TURFGRASS LICENSING AND PROTECTION (UGARF)
The University of Georgia Research Foundation (UGARF) owns and manages new turfgrasses developed at the University of Georgia. UGARF secures patents, issues licenses to qualified growers, and requires stringent certification to protect grass purity. UGARF also funds the development of new cultivars, distributing over fifty percent of royalty receipts to Team UGA plant breeders and their research and development programs.

CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTIONS (GSCD)
The Georgia Crop Improvement Association (GCIA) coordinates all certified turfgrass inspections for Team UGA. Every field in every state with a patented UGA grass is inspected under that state’s certification program, ensuring that all of the sod, sprigs, sod followed by seed and genetically pure stock. In Team UGA’s case it starts with a world-renowned breeding program, extensive University-backed research and market quality turfgrasses all around the world.

CONCLUSION
This certainly isn’t a study of all the ultradwarf greens out there, but rather a snapshot of one of the older TifEagle greens along with two new installations. Remember, early on when some of these courses started their conversions, no-till wasn’t even a viable concept. Most of the newer TifEagle greens are true “no-till” plantings. In closing it would be fair to say that all three of the premier ultradwarf varieties are capable of producing beautiful, challenging and extremely fast putting surfaces. Success starts with proper management and genetically pure stock. In Team UGA’s case it starts with a world-renowned breeding program, extensive University-backed research and market quality turfgrasses all around the world. And doing business with an ITGAP-approved grower or purchasing certified material from a licensed US supplier are the ONLY ways international buyers can be sure of getting a genuine UGA variety.

When the ultradwarfs first came out in the late 90s, the conventional wisdom was that they would end with the same kind of problems as Tifdwarf. Everybody expected that in five to seven years they would have to renovate, even if purity wasn’t an issue. Poor playability due to age and general decline had always plagued Tifdwarf, even though it was an industry standard, and most superintendents expected the same from TifEagle, Champion and MiniVerde. But here we are almost 20 years down the road and there are hundreds of clubs that still have superior ultradwarf greens.

The Ultradwarfs are Here to Stay
When that same time span, the ultradwarfs also began to move onto courses with troubled bentgrass greens. As the summers got hotter, superintendents not only literally sweated more, but in a lot of cases they sweated bullets over lost greens. Switching to ultradwarf bermudagrass eliminated a lot of headaches during the summer months.

Perfect For The Deep South and Transition Zone
So guess what? If you’re still struggling with Tifdwarf or bentgrass greens and your course is in the Deep South or even the transition zone, you’re now officially in the minority. Here’s why:

- Champion, MiniVerde and TifEagle all deliver the same high level of play as classic bentgrass greens, and they’re far superior to Tifdwarf.

When you watch the Honda Classic on TV you’re looking at TifEagle Bermudagrass greens. When you tune into the FedEx Championship at East Lake in Atlanta you’re watching puts on MiniVerde bermudagrass. When you checked out the 2011 PGA Championship at the Atlanta Athletic Club’s Highlands Course at Johns Creek, you had to be impressed with their Champion greens. Those overhead shots from the Met Life blimp of puts rolling in straight and true are not fantasy TV. These are all typical ultradwarf greens, and they all get high praise from top golfers from all over the world.

For more information, visit: www.tifeagle.com
IS THERE TROUBLE IN ULTRADWARF PARADISE?

Maybe. There have been rumblings about problems with off-types and mutations in a growing number of ultradwarf greens for several years now. TeamUGA is a key player in the ultradwarf revolution, but we can only control what’s happening with TifEagle. That’s why we decided we’d better take a look at a selection of the TifEagle greens out there to see how they were holding up.


“IT’S goN TO BE VERY INTERESTI NG TO ME TO SEE HOW THE OTHER NEW ULTRADWARFS DO AS THEY AGE.”

Berry Collett - Director of Golf Maintenance
Sea Island Golf Club, St. Simons Island GA

SEA ISLAND GOLF CLUB
ST. SIMONS GA

PRESTWICK COUNTRY CLUB
MYRTLE BEACH SC

We also checked out the greens at Prestwick Country Club in Myrtle Beach SC. This links-style gem was designed by Pete Dye and his son P.B. Dye and opened in 1989. Superintendent Paul Kaufman is responsible for the day-to-day management and upkeep of this top-flight course that features towering dune-like berms, stairway bunkers and bulkhead-protected greens. It was Paul along with his bosses who made the decision to go with TifEagle. “Our Tifwarf was really beginning to show its age and was getting to be almost unmanageable. On top of that, the Myrtle Beach area is so competitive. There are almost 100 courses here now in what’s essentially a one-mile by 30-mile strip, and the majority of them have ultradwarf greens. From a competitive standpoint we were just lagging behind. So I put in a combination test green with TifEagle, MiniVerde and Champion and evaluated all three grasses for over two years. I also looked at a lot of other clubs and talked to a lot of other superintendents. We decided to no-till. We shut the course down last year on June 18th. Believe it or not, we were open for play on September 1 with our new TifEagle greens.”

“TO BE HONEST, CHAMPION WAS ON MY MIND EARLY ON, BECAUSE IT WAS THE SEXY, IN-VOGUE PICK. BUT I PUT IN A TEST GREEN WITH TIFEAGLE, MINIVERDE AND CHAMPION, AND AFTER 2 YEARS OF PLAYING AROUND WITH ALL THREE, I TOOK TO SEE THE LIMITATIONS AND STRONG POINTS OF EACH GRASS. I ALSO LOOKED AT A LOT OF TIFEAGLE COURSES. IN THE END, MY BOSSES AND I AGREED THAT TIFEAGLE WAS THE BEST ULTRADWARF FOR PRESTWICK.”

Paul Kaufman - Superintendent
Prestwick Country Club, Myrtle Beach SC

TIFEAGLE BERMDAGRASS IS ON TWO OF THE THREE PREMIER GOLF COURSES AT THE EXCLUSIVE IBIS GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB IN WEST PALM BEACH FL. THE LEGEND COURSE, A SIGNATURE JACK NICKLAUS DESIGN, AND THE HERITAGE COURSE, DESIGNED BY JACK NICKLAUS II, WERE BOTH CONVERTED TO TIFEAGLE IN 2012. THE TRADITION COURSE, A STEVE NICKLAUS DESIGN, IS SCHEDULED FOR ITS TIFEAGLE RENOVATION THIS SUMMER. MATT MASEMORE, DIRECTOR OF GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND UPEEKEEP OF THESE THREE AWARD-WINNING COURSES, AND MATT WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE DECISION TO GO WITH TIFEAGLE. “WE WERE HAVING some mutation and off-type issues with our existing ul- gadgrass greens, and the newest was only 6 years old. It was beginning to affect ball roll on all three courses, so we knew playability would soon be a big problem. We looked at a lot of different properties, some with MiniVerde and some with Tifeagle, but ultimately decided on the Tifeagle. It’s a genetically stable variety that’s proven itself going on 20 years now, and we felt it was the best choice for us. We also needed a grass that could recover quickly after handling a lot of traffic. So far our members love it. My maintenance staff does too, even though we’re using a little more Primo and doing slightly more fertility.”

“AFTEr two really dry, cold winters we started seeing some mutations in our existing bermudagrass greens. When it started to affect ball roll, we knew we had to do something. We tossed around MiniVerde and Tifeagle and ultimately decided on Tifeagle since it’s such a genetically stable variety.”

Matt Masemore - Director of Golf Course Maintenance
Ibis Golf & Country Club, West Palm Beach FL

IBIS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB - WEST PALM BEACH FL
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CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTIONS (GCAI)
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MARKETING AND COMPLIANCE (GSDC)
The Georgia Seed Development Commission (GSDC) is the agency responsible for all foundation plant material production, including vegetatively propagated turfgrasses, and is another important member of Team UGA. GSDC develops and implements appropriate turfgrass management and maintenance protocols, and collects royalties owed on turfgrass sales. GSDC also works closely with the UGA faculty to support and facilitate new research projects.

INTERNATIONAL TURFGRASS GENETIC ASSURANCE PROGRAM (ITGAP)
Very early on, TeamUGA developed a set of rules and inspection protocols for prospective international licensees and made it mandatory for our international producers to sign on as participants. We dubbed it the International Turfgrass Genetic Assurance Program, or ITGAP for short, and it serves as the international licensing agent for the UGA patented turfgrass varieties. ITGAP helps international producers grow and market quality turfgrasses all around the world. And doing business with an ITGAP-approved grower or purchasing certified material from a licensed US supplier are the ONLY ways international buyers can be sure of getting a genuine UGA variety.

CONCLUSION
This certainly isn’t a study of all the ultradwarf greens out there, but rather a snapshot of one of the older TifEagle Bermudagrass plantings. In closing it would be fair to say that all three of the premier ultradwarf varieties are capable of producing beautiful, challenging and extremely fast putting surfaces. Success starts with proper management and genetically pure stock. In Team UGA’s case it starts with a world-renowned breeding program, extensive University-backed research and our TeamUGA partners who oversee new cultivar licensing, certification and inspections.

For more information visit: www.tifeagle.com

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