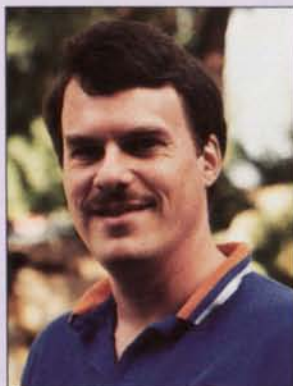


THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE



Standing Ovation

While many people haven't quite forgiven the major-league players and owners, baseball is nevertheless back in full swing, and changes are not limited to the personnel on major-league rosters.

In Denver, the Colorado Rockies have moved out of Mile High Stadium to a brand-new ballpark, Coors Field. Mark Altman, who served as a consultant on the project, gives us a behind-the-scenes look at

the process of building a new baseball field.

Coors Field is a state-of-the-art facility, from the irrigation and drainage systems to soil composition and field maintenance equipment. Turf for the diamond was grown in a carefully controlled environment, and the field is equipped with a special heating system to protect the turf in extremely cold weather and provide the best possible playing surface for the players even when the outdoor temperature is more suitable for skiing than baseball. These innovations in field design should make life a little easier for head groundskeeper Mark Razum, who is profiled in this issue as well.

Meanwhile, American League teams will no longer have to play on artificial turf in Kansas City. The Royals have joined their football counterparts, the Chiefs, in going to a new natural-grass surface at Kauffman Stadium. The Royals made the best of a bad situation by using the strike period to renovate the stadium. Details on the renovation will be included in a future issue of *SportsTURF*.

One of the most important changes made in the renovation was the regrading of the field. Now outfielders won't feel like they are throwing uphill when they throw back to the infield. Maybe when these players file for free agency or arbitration, they should offer some of the money they are making to the field designers and groundskeepers who make it so easy for them to play well.

The folks in Boardman, OH, are proud of the remodeled baseball facility at Boardman High School. Dave Dravecky Field, named for the former National League pitcher whose career was tragically cut short when he lost his pitching arm to cancer in 1989, is a shining example of what can happen when a community comes together with a singular goal. Dravecky's father is among those who were involved in the effort to renovate the field, which was selected as the Beam Clay 1994-1995 School Baseball Diamond of the Year.

Maybe the major-league players and owners haven't earned our respect — perhaps they never will. But the field designers and groundskeepers have done an outstanding job with these fields, and they should be appreciated for their hard work. Perhaps baseball fans should reserve their loudest cheers for the middle of the fifth inning when the grounds crew comes out to sweep the field and change the bases.

Mike Augsdorfer

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EVENTS

CALENDAR

JUNE

22-24 Sports Symposium and Trade Show, Baltimore, MD. Contact: Vince Angotti or Jim McIntyre, Towson State University, (410) 830-2384.

25-26 National Lawn and Garden Marketing Conference. Stouffers Renaissance Hotel, Denver, CO. Contact: Bob Mikulas, (719) 488-8050. Fax: (719) 488-8168.

28 Modern Arboriculture: The Science Behind the Treatment, a daylong seminar led by Dr. Alex Shigo. Six ISA CEUs and seven PAC, QAL and QAC CEUs have been approved. Sequoia Conference Center, Buena Park, CA. Contact: Ted Stamen & Associates, (909) 656-3431.

JULY

19-20 Fourth Annual Midwest Grounds Management Conference, Illinois State University, Normal, IL. Contact: Mike O'Grady, (309) 438-2032 or e-mail: meogrady@ilstu.edu.

26 Turfgrass Field Day, sponsored by the University of Georgia and the Georgia Turfgrass Association. Georgia Experiment Station, Griffin. Contact: (404) 975-4123.

26-28 Summer Convention and Field Days, sponsored by the Turfgrass Producers International. Omaha, NE. Contact: (800) 405-TURF or (708) 705-9898.

Send announcements of your events two months in advance to: Editor, **sportsTURF Magazine**, 68-860 Perez Road, Suite J, Cathedral City, CA 92234. Fax (619) 770-8019.