Field Maintenance Improves Play at Ohio Wesleyan

The Ohio Wesleyan University men's soccer team has been a contender in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Tournament every year since 1978. After years of minimal maintenance, the Roy Rike Field has finally reached the same level of excellence, hosting the 1990 Division III National Championship games.

According to John A. “Jay” Martin, Ph.D, athletic director for Ohio Wesleyan University, the team has been top-notch since he joined the institution in 1977 as a one-year replacement. “We lost the championship last year (1990) in penalty kicks.”

This and other fields at the university have not always been as “finely tuned” as the teams.

In 1978, after becoming a permanent faculty member, Martin inherited the winning soccer team and six poorly maintained sports fields, including the soccer field. Since then, he has helped the soccer team maintain its high level of performance and initiated improvements on all athletic fields.

In addition to soccer, Ohio Wesleyan also offers a variety of sports that use the athletic fields. These include baseball, played on Littick field; women's field hockey and lacrosse, which compete on Henry Street Field; and football, played on Selby Field and the football practice field.

"With the exception of the football field,” said Martin, "I was personally responsible for maintaining all the fields. My assistant coach and I would buy a bag of fertilizer, throw it on and hope it would work."

He added, "I also watered the fields myself in the summer. They looked terrible those first few years."

Martin indicated the fields were continued on page 24
Field Maintenance

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The teams have high caliber athletes. They play better because the fields are now level and smoother,” Martin added that the field hockey team has gone to the National Tournament every year since 1989. In addition to withstand- ing traffic and play, the fields have also held up well in harsh winters and under heavy rains.

He noted that having the fields maintained by Kasper has also prevented administrative headaches.

“Topdressing and overseeding are also more effective after subsolilng and core aerification.” Scotts Sports Turf Seed and a variety of methylene urea fertilizers, among other products are used at Ohio Wesleyan.

Martin still waters the fields himself and has an outside contractor mow. The fields are cut to a height of three inches once a week in the summer and every three or four days during the school year. In addition, Scotts cares for the infield on Littick Field.

According to Martin, Scotts has solved major problems on Roy Rike. “The field has been in existence since the 1920’s. It needed general maintenance and there were some low areas that had to be fixed.”

In addition to the 1989 Division III National Soccer Championships, the field is also used for the Central Ohio High School All Star games, a number of local soccer clubs and summer soccer camps. “A professional team from Holland is going to work out on it for two weeks in mid-June,” Martin added.

The Henry Street women’s field hockey/lacrosse field also takes some abuse. “There isn’t a practice field for these two sports,” said Martin. “So the field gets daily use for two seasons of the year.” The university has hopes of adding a practice field for the teams.

Even with all the traffic on Roy Rike and Henry Street, Martin explains that these fields need to be in top condition, “Field hockey and soccer differ from football in that they’re played with the ball on the ground. The surface of the field is as important as any other factor in a game. These should be the best two fields on campus.”

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Dr. Jay Martin (left) and Dennis Kasper.