



by Doug Brede, Ph.D.

Tips and Techniques from the Superintendent's Roundtable

At the Golf Industry Show each year, Jacklin Golf hosts a superintendent's roundtable discussion of current issues in golf management. The roundtable is an outgrowth of the smoke-filled hospitality rooms at the Penn State Nittany Lion Inn of 30 years ago, where golf superintendents would gather to share experiences and solve problems.

Understandably, the number of superintendents at these roundtables is limited for practical reasons. This year 17 superintendents and builders participated. As a benefit to our readers, your humble scribe took notes of the discussions and summarized them below.

Utah

Brian Schafer of The Ledges Golf Club opened the discussion with a description of the launch of his new course in St. George, UT. Situated atop dramatic red-rock mountains of the Arizona Plateau in Southern Utah's Western corner, The Ledges golf course was designed by Matt Dye with a housing development surrounding the golf course. T-1 was chosen for the greens due its growth habit and strong performance in the Las Vegas area. St. George is situated in Utah's banana belt adjacent to Arizona with summers often reaching 105 to 110°, but local golf courses are cool-season grasses.

Schafer's greens began as straight sand with USGA-approved particle sizes. He applied organic, 7-7-7 fertilizer, and 2 lbs. N per 1000 ft² from Polyon on the surface and tilled it in. Greens were seeded to T-1 creep-



The Ledges Golf Club, a top new T-1 course in St. George, UT, managed by superintendent Brian Schafer.

ing bent at 1.5 lbs. per 1000 ft².

"We used hose-end sprayers to bring up the seedlings. We were still getting the bugs worked out of the irrigation system," he says. "By 12 days we were mowing. The challenge really came in June and early July when we were syringing only. But the T-1 came through just great."

At opening day Schafer was mowing at .100 inch and has experimented with going even lower. The first season they put through 35,000 rounds of golf. He aerifies with ¼-inch hollow tines on 2-inch spacing and applies mainly iron for color. For topdressing Schafer relies on the same greens mix and applies topdressing lightly.

Schafer was asked if he had any trouble working topdressing through T-1's dense canopy. He relayed a tip that a couple superintendents in the room had tried. "We apply the topdressing and then lightly verticut. It does a marvelous job of working in the sand. Next day, you can't even tell we were there. The only down-side is that you wear out a set of verticut blades faster."

Schafer particularly likes T-1's quick greenup in the spring, because it extends the golfing season. "T-1 starts to grow here in the spring as soon as soil temps reach the upper 30's to low 40's – a lot earlier than other bents. There's been some talk at our course about putting in another 18. If they build it, I'd definitely go with T-1 again," he says.

Illinois

Frank Heery of Westmoreland Country Club in Wilmette, IL, has gone from superintendent to course renovator. Westmoreland CC, which was ranked among the top courses in America prior to renovation, took the bold step of closing the course to gas-and-re-grass to modern varieties.

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"I've put Alpha through its paces here at Westmoreland and have found no chinks in its armor," says Frank Heery, superintendent of Westmoreland Country Club, Wilmette, IL. "I'm excited about its possibilities with low fertility management."

"We noticed **Alpha** bentgrass growing on a nearby public course and were impressed by its performance. Ball marks are a big issue to us and we were looking for something with better healing," says Heery.

Westmoreland selected **Alpha** for the greens but at the last minute blended in a couple other varieties in smaller proportion. "It was a political decision to add those other varieties," he says. "I wanted straight **Alpha**. Fortunately we haven't seen any mottling in the year and a half these greens have been growing."

During grow-in, Heery caught clippings on the greens every 3 mows, allowing the other mowings to help build up an organic layer on the surface. He top-dressed every 10 days at a heavy rate until the greens firmed up.

Ohio

Don Sutton of Kinsale Golf & Fitness Club manages **L-93** in the dollar spot belt of central Ohio. Don has a few tricks up his sleeve for getting the most out of his **L-93**.

"**L-93** performs excellent here. We see almost no dollar spot at all on the course, including the fairways," he says. **L-93** also does well at their sister course nearby which irrigates with effluent water.

For peak performance of his **L-93**, Sutton uses smooth rollers on his Flex 21 greens mowers in midsummer and grooved rollers in spring and fall. He flips down brushes on his greens mowers almost every day.

Of particular note are Sutton's greens collars. "The collars are always the toughest place to grow grass," he says. Sutton mows his collars at .500 inch and attributes his success to turning his greens mowers on wooden sheets.

"We drag these 1/8 inch Luan sheets from Home Depot from green to green and do all of our turning on them rather than on the collars. You'd be surprised what that can do for the performance of collars." Several in the audience who had visited Don's course nodded in agreement.



"It has been exciting to witness Kinsale challenge visiting PGA Tour professionals as much as some of the courses they play on tour," says Sutton.

Doug's Bluegrass Top-4 List

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For sales, it's sometimes handy to know the top four Jacklin Seed varieties in each of several categories. This is good ammunition for instances where you are asked to create a "dream-team" 4-way blend against a certain pest or for a specific



maintenance situation. Varieties appear with the top Jacklin Kentucky bluegrass performer listed first.

Mowing

Close mowing: Award, Impact, Nu Destiny, Tsunami

Sports height mowing: Freedom III, Nu Destiny, EverGlade, Tsunami

Lawn-height mowing, unirrigated: Nu Destiny, Award, Impact, EverGlade

Least topgrowth (shortest height): Freedom III, Everest, Chicago II, Liberator

Shade

Tree shade: Rambo, Award, Liberator, Tsunami

Artificial (i.e., building) shade: Beyond, Chicago II, Everest, Nu Destiny

Wear

Traffic stress: Award, Tsunami, Nu Destiny, Odyssey

Wear tolerance: Limousine, Freedom III, Impact, Rugby II

Sports shear strength: Odyssey, Liberator, Nu Destiny, Total Eclipse

Sod stretching: Liberator, Everest, NuGlade, Limousine

Location

Overall quality: Nu Destiny, Impact, Freedom III, Award

Northeastern US: Nu Destiny, Award, Impact, Beyond

Transition Zone: Nu Destiny, Freedom III, EverGlade, Impact

North Central US: Nu Destiny, Award, Impact, Rugby II

Upper West Mountain US: Impact, EverGlade, Award, Everest

Pacific Northwest US: EverGlade, Freedom III, Limousine, Total Eclipse

Spring

Earliest spring greenup: Limousine, Rambo, Chicago II, Liberator

Spring density: Limousine, Impact, Total Eclipse, Beyond

Spring ground coverage: Limousine, Total Eclipse, Tsunami, NuGlade

Summer

Summer density: Impact, Odyssey, Everest, Freedom III

Summer ground coverage: Total Eclipse, Rugby II, Odyssey, Rambo

Drought wilt tolerance: Liberator, Nu Destiny, Limousine, Impact

Summer color: Chicago II, Impact, Beyond, Tsunami

Fall

Fall density: Nu Destiny, Total Eclipse, Impact, Award

Fall ground coverage: Nu Destiny, Impact, Award, Liberator

September fall color: Liberator, Rambo, Freedom III, Total Eclipse

October fall color: Chicago II, Rugby II, Award, Beyond

Winter

Frost tolerance: Rambo, Chicago II, Liberator, Award

Winter color: Chicago II, Freedom III, Limousine, Award

November color: Chicago II, Everest, Tsunami, Award

December color: Award, Beyond, Chicago II, Rugby II

Winter density: Award, Chicago II, NuGlade, Rugby II

Plant characteristics

Finest leaf texture: Freedom III, Nu Destiny, Odyssey, Beyond

Broadest leaves (to blend with tall fescue): Chicago II, Liberator, Total Eclipse, Everest

Fewest seedheads in the turf: Nu Destiny, Freedom III, EverGlade, Odyssey

Establishment

Seedling vigor: Liberator, Award, Nu Destiny, Impact

Fastest establishment: Award, Impact, Liberator, NuGlade

Pests

Anthraxnose: Chicago II, Everest, Freedom III, Total Eclipse

Billbug: Liberator, Nu Destiny, Rambo, Tsunami

Brown patch (warm weather): Nu Destiny, Beyond, Odyssey, Award

Crown rust: Award, EverGlade, Limousine, Total Eclipse

Dollar spot: Rugby II, EverGlade, Freedom III, Odyssey

Downy mildew: Liberator, Freedom III, Award, Beyond

Gray (typhula) snow mold: EverGlade, Freedom III, Limousine, Rambo

Leaf rust: Total Eclipse, Freedom III, Rambo, Rugby II

Leaf spot: EverGlade, Beyond, Freedom III, Chicago II

Least Poa annua: Award, NuGlade, Nu Destiny, Impact

Necrotic ring spot: Beyond, Award, EverGlade, Impact

Pink (Microdochium) snow mold: Award, Beyond, Chicago II, Everest

Red thread: Beyond, Liberator, EverGlade, Rugby II

Stripe smut: Beyond, EverGlade, Freedom III, Rugby II

Summer patch: Nu Destiny, Award, NuGlade, Odyssey

