



Adios, Steve!

You might be asking yourself, "Isn't this where I usually see Steve Berens' picture and read his words of sports turf wisdom?" By now, you may have heard or read that Steve left *sportsTURF* (ST) to start a new chapter in his life: he moved to Denmark to teach English. He was (and still is) a very good editor, and improved the quality of ST during his short tenure. I want to thank him for his hard work, and I wish him much success in his new endeavor.

Instead of rushing out and finding a new editor, you'll now have two people working on ST. I'll be taking the lead in shepherding the magazine through the publishing process. Mike SanFilippo (a current Adams' employee) will be working with me. My goal is to educate Mike during the next six months or so about the STMA and ST before transferring the editorship to him.



Both Mike and I will be attending the STMA 11th Annual Conference & Exhibition in St. Louis, and we look forward to seeing all of you. Let me reassure you that the quality of ST will not only remain the same, but it will continue to improve. Please call me at (847) 427-2057 (e-mail: rbenes@mail.aip.com) or Mike at (847) 427-2083 (e-mail: msanfilippo@mail.aip.com) to let us know your likes and dislikes with the magazine.

Certified Sports Field Manager

All STMA members should have received the Certified Sports Field Manager Certification Program Information Packet within the past few weeks. If you didn't receive a packet, call the STMA office at (800) 323-3875.



Letter to the Editor

Dear *sportsTURF* Magazine subscribers:

I have received a number of calls requesting copies of or information about the "New Pennsylvania Design." I would like to clarify that these soil mix design numbers, termed "New Pennsylvania Design" in the book *Sports Fields: A Manual for Design, Construction, and Maintenance* (by Jim Puhulla, Jeff Krans, and Mike Goately) do not represent a researched root-zone mix for athletic fields, but are suggested merely as a starting point for discussions concerning sand-based athletic field root-zoners.

I am currently working with the STMA in an effort to support research that will lead to STMA guidelines for the construction and maintenance of sand-based athletic fields.

Sincerely,
Andrew McNitt

Tom Mentzer Leaves the Turf Industry

Tom Mentzer, public relations counsel for Swanson Russell Associates and a Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association board member is leaving both organizations to take a new agency job that will not involve him in the turf industry. Tom did a great job representing his clients and keeping me informed about the goings on in the green industry—on any given day I could always count on receiving a minimum of five press releases from Tom. Have fun, Tom, with your new job.

See you in St. Louis!

Rob Benes
Group Content/Editorial Director

Tip of the Month

Safety First

Beating the lawsuit wave

by Floyd Perry

A famous philosopher once said: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." There isn't a more comforting blanket of protection than to have your guns loaded and in place before an accident or lawsuit occurs.

Every aspect of athletic competition must follow guidelines to guard against frivolous lawsuits. Staff meetings, risk-management conferences, facility walk-arounds, educational seminars, and bi-monthly documented checklists have become an integral part of the progressive groundskeeper's maintenance umbrella.

Be pro-active

In the southwestern United States, a member of an adult softball league brought a suit against his park and recreational facility for a sliding accident that resulted in a broken ankle. The plaintiff sued to recover injury expenses and lost wages, and for personal embarrassment. He tacked on an extra \$50,000 because the defendant was the local government, a phenomenon that's been described as deep pocket syndrome.

Fortunately, the city recreation department had safety policies and procedures in place:

- Grounds staff had placed a completed daily worksheet in the logbook.
 - The evening staffer and umpire had signed off on the pre-game evaluation sheet, and placed it in the logbook.
 - The area supervisor had signed his bi-monthly check list, and it was in the logbook.
- The staff responded promptly and professionally to the accident:
- An evening staff member was on the scene.
 - The staff member called 911 on

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his cellular phone within seconds of the accident.

- The player was not moved, and the game was delayed until the ambulance took him away.

- Three unbiased eye witnesses completed forms describing the event.

- Photos of the scene were taken immediately after the accident, before the game resumed.

- The staff member placed a completed report in the supervisor's mailbox before clocking out.

In addition to this thoroughly documented response to the accident, the department had standard maintenance procedures to strengthen its defense:

- A step by step daily checklist is assigned to every crew member.

- Supervisors perform educational staff evaluations annually.

- A nine-hour course in first aid and CPR is mandatory for all staff members.

- A disposable camera is placed in every city vehicle to record potential liability concerns and overnight vandalism.

- Staff improvement seminars continue to educate employees.

- Risk management walk-arounds expose concerns.

Outcome

When the matter finally went to court, the judge threw the case out for lack of substantial evidence. He ruled that the accident did not result from maintenance negligence, but from the assumed risk of slow-pitch softball.

Unfortunately, this scenario is becoming increasingly prevalent in our industry. Even when all pre-liability mechanisms are in place and staff members act professionally, the potential for injury remains. Use common sense, and be prepared for anything.



Floyd Perry is author of three books: *The Pictorial Guides to Quality Groundskeeping: I - Covering the Bases; II - There Ain't No Rules; and III - Maintain It Easy, Keep It Safe.* He also produces two videos: *The ABC's of Grounds Maintenance: Vol. 1, Softball; and Vol. 2, Baseball.* For more information, call: (800) 227-9381, or visit his web site: <http://gms.simplenet.com>.



Repair damaged and potentially dangerous fencing. Courtesy: Floyd Perry



Create safe and presentable bleacher settings to prevent falls and mishaps. Courtesy: Floyd Perry



Create even surfaces on pitching tables to avoid ankle injuries. Courtesy: Floyd Perry



Replace worn netting on outdoor cages. Courtesy: Floyd Perry

Category Blast Service

Use this new Category Blast Service to get FREE information on the products or service categories listed below which you are planning to purchase within the coming nine months. You will receive information, and possibly other follow up contact, from appropriate companies advertised not just in this issue, but throughout the year in **sportsTURF**. Just circle the number(s) on the reader service card (opposite) corresponding to the product or service categories below and drop the card in the mail!

9001Aeration equipment

9002Baseball Field grooming equipment

9003Drainage

9004Fertilizer / soil amendments

9005Field covers

9006Field marking paint / equipment

9007Infield mixes

9008Irrigation supplies

9009Mowers

9010Seed

9011Site amenities

9012Sod

9013 ..Turf equipment