

Close to perfect

Collar damage at Maryland's Four Stream Golf Club wasn't a prominent problem until 2009, when the staff used a turbine blower to blow excess topdressing sand onto the collars after aeration. The problem occurred when a heavy rain worked the sand into the canopy and it couldn't be removed. When it hit early June and the temperature started rising, the damage appeared.

"[The] damage started showing up once it got hot in early June," says Tom Harshberger, Four Stream's superintendent.

Because the collars had such large, thinned out areas, they decided to

overseed with P. Ryegrass and bentgrass, as well as spray extra plant growth supplements such as Gibberellic acid. This solved the problem until they decided they wanted to remove the P. Ryegrass. Four Stream decided to deal with the problem until fall of 2011 and spring of 2012. The club sodded the worst areas and then selectively killed the ryegrass with Corsair.

Since then, the collars have improved. To keep them high quality, the club now makes the crew turn the mowers on plastic mats from mid-May through early September.

"The collar region around a green is the area that receives the most traffic on any golf course," says Harshberger. "Also this is one part of the golf course where, if it's not close to perfect, it can affect playability."

Harshberger links the damage of the club's collars directly

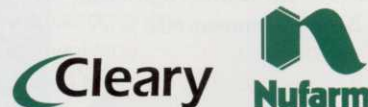


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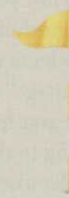


to the use of the turbine blowers, and he says there are probably other superintendents out there doing the same thing. Then, when they notice the damage, they are misdiagnosing it.



“I think other courses have run into collar damage that has been self made but blame it on other factors,” he says. “And this may only be a problem in areas that experience intense summer heat and stress. If it’s not hot, the sand should not create much of a problem. But when it gets hot the sand is very abrasive on the leaf blades and helps create more unwanted stress on the plants.”

What Four Stream found to work best with preventing collar damage was mowing higher. Ever since they have increased the height of the mowers when going around the collars, they have looked great. They also keep any triplexes away from the greens so they have their collar/approach mower mow six passes around each green. This keeps the larger mowers away from the collars. **GCI**



Four Stream Golf Club

Beallsville, Maryland

Tom Harshberger – Superintendent

18-hole, regulation-length course

Private non-equity golf course

71 par – 7,100 yards – 138 slope

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