

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

ALL IT TAKES IS A "CAN DO" ATTITUDE



When we started *sportsTURF* two years ago this month, just about everyone we talked to said there was definitely a need for a magazine about turf management—one that would encompass all types of sports facilities. But, after saying that, they would add, "How come nobody has done it before?"

I think the answer to that question is other publishers were hesitant because they operate by what is, not by what can be. To me, that attitude is totally contrary to sports. There are no sure bets in athletic competition. There may be a winner and a loser for every event, but every-

body wins in the long run.

The same applies to the business of sports. Joe Robbe had no guarantee that he could build Dolphin Stadium and make it profitable, but he is doing it. Al Davis is taking very large risks leaving the Los Angeles Coliseum and moving his Raiders to Irwindale, but he is going to do it. Every developer who invests millions of dollars in a real estate or resort course today is taking a huge risk as well. But, the number of new golf courses under construction today is phenomenal.

When a coach selects players for his team, he has no guarantee they will produce a winning season. He has some idea of an athlete's abilities, but he also has to have good intuition. Every professional, college and high school coach faces the same uncertainty. Do they decide not to field a team if they don't feel certain they will win? Of course not, they work harder to take the players they have and use determination, motivation and team chemistry to stretch their natural abilities to the maximum.

You have to be a little crazy to be in the business of sports. Every good sports turf manager knows that. The hours are long, the pay is decent but not spectacular and the work is hard. It's the other rewards that keep you going much of the time. These include the success of a sports program, the obvious improvement you provide to the facility and the excitement of being involved in sports. Sports turf managers who don't feel compensated by these non-salary benefits don't belong in the business. They will not make the extra effort it takes to build a winner.

Both financial and emotional rewards drive the sports turf industry. For that reason, the industry will always go beyond what skeptics predict. The golf market will continue to expand dramatically throughout this century. The number of new and reconstructed stadiums in this country will almost double in the next 20 years. Fewer professional baseball and football teams will have to share facilities between August and November. More communities will build or help finance stadiums for expansion teams, minor league baseball clubs, and college and high school sports. These new stadiums will employ skilled turf managers to provide higher standards in field management. More school systems will cooperate with park districts to provide better, safer fields for their growing sports programs.

More and more private investors and public officials are developing a "can do" attitude about sports facilities. If it can happen in Irwindale, CA; Miami, FL; Worthington, OH; Broward County, FL; Raleigh, NC; Chicago, IL; Toronto, ON; Albany, NY; Huntsville, AL; Omaha, NE; and St. Louis, MO; it can happen where you live. Those who will reap the rewards of the future must have the guts and drive to take a chance today. The leading sports turf managers in the U.S. and their employers have taken that step. Those who wait will end up going the way of the Model T. At some point you have to change to keep pace with society and the business and employment opportunities it presents.

Bruce F. Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

21-24 Northwest Turfgrass Conference, Salishan Lodge, Gleneden Beach, OR. Contact: NW Turfgrass Association, P.O. Box 1367, Olympia, WA 98507, (206) 754-0825.

22-23 Virginia Tech Turfgrass Research Field Days, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Contact: J. R. Hall, (703) 961-5797.

24-26 Pan Pacific Turf Conference, Hawaiian Regent Hotel-Waikiki, Honolulu, HI. Contact: Wayne K. Ogasawara, Hawaiian Fertilizer Sales, Inc., 94-155 C. Leowaena St., Waipahu, HI 96797, (808) 677-8779.

28-29 Sports Management 87...A Conference for Local Governments, Cincinnati, OH. Contact: International City Management Association, 1120 G Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, (202) 626-4600.

OCTOBER

6 GCSANJ Annual Turfgrass Equipment, Irrigation and Supplies Field Day, Rutgers Stadium and Golf Course, Piscataway, NJ. Contact: Dr. Henry Indyk, Soils and Crops Dept., PO Box 231, Cook College, New Brunswick, NJ, 08903, (201) 932-9453.

28-29 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium, Pfister Hotel, Milwaukee, WI. Contact: Bob Welch, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, 735 North Water St., Milwaukee, WI 53202, (414) 225-2222

NOVEMBER

3-6 New York State Turfgrass Association Convention, Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY. Contact: Elizabeth Seme, executive director, NYSTA, PO Box 612, Latham, NY 12110, (518)783-1229.