

## TURF TALK

### TRANSITION: WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE GOLF COURSE?

#### What is Transition?

The golf course goes through a period of 'Transition' every year. This Transition is a result of growing 2 different crops of grass / turf for year-round golf. 'Transition' is the term that refers to the process in which the Golf Course Maintenance team works to remove the winter grass, *ryegrass*, and promote the re-growth of the summer grass, *bermudagrass*. Every year this process is different. Mother Nature is the biggest determinant of its success, and some years are more difficult than others. Understand, the primary goals of the Golf Maintenance team are to 1) minimize the 'pain' of this 'Transition' process along with 2) develop a mature crop of bermudagrass that goes into FALL overseeding in strong healthy condition.

#### WHY don't we let this process happen 'naturally' vs the aerification, changing mow heights, and applying selective herbicides, etc...?

What we are really deciding is.... Are we going to take a proactive approach toward Transition or passive approach toward Transition. By taking a proactive mind-set...lowering heights of cut, making heavy applications of fertilizers, increasing irrigation cycles, increasing aerification, and making use of selective herbicides to remove the ryegrass...we are actively trying to eliminate the competition of ryegrass and allow the bermudagrass to grow unimpeded. By waiting, allowing this process to happen naturally, the ryegrass remains in competition with the underlying bermudagrass for light, air, fertilizer, and water. This delays the recovery of the bermudagrass. Being proactive puts the golf course in a ready position for the familiar warm-humid days of July, August.

#### WHY at this time of year?

In a more passive-natural transition, the ryegrass typically dies out by the middle-end of July. The warmer temperatures and higher humidity create less favorable growing conditions for the ryegrass, and it begins to decline dramatically. However, waiting until the end of July to begin this process only allows for 8-10 weeks of bermudagrass recovery prior to the overseeding process in the FALL. Remember, one of our goals is to have a mature crop of bermudagrass before going into FALL overseeding. Actively removing the ryegrass in the middle of April, early May, increases the recuperative potential of bermudagrass and lengthens the growing season of the summer grass.

#### HOW 'bad' will golf condition be during the 'Transition' back to bermudagrass? What can 'I' as a golfer expect to experience?

In all honesty, it will not be the most enjoyable time to play golf. The golf course will be 'squishy' under the tires of your golf cart from increased irrigation cycles. There will be the inconvenience of aeration

'plugs' being pulled in attempts to increase air-water flow to the plant roots. There will be bare, 'muddy' areas where bermudagrass hasn't completely recovered, creating additional challenging 'lies' for the golf ball. There may be areas that will require sod. There will likely be brown, dead-patches where ryegrass has died but bermudagrass hasn't had opportunity to fill in.

### **HOW long will this process take?**

It is my expectation that the 'Transition' process this year should be similar to previous years. By the end of June, early July we should have a good stand of bermudagrass. It won't be 100% covered but close. The proactive attitude toward ryegrass removal gets us on the right track. Of course, there are never any guarantees when dealing with Mother Nature that things will go smoothly. Thanks for your patience during this challenging agronomic season.