Boston College's Championship Soccer Facility is perhaps the most stunning setting for college soccer in the Northeast, according to the feedback from visiting coaches. "Nestled in the lower corner of Boston College's Law School Campus between a residential neighborhood and Edmund's Park in Newton Centre, Mass., the field is surrounded by a cathedral of mature oaks, maples and locusts," reports Patrick Maguire, director of Geller Sport, Boston.

The company spearheaded the development of the soccer game and practice facility, including the permitting, design and construction administration.

Maguire notes the soccer field development was first conceived by the Boston College administration in 1997 and project development began then. The intent was to provide premium facilities for the program, alleviate overuse of existing facilities and eliminate the need for the men's and women's soccer teams to travel up to 35 miles to various off campus sites for its "home" games when the existing facilities were scheduled for other use.

Alumni Stadium, an artificial turf field, was the original playing field for the Boston College soccer programs. Play was later moved to the native soil Shea Field, which serves the school's baseball and softball programs in the spring and doubles as the practice field for football in the spring and fall. It's also the site of Saturday tailgating by prior to football games in the fall. At times, one of these Saturday afternoon tailgating sessions would be followed by a Sunday soccer game on the same site.

Boston College's last undeveloped property was at the Law School Campus. Maguire says, "The site was near wetlands and a stream encompassed by the city-owned Edmund's Park. It was necessary for the field to be permitted under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Wetland and River Protection Acts. There also were issues expressed by the neighborhood, city and a local advocacy group that needed to be addressed. In June of 1999, the college reached an agreement with the City of Newton and the advocacy group to allow construction to begin.

"With the soccer season starting in early September, just 12 weeks were left for demolition, construction, sodding and grow in. The facility's first game was played on Sept. 12, just 5-1/2 weeks after the installation of the sod. Remarkably, the field was playable despite enduring one of Boston's worst rainstorms in almost a decade the night prior to the game. Remnants of Hurricane Floyd dumped over 5 inches of rain on the field less than 24 hours before kickoff. At game time, the field surface was dry, the footing was stable and the game proceeded without any problems."

**Construction details**

The 360-by-225-foot game field was developed within the wooded area next to the park. The smaller practice field is within 200 feet of the game field and directly adjacent to it, but is separated from it by the wooded area.

Preliminary work had taken place prior to June with the clearing and stockpiling of trees in areas outside the site where construction agreements and protection permits had been needed. Following some additional tree clearing, approximately 1,000 yards of the existing sandy loam were stripped from the game field site and moved to the practice field area to be mixed with the existing native soil.

Maguire says, "On the game field, a 6-inch gravel base was installed. Embedded in it are three subdrain pipes running across the field and draining away from the park into a dry well on college property. This was topped with an 8-inch layer of 70 percent sand, 15 percent native soil and 15 percent All Gro compost mix tested to meet the particle size and physical performance criteria of the USGA rootzone mix. Each load was tested at the pit and again on site to insure specifications were met. The field is crowned from the center to .085 percent. Around the top of the penalty areas it becomes converse to drain toward the goal area. The field was sodded with big roll washed bluegrass sod. "The field is fully irrigated with a low flow, low pressure
Maintenance Program

**Fertilization:**
- Based on soil test results
- pH monitored to 5.5 to 7.5 range
- Slow release polyon-constructed fertilizer with N:P:K ratio of approximately 4:1:4 (21-5-20)
- First application when field tarp removed and growth initiated
- Additional applications at four-week intervals (or more frequently if indicated) along with micronutrient needs as indicated by soil tests
- Final granular application made in late September or early October
- Liquid fertilizer package applied every two weeks according to test results

**Irrigation:**
- As needed based on evapotranspiration

**Mowing:**
- Mowed two to three times per week as growth dictates with ride-on triplex reel mower
- Off season height-of-cut 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 inches
- In season height-of-cut 1-1/4 inches to 1 inch

**Aeration:**
- Spring aeration—two passes in different directions with 6-inch hollow tine cores penetrating 3 to 5 inches
- Fall aeration—three passes in different directions with 8-inch hollow tine cores penetrating 3 to 5 inches
- Aeration of goalmouths, sidelines and other high traffic areas as needed
- All cores shattered in place and dragged back into field

**Overseeding:**
- Early May and mid-September with slice seeder at the rate of 2 to 3 pounds per thousand square feet followed by a broadcast application at the same rate and a light topdressing with a sand based medium matched to the soil profile
- Goalmouths, sidelines and other high traffic areas overseeded as necessary

**Mowing:**
- Weed, disease and insect control as needed following integrated pest management practices with manual and cultural solutions preferred
- Chemical controls used only as necessary

**Painting:**
- Twice per week during playing season, depending on game schedules

For further details contact:

**ABI**  
P.O. Box 909, Villa Rica, GA 30180  
1-800-832-6224  
770-459-4401; 770-459-6877 Fax
A crew member prepares the field for an upcoming game. 

Photo courtesy: Boston College

notes, “The field was a long time coming and we’re pleased with the end result and with the professionalism demonstrated by Patrick Maguire and Geller Sport.”

Vaughn Williams, assistant athletic director of facilities and operations, reinforced the statement made by both Maguire and McCoy: “The best part of the whole process is the reaction of the student athletes. It’s great to see how happy they are to have such a tremendous playing surface.”

Bob Tracinski is the business communications manager for the John Deere Worldwide Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division headquartered in Raleigh, N.C.