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The official blog of GCSAA's Golf Course Management magazine

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### Downing heads innovative project

David Downing II, CGCS, is off to an attention-getting start as the new president of Signature Golf Group, a Myrtle Beach-based management firm.



Seashore paspalum greens are all the rage in coastal areas around the country these days and Downing, GCSAA President in 2008, has launched a renovation from bentgrass to SeaDwarf seashore paspalum at Signature Golf's flagship property, Rivers Edge Golf Club in Shallotte, N.C., (at left) and he's adding an innovative twist to boot.

As far as anyone knows, the Rivers Edge project is the first-ever no-till conversion from bentgrass to paspalum. In no-till, the new grass is planted without tearing out the existing surface. The process allows the greens' contours to be more easily preserved and also allows a shorter downtime for the course compared to more standard greens renovation methods. Rivers Edge, which closed June 1, is scheduled to reopen in August.

Downing is a strong proponent of the attributes of the environmentally friendly paspalum -- drought- and salt-tolerant, less water and nutrient requirements and it adapts well to alternative irrigation sources such as recycled or effluent water.

Downing noted on [www.worldgolf.com](http://www.worldgolf.com) that Rivers Edge GC, which is located along the Shallotte River marshlands, has been plagued by poor water quality. He added that in a test run last summer the course's practice putting green was converted to SeaDwarf and it has been very successful. He and others closely connected to the project believe the no-till method could be a breakthrough for the golf course industry.

"I can't think of a better place for the SeaDwarf to make its debut as a no-till project. This transition from bentgrass to seashore paspalum to my knowledge is truly a first," Hank Kerfoot, president of Modern Turf, a South Carolina company that's supplying the sprigs for the conversion, told the online newswire.

"The use of a new grass to help adapt to an extreme environmental condition is the reason we grow grasses like SeaDwarf," Kerfoot added. "It is far better to work with what nature gives you than to try and control it. In the capable hands of (Rivers Edge golf course maintenance director) John Shaver and David Downing, I have every confidence this will be a successful venture."

Posted by Terry Ostmeier on June 09, 2009 | [Permalink](#)

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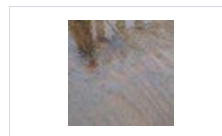
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