



In October of 2003 The Woodlands Development Company set out to develop a Tom Fazio Championship 18 hole golf course, one that would be added to the highly acclaimed Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course at The Club at Carlton Woods. The mission was to create an equal to or better golf course, one that would add value to an already reputable golf development. I knew that this was an excellent opportunity to recommend Zoysia grass to the Fazio Design Team and the Woodlands Development Company. I then began to gather information about Zoysia grass by talking to turf grass breeders, visiting superintendents that have experienced maintaining Zoysia and witnessing first hand how impressive zoysia grass would be as a playing surface for tees, approaches, roughs and fairways. I became confident that Zoysia grass would be my recommendation. Once the decision was made to use Zoysia I needed to find a grower. I was extremely impressed upon meeting David Doguet and seeing first hand his dedication and passion toward Zoysia grass and its future in the golf market. Bladerunner Grass Farms are the best in the sod growing business when it comes to developing and growing Zoysia grass. Once we visited Balderunner Grass Farms sod farm my owners and I were confident that Zeon Zoysia grass would be the grass of choice. Zeon has many pros compared to Bermuda grass such as:

- Lower nitrogen requirements compared to Bermuda grass (i.e. 1-2 lbs. N per year vs. 7-8 lbs. N per year).
- Less time mowing because of growth habit.
- Less water consumption than Bermuda grass.
- Higher wear tolerance than Bermuda grass.
- Lower weed pressure because of turf density.
- Higher heat tolerance than Bermuda grass.
- Higher Salinity tolerance than Bermuda grass.
- Higher Shade tolerance than Bermuda grass.
- Better playability because of the growth habits of Zoysia grass, the ball will sit up higher.
- Less insect infestation. Studies have shown that Zoysia grass has excellent resistance to problematic insects that are common in our area resulting in operating dollar savings. (i.e. Mole Crickets, Army Worms, Cutworms)

And only a couple of negatives:

- Growth rate is slower than Bermuda grass; therefore, establishing Zoysia grass by sprigs is not common. Sod is the preferred method of establishment for Zoysia grass.
- Disease pressure is typically higher in Zoysia grass than Bermuda.
- Wear and tear on mowing blades.

However, even with the negatives I was able to show long term savings by grassing our new course with Zeon Zoysia. Now that we have had Zeon for 4 years, the membership and I could not be happier! The complements are overwhelming from the membership and their guests regarding the playability and appearance. In addition, the course was ranked by Golf Digest as the third Best New Private Course in America in 2005. And from an operations standpoint at a time in the golf business when every dollar counts maintaining a high quality playing surface, Zeon Zoysia grass is my grass of choice!

Eric Bauer
Director of Grounds