



A Tribute to Park Managers

Turf managers whose work is confined to the civilized arenas of sports fields might like to know what their peers in the parks have to deal with. James N. Ward, a certified golf course superintendent employed by Los Angeles, provides a glimpse. He wrote the following remarks for the July 1997 issue of the *Divot News*, a publication of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of Southern California.

Just Another Day

By James N. Ward, CGCS

Just another day in the Valley Region of the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks. Besides overseeing the problems associated with 72 holes of golf, I have the pleasure of dealing with park issues. Much like a golf course, parks have a few unique quirks.

I just returned from a wedding in one of our parks. Eighteen couples exchanged vows simultaneously in their Sunday best. What made this wedding unusual was that the couples were all canines. The ceremony was sanctioned by a City Council member and performed by a local radio station DJ. Television news media were on hand to cover the first-ever mass dog wedding at our new off-leash dog park.

You think your days are crazy? This wedding followed two weekends of events at other parks where activities ranged from fireworks, carnivals and bands on stages to a jazz festival around a reclaimed-water lake. Some events were attended by over 12,000 patrons.

Believe me, you haven't seen it all yet until you deal with the general public in our parks. How about dealing with a movie-location scout requesting a grassy hill with no trees so they can turn it into a cemetery and crash, flip and burn a car? Golfers seem tame with their disputes over course conditions and rules. My heart is in golf course management, but the parks keep me guessing what will turn up next.

I'm off to a City Council meeting regarding additional funding for brush clearance in our undeveloped park land. Just another day in the business of growing turf!



Getting on an infield too soon after a heavy rain often causes additional damage. Photo courtesy: Floyd Perry.

Conditioning Wet Infields

If your infield contains a conditioner, try the following after a heavy rain:

- First, stay off the infield and let the conditioner do the work. There may be some low spots on the infield that might need additional conditioner, but that's best saved for later. Most of the time, more damage is done to the field by getting on it too soon. If the sun is out after the rain and before a game, just let the field naturally dry for a couple of hours.
- If the field dries enough to work on without any damage (rutting or clodding), then nail drag the infield to cut it open in order to let the air get into the dirt. Make sure to cut it open *one time* and then let it sit about an hour before the game.
- At this time, screen drag it and level it back out.
- Do not cut open the infield with a nail drag if there is still a chance for more rain. If there is a chance for rain throughout the day, just let the infield sit and try to do any touch-up on it right before game time.

The above tip is courtesy of Earthen Technologies, manufacturer of Diamond Pro Infield Conditioner, Dallas, Texas. If you have a tip to share with others, send it to sportsTURF, 68860 Perez Rd., Cathedral City, CA 92234.