I find it hard to understand after 12 years of covering the turf industry, why the sports turf market has been so neglected. After speaking with many extension agents and sports field managers, it was clear they felt the same way. After all, isn’t quality, safe sports turf important to society?

Not all sports turf is forgotten. The gridirons of major college and professional football games and major league baseball have become monuments to the importance of sports to Americans.

Perhaps the apparent health and success of these athletic facilities makes the public assume all is well with all sports turf. It is too easy to forget the condition of the fields not shown on television.

But as I dig deeper into this double standard for fields, there are signs that the public is beginning to wake up. More and more sports facilities are reevaluating the condition of their fields. Transition is definitely underway.

Still, what took the market so long to wake up? An interesting idea comes to mind. Try imagining that you are a student sitting in an agronomy class in 2,000 A.D. listening to the instructor describe the sports turf market of the 1980s. Might he say something like this?

"In the 20th Century, the world of sports turf was in chaos. Sports field managers were broken into rebel groups, some blindly worshipping artificial turf. A few managers tried any new field concept without question. Confusion, and a lack of standard construction and maintenance specifications, caused many to ignore all recommendations for field care, leaving fields in primitive condition."

"Many athletes had their careers shortened by poor sports surfaces. Far too many fields were in pitiful condition causing injuries to kids anxious to develop their sports skills. Sports turf managers needed leadership."

Will that professor say that chaos ended in the '80s, that the market got organized, and all available technology was put to use? If letters from our readers are any indication, the answer is a resounding yes!

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