

## HEAT, LACK OF TIME CAUSE STRUGGLE AT NEW SOLDIER FIELD

The Kentucky bluegrass sod at Soldier Field looked as healthy as grass can look when the Chicago Bears walked onto the field for their exhibition game with the Miami Dolphins early last month. It was a feat for the sod just to have survived the relentless heat since its installation just seven weeks before. But the cleats of the players quickly found the turf's weakness as the whistles blew and the game began.

The turf tore so badly that the National Football League stepped in to recommend ways to salvage the field for the remainder of the season. The Dolphins were especially concerned since they were to play their season opener against the Bears on the same field five weeks later. In a series of emergency meetings, the NFL, Chicago Park District, Turfgrass Services, Inc., and Huber Ranch Sod Nursery worked out a "temporary solution."

The problem with the turf was linked to many things, starting with the intense heat and the extremely short period of time the sod had to root. The same sod and root zone (PAT) had passed the test two years before at Findlay High School Stadium in Findley, OH, explained Laurel Meade of Turfgrass Services. "We had every reason to believe it would do its job again in Chicago."

But the fact remained that the sod did not root sufficiently to withstand the abuse

of football. To give the sod more time, the Park District and the Bears discussed moving the two remaining exhibition games to either Memorial Stadium at the University of Illinois in Champaign or Camp Randall Stadium at University of Wisconsin in Madison. Such a move would have had created severe complications for ticket holders, concessionaires, the teams and the park district.

George Toma, turf consultant to the NFL, with the assistance of Dr. James Watson, vice president and agronomist for The Toro Company, put his reputation on the line once more by recommending the mid-section of the field be resodded with thick-cut sod immediately. "The situation reminded me of Candlestick Park in San Francisco in 1981," says Toma. "The sod just wasn't rooting fast enough."

Huber cut sod from the same field as before, but this time it was 2½ inches thick in 18 by 36 inch sections. "Huber really went the extra mile to help," Toma said. "Each piece of sod weighed more than 90 pounds. We started laying sod on Thursday and finished noon on Saturday." An 80-foot-wide section of the center of the field from goal post to goal post was installed. Then it was topped with a mixture of sand and calcined clay, fertilized and treated with Bovamura and Ferromec.

The sidelines were heavily aerified with

solid tines ¾ inch deep and overseeded with perennial ryegrass. "We had to break through the silt interface between the sod and the sand to let the roots through," Toma stated.

The park district crew worked two 12-hour shifts for more than five days to complete the repairs. "The center of the field will have to be irrigated separately from the sidelines since the sod is thicker there," Toma added. "I still believe that natural turf is the right turf for professional sports."

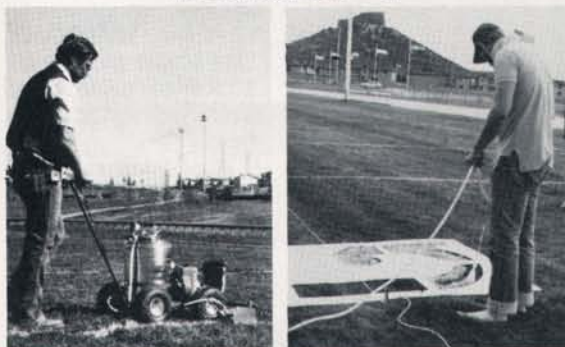
## NCAA CONSIDERS TWO NEW BOWL GAMES

While the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) does not appear in favor of a "College Championship," it has given conditional approval to two more college bowl games for 1989.

Memorial Stadium in Baltimore, MD, will serve as the site of the Crab Bowl, currently scheduled for Dec. 6, 1989. The event will move to the Twin Harbor Stadium complex when it is completed. Crab Bowl coordinators are seeking sponsors to assure the necessary \$1.5 million line of credit before NCAA or the stadium will ink contracts.

The other bowl game approved, tentatively called the Cactus Bowl, will give Tuc-

## IS YOUR FIELD A "WINNER"?



NEWSTRIPE can supply the products to make your sports surfaces the most attractive in your conference. Our line markers and stencils are being used by major universities, school districts and soccer clubs for field maintenance.

### Check these possibilities:

- Football
- Basketball
- Soccer
- Playgrounds
- LaCrosse
- Shuffleboard
- Baseball

**NEWSTRIPE** Inc.

P.O. Box 440881  
Aurora, CO 80044

CALL  
1-800-624-6706  
For Details

## Measuring Wheel Deal

**IMLER® Measuring Wheel records up to 99,999 ft. without resetting.**

- ★ Solid rubber wheel— 2 ft. circumference, 10¼" diameter; will not backtrack.
- ★ Five digit counter with reset button, measures in one ft. increments.
- ★ 32" welded steel handle.

**Order by stock number. No. 103405A \$79.55**

Price includes shipping and handling charges.

### Central Ordering

**1-800-241-6401** Outside Georgia  
**1-800-241-3136** In Georgia  
**(404) 455-0907** In Atlanta



Prices subject to change without notice.



**Ben Meadows Company**  
3589 Broad Street Atlanta (Chamblee), Georgia 30366  
Telephone 404 455-0907 Cable Address 'Benco' **5220B**