

By HAL PHILLIPS

SOUTH LAKELAND, Fla. — GN-1, the new fairway Bermudagrass from Greg Norman Turf Co., has not been university-tested. It went straight from the test plot to the national Bermudagrass trials — under the name CT-2 — to the marketplace.

Most turfgrasses on the market today have undergone university testing. Why the aberration with this new grass?

"We're not trying to do anything that isn't well founded," said David Barnes, staff agronomist for Greg Norman Turf Co., a division of Great White Shark Enterprises. "With Greg's name and reputation, we certainly wouldn't do anything to harm that. To put his name on the grass we had to be sure. Greg doesn't need to be in the turf business. The money we make now isn't going to affect the way he lives.

"Right now there are several dwarf Bermudas being sold that aren't university-tested," added Barnes, who named Quality Dwarf and Classic Dwarf as examples. "We are going to run through some trials at the University of Florida, but there really isn't a testing procedure for turfgrass that gives me the data

N.E. supers fund research

Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England Vice President Kevin Osgood of Newton Commonwealth Golf Course has announced the association will fund several turfgrass research grants.

GCSANE is supporting Dr. Gail Shuman of the University of Massachusetts with \$6,988; Dr. Robert Wick, University of Massachusetts, \$6,000; and Dr. Bridget Ruummele, University of Rhode Island, \$9,000.

The money is raised by the members of the association through their Research Tournament and the Annual Turf Conference and Show.

"All our courses and golfers in general enjoy improved playing conditions due to research efforts of the university community, and the GCSANE is committed to support these efforts," Osgood said.

However, Osgood is most excited about the association's newest research effort — an economic impact study of golf in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. GCSANE has obtained similar studies from other states and Osgood believes such a study will benefit all aspects of the golf industry. The initial appropriation will define the protocol and methodology of the study.

Osgood and the members of the GCSANE board of directors hope that once the ground work for the economic impact study is completed, allied associations will assist in its completion.

No university tests no problem for GN-1

I need. You get that information in the field, which is why we made the decision to put this grass in selected areas."

GN-1 will make its 18-hole debut here at The Club at Eaglebrook, a Ron Garl design scheduled to open next month. Sugarloaf, the Norman-designed course outside Atlanta and future home of the Bell South Classic, will feature GN-1, as will Real Mar, another Norman design under construction in Puerto Rico. Also, The Medalist Club —

a Norman/Pete Dye collaboration in Hobe Sound, Fla. — has two holes already grassed with the new Bermuda.

GN-1 is a hybrid developed from an Australian strain by Aussie Hugh Whiting, who tended to an experimental field of the grass in San Diego starting in 1988. Whiting was so impressed he patented the product. Enter Barnes and Norman, who were so impressed they decided to market the turf nationally.

GN-1 may have bypassed uni-

versity testing but Barnes is no turfgrass renegade. In fact, he holds a degree in ornamental horticulture from the University of Florida. He also spent 12 years as a superintendent, owned his own turf supply and consulting business, Agronomic Resources, from 1983 to 1994, and currently serves as secretary-treasurer of the Florida Turfgrass Association (FTGA).

While it may not have the university stamp of approval, Barnes noted that GN-1 will be one of

the first Bermudagrasses certified by the Florida's new certification process administered by the Southern Seed Certification Association, the FTGA, the University of Florida and Florida Foundation Seed.

"We haven't forced GN-1 on anyone," said Barnes. "Real Mar chose it because they have 419 on another course and have tremendous nematode problems. The people at Sugarloaf chose it because it has better cold tolerance than 419.

"We're not cutting corners. We really feel this grass is an improvement on the norm."

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