Bluemuda (or overseeding) – can one really have it all for a turfed surface?

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The Transition Zone Climate

• Characterized by warm summers and cool winters
• Not ideally suited for warm-season grasses (winterkill) or cool-season grasses (summer stress and disease)
• Transition zone appears to be moving north
U.S. Transition zone average summer temperatures:
69.8-80.6 °F

U.S. Transition zone average winter temperatures:
35.6-44.6 °F
Strengths of Bermudagrass

- rapid establishment and recovery— (has stolons and rhizomes)
- excellent wear, heat, and drought tolerance
- very few insect or disease pests
- competitive against weeds
- mow between 0.5-5”
- Excellent density
Two weeks after divoting

Philadelphia area
Weaknesses of Bermudagrass

• shade tolerance (needs 8 hrs)
• winter dormancy
• winter kill
• Invasive
• High N requirement
• rapid leaf growth (ie. lots of cutting and vertical mowing necessary
  • mower maintenance
• spring dead spot
Winter traffic on bermudagrass negatively impacts spring greenup
Winter Color and Recovery Options

- **Perennial ryegrass**
  - Quick germ/establishment
  - Poor transition
  - Good traffic tolerance
  - Poor recovery

- **Annual (Italian) ryegrass**
  - Quick germ/establishment
  - Fast growth
  - Poor transition
  - Poor traffic tolerance
  - Poor recovery
  - Poor color

- **Kentucky bluegrass**
  - Slow germ/establishment
  - No transition
  - Poor traffic tolerance
  - Good recovery

- **Tall fescue**
  - Quick germ/establishment
  - No transition
  - Good traffic tolerance
  - Medium recovery
Bermudagrass thinned from unremoved perennial rye grass overseed
Bluemuda Considerations

- Bermuda base
- KBG seeded in late summer/early fall
- Takes time
- No transition
- Continuously growing root system
- Not all KBGs are created equally
Turfgrass Selection to Match the Racing/Competition Season

• Depends on where you are
  • North—what would your recommendations be and would time of meet change anything?
  • Transition zone—Spring races
    • Summer races
    • Fall races
    • Spring and fall races
  • South
    • Winter races
    • Summer races