particular KOBAN spray is *the* one that affords the protection already "built into" the treated perennial ryegrasses.
 - 2.5 Follow through the remainder of the program by adhering to the actions set forth above under sub-sections 1.6, 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9 in Section 1., "PERENNIAL RYEGRASS OVERSEEDING".

As an "aside", it should be pointed out that when circumstances may so dictate KOBAN and FUNGO may be tank-mixed for broader-spectrum disease control — including *Pythium* control.

Above all else remember that *GREEN* is "the name of the game" (the *golf* game, that is), especially as regards putting turf. Many Florida golf courses represent multi-million dollar investments — all to attain the objective of playing golf on *green* grass. Thus, it is sheer folly for any turf manager to try to "cut corners" and "save" (?) a few hundred dollars, either by avoiding and overseeding or by following a poorly devised overseeding program that doesn't include maximum protection against fungus diseases — especially *Pythium*. Let's face it, fellows — it just "ain't worth the risk!"

*Stan Frederiksen, retired as Manager - Turf Products, at Mallinckrodt, Inc., in St. Louis, is currently a consultant in Turfgrass management.

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