



Overseeding Trends in the Southwest

By: Pat Gross, USGA Green Section

Perennial ryegrass overseeding is a popular program in the fall at many locations in the Southwest, especially in the resort areas of Palm Springs, Phoenix, and Las Vegas. Every course has a slightly different program due to their location, needs of the course, climate, clientele, and personal preferences. The following is a brief review of the overseeding practices at five courses in the Southwest Region.

Desert Mountain, Scottsdale, Arizona: Shawn Emerson, Director of Golf Course Maintenance for Desert Mountain Properties, scheduled overseeding on their five courses between September 15th and October 15th. All tees, fairways, and rough areas received 600 lbs. of seed per acre with an additional 150 to 200 lbs. per acre in the fairway landing zones. To reduce *Poa annua* establishment in the overseeded areas, Shawn experimented with a preemergence application of prodiamine (*Barricade*) on the Geronimo course. Perennial ryegrass establishment was good on all the courses this year, and Shawn does not see any need for additional seeding going into winter to sweeten up the fairways.

Thunderbird Country Club, Rancho Mirage, California:

Roger Compton at Thunderbird Country Club in

the Palm Springs area overseeded his Tifdwarf hybrid bermudagrass greens during the week of October 11th with a combination of 18 lbs. perennial ryegrass, 8 lbs. *Poa trivialis*, and 1-1/4 lbs. creeping bentgrass per 1000 sq. ft. The tees, fairways, and rough were overseeded the following week at 650 lbs. per acre with an additional 250 to 350 lbs. on the fairways. Roger said the weather was ideal in the middle of October, and the course had great conditions for opening day.

The Springs Club, Rancho Mirage, California:

Mike Kocour, next door to Thunderbird Country Club at the Springs Club, had a slightly different program. Since Mike will be planting new bermudagrass next year, he sprayed all the fairways and rough with glyphosate in late September and seeded during the first week of October. With the broadcast spreader wide open, Mike said he got a rate of 581 lbs. per acre. An additional 200 lbs. of seed was applied to the fairways in the middle of October to increase turf density and compensate for any weak areas. Fortunately, weather conditions were very good during October, and the early seeding date allowed for a few weeks of additional growth and tillering prior the opening day on November 6th.

Angel Park Golf Courses, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Bill Rohret CGCS, Director of Golf Course Maintenance at the Angel Park Golf Courses, oversees two 18-hole courses and a 9-hole Par-3 course. Seeding dates were staggered to reduce the amount of time the courses were out of play. Seeding began on August 26th on the Mountain Course at a rate of 500 lbs. per acre on the tees, fairways and rough, with an additional 200 lbs. in the high traffic areas. The Mountain Course retained approximately 70% of the perennial ryegrass overseeding from the previous year, and this year's seeding helped boost the density. The Palm Course has a stronger bermudagrass base and was seeded the first week of September. Growth regulator was applied the last week of August and the course was seeded at the same rate as the Mountain course. Each course was closed 8 days for seeding and establishment. The Cloud Nine Par 3 course was seeded October 1st, and not shut down during seeding or establishment.

Big Canyon Country Club, Newport Beach, California:

Big Canyon hosted the USGA Women's Mid-Amateur Championship during the first week of October, and Jeff Beardsley had to hold off on seeding until the week of October 16th. The hybrid

bermudagrass fairways were prepared by simply lowering the cutting height from 3/8" to _" followed by dragging and sweeping to remove debris. Seed was broadcast at 375 lbs. per acre. The goal of their program is to provide some winter color without compromising the bermudagrass base. The course was closed for two weeks during seeding and establishment, up from two days the prior year. The extra time for establishment made a big difference in overseeding quality this year.

The Five Keys to Overseeding Success:

As you can see, there are many different methods to overseed the golf course, but the key to success lies in five main factors:

1. Timing – Overseeding should be scheduled when bermudagrass growth begins to slow and temperatures are still ideal for seed germination and establishment. Daytime temperatures should be 80-83°F with night temperatures around 55°F. Seeding before or after the recommended time period runs the risk of poor germination or excessive competition with bermudagrass. Unfortunately, most courses must schedule overseeding based on opening dates and tournament schedules. This year, temperatures were ideal for overseeding establish-

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ment, but other years they are not. When you use the calendar system, you take your chances.

2. **Irrigation system** – It is essential to have an efficient and dependable irrigation system to accurately water the overseeded turf several times during the day for proper seeding germination. Without such a system, all money spent on seed and supplies would be wasted.

3. **Seed rate** - A minimum seeding rate of 300 lbs. per acre is normally required for adequate turf density during the winter.

4. **Equipment** - Light weight mowers should be used to cut the seedling turf to prevent wheel ruts on the wet fairway soils and to avoid tearing the shallow rooted turf out of the ground.

5. **Traffic control** – All carts should be kept off the overseeded fairways a minimum of six to eight weeks. There is a direct correlation between turf quality and the amount of traffic allowed on the overseeded turf.

It is important to finish by saying that overseeding is not for everyone. While the winter playing quality is very good, there are significant costs involved for the purchase of the seed, additional water, fertilizer, labor and wear on equipment compared to courses that do not overseed in the winter. Summer playing quality can also be compromised if the overseeded grass persists well into the summer. Each course should carefully consider if overseeding is in their best interest.

Get Work Published in Sports Illustrated

GCSAA has a wonderful opportunity to have one of its member's work publicized in Sports Illustrated. The magazine is pursuing a project in which it will cover a golf course restoration/renovation project from start to finish. It will look at all aspects from the decision-making process to completion. We are asking for your assistance in identifying any such projects. The only requirements are the facility must be located in the sunbelt region of the U.S. or the southwest or west coast. The facility can be anything from a nine-hole municipal to a high end private club.

Please respond to GCSAA Director of Communications Jeff Bollig at 800-472-7878, ext. 430 or jbollig@gcsaa.org should you know of any such project

GCSAA Conference and Show Update

GCSAA's 72nd International Golf Course Conference and Show will be held Feb. 11-18, 2001 in the Dallas Convention Center, Dallas, Texas.

Have you reserved your spot at the conference and show? The big event may be more than three months away, but hotel rooms and education seminars are already quickly selling out.

GCSAA's Dallas web site is your comprehensive source for the latest information about the conference and show. You'll find details on everything from the six championship courses, to special guest activities, to all the forms you need to register for the conference. In order to use the stored list functions (my trade show favorites & personal planner) you will need to register on the conference and show site.

<http://www.golfcourseshow.com/reg2001.html>

If you haven't yet made a hotel reservation, you need to act quickly! Call GCSAA Travel at (800) 442-7220 to make your hotel reservations and other travel arrangements for the Dallas Conference and Show. You can find detailed information on each of the hotels by visiting the show web site at:

<http://www.gcsaa.org/2001confer/travel/hotels/hotelmap.html>

Would you like to plan your itinerary before you get to Dallas? The "Personal Planner" available online can do just that. As you browse through titles of events, you can click the box on those events you are interested in attending and add them to your planner. When you are ready to leave, use one of the print buttons located above and below your planner to get a print out of all the events you selected.

You can learn more about your "Personal Planner" here:

<http://www.gcsaa.org/2001confer/events/events.html>

The GCSAA Foundation's fifth annual Silent Auction is nearly underway! Take the time to browse through the listings and choose your products. Online bidding begins on Jan. 8, 2001, and closes on Feb. 17, 2001. All proceeds from the Silent Auction benefit applied on-course research and educational initiatives funded by The Foundation. Check out the silent auction items:

<http://auction.gcsaa.org>