Using Tenacity for Poa annua control

Most field managers deal with Poa annua annually. Some have chosen to embrace it, but most have declared a war that will never end. Like most things in this world, new technologies become available all the time. The most recent chemical control for Poa annua control labeled for sports turf managers is mesotrione with the common name Tenacity. Tenacity just became available in the spring of this year for athletic fields. The following information is how the three of us used Tenacity in slightly different ways to help with the never ending fight against Poa annua.

Tim VanLoo, CSFM, Iowa State

At Iowa State University we used Tenacity on Jack Trice Stadium and Johnny Majors practice football facility, both sand-based fields. I worked with Syngenta’s territory manager, Luke Dant, to come up with a plan. Knowing that Tenacity has post and pre-emergent capabilities, we formulated a plan that we thought could use both of the chemical’s attributes to our advantage. Tenacity has a limit of 16oz/acre/year.

Luke and I decided to make four applications at a 4oz/acre rate on 10-day intervals starting the first week of May. Applying in this matter would give me 50-60 days of pre-emergent control in the spring while controlling the Poa annua that was in the fields already. Using Tenacity also allowed me to re-seed the worn areas from the previous playing season. I was able to germinate Kentucky bluegrass during the applications without any problems.

We were able to get complete control in Jack Trice stadium and greatly reduce the amount of Poa annua in the practice field. The Poa annua spots that were in the stadium were very small in size. The areas in Johnny Majors that still have Poa were 1-2 feet in diameter. Now those spots have been reduced greatly and have some desired grasses growing inside the spots.

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One thing I was told is that as the plant dies it will turn white in color. I did see my weeds turn white but I couldn’t see the Poa turn white. As far as I can tell it just melted away and the bluegrass took over.
spring and fall with the cloudy, damp climate here in Mid Michigan. I have worked with our turf department here on campus for many years, Dr. Calhoun, our weeds specialist, and his research technician, Aaron Hathway, for viable options to rid us of Poa annua and Poa Trivialis. Until this season I had been weary of the “latest and greatest” products for Poa control. I am a very conservative grass grower and have been skeptical of many products. We first conducted a trial with Velocity and Tenacity at different rates and intervals of applications in the south end zone of Spartan Stadium. We determined from these trials in the spring we could use fewer products with repeated applications.

We made our applications to Spartan stadium field in mid-June, which consisted of taking 1oz/acre rates and making five applications, one application every 3-4 days, to equal one 5oz/acre total. The repeated applications at the low labeled rate provided us with an excellent reduction of Poa annua, Poa trivialis, and Common Bermuda (on the practice football test area). Throughout the 14-day application process we seeded Kentucky bluegrass, aerated, and top-dressed the playing surface. As both Poa’s browned out in weeks 3-4, we had numerous seedlings surfacing and thriving and by week 6 you could not tell we had done anything.

We reduced our “weedy grasses” significantly but not completely with these applications. The existing Kentucky bluegrass remained healthy with no reduction in root density or rhizome growth. In areas we had solid Poa it has been reduced by at least 50% and now has Kentucky bluegrass thriving within those areas. I believe with repeated treatments this is a great tool in the tool box to combat Poa annua and maintain safe and consistent playing conditions.

Using Tenacity positively benefited all of our fields. It is our hope that we were able to show another tool to help achieve a uniform and safe playing surface for the athletes that use our facilities. As you can see we all used Tenacity at different times of the growing season with slightly different application rates and timing. We all had great success. Please don’t hesitate to contact any of us on more details using Tenacity.

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