

REBOUND

LETTERS FROM READERS

MORE SPORTS TURF MANAGERS

At every sports event, spectators focus on two things, the athletes and the condition of the field. Both the athletes and the spectators enjoy a higher sense of enjoyment and competition when an event is played in a cool, well-groomed, verdant arena.

There is nothing more discouraging to athletes than trying to play their best on muddy, turfless sports fields. They know that it is virtually impossible to perform at their best on mud and water.

Artificial turf is not the answer. The basic problem is we simply do not have enough sports turf managers to satisfy the need. As a matter of fact, the position of sports turf manager is practically nonexistent. People who are trained in growing and managing sports fields are quickly absorbed by sales organizations and other better paying positions.

Just as every golf course has a superintendent who is responsible for the entire course and the grounds, all types of sports

facilities should have a sports turf manager. Producing acceptable, injury-free turf should not be delegated to school principles, coaches, custodians or civic-minded citizens. Seldom, if ever, have these people been properly trained in the art and science of turfgrass culture.

Every school district should have an overall turfgrass manager for its entire grounds and a job description to fit these responsibilities. The same is true of many municipal park and recreation departments. They spend a great deal of money on recreational programs which put greater pressure on existing turf facilities. But ask to see their sports turf manager and you meet with blank stares. There is no such person. Many private schools, colleges and other sports facilities fall into the same category.

As a result, millions of dollars of public and private money is wasted each year. Most of these dollars are spent on unqualified or unsupervised labor, poor quality seed or sod, wrong fertilizers, heavy weed-infested

soil, poorly selected chemicals, and poorly designed maintenance equipment.

It seems that more grass is killed by poor management than it is possible to grow. This results from the wrong type of mowers, wrong height of cut, lack of sensible mowing schedules, aerification or verticutting, and bad irrigation systems and schedules.

When new fields are constructed, no knowledgeable person is on the job to see that the work is being done properly and according to specifications. Low bidders, who have little knowledge of good sports fields, will sometimes bury stones, rocks and other debris which can surface later to cause injury.

It is time to wake up and correct this appalling situation. When administrators refuse to recognize the seriousness of this situation, insurance companies will.

There is no defense for not knowing where to turn for help. The Sports Turf Managers Association, the National Sports Turf Council, the Professional Grounds Management

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Grounds Managers



This Is What PGMS Is Doing For You

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Clip and mail to:
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12 Galloway Ave., Suite 1E, Cockeysville, MD 21030, (301) 667-1833

Association, to name a few, are there to help. Almost every state has a turfgrass specialist to answer your question as part of the Agricultural Extension Service. We also have many excellent magazines that publish timely articles and supply information.

Where will these needed sports turf managers come from? There are many people who qualify for the position of sports turf manager. It's just that no one has recognized them. They have been lost in old, archaic systems of administration. It is time to change the system and move these people into positions of responsibility and authority.

New sports turf managers will come from students entering this growing field of turfgrass management. These people, after serving as assistants under experienced managers, will be ready to take responsibility as managers themselves. Even golf course superintendents are becoming sports turf managers.

The sports turf manager should make up and administer the budget, develop forecasts of future sports needs and manage the work force for maintenance. He should have the authority to purchase the proper equipment and supplies. He should be paid a staff position salary with benefits to attract and hold him.

A sports turf manager more than earns his salary in direct savings resulting from more efficient use of labor, specifying the proper materials and better turfgrass management programs. Insurance rates can be held in line and even lowered when a knowledgeable person is in charge. Most important of all is minimizing injuries to players.

Who is responsible for fractured bones and painful injuries? Responsibility begins with the administrator at the top. Unless he moves to bring physical education programs and sports turf management into perspective, all of the blame will be on his shoulders.

No longer is there an excuse for the negligence of this nationwide problem. Information and help to set up workable sports turf management programs is only as far away as the phone.

Everyone loves sports. Everyone wants to help. But those that are knowledgeable in sports turf management can make it happen.

PORT CHARLOTTE

It is with great pleasure that I could read in your March 1988 issue of *sportsTURF* about one of the best groundskeepers in all of professional sports, namely Tom Burns, in your article "A Star For The Texas Rangers.

I am so privileged to have had the opportunity to work with such an outstanding young man. For him, I am very happy that he is receiving some long overdue credit for his efforts in his chosen profession.

Sarge Anderson, Camp Coordinator
California Angels



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The Awards are sponsored by **Beam Clay**[®], the **Sports Turf Managers Association**, and **sportsTURF** magazine in recognition of excellence and professionalism in maintaining outstanding, safe, professional quality baseball diamonds. Entries will be judged in three categories: professional diamonds; college diamonds; and school, municipal or park diamonds.

Send the information below to enter:

1. Age of baseball diamond (year of installation).
2. Geographic location (city and state).
3. Description of maintenance program.
4. Operating budget for baseball diamond.
5. Irrigation: None Manual Automatic
6. Total number of maintenance staff for field.
7. Does baseball field have lighting for night games?
8. Number of events on baseball diamond per year.
9. Types and number of events on diamond other than baseball?
10. How many months during the year is the field used?
11. Why you think this field is one of the best?
12. Include an assortment of color slides or prints of the diamond.

Deadline for entries: Entries must be postmarked no later than November 1, 1988. Selection of winners will be made by the Awards Committee of the **Sports Turf Managers Association**.

Mail entries to:
Beam Clay Award
sportsTURF magazine
P.O. Box 8420
Van Nuys, CA 91409

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