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Turf *Twisters*

Q: At times during the spring, our rough presents very challenging playing conditions. If it rains, it seems that the grass grows faster than we can mow it. The Green Committee wants me to lower the height of cut (currently 2.5 inches), but I don't want to predispose the turf to dam-

age later in the season. How can this issue be addressed without causing a problem? (Pennsylvania)

A: Although many of the golfers want mowing height reductions, it may be more of a mowing frequency issue. Mowing is a variable that can be controlled, but if

the turf is mowed too low, uncontrollable variables such as weather may deal the final blow and turf loss can occur. Consider mowing the most frequently played areas of rough more frequently during the spring. For example, this may involve mowing the rough on one particular side of a

sloping fairway, or the rough around the greens one additional time during the week. Depending upon the grass species in the rough, there may be some flexibility regarding the height of cut. However, for a short period of time, try reducing the interval between mowings rather than the height of cut.

Q: Our club is scheduled to renovate the greens and collars this year. We have observed other course renovations where the bermudagrass collar encroached several inches into the new greens before they were even opened. Surely, there is a technique that can prevent this problem. Encroachment is one of the reasons we are resurfacing in the first place. (Texas)



A: Encroachment during grow-in is a major problem that, quite frankly, is very seldom managed as aggressively as needed. Often, it's accepted as inevitable by many courses. After the collar is sodded, apply a band of glyphosate about 2 inches wide on the inside edge next to the green. This prevents runner/rhizome encroachment during establishment, yet the banded area will

completely grow back before the bentgrass seeding or bermudagrass sprigging matures. Often, two applications at 30-day intervals are needed to prevent regrowth during green establishment. This process works well for bermudagrass or zoysiagrass collars.

Q: We are an older golf course with a small practice tee. Recently, another course in a similar situation converted its practice tee to bermudagrass, even though their fairways are perennial ryegrass. Why would anyone want a practice tee grass that is different from their fairway? (Maryland)

A: When you have a small tee, it is difficult to recover from divots, especially dur-

ing the summer months. Bermudagrass grows aggressively, while creeping bentgrass and perennial ryegrass do not. The tee can be overseeded with perennial ryegrass in early fall to provide a better winter and spring surface, although traffic levels need to be regulated during late fall and winter. Although bermudagrass may not match your fairway, it is better than practicing from artificial mats or dirt



because your cool-season grass does not recover well during the summer months. Prominent courses as far

north as Philadelphia have used bermudagrass with success on their practice tees.