

F.Y.I. Finding Common Ground in Ohio

by Dr. John Street and Pam Sherratt, Ohio State University

There are exciting times ahead for sports turf in the year 2000. The advance of educational programs, research trials, workshops, field days and conferences make 2000 the year to learn. Combined efforts of the Ohio Turf Foundation, Ohio State University and the Great Lakes Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) means that there is a wealth of accessible information this year for sports field managers.

Mr. Tim Davey, assistant director of games operations with the National Football League, Steve Trusty, executive director of the STMA and Boyd Montgomery, president of the Great Lakes STMA, visited with the turf team at Ohio State University recently. The visit was initiated by Dr. John R. Street to further develop relations within the sports turf industry and to give those involved with sports turf education and research a chance to meet and discuss relevant issues.

The meeting took place at the OSU/Ohio Turf Foundation (OTF) Research and Education Center where many of the turf science faculty, staff and graduate students maintain active field research programs during the growing season. The OTF facility was the ideal setting to meet informally with the visitors and to welcome them to the Ohio State University turf team.

The morning session went by far too quickly as Davey gave a colorful insight into the workings of the NFL and the needs of the league with regards to education for the sports field manager. Like many land-based industries, there is a shortage of concentrated education packages aimed at the industry professional who does not wish to return to full-time education. The national association for sports field managers in the

United States is the STMA. They have recently initiated a certification program similar to the program run by the GCSAA. Through a combination of education, practical experience and background knowledge, a sports field manager can apply to take the STMA test and, upon passing all four segments, become certified.

The aim of the Ohio State University turf team is to develop training packages and short courses based around the certification program and to be at the forefront of national sports turf education in the United States. Once on the STMA list of approved educational programs, Ohio State University can offer STMA certification points or CEUs at the annual OSU "Sports Turf Short Course" and at the annual OTF Conference and Show.

Lively discussion was the theme for the morning's meeting with our visitors. Everyone present shared thoughts and ideas to improve the situation for the sports field managers. Wide ranges of topics were covered and it was great to see the NFL, STMA and Ohio State University all working toward common goals.

The afternoon session started with a tour of the Ohio State University "Ohio Stadium." The renovation of the stadium and the construction of the new football field were subjects that everyone had an active interest in. In recent years, many sports clubs like the Buckeyes have replaced artificial field surfaces with natural grass. This conversion to natural grass has opened up a plethora of sports turf research and education. Some of the new field construction has failed and some has been successful, which means there is still a lot to learn about field construction, stability, agro-

nomics, the stadium environment and field maintenance.

There are many opinions and the industry is moving so fast that it is difficult to form an educated judgment on many new ideas. Extensive research and education within the sports turf sector should be paramount.

The Ohio Stadium field is of great agronomic importance. Many of the research studies this year at the OTF facility will shadow the work carried out on the field so that comparisons can be made and we can learn the best techniques for optimum field management.

The new Buckeye field will include:

- A Prescription Athletic Turf (PAT) construction
- An innovative surface stabilizer/natural grass system
- A specified rootzone mix

After the informative visit to the stadium, the team went back to the research facility to wrap-up the day's events and to look at how we can further develop this relationship. Both of our visitors thoroughly enjoyed their stay with us and showed great interest in returning, probably in late summer when the field construction is completed. It is the aim of the Ohio State University sports turf team to keep these ideas rolling and to turn our educational initiative into reality.

We are always open to suggestions and comments, so if you have any points you would like to raise please contact us. Good luck with the season and we hope to see many of you at future events.



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