

NFL PLAYERS CONFER ON TURF CONDITIONS

Field safety was one of several key topics discussed by more than 600 members of the National Football League Players' Association (NFLPA) during its recent conference in Los Angeles, CA. Two sessions were devoted entirely to current field conditions in the NFL and their potential impact on players' careers. It was the first such conference held by the players since 1983.

"Players are justifiably concerned about anything that can shorten their careers," said John Macik, sports medicine coordinator for the players' association. "With the new contract with the owners under negotiation this year, the players want to determine what influence they can have on improving field conditions." The players are expected to include some type of field safety clause in their next contract, although Macik would not discuss what it might be.

Both the NFLPA and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) have recently completed studies on injury rates on artificial versus natural turf fields. "After four years, we have found injury rates to be twice as high on artificial as on natural," Macik revealed. He stated that the NCAA found injuries on college fields to be 1.6 times greater on artificial than on natural turf. "To someone whose career depends upon the condition of these fields, the differ-

ence in injury rates is very important."

Dr. Kent Kurtz, executive director of the Sports Turf Managers Association, spoke to the players during both sessions about methods used by turf managers to protect fields from damage by other types of events frequently held at stadiums. "The technology exists today to make natural turf fields nearly as durable as artificial surfaces with the added benefit of fewer injuries," he told the players. Kurtz described types of field construction and maintenance available today for stadium and practice facilities so the players could discuss the subject knowledgeably with the owners.

CONGRESSMAN CONSIDERS HEARINGS ON FIELD SAFETY

Congressman Ted Weiss (D-NY), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations, is exploring the possibility of holding hearings on turf-related injuries to athletes on public school and park fields. The congressman's staff has been contacting various organizations to evaluate the importance of hearings to be held this spring. No date has been set.

Support for such hearing in the turf industry is great. John Macik, sports medicine coordinator for the National Football

Players' Association, thinks the hearings should be as comprehensive as possible and include testimony of experts from around the country. George Toma, grounds superintendent for the Kansas City Chiefs and consultant to the NFL, believes hearings on field safety would benefit "the kids" more than anyone else. "It's the future generation of athletes we need to be concerned about," said Toma.

Dr. Jack Murray, a director of the National Sports Turf Council, cautioned that many hearings fall short of expectations and months go by before the testimony gets published in the *Congressional Record*. "These hearings are too important to rush through or to treat as a regional problem," said Murray. "We hope that they will be regarded with the importance they deserve."

"We have nothing to report at this time," said Pat Fleming, aide to Weiss. "We're just checking to see if they should be held."

JAMES B. MONCRIEF

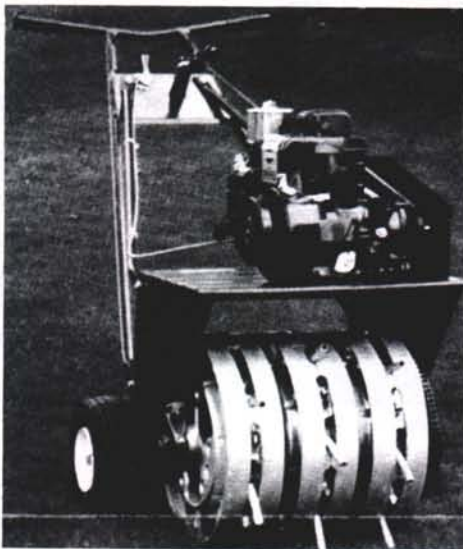
James B. "Monty" Moncrief, retired southeastern regional agronomist for the United States Golf Association Green Section died in February after playing his daily round of golf. During more than 30 years with the Green Section, Monty played a major role in the improvement of golf course maintenance in the Southeast.

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