

# FROM THE PUBLISHER



I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to thank all of you for the overwhelming response we have received on our premiere issue of **sportsTURF** magazine. We have received thousands of return cards.

I must thank our advertisers who had the courage to accept a new dimension in the turf marketing area, and to back it up with dollars. This shows a confidence I hope we never betray.

But it is you the reader who is most important. If we don't fill your needs . . . if we can't relate to what you are doing and be able to tell your story, then we are on the wrong track.

Based on the response we have received, I am pleased to say that we are on the right track. It is to you that we pledge to put our best effort forward to make this publication meaningful to you.

The sports turf market encompasses many different sports played on different types of turf surfaces. From golf to polo to baseball to soccer to football to park recreational areas . . . the common bond being the management of large, high-traffic turf areas. Here is where professional help is required.

Safe sports turf should be foremost in the minds of those who tend the fields and coach the players. Yes, even management must be made more aware of the importance of safer sports turf and how it can prolong a player's career. However you look at it, the responsibility usually lies with the field manager. These people toil endlessly throughout the year to maintain their fields. Yet these unsung professionals have a tendency to be overlooked- perhaps ignored is a better word.

For the past dozen or so years, a controversy has existed regarding the use of natural and artificial turf. I am partial to natural turf. Maybe its because I have been involved in this market for the past twenty years. I do however try to keep an open mind. I try to look at both surfaces objectively. There is no question that artificial turf has its place in sports indoor stadiums. It is there that artificial turf cannot be grown successfully, i.e. I do feel that wherever natural turf can be used it should be. Playing surfaces should have eye appeal, and that is the point artificial sales use best. However, I know that with professional management, natural turf playing surfaces can have even better eye appeal.

I'm not knocking artificial turf, but some of the reasons why stadiums use it do not make sense.

First, it is more expensive to install than natural turf. Second, it certainly is not any less expensive to maintain, especially when you consider that it is washed periodically, cleaned occasionally, and requires a capital expenditure for equipment. It does wear and eventually needs to be replaced. That requires another major expenditure.

What seems to make artificial turf desirable is television. The demands put on stadiums by television surely do not have the players best interests at heart. Their concern is that they send back a good picture to their audience.

The new generation of artificial turf has some improvements in helping to cushion a fall. But cementing a thin piece of carpet to blacktop is hard to play on, it is even harder if one falls.

This market needs to be looked at with a different point of view. There are a number of different ways to approach the subject. We should be objective.

We all need to continuously seek the challenge to ensure safe sports turf. From myself and our entire **sportsTURF** staff, we would like to wish you all Happy Holidays!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis E. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a background of horizontal lines.