

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

PEOPLE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



The future of sports turf is really in the hands of a few people compared to the enormity of the industry. By a few, I mean the 18,000 readers of this magazine.

That's a pretty bold statement to make. The industry is huge: some 15,000 park districts, another 15,000 public school districts, roughly 8,000 resorts, thousands of colleges and universities, 13,000 golf courses and hundreds of stadia in the country. The managers of sports turf at all these different facilities have operated with limited support for years. They have been

limited largely by an inability to communicate with each other.

As we said in the last issue, it's not that the technology doesn't exist to achieve safe, quality turf under heavy use. There just wasn't a vehicle to get the word of this technology out to those who need it. That is why the readers of **SPORTS-TURF** can and will make the difference in the future.

Obviously, the magazine alone won't make the difference. Many sports turf managers were successful before the magazine was launched. But, not enough. As a whole, the condition of sports turf in the U.S. is far worse than it should be. A comparison of the condition of most sports turf in this country to that in England proves it. As an industry, we have a long way to go to catch up with the United Kingdom.

This is a huge challenge—one too great for many to accept or our fields wouldn't be in the condition they are. Only a few have accepted the challenge in the past or will accept it in the future. But, from those who encouraged us to start the magazine and those who continue to spur us on, we believe that many more sports turf managers are willing to accept the challenge—enough to make the difference.

That is why you are so extremely important to this industry. Only you can really improve the state of sports turf in this country.

The characteristics that make great turf managers are energy, determination and goal orientation. Each person featured this month has those qualities. When I spoke with them they didn't complain about salary, benefits or management. They spoke only of the challenge of their job and how rewarding it was to achieve difficult goals.

Ken Novak at Rancho Park could just hide in the huge Los Angeles Park System—it's so big. He chose to go the extra mile and gain the support of his management to make a municipal golf course more challenging to golfers and profitable to the city. Fred Allen at Seabright Lawn Tennis Club went back to school to better understand his bentgrass tennis courts. Dick Hahne at Daytona Speedway creatively linked the need for dust control on the motocross course with quality turf to a very quality-conscious management.

These people provide inspiration for other sports turf managers. Now that you know about them and are hopefully inspired by them, maybe you will go the extra mile and accept the challenge of better sports turf.

Bruce Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

MAY

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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.

JUNE

8-11

National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, Marriott Resort, Marco Island, FL. Contact Michael Cleary, NACDA, (216) 892-4000.

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Athletic Field Demonstration Day, Wakefield Recreation Center, Fairfax County Parks, Annandale, VA. Contact J. R. Hall, extension agronomist, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Blacksburg, VA 24061

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Fourth Annual Turf Field Day, Turf Seed, Inc., Research Center, Hubbard, OR. Contact Tom Stanley, Turf-Seed, Inc, P.O. Box 250, Hubbard, OR 97032.

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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

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Troubleshooting Ornamental Horticulture Problems, University of California Riverside. Contact Ted Stamen, University of California, 21150 Box Springs Rd., Riverside, CA 92507. (714) 683-6491.

20-22

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