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Mid-Continent Region  
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**USGA Green Section**  
*Turf Advisory Service Report*

**HOLLY LAKE RANCH GOLF COURSE**  
**HOLLY LAKE RANCH, TX**

Visit Date: May 28, 2010 – Half Day Visit  
Report Date: June 7, 2010

Present During Visit:

Clayton Wood, GCS  
Rob James, General Manager  
Steve Gowan, Green Committee Chairman  
John Quezada, Assistant GCS  
Bud White, Director, USGA Mid-Continent Region

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**Statement of Purpose:** The purpose of the USGA Green Section is to assist subscribing courses in matters of agronomic management. All recommendations are offered free of bias, since the USGA has no connections or obligations to any manufacturer, supplier, or contractor. Additionally, since 'quick fixes' seldom result in permanent improvement, some of the recommendations in this report may not be easy to implement and it could take more than a single season to produce the desired results.



## ***INTRODUCTION***

On behalf of the USGA Green Section, it was a pleasure visiting Holly Lake Ranch Golf Course and assisting with your agronomic programs for golf course management. The following report will summarize topics discussed during the Turf Advisory Service visit on May 28, 2010 at your club. We appreciate your support of the TAS and hope you consider it a vital part of your maintenance program. Our unbiased recommendations are based on a continually up-to-date knowledge of trends in the industry and especially in your local region. It is this basis that makes the TAS so helpful and applicable to all levels of course maintenance.

This was my first visit to Holly Lake Ranch Golf Course, and it was certainly a pleasure to meet you and visit the golf course. I think you have an incredible development at Holly Lake Ranch, and as I shared with you, being from North Carolina, it was almost like being back home. It was unfortunate we visited under the difficult circumstances you have had with the putting surfaces this year. As I explained, this is the most severe winter we have experienced on bermudagrass since 1989, and some of your damage was definitely a result of the harsher winter.

## ***GREENS***

As stated above, our main focus of the visit was the evaluation of the damage to the Champion bermudagrass and the best approach for recovery and prevention into the future. The problems on the greens had been diagnosed as Fairy Ring, but the problems we saw on greens such as #6 and #14 were clearly remnants of Spring Dead Spot (SDS) and not Fairy Ring. The area that had been sodded out on #6 did have the pattern of Fairy Ring due to its circular nature, but the balance of problem areas on this green were SDS and some bermudagrass decline that you experienced early last fall. Below are two pictures which identify the difference in appearance from SDS and Fairy Ring. The picture on the left is a bermudagrass green with SDS. The picture on the right is a green that is battling Fairy Ring, and you can clearly see the difference in the pattern and how that relates to the patterns you have seen on your putting greens. The SDS is the lesser of the two evils as control of this has been more successful and dependable than control of the Fairy Ring.

I outlined that the best approach for Fairy Ring control is an application of Bayleton in the early spring when the soil temperature reaches 50°F. Then this Bayleton application is repeated at a 2 oz. rate in four weeks.

The best control for Spring Dead Spot, however, is to apply two applications of the Rubigan at two weeks apart. Each application is at the 6 oz. rate. The first year I suggest a third application at the 2 oz. rate in early January just to make sure control is complete. This preventative has been most successful in dealing with SDS.



**Spring Dead Spot**



**Fairy Ring**

The root problem that must be dealt with can be done so with increased cultural management on the greens, which is necessary due to the aggressiveness of the Champion bermudagrass and its tendency for building thatch. I recommend three core aerations per year with the ½" side eject tines on close centers, followed by removal of the cores and topdressing with the proper sand. Since your irrigation water is such high quality, you do not need to do any additional venting for salt management; however since the greens are soil based, you may have to do some additional venting with the small diameter tines during rainy periods because of poor drainage.

The only aeration that is critical for absolute timing is the one at the end of August as this sets the bermudagrass up properly for the upcoming winter dormancy. I would suggest that within a week after this late August aeration, you put down a combination of Heritage and Daconil and then in 30 to 40 days make another preventative application of 3336 and Fore.



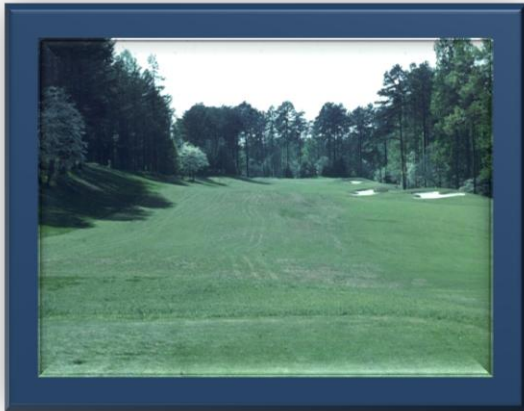
In the early spring, about early March for your location you should make another preventative application for spring green-up of Aliette/Fore at 4 oz. and 8 oz./1000 sf. respectively.

Your other core aerations are spread out through the late spring and early summer as it best fits your golf calendar. I think your verticutting and topdressing programs are very good but you definitely need to add a spin type topdresser to your equipment needs to be able to manage the Champion bermudagrass as best as possible as well as give the best playing surfaces. The older style topdresser you currently have is great for heavier topdressings, but a lighter topdressing or “dusting” is the best way to manage the ultradwarf bermudas and you would definitely see a benefit from that piece of equipment. It will also be a real labor saver for you, especially since you have a more limited labor budget.

I also suggest your fertility include about 7 lbs. N/1000 sf./year, along with a 1:1 ratio of potassium. Even though your phosphorus tests high, an application of a starter fertilizer should be put down the first of April and the end of August each year for additional turf health. The rate would be ½ lb. P/1000 sf. This is mainly because of your higher amount of traffic and need for additional growth.

### ***SHADE AND ROOT COMPETITION***

We talked at length about the evaluation of shade and root competition from the trees throughout your golf course and the need for correction of this in many areas to provide good turf health. I remind you that bermudagrass ideally needs eight hours of sunlight per day, and preferably 60% of this sunlight is morning sun. With that in mind, we discussed the issues of shade on the golf course, which included the shade patterns of summer versus winter because of the different angles of the sun in the sky. Below are two pictures from another golf course which exemplify this difference. The picture on the left was taken at 1:00 PM on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The picture on the right was taken from the same location at 1:00 PM on January 15<sup>th</sup>. If you will notice, the thin bermudagrass on the left picture corresponds to the shade pattern on the right.



Numbers 8 and 16 are prime example greens that need shade removal and root pruning to improve turf health. Below is a picture I mentioned I would include in the report of root pruning in the landing area. You can clearly see the line where root pruning is done and the recovery of the turf on the outside of that line. You would see similar results in many areas.



**Root pruning can have dramatic results**



## ***TRAFFIC CONTROL***

Any golf course that receives high numbers of golfing rounds and has private carts is subject to maximum wear and damage on the golf course. This damage is magnified by shade in the rough areas, especially on the cart path side. You had resodded the right side of #13 with Zeon zoysiagrass and it looked excellent at the time of our visit. However, I remind you that this look is not totally because it is zoysiagrass, but a huge factor is because traffic has been eliminated from this area and thus it is not receiving the same wear and tear. Therefore, careful consideration must be made as thin or bare areas are upgraded, in that they must have the following conditions for success:

- Adequate irrigation coverage.
- Soil compaction relief.
- Adequate amount of sun and reduction in root competition.
- Traffic control restrictions.

I encourage Holly Lake Ranch Golf Course to look closely at your traffic control programs for improvement of these areas. You must help golfers understand that shade on bermudagrass and excessive traffic in key areas such as the ingress and egress of greens and on and off cart paths overwhelms the ability of even bermudagrass to produce a quality surface. These poor turf areas must be accepted if traffic flow correction is not going to be practiced or if heavy shade is not eliminated.

## ***CLOSING***

Again, it was a pleasure to visit Holly Lake Ranch Golf Course and discuss golf course maintenance. Besides providing agronomic advice that is unbiased and has no affiliation with any product or manufacturer, the USGA Green Section is the largest supporter of turfgrass research in the world. This research effort is helping to ensure the future of the game of golf and the industry of turfgrass maintenance and developing environmentally friendly grasses and maintenance practices for golf course maintenance of the future. The thrust of this research is to provide superior turfgrasses that provide better playability and are easier to maintain while ensuring golf courses remain positive influences on the environment. Your club's membership in the USGA and support of the Green Section helps make this research effort possible.

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We invite you to visit our website at [www.usga.org](http://www.usga.org) to learn more about Green Section programs and to stay up-to-date on activities in the Mid-Continent area via our Mid-Continent Regional Update which is changed every two weeks. A new program the USGA has developed is a “Live Webcast” which covers various golf course maintenance topics as well as a variety of other related topics to the course or the game. This link can be found on the USGA homepage. An update of upcoming webcasts and a list of recorded ones can easily be searched and selected.

Additionally please note that the *Green Section Record* will change to a digital-only format. Published under various names since 1920, the last printed issue of the *USGA Green Section Record* recently went through layout and was mailed out mid-May. A card was included in the issue announcing that it is the last printed copy that will be received, in addition to providing information on how to sign-up for the weekly electronic update from the Green Section.

We are sad to see the Green Section RECORD magazine go out of print, but you can sign up easily at <http://gsportal.usga.org>

Please do not hesitate to call my office should you have any questions concerning this report or if Karen and I can help you in any other way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bud White". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Charles B. White, CPAg  
Director, Mid-Continent Region

CBW:krw