

# THE FRONT OFFICE

## OPINION PAGE

### BRIDGING THE GAP AMONG SPORTS



**W**ith the January issue, Golf & sportsTURF enters its seventh year of publication. It seems like just a few weeks ago that Denne and I were at the 1985 Sports Turf Institute at Cal Poly Pomona talking about the need for a publication covering the entire recreational turf industry.

Literally hundreds of people had voiced to us the need for a magazine that recognized the common bonds between golf course superintendents and managers of other high-use, recreational turf facilities. Stadium groundskeepers, park superintendents, school maintenance directors, and college landscape supervisors wanted a voice in the turf industry equal to their associates in golf. They wanted dialogue with others to help solve specific problems related to the stress placed on turf by all types of sports.

At the same time, it became obvious that most golf course superintendents are just as curious about what is required to deliver high-quality surfaces for football, baseball, soccer, polo, croquet, field hockey, horse racing, and lawn bowling. Superintendents don't live in ivory towers despite the high-scale image of their sport. Most superintendents I've talked with are anxious to help out their counterparts at other types of sports facilities. The brotherhood extends beyond one sport.

Every week I hear people remark that the athletic field industry today is where the golf industry was 20 years ago. That statement is usually directed at the safety and quality of athletic fields. Everyone points to inadequate investment in knowledgeable personnel, equipment, and supplies. They know what is possible when athletic directors, park superintendents, and other facility managers make a serious commitment to proper construction and maintenance.

Everybody learns by example. Superintendents improved their golf courses largely in this way over the past two decades. If one course set higher standards, other superintendents responded to compete for golfers. Certain universities adapted their turf curriculum to fit changing standards in golf course maintenance and manufacturers acted in kind with new products.

It's no different for the rest of the sports turf industry. New standards have been set and applied by a growing number of facilities. Quite a few were borrowed from the golf industry. Stadiums, racetracks, parks, polo fields, practice facilities, and universities have begun to learn from examples set by those committed to better, safer turf. Soon universities will be offering sports turf curriculum in addition to their golf course curriculum. Manufacturers have already begun to design and build specialized equipment and supplies.

Overall, the similarities between golf and other sports outweigh the differences. It's not unusual for a superintendent of parks, a resort facilities manager, or a university groundskeeper to be responsible for both golf courses and various sports fields. Furthermore, the number of former golf course superintendents in college and professional sports is rising.

Cooperation between the golf industry and the rest of the sports turf industry is crucial to the future of the turf market. That was the principle on which Golf & sportsTURF was founded. It is clearer today than it was seven years ago. I sincerely hope that this magazine has helped all its subscribers by bridging the gap among sports played on turf.

*Bruce F. Shank*

# EVENTS

## CALENDAR

### JANUARY

**21-23** Midwest Regional Turf Conference, Adams Mark Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. Contact: Jeff Lefton, Dept. of Agronomy, Purdue University, W. Lafayette, IN, 47907, (317) 494-9737.

**21-23** Michigan Turfgrass Conference, Clarion Hotel, Lansing, MI. Contact: Michael Saffel, 584G Plant and Soil Sciences Bldg., Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, (517) 353-9022.

**29-30** Athletic Fields/Sportsturf Seminar, Parke Hotel, Columbus, OH. Contact: Sue White, extension associate, Dept. of Agronomy, Ohio State University, Room 202, 2021 Coffey Rd, Columbus, OH 43210, (614) 292-2001.

### FEBRUARY

**5-12** International Golf Course Conference & Show, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV. Contact: Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, 1617 St. Andrews Dr., Lawrence, KS 66047, (913) 841-2240.

**19-20** Northeastern Pennsylvania Turf & Grounds Maintenance School, Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke, PA. Contact: William Pencek, Lackawanna County Coop Extension, 200 Adams Ave., Scranton, PA 18503, (717) 963-4761.

**21-22** Landscape Industry Conference, Holiday Inn I-70 East, Denver, CO. Contact: Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado, 3895 Upham St., Suite 150, Wheat Ridge, CO 80033, (303) 425-4862.

**26-28** Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference, Pittsburgh Expo Mart, Monroeville, PA. Contact: PTC, Landscape Management Research Center, Orchard Rd., University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-3475.

### MARCH

**1** Seminar on Recreation, Golf, Sports and Landscape Turf Management, Cuyamaca College, El Cajon, CA. Contact: Bill Mitchell or Michael Hall, Cuyamaca College, Ornamental Horticulture Dept., 2950 Jamacha Rd., El Cajon, CA 92019-4304, (619) 670-1980.

Send announcements on your events two months in advance to editor, Golf & SportsTURF, P.O. Box 8420, Van Nuys, CA 91409. Fax: (818) 781-8517.