

Still battling weak areas on golf courses from last winter?

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Many golf courses are still battling weak or thin turf from last winter's damage. There are many factors that can be blamed for slow recover, but the bottom line is that it is difficult to grow in golf course turf in the spring and summer, especially while it is still under low mowing heights and regular traffic. We have been lucky to have a relatively mild summer that has helped with seedling survival, but some areas are still thin. Now is the time to achieve serious recovery and the most important step is to reduce traffic and excess stress on recovering areas. Closing areas in late August or early September is very easy for us to recommend (dang University guys), but it will dramatically help a thin area with little inconvenience to the waning play this fall. Other suggestions to improve thin areas this fall include:

1. Raise the mowing height on greens or areas of greens that are out of play and limit mowing frequency.
2. Fertilize aggressively this fall: a total of 2.0 to 3.0 lbs of N/1000 sq ft applied from early Sept to mid-October will heal many thin areas in the turf. Applications this close together should be primarily soluble sources.
3. Introduce seed with aerifying followed by overseeding, the TriWave or other seeders that cut grooves or punch holes and drop the seed into the grooves or holes. Simply verticutting and drop seeding has had limited success this year with the possible exception of wider carbide-tipped verticut units. Seed in mid-August to maximize maturation before winter and to minimize annual bluegrass competition. Following seeding with topdressing will help improve seed-soil contact. Damping off fungicides may be required depending on the weather after seeding.
4. Apply no growth regulators to the recovering area until fully recovered.
5. Tenacity in the seedbed of Kentucky bluegrass or perennial ryegrass or Velocity applied over the top of seedling bentgrass will help minimize annual bluegrass.

Let us know how we can help.

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Though many areas damaged by winterkill are fully recovered, many courses still have occasional small areas that are thin or weak. Isolated small areas are always the most difficult to heal in, but limiting traffic, aggressive fertilization, and raising the mowing height are the first steps.

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