

# FROM THE PUBLISHER



**T**here are always ways to cut corners. Just like there are short cuts in the sports turf business, there are similar short cuts in the publishing business. One of the obvious ways to cut corners is to use cheaper paper. I guess if we started out using cheaper paper that was a little lighter and grayer in color than what we are now using, would many of you know the difference? But we would, and we would know that we are not doing our best.

Another way for us to cut corners is to use fewer color photographs, and still another way is to take our articles out of Extension Service newsletters. Some magazines are just filled with product releases. If we were to do this, it would make our lives a lot easier. We don't cut these corners because I believe it would hurt us in the long run.

Cutting corners may save dollars but it reduces the value of a magazine to its readers and advertisers. We don't want that to ever happen to (b)sportsTURF. (t)We feel our mission is too important to risk the readership loyalty we have built in one short year. That's why we constantly feature our readers in our stories instead of dry subject matter that lacks the color you want in your industry's trade magazine. It doesn't attract your attention and you don't read it, we've wasted your time and our paper.

Many turf managers save magazines they receive in the mail intending to read them later. Many times they never get read and end up in the waste basket during spring cleaning. We want you to read **sportsTURF** the day you receive it, not weeks or months later. As magazines lose their value when corners are cut, so do athletic fields. This month we feature the number one corner cut on sports turf... drainage. Sports fields go rapidly downhill when drainage is neglected. Even though poor drainage is a leading cause of field failure, it rarely receives the attention it deserves.

Poorly designed or poorly functioning drainage systems are a major cause of compactness, turf diseases and poor footing. By simply meeting basic drainage standards, perhaps half the problems of athletic fields can be solved. It is one thing to not know about drainage but it is another to try to cut corners if we do have the knowledge. There is a learning curve for all of us in every facet of any business, and surely we are entitled to some mistakes. With drainage, those mistakes are hidden below the surface for most of the year. There is also a number of ways to conceal drainage problems. But, in the long run the problem will surface for everyone to see, and usually when the field must be at its best.

By comparison, if we make a mistake it is minor compared to what you can do on turf. A typo here or there does not spell disaster. But, put down too much fertilizer on a stadium field and burn the turf and it takes weeks to correct your mistake. Unless you compare the quality of paper we use to other publications, you might not notice that our paper is much whiter. But compare a field with good drainage to one without and the difference is apparent immediately. What's worse is that the players and coaches will notice, sometimes before you do.

Many times we all feel budget constraints. Rising costs keep the pressure on all of us to cut the budget. We too keep looking for ways to cut our budgets. However, I have mandated that we will not compromise the quality of our publication, just like you should not compromise the quality of your work.

I have learned a bitter lesson that money hurts only when you spend it. If you sacrifice quality for a handful of dollars, when the damage occurs to your turf and you try to explain that if you had those extra few dollars to spend this would not have happened, you will find it falls on deaf ears.

There are times we have to stick with our convictions despite the cost. We may have to take some heat, but as the song goes... "I took the blows and did it my way."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. E. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Publisher