

CHALKBOARD

TIPS FROM THE PROS

Roses Get a Shot of Iron

The Tournament of Roses keeps tight control of its annual New Year's Day event, from the petals on the flowered floats to the blades of grass in the Rose Bowl. The emphasis is on natural and that includes the field. Although many stadium managers will help out the television cameramen with an application of green colorant to the field, the Tournament of Roses directors forbid it at the Rose Bowl.

Kent Kurtz, consultant to the Rose Bowl, wanted viewers celebrating New Year's Day at home to see a field as green as any other major event. Kurtz turned to PBI Gordon of Kansas City, MO, for help in the form of Ferramec, a sprayable combination of iron, sulfur and urea. Five days before the big event, the Rose Bowl crew applied the color booster to the field in two directions, for a total application of 10 ounces per 1,000 sq. ft.

If you saw the game, you know Kurtz got his wish, a field as green as nature can make it. Of course, the turf that responded so beautifully to the iron compound was Gold Tag Brand perennial ryegrass blend provided by Ferry Morse Seed Company and Turf Seed, Inc. The combination of Citation II, Birdie II and Manhattan II provided the bright green background the game.

One can say the turf at this year's event was as spectacular as the floats in the parade.

When Drainage Fails

Athletic field maintenance gets progressively unreliable as old drainage systems silt up or fail altogether. The thought of excavating every tile line under the field is the last thing a field manager wants to face. Just ask Harry Gill, field manager for the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club.

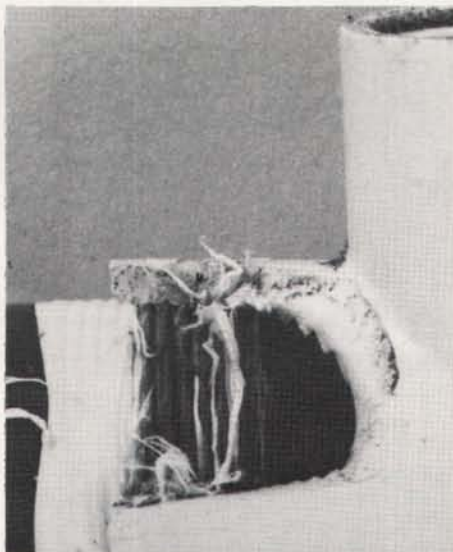
Milwaukee Stadium hosts the Brewers during baseball season and then the Green Bay Packers in the fall. Harry had to fit in the drainage work between the two sports seasons and before winter.

Gill, one of the deans of stadium field management, knew sand slitting could do the trick without major disruption to the turf surface. Sand slitting is the process of cutting a gridwork of narrow trenches which drain to the tile on the edge of the field, then backfilling these trenches with sand. David Heiss, president of Turf Services, Spring Lake, Mich., has a single device imported from England which performs the task that would normally require a trencher, a backfiller and backhoe.

The narrow sand-filled trenches are easily hidden after seeding and the turf around the trenches grows back over the sand. Harry now has his drainage back and a field that will be in professional condition for the Brewers' opener in April.

One Turn Too Many

Swing joints are one of the best ideas conceived for turf irrigation. If someone or something steps on or runs over an irrigation head the pipe below sinks out of harm's way. The



Swing joint broken by overtightening.

trick is buried under the surface, a joint which allows the pipe to swing to the side rather than break. The give is derived from loosening and tightening of the joint.

Swing joint assemblies made of iron or steel pipe have a great tolerance to extra tightening, but the PVC pipe commonly used today is not so forgiving. The thought of a leaking loose joint below ground causes some irrigation installers to overtighten PVC joints.

Larry Workman of Lasco Division of Phillips Industries says installers need to recognize PVC pipe requires different installation procedures than metal. When the male pipe threads wedge against the female threads a certain amount of force is exerted. If this force exceeds the tensile strength of the pipe (7000 pounds per square inch) the joint will crack or break.

Workman recommends applying a paste-type pipe joint compound. Turn until finger tight, then add one to two more turns with a strap wrench. This will leave three to six male threads exposed and give the joint the necessary leeway for swinging.

Harrowing Experiences

As the importance and use of the core aerator grows, another tool is being employed for dispersing the left oversoil cores: the tine harrow. Once a sports turf manager has a tool in his shed, he tries to use it for as many jobs as possible.

Following the PGA at Oakhill Country Club, Richard Bator was faced with roughs trampled down by the galleries. Suspecting compaction, he aerated and brought out his Fuerst harrow with tines down to lift up the turf and make grooves in the soil surface. His crew overseeded, turned the harrow onto the smooth side and dragged the area to cover the seed. "The process brought the roughs back to life beautifully," Bator boasts.

Compacted and wet infields were a problem for John Moran at Columbia University. The sand clay soil mix would pack down after just a few games and stay wet too long following rains. He needed a fast way to loosen and dry the soil out.

After some thought, he decided it was easier to use a harrow to loosen the soil and mix in Turface or Diamond Dry than to hand rake. He had his crew go over the field with the tines down to loosen the surface and knock down any ruts or bumps. Then they spread the drying compound and went back over the field with the smooth side of the harrow. "The baseball teams now miss fewer practices and games than they used to since the infield is more manageable," says Moran.

Winter overseeding of bermudagrass fairways at Desert Inn Country Club, Las Vegas, NV, includes the use of a harrow. Superintendent Gary Meyers describes how he overseeds his course prior to the LPGA Desert Classic. "First thing we do is scalp the bermuda as low as we can get it, wall to wall. The cutting height is slightly under 3/8 inch. Next, we bring the harrow in and go over the area four times in four directions. Our next step is seeding. Then we go over the fairways twice in two different directions. Following that, we mow again, rope it off and water it. I believe the harrow gets the seed down and spreads it out.

Finally, Bruce Jackman of Clarkston Golf and Country Club, Clarkston, WA, uses a harrow in his sand topdressing program. After aerifying, Jackman spreads a thin layer of sand with a Lely spreader with a sand ring in it. Using the smooth side of the harrow, Jackman spreads the sand and breaks up the cores evenly over the area. The sand enters the open aerifier holes and the cores are broken down.