

EVENTS

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

18-19 Southwest Athletic Turf Clinic, Will Rogers Memorial Complex, Fort Worth, TX. Contact Athletic Turf Association, Inc., P.O. Box 1114, Hurst, TX 76053. (817) 282-4965.

18-20 Iowa Turfgrass Conference, Des Moines Convention Center, Des Moines, IA. Contact: Dr. Michael Agnew, 105 Horticulture Bldg., Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011. (515) 294-0027.

24-26 Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference, Pittsburgh Expo Mart/Marriott Hotel, Monroeville, PA. Contact: Christine King, Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, P.O. Box 417, Bellefonte, PA 16823. (814) 355-8010.

MARCH

2-4 Midwest Turf Conference, Stewart Center, Purdue University, Contact: Dr. Clark Throssell, Purdue University, 2-443 Lilly Hall, W. Lafayette, IN 47907. (317) 494-4785.

2-5 Massachusetts Turfgrass Conference, Springfield Civic Center, Springfield, MA. Contact Dr. Joe Troll, University of Massachusetts, Dept. of Soil Science, Stockbridge Hall, Amherst, MA 01003. (413) 549-5295.

9-11 Winter Turf Short Course, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. Contact Tom Samples, Box 1071, Knoxville, TN 37901-1071.

24 Third Annual Sports Turf Institute, Cal Poly University, Pomona, CA. Contact: Kent Kurtz, Dept. of Horticulture, Cal Poly University, 3801 W. Temple Ave., Pomona, CA 91768. (714) 869-2176.

APRIL

13-14 Southeastern Turfgrass Conference, Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station, Tifton, GA. Contact: Dr. Glenn Burton, Dept. of Agronomy, Coastal Plain Experiment Station, Tifton, GA 31793. (912) 386-3353.

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

REPORTERS FINALLY RECOGNIZE THE SPORTS TURF MANAGER



Now that Super Bowl XXI is history, it is obvious that sports turf managers received more publicity in the past two months than they have in the past four years. The Super Bowl made 130 million television viewers aware of beautiful, SAFE sports turf.

Despite this newfound publicity, as the hype of Super Bowl XXI built to a crescendo, the story behind the scenes was not fully told. We thought you would like to know this fascinating tale, so I spent days at the Rose Bowl and many evenings on the phone with George and Chip Toma

to put together the story beginning on page 12.

Although only a few men received the recognition for Super Bowl XXI, there is no question they helped the image of all sports turf managers. At last, they are receiving the recognition they truly deserve. The recent publicity will go a long way to furthering the awareness of the public and the owners of professional football and baseball teams to the needs of a professional turf manager.

The playoffs leading up to the Super Bowl also made some very strong statements to the public. David Frey at Cleveland Stadium and Steve Wightman at Mile High Stadium in Denver amazed both the announcers and the viewers with the condition of their natural turf fields after weeks of freezing temperatures, snow and heavy use. Both fields had to be maintained for a month after their regular season schedule was over.

There is no question that managers of today's sports complexes can do Houdini-type magic to make a sports field come alive. Although this magic is generally associated with the appearance of a field, I believe the most important thing in the minds of the best sports field managers is the safety of the players using their field(s). Turf managers have to do both to keep their jobs today.

Needless to say, golf course superintendents have been doing the very same thing for many years. As the professional golf tour began again last month, superintendents are being recognized for the spectacular condition of their courses, especially those courses constructed specifically for a televised tour event.

It's great to see that sports journalism is finally giving some recognition to "the man behind the scenes."

From the beginning, we have felt that sports turf management is comprised of golf course superintendents, athletic field managers and those who maintain the grounds around sports complexes. We've also maintained that colleges, schools and parks have many of the same problems as professional stadiums.

Our approach is different from the mass media and other trade publications. We have to be more attuned to the problems of growing natural turf under heavy use. We are aware of the damage to golf turf caused by hundreds of golfers every day, seven days a week. We are equally aware of the wear and tear to fields from two teams every football, baseball and soccer game. Only the resourcefulness of the sports turf manager keeps these sports complexes in play.

One of the most positive effects of increased publicity will be new talent. As young students exploring career options see sports field managers on television and read publications about them, they will investigate this career for their own futures.

It is largely the aggressive, ambitious and progressive superintendent, drawn to golf largely by television and sports, who has propelled golf course management into a new age. He sets goals and acquires the education, experience and contacts to achieve them. It will be the same kind of aggressive, ambitious and progressive person who will take athletic field management into a new age of its own. Increased publicity is making it all possible.

Bruce Shank