

EVENTS

CALENDAR

MARCH

20 Sports Turf Clinic and Equipment Rodeo, Ranger Stadium, Arlington, TX. There will be three hours of instruction and demonstration of equipment. Contact Bill Knoop, Texas A&M, 17360 Coit Rd., Dallas, TX 75252. (214) 231-5362.

24-26 Athletic Turf Management Seminar, Providence, Rhode Island. Intensive two-day seminar on sports turf construction and management for those with tight budgets. Contact Athletic Turf, Box 1836, Appleton, WI 54913, (414) 733-2301.

26-27 Landscape Design Short Course Fisher Auditorium, Ohio Agricul Research and Development Center, Wooster, OH. Contact Fred K. Buscher, OARDC, Wooster, OH 44691. (216) 263-3831.

27 Third Annual Sports Turf Institute and Trade Show, California Polytechnic University, Pomona; in cooperation with the Sports Turf Managers Association. Contact Kent Kurtz, (714) 598-4167, or 598-4168.

27-28 Athletic Turf Management Seminar, Roanoke, VA. Two-day program on efficient use of crews, equipment and turf care methods. Contact Athletic Turf, Box 1936, Appleton, WI 54913, (414) 733-2301.

APRIL

23-25 Landscape Industry Show, Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, CA. One of the largest trade shows in the landscape industry. Contact California Landscape Contractors Association, 2226 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95816, (916) 448-2522.

MAY

21 North Carolina Turf and Landscape Field Day, NCSU Turf Field Center, Raleigh, NC. Contact J.M. DiPaola, Box 7620, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-7620, (919) 737-2657.

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

THE NEED FOR DEMONSTRATION FIELDS



As the overused cliché goes, "I'm from Missouri and you have to show me." Well, I really am from Missouri and it's true. In fact, my first newspaper job was editing an "action line" column called Show Me for the *Columbia Missourian*.

So I can appreciate a sports turf manager's concern for trying to make his field look like a professional ball park when his budget is limited. He has to be realistic when asking for money to improve or maintain his field. He needs a concrete, practical example to show those holding

the purse strings, especially when a request has to be approved by two to three layers of decision makers. The initial request for funds can be twisted like a rumor as it's passed from one level to the next, unless such an example is there to keep the original request intact.

Statements like, "We can't afford a professional ball field; it's just not a responsible use of public funds," have kept many fields from being improved. It would be great to be able to say, "I share your concerns—and that is why the field being proposed has been designed by leading experts specifically for our part of the country, with special attention to construction and maintenance costs."

Both the National Sports Turf Council and the Sports Turf Managers' Association have made demonstration fields a high priority. They realize most sports turf managers operate under limited budgets. They want to show that good fields are possible even with small budgets. They also realize the right type of field construction and maintenance depends upon local conditions. This would require demonstration fields across the country.

At the local level you have leaders using fields for demonstration purposes. Dr. Bill Knoop at Texas A&M in Dallas is working closely with high schools and colleges to show them they can improve their fields with the support of suppliers and the Extension Service. Dr. Roy Goss at Washington State University is doing the same. So are Dr. Kent Kurtz at Cal Poly Univeristy, Dr. Herb Portz at Southern Illinois University, Dr. Henry Indyk at Rutgers University, Dr. Tom Turner at the University of Maryland, Dr. John Harper at Pennsylvania State University and Dr. Richard Skogley at the University of Rhode Island.

Golf course superintedents are also pitching in. George Renault at Chevy Chase Country Club in Maryland hopes to build a demonstration field this year. Frank Dobie at Sharon Country Club in Sharon, OH, is gathering volunteers for a northern Ohio demonstration field.

Golf superintendents face budget restraints too. A golf course greens committee may not be as sensitive to costs as public officials, but superintendents have to justify expenses regularly. How do they do it? What do they have that athletic field managers don't? One major advantage they have is the example set by other courses.

Demonstration fields are on the way. Let's all do what we can to speed things up as much as possible. Sports fields should get the same critical eye that residential lawns do. We hope to encourage competition between schools by a contest to be announced later this year. A bit of peer pressure might help move things along a little faster.

Bruce F. Shank