

Colorado Chapter Meets Come Sun—Or Snow

It takes more than 10 inches of snow cover to dampen the spirits of the Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association—or to keep members from attending a seminar.

Despite continuing snowfall on April 16, 84 people gathered in the United States Air Force Academy's (USAFA) Falcon Stadium. From the press box they looked out at a snow-covered field during the chapter's 1998 Spring Seminar.

If the turnout alone isn't enough to confirm this chapter's dedication to promoting better and safer sports turf areas, consider the fact that two Colorado facilities earned top field awards for 1997. CSTMA President Abby McNeal's facility, Pleasant View Sports Complex, was named STMA College Soccer Field of the Year. Chapter members Michael Sexton, Tony Madrid, and Richard Sandoval also earned top honors for their work at La Junta's Potter Park Field. The facility captured the STMA / *sportsTURF* / Beam Clay Municipal Baseball Diamond of the Year Award (See Field Focus: page 12).

USAFA Football Coach Fisher DeBerry opened the educational session with his presentation: "What a well-maintained field means." He noted that football is a mind game, and the condition of the field has a lot to do with the team's confidence, mental attitude, and pride. He added, "A field not in good condition is the greatest equalizer of a football game." Before every away game, DeBerry takes his team to the stadium so players can see what they will be playing on, and to set

the tempo for the competition.

Falcon Stadium Manager Mike Wehrmann followed with a history of the facility. The original field had been installed in 1965, but it was converted to a high-tech, sand-based field in 1996. Prior to the reconstruction, five crew members labored for three days prior to each game to whip the problem areas into playable condition. The antiquated irrigation system took six hours to adequately water the field.



Ten inches of snow covered USAFA's Falcon Stadium for CSTMA's Spring Seminar in April. Courtesy: Steve Trusty

Wehrmann told of the extra work created by secret service inspections when the President or Vice President attend games at the stadium. Even the irrigation system's valve boxes are checked out.

Richard McDonald, landscape architect for RBI, supplied details of the field reconstruction. Because the nine-foot high tunnel is the only entrance to the field, they could only bring in five yards of material at a

time. This becomes a long process when you're adding 5,000 tons of sand and 2,000 tons of gravel!

Mark Altman of Altman & Altman Consulting addressed the topic, "Understanding soils and soil test results." He gave a step-by-step review of how to gather, prepare, and send soil samples, and noted that if you only soil test once a year, you should be sure to do it in full.

Next Steve Yarish of American Pride Fertilizer covered "the basics of fertilizer varieties and their costs," giving a practical, easy-to-use overview of the steps necessary to match fertilizer products with field needs and budgetary parameters.

STMA Executive Director Steve Trusty addressed services provided by the national association and gave an update on the status of the certification program.

Ross Kurcab, turf manager for the Denver Broncos, kicked off the afternoon session with a presentation on "how to calculate fertilizer rates and spreader and sprayer calibrations." Kurcab gave a detailed walk-through of the basics and worked through some sample calculations.

Show-and-tell tours of Falcon Stadium, the fieldhouse, and athletic complex wrapped up the seminar with as much outdoor observation as the melting snow allowed.

Chapter news

The MAFMO Chapter STMA: MAFMO will hold a "Seminar on Wheels" on June 26. Tour stops will