

October  
2018

# TURF TALK

Fall/Winter

## Fall/Winter Season

With the number of Villages residents rising every single day, it is more evident than ever that our golf courses need to be taken to the next level of consistency and sustainability in regards to turf conditions throughout the year. Therefore, the practice of overseeding will be implemented in very limited fashion on specific areas of our championship golf courses in 2018. All other areas will instead be utilizing low rates of nutrients and pigments throughout the winter months to help maintain turf color and enhance growth. It is believed that the negative side effects of overseeding far outweigh the positive aspects, in regards to long term playability, sustainability, and overall health of our golf courses.

For the next few months as Fall approaches and cooling weather accompanies it, we can expect to see our golf courses continue to get stronger and healthier. What we will not see are extended course closures due to overseeding practices, nor will we see excessive amounts of water being put out onto the courses to help with the grow in process. We will need the help of our residents in order to achieve the goals that we have set. Simple things can go a long way on the golf course when it comes to helping us be good stewards of our golf courses. Recognizing wear patterns in high traffic areas and avoiding those areas will be key. Diligently repairing divots and fixing ball marks will play a major role. Adhering to signage, deacon beacon placement, and parking posts will help to keep those sensitive areas in good shape. Lastly, helping to educate fellow golfers and fellow residents on these practices is going to be very important in order to keep our movements going in the right direction.

## What is Overseed?

Overseeding is the process of implementing cool climate tolerant grasses to help combat growth and appearance when our Bermuda grass goes dormant in the fall and winter. While there are many positives to adding overseed and it is something that has been done on golf courses for decades, recently there have been large movements to replace this method with other practices. This is especially true for those facilities that desire consistent turf conditions and sustainability throughout the entire year. These alternatives have been referred to as "liquid overseed" where the traditional seed is replaced by nutrients for growth and various pigments to assist with color. For research and more information on overseed practices and other discussions, visit [www.usga.org](http://www.usga.org).



## Winter Reminders

- ◆ Repair ball marks on the green, no matter how big or small.
- ◆ Help each other by filling those divots with sand provided.
- ◆ Keep all 4 tires on path when parking.
- ◆ Be mindful of cart signs and stakes on the course.
- ◆ Don't forget to rake the bunkers and keep the rakes inside the bunkers.

**Be sure to open your window of time and course to maximize your tee time request success!**

Your courses proudly maintained by:



# Sustainability Is the Name of the Game

Alternatives to overseeding will be implemented to keep championship courses sustainable all year round.

By **RICKEY CRAIG**  
Director of Golf Maintenance

Much like the change of the seasons, industry changes are inevitable.

The golf industry is one that has changed quite a bit over the years, from rules, to course playability, and everything in between. One change in particular is the way that golf courses, especially in the Southeast, are trending away from the traditional practice of overseeding.



**Rickey Craig** Overseeding is the process of implementing

cool-climate grasses to help combat growth and appearance when our Bermuda grass goes dormant in the fall and winter. While there are positives to adding overseed and it is something that has been done on golf courses for decades, recently there have been large movements to replace this method with other practices.

This is especially true for those facilities that desire consistent turf conditions and sustainability throughout the entire year.

With the number of Villages residents rising every single day, it has become evident that our championship golf courses are in need of being in that category of consistent and sustainable turf conditions throughout the year. Therefore, the practice of overseeding will be implemented in very limited fashion on specific areas of our golf courses in 2018.

All other areas will instead be utilizing low rates of nutrients and pigments throughout the winter months to help maintain turf color and enhance growth. It is believed



Belle Glade Country Club is one of the most scenic championship courses in The Villages.

George Horsford | Daily Sun

that the negative side effects of overseeding far outweigh the positive aspects, in regards to long-term playability, sustainability, and overall health of our golf courses.

We realize that with change, comes concern. So what are some concerns with not overseeding during the winter months? Will the tee boxes and fairways hold up to lots of play and maintain good density? Can consistent roll and speed be achieved on the greens? Will turf quality, presentation, and overall playability be acceptable in the eyes of our golfers?

Over the last two years, there have been trial runs of not overseeding on a select few courses in The Villages and through that, along with other practices, the vast majority of these concerns have been laid to rest.

Even after arguably one of

the coldest and wettest winters to date in 2017/18, which are Bermuda grass's worst nightmare conditions, the overall health and playability for the trial areas exceeded those that were overseeded as normal. There were slight challenges with some high traffic areas, but those were alleviated with diversion and other strategies.

As for the positive aspects of the alternatives to overseeding, there is quite the list, beginning with year-round sustainable course conditions and health. Simply put, the labor efforts and resources are used to promote healthy Bermuda grass instead of implementing and removing overseed.

There no longer will be course closures due to overseed implementation nor will there be the not-so-desirable course conditions during the spring

"transition" period when the overseed is dying off.

The use of irrigation will be drastically reduced as the grow-in and maintenance of the overseed will not be needed. The competition for sunlight, water, and nutrients between the Bermuda grass and overseed will be eliminated. The weed population will be controlled better due to having the ability to treat them more aggressively without the worry of killing the overseed. Lastly and possibly most important is that the labor efforts that it takes to implement, maintain, and remove overseed will be reallocated to other important areas such as improvement projects for overall golf course quality.

Here in The Villages, we are already an industry leader in rounds of golf played and number of golf holes. So we

believe that is time to be industry leaders in golf course quality and condition to go along with our impressive numbers. While we do realize that there will be challenges along the way, we believe that is in the best interest of championship golf in The Villages to make these strides towards having high quality golf courses all year.

Also in light of having the highest quality golf courses, our 2018 summer projects have exceeded our expectations!

With a lot of help from Mother Nature, we have been able to keep everything on schedule and keep the new grass growing. Tierra Del Sol has received all new Tif-Eagle Bermuda grass greens, which is believed to be some of the highest quality and toughest Bermuda grass in the industry today. Tierra

has also had all of its bunkers redone with new sand. Over at Lopez Legacy, many similar projects have taken place on the Ashley Meadows course, with all new Tif-Eagle greens and new bunkers. The driving range at Palmer Legends has been resodded with a more sustainable Bermuda grass and received all new paver work in the teeing mat area. The completion of the remodel for the No. 9 green of the Pensacola course at Bonifay is also in total effect. The green and the surrounding area were reshaped and cleared out for a unique, golfer-friendly experience. There are also several smaller projects still underway that will help to further enhance the experience at our top notch facilities.

For the next few months as Fall approaches and cooling weather accompanies it, we can expect to see our golf courses continue to get stronger and healthier. What we will not see are extended course closures due to overseeding practices, nor will we see excessive amounts of water being put out onto the courses to help with the grow in process. We will need the help of our residents in order to achieve the goals that we have set. Simple things can go a long way on the golf course when it comes to helping us be good stewards of our golf courses. Recognizing wear patterns in high traffic areas and avoiding those areas will be key. Diligently repairing divots and fixing ball marks will play a major role. Adhering to signage, deacon beacon placement, and parking posts will help to keep those sensitive areas in good shape. Lastly, helping to educate fellow golfers and fellow residents on these practices is going to be very important in order to keep our movements going in the right direction.

Always remember that your Hometown superintendents are working tirelessly behind the scenes to accomplish these objectives, please take a moment to thank them next time you see one on the course!