

choose a height that will provide a happy medium. Your choice should fall at the upper end (if not higher) of the warm-season preferred range, and within the preferred range of the cool-season species.

If heavy traffic is scheduled during the summer months in the northern part of the country, where only cool-season grasses are used, the mowing height should fall at the upper end of the range for the particular species. In fact, the upper end of the height range should be used on any field where heavy traffic dominates. This provides a greater amount of biomass for plant crown protection and player safety.

• Mowing frequency

Mowing frequency is most often determined by other cultural practices and by temperature. It should always be dictated by the 1/3-inch rule, which states that you should never remove more than 1/3 of the total length of the leaf at one time.

Lack of water and fertility will obviously slow down a turfgrass' growth rate. Low soil temperatures also affect growth, particularly in stressed cool-season grasses. However, when adequate irrigation and nutrients are provided during the growing season, you should mow two or three times per week.

Mowing more frequently will help ensure that you follow the 1/3-inch rule. It will also promote more tillering, which thickens the turfgrass stand for a denser canopy. A dense canopy provides plant crown protection, greater biomass for wear tolerance, and a more resilient playing surface for field safety.

Practice field renovation

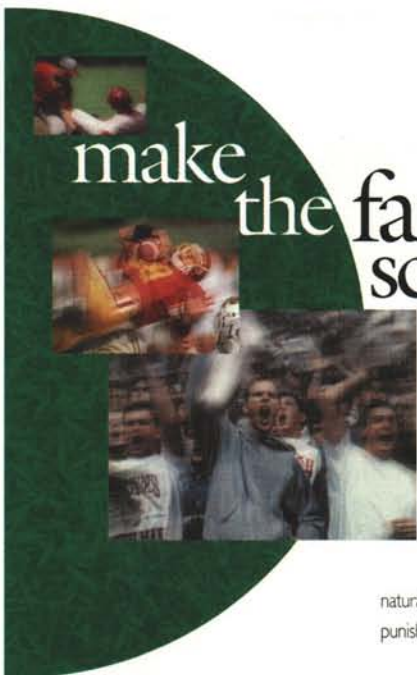
by Rich Genoff,
San Francisco 49ers

The San Francisco 49ers are currently growing Tifway II hybrid bermuda at the team's training facility in Santa Clara, CA. I have approximately 290,000 square feet of practice fields.

At year's end, the fields are like most NFL practice fields: beat up and worn out. In my case, they are also dormant.

The bermuda starts going dormant or losing its color at the first frost. This usually occurs toward the end of November, or by mid-December each year. When the season ends, I immediately start my

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field renovation, weather permitting.

I have a Turfcut 422D with two decks: one rotary and one flail mower. We attach the flail unit to the tractor and mow the field right down to the sand. We remove all the grass blades, so all that remains is the stolons and rhizomes.

We remove all of the clippings with a Toro 54 HC, and ship them out for recycling. The whole process takes about 14 to 17 days.

After a light verticutting, we core aerate in two directions. We break up the cores and remove them.

When each of these procedures is complete, we top-dress the field with approximately 75 to 100 tons of sand. A screen drag helps us fill the aeration holes and float out the field.

We apply approximately three tons of 6-20-20 fertilizer, and approximately five tons of calcium. We then start a light watering program, adding small amounts of ammonium nitrate, and we wait for the temperature to warm up.

We have soil tests done in early summer, after the renovation is complete. By the time August rolls around, my fields are in game day condition. They're ready to start the cycle all over again.



Ross Kurcab is turf manager for the Denver Broncos Football Club and is a member of STMA's Certification Committee. Steve Wightman is turf manager for Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego, CA. Rich Genoff is sports turf manager and head groundskeeper of the San Francisco 49ers.

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