

Co-operative Action

By tank mixing a variety of broad-spectrum fungicides with different modes of actions, a superintendent can control several turf diseases simultaneously **BY BARBARA MCCABE**

When the television cameras zoom in on Nemacolin Woodlands Resort's Mystic Rock golf course this month at the 84 Lumber Classic, superintendent Brian Anderson will be beaming with pride.

The energetic, young superintendent oversees maintenance of the two 18-hole golf courses at the scenic 2,800-acre resort and spa in Pennsylvania's rugged Laurel Highlands, about 70 miles south of Pittsburgh in Farmington, Pa. He's confident that the turf management practices he employs at Mystic Rock will keep his bentgrass tees, fairways and greens looking as healthy and robust as the players vying for the \$4.4 million purse in this PGA Tour event.

"I manage turf very simply," the 29-year-old Ohio State University graduate says. "My thoughts on it are that it's just grass that wants to grow."

With the 84 Lumber Classic returning to Mystic Rock for the third year in a row, Anderson's simplistic approach to turf management seems to be working.

"The players loved every minute of it," he says of last year's tournament. "They didn't complain once about anything on the golf course."

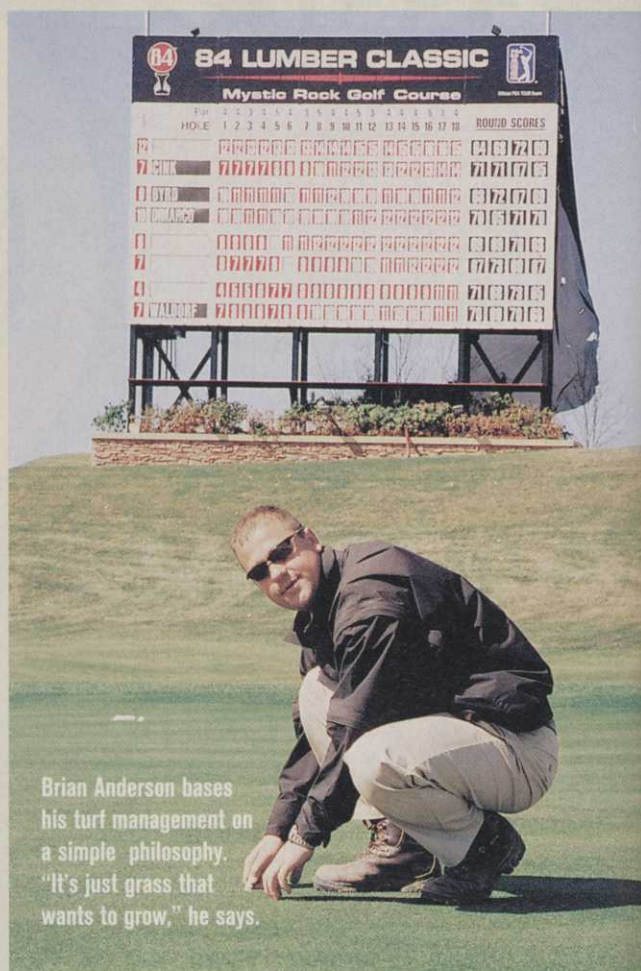
Challenge

The PGA Tour is coming to town. Obviously, a superintendent wants his course to look like a million bucks. That means fighting off turf disease.

Solution

By tank mixing a variety of broad-spectrum fungicides, a superintendent can control a number of diseases at the same time.

Situated at one of the highest points in the Laurel Highlands, the Pete Dye-designed course is about 2,200 feet at its highest point on the 16th hole. The high elevation helps minimize disease problems, reducing the amount of chemicals Anderson uses on the par-7,511-yard layout. But in spite of the altitude at Mystic Rock, Anderson must contend with dollar spot, which thrives in



Brian Anderson bases his turf management on a simple philosophy. "It's just grass that wants to grow," he says.

any type of weather. "Dollar spot doesn't look good on television, and it doesn't make for a good playing surface," says Anderson, who plans his entire disease prevention program around the tournament. "It's a high-stress period for us. We're manicuring our turf more than we normally would. We are more susceptible to disease by stressing out the plant."

Nonetheless, if Anderson sees disease developing on the course in the midst of the tournament, he doesn't panic.

"We don't overspray to compensate for it," he says. "We try to stick with our regular fungicide spray program."

Anderson prefers to use low rates of fungicides with long residual control and supplement the program with cultural practices that combat the disease.

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"You can cut down on your fungicide use by doing simple things like topdressing, aerifying and eliminating thatch," he says. "Eliminating thatch is a big thing for us. Dollar spot loves to grow on it. Another thing is fertilization. The No. 1 way to combat dollar spot for us in this area is to fertilize. We like to keep our nitrogen levels up."

Anderson believes a synergistic effect is created by tank mixing a variety of broad-spectrum fungicides with different modes of actions, which enables him to control a number of different diseases at the same time. By mixing systemic fungicides such as Bayleton and 26GT fungicides from Bayer Environmental Science with a contact product like Daconil from Syngenta Professional Products, Anderson says he achieves the desired control of dollar spot and a host of other diseases.

"It's not just the altitude that prevents us from getting a lot of other diseases up here," Anderson explains. "We tank mix many different things and we use broad-spectrum fungicides. So, while our target may be dollar spot, we get control of a whole lot of other diseases — like anthracnose and summer patch — as well."

For example, spraying a tank mix of Bayleton and Daconil fungicides at the low label rate of 0.5 ounces per 1,000



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square feet each on the fairways of Mystic Rock and the Links, Nemaquin Woodlands' other golf course, Anderson says the courses get 25 days to 30 days of control of dollar spot.

"Daconil knocks down whatever disease is out there and Bayleton picks it up from there and continues to control it for up to 30 days, depending on the time of year," he says.

Again, it's the simple things that Anderson believes work best in combating turf diseases. His simple approach worked well in attracting the PGA event to Nemaquin and it seems to be working well in keeping it coming back. ■

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