

## Super's first two words on new job: 'Course closed'

Superintendents throughout the Southeast share their thoughts with Patrick O'Brien as he travels, making Turf Advisory Visits (TAVs) as director of the Southeast Region for the U.S. Golf Association Green Section. Here are some comments following this year's massive winter kill.

"On Jan. 14th I started my new job at the Capital City Club [in Atlanta, Ga.]. My first two words on the job were "course closed."  
— William Shirley

"It was amazing. Our soil froze to a depth of six inches, and our course is adjacent to the ocean! Our Tifway Bermudagrass suffered extensive damage at fairways and tees, and especially at stress sites with higher traffic, poor drainage, shade, and past insect and drought damage."  
— David Bentley of Duck Woods CC in Kitty Hawk, N.C.

"I was so surprised to see our Vamont Bermudagrass winter-killed. After our TAV visit, our green committee decided to row-

plant five fairways to the new El Toro zoysiagrass. I'm thrilled to switch to zoysia, at least at these holes, as no other fairway turf has survived our winters consistently."  
— Gilbert Jackson of Signal Mountain (Tenn.) Golf Course

— Gilbert Jackson of Signal Mountain (Tenn.) Golf Course

"Our three weakest Bermudagrass fairways ... completely winter-killed. After our TAV, it was decided to sod those fairways to Meyer zoysiagrass to minimize future winter-injury problems. We will convert the other fairways to zoysiagrass over the next two years. I'm switching to a better horse."  
— Frank Turner of Cherokee Country Club in Knoxville, Tenn.

— Frank Turner of Cherokee Country Club in Knoxville, Tenn.

"Having just relocated to The Farm [in Rocky Face, Ga.] three months ago, I am relieved that we have Meyer zoysiagrass fairways and roughs. We believe so strongly in zoysiagrass that we are renovating all our Tifway Bermudagrass tees, which winter-killed."  
— Tim Kennally

— Tim Kennally

## Winter kill devastates many courses in Southeast

Continued from page 15

killing stolons and rhizomes, according to O'Brien.

Compaction played a major role as well, said superintendent Andy Brennan of Springhouse Golf Course at the Opryland Hotel. "Wherever traffic is funneled, it's dead," he said.

And superintendent Doug Ward at Belle Meade Country Club added, "If it [Bermudagrass] was mowed under an inch, you had some damage problems."

"I saw clubs with very little damage and others with 70 acres," O'Brien said.

Dan Gibson, superintendent of golf operations for the Metro Board of Parks and Recreation, said he lost 70 acres on the city's seven courses.

"Most everybody still looks bad because we haven't had warm weather," O'Brien said in early June. "If you are sprigging, the sprigs are sitting there doing nothing because of the mild weather. If you resodded, you're looking pretty good."

A number of superintendents have sodded over tees and around greens. The cold-hardy bentgrass greens are "some of the best greens ever," O'Brien said. "They're beautiful."

Meanwhile, superintendents who last fall overseeded with ryegrass face a unique struggle.

"It's a Catch-22 situation," said Brennan, who wanted to keep the ryegrass alive through the PGA Senior Tour event at Springhouse, June 13-19.

Unseasonably cool weather in late May and early June helped the ryegrass fairways. But the Bermudagrass roughs, which were weakened but alive, "needed to be kicked a little bit, and the temperatures aren't cooperating," Brennan said. "What's good for the ryegrass isn't good for the Bermuda, and vice versa."

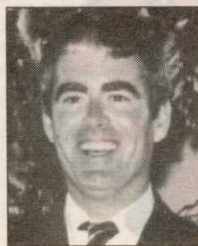
He said he would be sprigging his course with Bermudagrass if he didn't have to keep the ryegrass alive for the Tour event.

The ryegrass in the region was thriving in the cool weather, and that was inhibiting recovery of any damaged Bermudagrass areas, O'Brien said. "Those guys should, if possible, do practices to discourage the rye so they can evaluate their situations," he said.

"Courses with ryegrass in the fairways can play to the hilt," Gibson said. "But it's camouflage, and in July they will have to sprig, too."

•••

Making the best of a bad situation, many superintendents are experimenting.



*I have already worked with several clubs that have elected to switch horses from Bermudagrass to zoysia. They are taking a long-term approach.'*

— Patrick O'Brien

"I have already worked with several clubs that have elected to switch horses from Bermudagrass to zoysia," O'Brien said. "They are taking a long-term approach. This will certainly lessen the potential for winter damage at these courses. I never thought a lot would do that. But they are now."

Lemons said many superintendents are trying some of the new seeded varieties of Bermudagrasses. He has planted a half acre each of the Meyer and El Toro zoysias, and will plant 450 square feet each of three of Dr. Milt Engelke's cultivars from Texas A&M "to test them in fairway situations. The rest of our course we put in sprigs of a new 'QuickStand' Bermudagrass from Dr. A.J. Powell at the University of Kentucky."

O'Brien said resprigging zoysia can be costly: \$1,800 to \$2,000 per acre for 800

bushels, plus the cost of one or two applications of Roundup at five quarts to the acre.

The cost to resprig to Bermudagrass, he said, would be \$600 to \$900 per acre (at a rate of 700 to 800 bushels per acre).

Meanwhile, lost play is also expected to hurt clubs. Gibson explained that when a course is sprigged, the ground must be kept wet for the first three weeks, "and that cuts your play way down."

"For people who are resprigging with Bermudagrass and zoysia, it will take them until August or September to fully get back to the turf density golfers expect," O'Brien said.

"Nashville is the epitome of the transition zone," lamented Brennan. "Whenever anybody gets any winter kill, Nashville seems to. They tell me it builds character. I've got a lot of that if that's the case."

## Overseeding would make little difference — Carrow

By PATRICK O'BRIEN

Many golfers mistakenly feel the past winter's Bermudagrass injury could have been prevented by overseeding affected sites in the fall with perennial ryegrass.

Overseeding may offer minor protection against extracellular injury during normal winters, but most likely makes no difference during winters with large-scale Bermudagrass kill caused by extracellular death.

"It is true, overseeding affords a small degree of protection," said turf physiologist Dr. Bob Carrow of the University of Georgia at Griffin. "The overseeding helps to insulate the Bermudagrass, providing some extracellular protection."

The extra irrigation, fertilization and better routine care applied to the overseeding is enough to again indirectly maintain adequate moisture for the Bermudagrass, further reducing extracellular injury.

"Unfortunately, overseeding provides practically no protection against extracellular injury," Carrow said.

Carrow said that even in winters with partial kill, overseeding always slows down the recovery of the remaining Bermudagrass. In historically weak Bermudagrass areas — such as shade lines, high-traffic tees and fairways, etc. — overseeding is another stress factor inhibiting recovery of the Bermudagrass the next spring, he said. For these reasons, fairway overseeding should be used mainly at resort courses in the warmer areas of the Southeast.

*Patrick O'Brien is director of the Southeast Region of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section.*

## COMPLEMENT YOUR GREENS WITH BLUE.



You and your superintendent work hard to keep your golf course green and beautiful. But keeping your ponds, lakes and lagoons clean and blue sometimes seems impossible. There is a solution: Gundline® HD, a durable, high-density polyethylene liner from Gundle Lining Systems. Our new blue Gundline HD is more effective and less costly than clay. Supplied in other colors with U.V. protection, Gundle will install or prefabricate the material and send it to your site. And this low-maintenance system will help keep your water clear and clean while preventing ground seepage. So call us. We'll make your course a real blue chipper.

Gundle Lining Systems Inc

**Gundle**®

19103 Gundle Rd. Houston, Texas 77073 U.S.A.  
Phone: (713) 443-8564 Toll Free: (800) 435-2008  
Telex: 4620281 GundleHou Fax: (713) 875-6010