

Turfgrass from the bottom up

by Floyd Perry

These photos were taken in Seminole County, FL, on a practice field that was 100% native sand. The playing surface was extremely sparse, with more than 70% weak turf, high stress blow out areas, and weeds.

This progressive groundskeeper cut Bermuda sod sections from another section of the athletic facility and placed them in the low and worn areas. In the extremely low areas, an 89% sand/clay mix was dropped and leveled to cover the newly placed sod sections. In bare but level ground areas, a 50/50 blend of sand/peat was smoothed out to blend with the existing surface.

To blend all the materials along with the existing and new Bermuda turf, a RotaDairon was used to bring the mix to an on-grade surface level.



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After two irrigation cycles, one light 1,500-lb. rolling, one biostimulant fertilizer application and 2 weeks of brilliant Florida sunshine, the Bermuda turf was filling in and laterally running together. Once the new stolons and rhyzomes regained strength and began to fill in, a selected weed spray formula was applied.

This process was accomplished at five different high school facilities and met with extremely positive results during May and June, the prime Bermuda growing months. The process was adjusted by using washed sand on fields that had an extremely heavy sub-soil base. By blending both sand and clay together, the RotaDairon created quality root moisture, and a soil blend that allowed water to move vertically. The Bermuda plant filled in from the bottom up and created a 4- to 6-inch root structure.

The southern part of the United States has the fortunate luxury of being able to work with Bermuda turf and its physical foot-hardy characteristics. Should your athletic



facilities experience the difficulty of maintaining a smooth level-playing surface, a power blender RotaDairon may be the way to work.

"Turf grows by the inch and is killed by the foot," but perhaps as progressive groundskeepers we can

keep ours coming back from the bottom up.

Floyd Perry is president of Grounds Maintenance Services. The company may be contacted at (407) 648-1332 or e-mail grounds@digital.net, or see www.gmsforsportsfields.com.

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