

EVENTS

CALENDAR

MAY

16 North Carolina Turf and Landscape Field Day, North Carolina State University Turf Field Center, Raleigh, NC. Contact: Dr. Joe DiPaola, Crop Science Dept., NCSU, Box 7620, Raleigh, NC 27695, (919) 737-2657.

JUNE

19 Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Exposition, Santa Clara Convention Center, Santa Clara, CA. Contact: Richard Mauck, Public Works, 1500 Warburton Ave., Santa Clara, CA 95050-3792, (408) 984-3151.

20 Fourth Annual Athletic Turf Field Day, Kitchener Auditorium, Ottawa Street, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. Contact: Michael J. Bladon, Sports Turf Association, 185 Edinburgh Rd. South, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1G 2H8, (519) 824-4120, Ext. 3460.

20 Midwest Sports Turf Institute, College of Du Page, Glen Ellyn, IL. Contact: STMA, 400 N. Mountain Ave., Suite 301, Upland, CA 91786, (714) 981-9199.

25-26 Second Annual Summer Turfgrass-Fest, Western Washington Research and Extension Center and High Cedars Golf Club. Contact: Northwest Turfgrass Association, P.O. Box 1367, Olympia, WA 98507, (206) 754-0825.

JULY

29-31 International Lawn, Garden and Power Equipment Expo, Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center, Louisville, KY. Contact: Expo 90, P.O. Box 70465, Louisville, KY 40270, (800) 558-8767.

Send announcements on your events two months in advance to editor, *Golf & SportsTURF*, P.O. Box 8420, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

THE WAIT IS OVER...EXPANSION DEADLINES ARE SET



After years of speculation, the most significant expansion of professional sports since the short-lived United States Football League appears to be just around the corner. Both the National Football League and Major League Baseball provided a glimpse of their expansion plans last month.

Six cities will gain either a NFL or National League Baseball franchise within the next 36 months, according to statements made by NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue and Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent. Four new football teams and two new baseball teams, will be created before 1993 to meet the tremendous demand for professional sports.

The addition of two National League Baseball franchises was part of the settlement between the Player Relations Committee and Major League Baseball. Vincent will unveil his complete expansion plan by the end of June. Among the cities likely to compete for the teams are Buffalo, NY; Denver, CO; Indianapolis, IN; Miami, FL; Phoenix, AZ; San Antonio, TX; Tampa/St. Petersburg, FL; and Washington, DC.

Tagliabue revealed in April that, "Expansion is a very top priority -- possibly by 1992, certainly by 1993." Dick Maxwell, spokesman for the NFL, said the league would either add four teams at one time, or two in one season and two more soon after. Former Commissioner Pete Rozelle had held off expansion until owners and players reached a collective bargaining agreement. The league has been operating without an agreement for more than two years. Tagliabue has apparently lifted this condition.

Cities expected to go after new football franchises include: Baltimore, MD; Columbus, OH; Jacksonville, FL; Nashville, TN; Raleigh, NC; Sacramento, CA; and St. Louis, MO. If the Raiders move to Oakland, Los Angeles will be looking for a second team.

Now that the commissioners have set deadlines for expansion, the bidding war should begin in earnest. Hundreds of millions of dollars are on the line. Much of this is earmarked for stadium construction or renovation. Add to this the development of new football training centers and farm systems for each new baseball team, and the economic impact of the dual expansions will exceed \$1 billion during this decade.

Expansion should open the door for a number of excellent assistant groundskeepers who have been waiting in the wings for years. But the pendulum will start to swing in favor of college-trained turf managers as it did in the golf industry during the '60s. Harder to manage sand-based rootzones will become the standard. Stadium turf will have to withstand more special events than ever before and still provide perfect playability. Management will be forced to place the sports surface in the hands of experts.

The wait is over. Sports have become big business, and so has sports turf.

Bruce F. Shank