

This is “Turf Talk” from Scott Anderson:

Transition Time:

Every year during the spring, the golf course TRANSITIONS back to bermudagrass from winter ryegrass. This is NEVER easy and.... it changes every year because of the dependency of weather and Mother Nature. Every Club manages this process differently depending on their financial impacts and demands of play. As you can imagine, those do not always line up with what is best agronomically. Removing ryegrass throughout the months of April and May gives the facility the best advantage for bermudagrass recovery in June and July. Starting the TRANSITION process early leads to it being completed earlier, which results in a healthier stand of bermudagrass by October. There are several agronomic decisions necessary to have a successful TRANSITION.... and... making all the right decisions does not guarantee success. One of the more important, beneficial decisions, is to lower the height of cut (HOC) on the ryegrass. I understand this causes ‘heart-burn’ for some golfers, but it is a vital step in the TRANSITION process.



Lowering the HOC reduces the ryegrass turf canopy that is covering the underlying bermudagrass. Reducing the HOC shifts the competitive advantage for sunlight, water, and nutrients to the benefit of the bermudagrass. During the months of May and June, the temperatures start getting warmer during the day which triggers the bermudagrass to ‘wake-up.’ However, the low nighttime

temperatures and low humidity slow the growth of the waking bermudagrass. Lowering the HOC, along with other agronomic practices such as, increasing irrigation and increasing granular fertilizer applications, help to remove the ryegrass, and 'push' the bermudagrass so the golf courses will be in the best state of preparation. When Mother Nature brings summer monsoons, high humidity, and warm nighttime temperatures above 85 degrees, the uninhibited bermudagrass begins to grow at a rapid pace and starts to fill-in. As I mentioned earlier, Mother Nature always has the final say. At this point, I am extremely happy with where the golf courses are in the TRANSITION process. There are areas that are better than prior years and some areas that are not as good, which is typical. As we move into July, things will continue to improve dramatically in overall playing conditions. If rainfall is typical for July and August, we should have a particularly good stand of bermudagrass by the end of summer to Overseed into.