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SPORTS

Sunday, Mar. 15, 2009

New Greens Considered

Rivers Edge Golf Club in Shallotte (N.C.) could be the second course in the Myrtle Beach area to give salt-tolerant Seashore Paspalum grass a shot. Course owners and operators are considering closing the course in June to change its greens over to the same SeaDwarf cultivar of Seashore Paspalum that is featured wall to wall at Pine Lakes Country Club, which is reopening today after a two-year renovation project.

A sample from Pine Lakes was planted on Rivers Edge's practice putting green last summer. Superintendent John Shaver believes it performed well enough - and he learned enough about its maintenance - to warrant the change.

Like many area courses along salt marshes, Rivers Edge has water quality concerns, particularly during droughts, and its L93 bentgrass has struggled on some greens since the Arnold Palmer layout opened in 1999.

"We looked at the Bermuda ultradwarfs and with the salt levels we think we're making the right decision," Shaver said.

Paspalum has also been used at Rivers Edge along a bulkhead on No. 9, where it has done well, and on the small 15th tee box, where it has struggled. "Once you get it established it's a really strong grass," Shaver said.

Course operators would try to reopen in August if the renovation occurs. In anticipation, Shaver is trying to sell three of the four 500-gallon water trailers that are used to hand-water and mist greens, as well as four of the five fans he uses for air circulation on greens.



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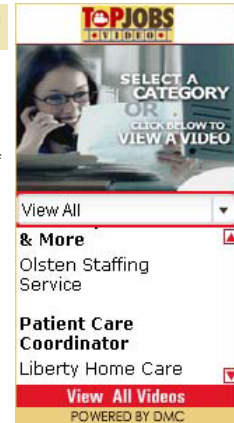
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