

STMA in ACTION

Frontier Pioneers Conversion

What started as a dream ended in successful reality for Frontier Field, the new multi-purpose stadium in downtown Rochester, N.Y., where the very first conversion from a baseball field to a professional soccer pitch occurred early this summer.

The Rochester Rhinos, one of the top-rated teams in A-League professional soccer, share Frontier Field with the Rochester Red Wings, the AAA affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles.

With guidance from STMA member **Alan Dungey**, Frontier Field's facility manager, and **Gene Buonomo**, Red Wings groundskeeper, the baseball infield and base paths were sodded with fresh grass for the Rhinos' first home game, on Memorial Day, May 26. A crowd of 12,153 watched the historic soccer game, which was played on a complete natural grass field where only 24 hours earlier the baseball team had finished a three-game home stand.

While the Rhinos lost only their second game in six starts that day, the turf held true throughout the game. "The turf was fine," the Rhinos goalkeeper said. "The grounds crew should be commended on the great job they did."

The conversion began the evening before the soccer match when a crew from RM Landscaping began to edge the infield and lay sod at 6 p.m., after the Red Wings Sunday baseball game.

Fresh grass, acquired from Batavia Turf Farms in 30-inch by 90-foot rolls, was laid out on fabric covering the infield dirt. Six hours later, the crew completed the job of laying approximately 1,550 square yards of grass.

The following morning, they placed additional grass on the warning track to finish the 110-by-70-foot soccer playing surface. The new sod was watered and then rolled, which leveled the field. Turf lines were marked and the field was ready for the 6 p.m. match. In less than 24 hours, the conversion was complete.

Stadium Director **Jim LeBeau**, who was involved in the design, construction and now the operation of the state-of-the-art facility, says, "Frontier Field is now truly the multi-use stadium that we had envisioned. The conversion is certainly one of a kind for facilities this size, and I'm proud that all parties are working together to make this happen."

Along with a busy schedule of soccer matches and baseball games, Frontier Field also entertains concerts and other events. The turf conversion will be applied before every Rhino match, and the soccer organization will pay the approximate \$5,000 cost of the turf and landscaping each time.

"For professional soccer, the turf conversion is an important step to developing the game in the United States," says **Francisco Marcos**, commissioner of A-League soccer.

"We feel it is important for our fans to enjoy the game on an all-grass field," says Rhinos Vice President/General Manager **Chris Economides**. "All parties, including Frontier Field and the Red Wings, have been enthusiastic about this concept, and we look forward to being leaders in this type of stadium field conversion."

After each soccer match, the turf is rolled back and either sold or donated to private parties and charities. The life span of the rolled grass is only 24 hours after being pulled from the field, so it is immediately carted from the stadium. The pitcher's mound, which is leveled and removed from the field, is rebuilt for the following baseball game. The conversion from baseball to soccer will occur 11 times this summer.

Outstanding Job

The mission of STMA is "to be the leader in the sports turf industry, to enhance, promote and improve professionalism through excellence in communication, training, research, education and services." Through the various educational opportunities it sponsors and the many articles its members supply to this magazine, STMA seems to be achieving that mission. Witness the following letter from Recreation Supervisor **Eric V. Schill**.

"The City of Mountain View is in Santa Clara County, California, and is located in the heart of Silicon Valley. The approximate population is 69,000.



On Memorial Day, Frontier Field in Rochester, N.Y., became the site of the first conversion of a baseball diamond to a professional soccer pitch. Photo courtesy: James D. Lathrop.



With a lot of hard work and some advice from STMA and this magazine, Phil Blach keeps athletes happy with the fields he maintains in Mountain View, Calif. Photo courtesy: Eric V. Schill.

As a recreation supervisor with the City of Mountain View, I have the maintenance of our athletic fields as one of my job responsibilities.

"I read your magazine regularly as it has given my staff and me many good ideas in the general upkeep and maintenance of baseball, softball, football and soccer fields. Enclosed is a photograph of one of our Little League diamonds in Monta Loma Park.

"Monta Loma Park is used by our local Little League beginning in February and usually wrapping up in early fall. Fall renovations include thatching, overseeding, irrigation repair, grading, leveling and hopeful cooperation from Mother Nature. Upkeep of our Little League, Babe Ruth League and softball diamonds falls on one person, **Phil Blach**, who deserves recognition for the outstanding job he does."

STMA Chapter News

Florida Chapter #1: Florida Chapter #1 will again participate in the Florida Turf Grass Conference and Show to be held September 5-8 in Tampa. Join chapter members and representatives from STMA Headquarters at the STMA booth to help spread the word about STMA and the 9th Annual Conference and Exhibition to be held January 14-18, 1998, at the Coronado Springs Resort and Disney's Wide World of Sports complex in Orlando.

Florida Chapter #1 will meet in Ft. Lauderdale on October 21. The meeting

focus will be aerifying and topdressing.

For information on these events, other pending activities, or the Florida Chapter, contact: **John Mascaro** at (954) 938-7477.

Colorado Chapter: The Colorado Chapter of STMA has set its combination Vendor Expo and Meeting for September 18, 1997, at Jeffco Stadium. This replaces the spring event that was canceled due to an April snow.

The following are just a few of the features to be included at the September meeting: a presentation on the history of Jefferson County stadiums, a presentation on the STMA Certification program by Certification Committee member **Ross Kurcab**, a tour of Jeffco Stadium and product demonstrations.

For more information on this event, the Colorado Chapter and other upcoming activities, call the 24-Hour CSTMA Chapter Hotline/FAX: (303) 438-9645.

Iowa STMA: The Iowa Chapter will hold a Baseball/Football Workshop from 9 a.m. to noon on October 9 at Waldorf College in Forest City. Sessions will include general care of the baseball mound and home plate and general care of the football field.

For more information on this event, the Iowa Chapter or other upcoming activities, contact: **Lori Westrum** at The Turf Office at (515) 232-8222 (phone) or (515) 232-8228 (fax).

KAFMO: The Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO Chapter STMA) is now plan-

ning its Fall Field Day. Details will be announced soon.

For more information on the field day or the KAFMO Chapter STMA, contact: **Dan Douglas**, Reading Phillies Baseball Club, at (610) 375-8469, extension 212.

Midwest Chapter: The Midwest Chapter of STMA is in the process of planning future events. For information on the Midwest Chapter or pending activities, call: The Chapter Hotline (847) 439-4727.

Southern California Chapter: For information on the Southern California Chapter or pending activities, contact: **Chris Bunnell** at (619) 432-2421.

Minnesota Chapter: For information on the Minnesota Chapter or upcoming activities, contact: **Connie Rudolph** at (612) 646-1679.

STMA Chapters on the Grow

Northern California: A budding chapter is beginning to take shape in Northern California. The steering committee includes **Sal Genito**, UC Davis; **Steve Abella**, Delta Blue Grass; **Sandy Jacobson**, UC Davis; **Bob Milano Jr.**, UC Berkeley; **James Moore**, B & B Concrete; **Dave Patterson**, Sierra Pacific Supply; **Greg Roberts**, Placer Union High; **Tim Smith**, Brown Sand; and **Dennis Suit**, San Jose State.

News about the official "grand opening" and Charter Commercial Memberships will be announced soon. For information, contact any of the committee members, or the UC Davis Grounds Office at (916) 752-5035.

MAFMO: The Mid-Atlantic Athletic Field Managers Organization (MAFMO) is an active group currently working toward STMA affiliation. An August "Dinner and a Game" Meeting will be held at the Bowie Baysox Baseball Stadium. Date and time will be announced soon.

A Field Day will be held on September 18 at MacGruder High School in Rockville, Md. This will include a "Turface in Turf" stadium turf renovation.

For more information on these events, MAFMO, or other upcoming activities, contact the Hotline: (410) 290-5652.

Great Plains: For information on the Great Plains Sports Turf Managers Association or upcoming events, contact: **Mark Schimming**, City of Wichita, at (316) 337-9123.