

My second piece of advice revolves around worker morale. It's common knowledge that worker morale is higher if the workers have respect, or at least a professional respect, for their bosses. My suggestion to a newly hired superintendent is to display your knowledge after the formal interview. Just because the interview is over and you've secured the job, doesn't mean it's time to stop selling your qualifications.

One superintendent I worked under constantly boasted of the many years he'd put in as "one of us," the normal worker. But he still had a problem convincing me that he knew the difference between a fairway mower and a Zamboni. Because of his lack of knowledge or display of knowledge, many of my coworkers decided it would be just as easy to slack off on detail work because "he'll never notice because he doesn't even know what's right."

Do yourself a favor and sell yourself to the workers. Make them know that if they don't make that green look like a checkerboard, you'll show them how.

My third piece of advice expands on selling yourself. Specifically, sell the product you know you have. One superintendent I worked for sold himself the first day he walked in the door. He told all of us that he did things the right way, and he didn't accept anything less. He promised raises, Christmas bonuses and employee outings to all of us who took our jobs seriously. Everything that came out of his mouth that day landed pin high with me.

But when it came down to reality two months later, his promises had wicked backspin. When nothing he promised panned out, he became a hated individual on our crew. He was gone after less than a season. So when selling yourself, make sure you're selling something you can deliver. Honesty may not get you high fives on the first day of the job, but it will in the long run.

While I only have one suggestion for workers tired of taking orders from a new face every season, it's just as important as the three others. It's crucial

to be patient and accept that no one sees eye-to-eye with his or her boss. While superintendents can do things to dull the pain of this situation, disagreements will arise. Workers must understand that the two sides together must choose whether to make the process a 280-yard par four or a 300-yard par three.

To all you newly hired superinten-

dents, your course may be no Pebble Beach. But with a levelheaded crew along with some sound advice and open communication, the adjustment period will be a day at the beach.

Wagner, a student at the University of Southern Indiana, worked at Oak Meadow GC for six seasons.

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Mark Riggs, the head pro at Country Club of Culpeper (Va.), believes superintendents have turf maintenance in their blood. He should know.

Riggs once aspired to be a superintendent and worked as a spray technician, irrigation technician and assistant superintendent.

But while climbing the ladder to become a head superintendent, Riggs realized he didn't have the agronomic instincts to tend turf with the best of them. He couldn't sense an onslaught of anthracnose like many superintendents can. "If you're not a person in tune with those things, you'll get way behind the eight ball," Riggs says.

Superintendents must look inside their crystal balls, Riggs realizes. They must be prognosticators of weather, disease and anything else on turf maintenance's often hidden horizon.

We've heard tale after tale of how superintendents and pros don't get along and don't respect each other's roles. But Riggs can't be clumped in that category. After getting a taste of golf course maintenance, Riggs knows better.

"They're not just out there mowing and watering," Riggs says of superintendents. "They're at the mercy of Mother Nature and in a very uncontrollable situation."

Golfdom recently polled superintendents on a variety of issues, many of which are featured in this month's *Golfdom Report*. One of the questions we asked superintendents was: How do you get along with your course's pro?

Not surprisingly, Charlie Fultz, superintendent of the Country Club of Culpeper, said he gets along "very well" with Riggs. "Charlie's clear at communicating what he needs, and I'm clear at communicating what I need," Riggs says, explaining the key to their relationship.

Every February, Fultz provides Riggs with a schedule of major maintenance projects for the upcoming season. "And I let him know about the tournament schedule so he doesn't plan maintenance projects during those times," Riggs says.

Riggs has been in the golf business for about 15 years and worked as a pro in Maryland for the first eight years. But Riggs aspired to play competitively on minitours to appease his competitive spirit and earn some money. To do so, however, Riggs knew he'd also need another income

Been There, Done It — Won't Forget It

BY LARRY AYLWARD



**GOLF PRO MARK
RIGGS, WHO ONCE
ASPIRED TO BE A
SUPERINTENDENT,
KNOWS HOW
CHALLENGING THE
PROFESSION CAN BE**

because the cash on tour might not be that lucrative, especially if he didn't win. Riggs moved to Florida, got a job on the maintenance staff at Broken Sound GC in Boca Raton and began to play competitively. At the golf course, he worked in the mornings and practiced in the afternoons.

"I definitely developed an interest in golf course maintenance, and I started taking turf classes through the Florida GCSA," Riggs says.

After one and a half years at Boca Raton, Riggs was promoted to assistant superintendent, a title he held for about a year. But he realized he'd hit his personal ceiling for golf course maintenance. When a head pro job came calling at a resort course in Naples, Fla., Riggs opted out of turf maintenance. "It would have been tough for me to get to the next level to be a superintendent like Charlie," he says.

Riggs is impressed with Fultz's uncanny ability to spot trouble before it arrives. One time, Riggs says Fultz came to him and told him the greens were in trouble. "I said to him, 'What do you mean? I just played the course yesterday, and the greens looked great,'" Riggs recalls. "But about two days later, the greens came down with a mild case of anthracnose."

It was like Radar O'Reilly hearing the choppers before anyone else could. Riggs was impressed with Fultz's flair for forecasting. "I look at Charlie and appreciate that he's at a level I can't achieve."

Riggs has been at Culpeper for three and a half years. In his career, he has seen pros and superintendents at other courses who don't get along. He's thankful that he and Fultz are colleagues on the same mission: the golf course's success.

Riggs doesn't have turf maintenance in his blood. But, in his brain, he knows how important it is to a course's overall operation.

Editor Larry Aylward can be reached at 440-891-2770 or larryward@advanstar.com.

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"Floratine made a believer out of me"

There are so many vendors out there pushing "quick fixes" that it breeds skepticism, so I had serious doubt about Floratine products performing as well as advertised.

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The Floratine approach is certainly more than just a good product. It is a system of testing to determine specific needs, application of great products, and personal involvement by Floratine.

While they may not be a cure all, I am firmly convinced that, along with a solid cultural program, the products can make greens healthier and jobs less stressful.

Floratine has made a believer out of me.

- Fred Theus, Superintendent
Ocean Forest Golf Club
Sea Island, GA (Walker Cup, 2001)



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CIRCLE NO. 114

Shades Of Green

OPINION

I love the PGA Tour's media campaign, "These Guys Are Good!" This series of somewhat self-indulgent promotions extols the golfing prowess of its members with clips of chips, putts, eagles and aces rolling into the cup from great distances and unbelievable lies.

Then there's the computer-enhanced vignette with David Toms lobbing wedges at his rooftop satellite dish and the balls rolling back to his feet though the gutters and downspout. All this is good-natured hype to affirm that in fact these guys are pretty darn good at what they do.

They are also lucky. I watched K. J. Choi pull his approach shot so far left during the Tampa Bay Classic that the gallery, the marshals and even the trees were ducking for cover. But as rub of the green would have it, Choi's ball "expertly" caromed off the cart path and ended up 10 to 12 feet from the pin. I don't think that highlight will be featured in the next promo clip.

You have to admit these guys are at least persistent when Bob Burns, No. 118 on the tour, goes low for four straight days to win the Disney Classic from a hard-charging Tiger Woods and rising star Chris DiMarco.

But these pros don't have anything on the unsung stars of the game, the superintendents. If we only had to go low on the greens for four days instead of a whole season, maybe we'd have more winning days, too.

While announcers are doing a little better job of mentioning superintendents by name at the end of broadcasts, I would love to see some footage of superintendents and their staffs in action doing some tournament prep or recovery during weather catastrophes. It would go a long way in educating the golfing public about what it takes to present those flawless conditions during tournament week, and why it might just not be possible to accomplish that 365 days a year.

Like the golf pros, superintendents perform incredible feats manipulating manpower and equipment in an intricate ballet of motion designed to produce near perfection when the curtain rises on the first tee

These Guys Are Good, Too

BY JOEL JACKSON



THE PROS DON'T
HAVE ANYTHING ON
SUPERINTENDENTS,
THE GAME'S
UNSUNG STARS

time of round one of a tournament. Weeks and months of preparation by the maintenance staff precede that moment. Just as the pros practice their swings and shot-making endlessly, turf managers practice their turf grooming art over and over, getting more proficient with each attempt.

Like the pros, to be good is not always enough; sometimes you have to be lucky. Maybe the mechanic catches the hydraulic hose leak during routine maintenance. That's being good. But if it blows out in the middle of operating, maybe it happens on the back edge of the green. That's being lucky.

As for persistence, you won't find too many superintendents who don't embody the virtue. Just like those pros trying to make the top 125 on the money list, the superintendent ranks are filled with grinders who keep plugging away against the odds of meeting high expectations feeding on beer budgets.

The improbable birdies and eagles shown in the PGA Tour commercials are momentary fortunate perfection — one shot in one round of golf in a tournament. It begs the question of why we call these guys good when they are rarely so perfect. Conversely, one has to wonder why superintendents take so much heat if they also only momentarily reach total perfection on the golf course a few times during the season.

Day in and day out, superintendents provide good playing surfaces worldwide under a variety of conditions that require skill, persistence and even a little luck. Just remember — when the trophies are handed out, these guys are good, too.

Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.

WHAT THE ROUGH LOOKS LIKE TO LESSER UTILITY MOWERS.

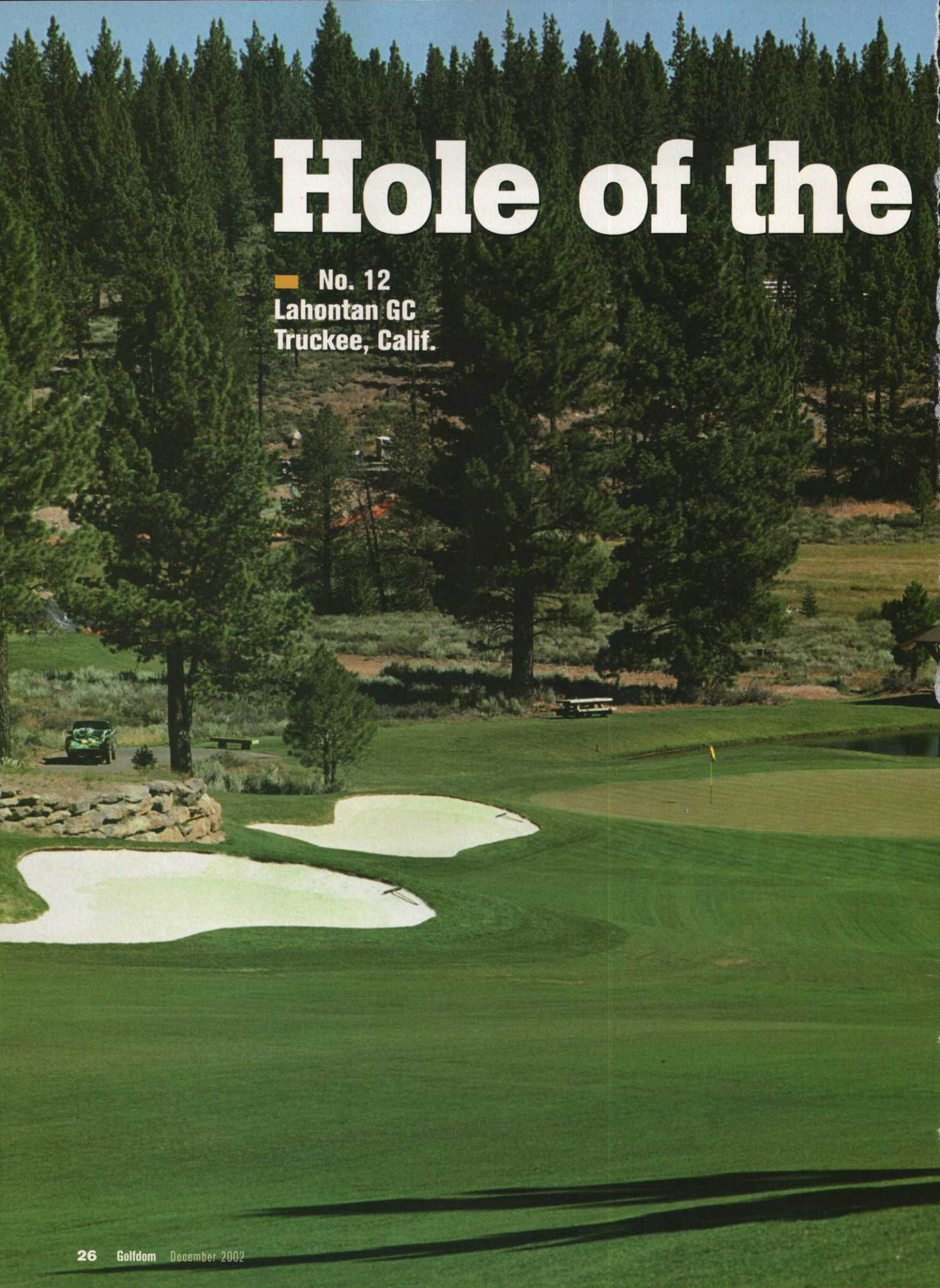


The rough can indeed be rough on a trim mower, especially one that has a problem with balance. But the John Deere 2653A Utility Mower is a machine born of stability and simplicity. It features wide, low profile turf tires for excellent stability and superior performance in rugged conditions. For extra traction, a standard hydraulic weight transfer comes to the rescue. And the reel pump and cutting unit motor sizes have been increased for better cutting performance. The 2653A is also anything but rough on the operator: an adjustable high-back seat, power steering, and 2-pedal traction drive make for a comfortable yet productive day on the course. To test drive the machine that makes mole hills out of mountains, visit your local John Deere distributor.



Hole of the

■ No. 12
Lahontan GC
Truckee, Calif.



Month

Watch That Water

Water plays many roles at the par-5, 12th hole at Lahontan GC in Truckee, Calif.

The lake which stands to the right of the green on the 594-yard hole serves as a hazard for golfers, a fishing hole for the surrounding housing complex and a scenic picnic spot (complete with a grill) for everyone. It is also the lake that causes certified superintendent Kevin Breen the most maintenance headaches.

“Because it serves so many different functions, you have to be careful about how you take care of it,” Breen says. “The lake needs to be clear so golfers and homeowners can enjoy the scenery.”

At the same time, the lake is stocked with trout, which provides a great fishing hole for the locals, Breen says.

“We are quite aware of the responsibility we have to keep that lake free from runoff,” Breen says.

“That’s why we only use organic fertilizers around its edges. You must prevent chemicals from killing off the fish.”


Golfdom’s Hole of the Month is presented in partnership with:

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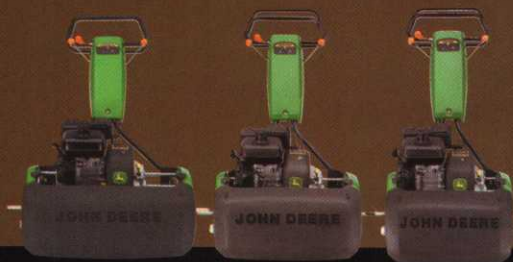
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Timing *is* Everything

Transitional ryegrass finds its place in the overseeding market

BY PETER BLAIS

Okeehelie GC in West Palm Beach, Fla., traditionally had problems with its bermudagrass fairways thinning every winter because of high traffic, dry weather and other environmental factors.

Paul Hickman, vice president of One Source Landscape and Golf Services, whose firm maintains the course, feared that if the fairways were overseeded with perennial ryegrass — which many Southern courses use to overseed fairways, tees and roughs — its inbred resistance to heat would cause it to survive longer into the spring and early summer than he wanted. “That means a bad transition, with thin turf or no turf in the areas where the ryegrass has gotten so strong that bermudagrass is shaded out,” Hickman explains.

But last fall Hickman overseeded with a transitional ryegrass from Pickseed West called Transist 2200. “The biggest advantage of using it was its quick establishment, and that it didn’t

tolerate the heat as well as perennial ryegrasses,” Hickman says. “It did just what we wanted it to. It colored the fairways, gave us some density and died out at the right time of the year.”

Transitional ryegrass, also called intermediate ryegrass, is a cross between perennial and annual ryegrass, according to Pickseed West General Manager Jerry Pepin, whose company is selling “millions of pounds” of intermediate ryegrass annually. Its darker-green color and finer-leaf texture (compared to annual ryegrass) approaches that of perennial ryegrass. But it has an annual ryegrass growth habit, germinating quickly in the fall and dying off earlier in the spring when warmer weather arrives, allowing the awakening bermudagrass to take over. Just how early it dies off depends on weather and management practices.

Pickseed West has undertaken significant research and recently obtained patents on its breeding process and transitional ryegrass varieties, Pepin says. It is marketing three brands: Transist, Transist 2200 and Transeze. To soften the springtime transition from ryegrass

Continued on page 30

Transitional ryegrass colors up fairways fast in the winter. But it will die out quickly when warm weather arrives, allowing bermudagrass to take over.

PICKSEED WEST

Transitional Ryegrass



PICKSEED WEST

Transitional ryegrass establishes quickly. One superintendent said his overseeded course had germination in five days, and he and his crew were mowing 14 days after germination.

Continued from page 29

grass to bermudagrass, these improved intermediates can be blended with some perennial ryegrass to keep the turf green until the bermudagrass resumes active growth.

Other intermediates include Pennington Seed's Professional Select QT (Quicker Transition) and Turf Merchants' Froghair. Seed Research of Oregon (SRO) is experimenting with its own transitional varieties and plans to market Pickseed's products as well, according to SRO Research Director Leah Brillman.

Certified superintendent Patrick Burgess, project manager for recreation centers at Sun City West's seven courses outside Phoenix, says he first heard about Pickseed's transitional ryegrasses four years ago.

"The reason to change over was mainly because more of our residents are living here year round," he says. "They can't tolerate hard transitions in the summer. This is a tool I'm using to try to alleviate some of those summer problems."

Burgess overseeds the transitional ryes on the tees, fairways and roughs.

"We do our normal bermudagrass preparation in the fall to make sure the seed gets down into the soil by verticutting and lowering mowing heights," he says. "We start overseeding Sept. 23 for the first four courses and then reopen them Oct. 14. Then we close the last three and overseed them. So we're overseeding for six weeks here. We always have to have some courses open."

John Hoffman, superintendent of golf course and common grounds at Heritage Springs Golf and CC in New Port Richey, Fla., says he first used Pickseed West's Transist on his 18-hole course in 2000.

"We overseed in early November," he adds. "We used 325 pounds per acre on fairways and roughs last year. We had germination in five days and mowed 14 days after germination."

Pepin says superintendents can use any traditional seeding method from drop spreaders to air seeders. The water, mowing and fertilization requirements are the same as with perennial ryegrass.

Once established, transitional ryegrass management practices are the same as for perennials, according to Russ Nicholson, national sales manager for Pennington Seed. "The original transitional grasses [which were first developed in the early 1980s] had to be mowed more, but the new ones don't need to be," he says.

In addition to their main attribute of giving way quickly to the underlying warm-season grass in the spring, transitional ryegrasses also germinate exceptionally fast in the fall. With warm soil and adequate moisture, they germinate in five to seven days, notes Pepin, and at temperatures ranging from as low as 22 degrees F to as high as 90 degrees F, adds Heritage Springs' Hoffman. They are durable, standing up to the wear and tear of an average 220 rounds a day at 6,100-yard Heritage Springs.

But, when choosing whether to overseed with transitional or perennial ryegrass, there are those who question whether intermediate ryegrass's major attribute — a quicker spring-time transition — is worth what most agree is, at least, a slightly inferior color and texture than the best perennial ryegrasses.

"With the intermediates, you are giving up color and texture for a week to 10 days of earlier transition," says Steve Tubbs, president of Turf Merchants, who believes the attention being paid to transitional ryegrasses represents a fad rather than a trend. "You also have to