

# THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

## PLAYING TO WIN MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE



**S**uccess or failure in any business can be boiled down to two things: a good team and a winning attitude. Put those two together and you'll achieve your goals. You are the coach of your own destiny.

This industry's greatest asset is its connection to sports. Even money pales by comparison to the excitement of a team after winning a tough game. Sharing a common goal with a group of people, spending hours preparing and practicing and achieving that goal can create a spirit found only in sports. This *esprit de corps* leads

people to discover new abilities, new energy and a new determination to learn the skills necessary to win.

Take these same characteristics and apply them to your job, as Johnny Grimes did in Denison, TX. Read the story about him in this issue and you'll be amazed at what can be accomplished when a sports turf manager involves an entire community in a sports field improvement program. Grimes applied his skills as an American Legion baseball coach and former minor league baseball player to obtain the necessary funds to improve an old high school football stadium.

As the field improved, so did the Denison Yellow Jackets. The high school team, which had never made the state finals, battled their opponents on their improved gridiron to become state champions! Grimes' winning attitude permeated an entire community.

Just as Grimes drilled his baseball team, he developed a winning routine for his field maintenance crew—and makes them stick to it the entire year. There is no off season for the Denison field crew. Both he and his staff polish their knowledge and skills at sports turf management seminars when they are not working on the fields. If there is a new technique to improve the school's fields, it will be practiced and added to the maintenance routine.

Instead of a play book, Grimes has a list of maintenance procedures which must be followed precisely. This list covers 12 months, not just the three or four months prior to the fall football season. It was put together with the help of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. If something doesn't work, the trouble is in the execution, not in the procedure. Knowing that, Grimes' crew follows its play book to the letter.

The fact that Grimes thinks like a coach helps him obtain the support of Denison's coaching staff, an important key to any field maintenance program. The field crew is part of the Yellow Jackets team working to reduce injuries and send the team to the finals year after year. In four years, the team has not lost a single player to ankle or knee injuries because the fields are always smooth and safe.

A good coach motivates people to perform to the best of their abilities. As part of the team, the field crew must also be encouraged to use all their abilities to produce the best field possible. That's where sports and field maintenance come together. Break this link and you'll find yourself at a great disadvantage.

As every coach tells his players, "If you don't want to win you'll never make the big leagues." Certainly, professional sports figures play to win and have developed skills to keep winning. Sports turf managers, in their own way, are professional sports figures and should share the same determination to be on a winning team.

*Bruce Shank*

# EVENTS

CALENDAR

JUNE

**24-25** Washington State University Turfgrass Field Days, Puyallup, WA. Contact Dr. Roy Goss, Western Washington Research and Extension Center, Puyallup, WA 98371. (206) 593-8540.

**26** Midwest Sports Turf Institute, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL. Presented by the Sports Turf Managers' Association. Contact Susan Benson, Business and Technical Institute, College of DuPage (312) 858-2800, ext. 2196.

JULY

**20-22** Mississippi Turfgrass Association summer meeting, Biloxi, MS. Contact Jim Perry, P.O. Box 5426, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

AUGUST

**6** Annual Turf Research Field Day, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. Contact Dr. Henry Indyk, Rutgers University, Soils and Crops Dept., P.O. Box 231, New Brunswick, NJ 08903

**14-15** Pennsylvania State University Turf Field Days, University Park, PA. Contact T. L. Watschke, 16 Tyson Building, University Park, PA 16802.

**26-28** International Sport Summit, Hilton Hotel at Rockefeller Center, New York City, NY. Contact Sport Summit, 372 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10018. (212) 502-5306.

**28-30** International Lawn Garden & Power Equipment Expo, Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center, Louisville, KY. Contact Expo 86, (800) 558-8767.