



### Play Ball!

Last month I began to hear a phrase on the television and radio, a phrase I had been waiting months to hear: *Pitchers and catchers report*—the four sweetest words to a die-hard baseball fan such as myself. More than suggesting the impending opening of another baseball season, the phrase reminds me that even though it's snowy and cold in Chicago, spring is right around the corner. And even though my beloved Cubbies will probably be out of the hunt by July, at least I can count on getting a nice tan in the bleachers at Wrigley, watching the ivy grow green and thick over the bricks of the outfield wall.

While the crack of the bat and the pop of rawhide meeting leather might draw the most public attention at Major League facilities this spring, they represent only a tiny fraction of the number of baseball players in organized leagues who are gearing up for the start of their seasons. Groundskeepers for thousands of parks across North America—whether they are from parks and recreation departments, colleges or professional stadiums—must begin preparing their fields just as hard as the players prepare themselves for the new season.

Hopefully this special baseball-theme issue of *sportsTURF* will assist all groundskeepers who manage a baseball field with tips and advice for making their fields as safe and attractive as possible. No matter who plays on your field—the 4-foot tall little league shortstop with his or her comically oversized hat and glove; the 50-year old pitcher for a park district league who can still baffle hitters with his knuckle ball; the 17-year old A Ball rookie, playing his first game for which he'll be paid; or last year's Major League Most Valuable Player, stepping up to the plate for his first at bat of the season—all players deserve a safe, consistent field. Be sure to check out all the articles in this issue for information you can apply to your field.

### Certification Update

The year 2000 marks the introduction of the STMA Sports Field Manager Certification program. At the annual conference in St. Louis this past January, Ross Kurcab was recognized at the awards banquet as the first applicant to successfully complete all the requirements to become a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM).

Since that time, four other STMA members have gone on to earn the CSFM status as well. Here is a list of the five current CSFMs:

Ross Kurcab—Turf Manager, Denver Broncos

Dale Getz—Athletic Facilities Manager, Notre Dame University

Eric Adkins—Agronomist, Northwestern University

Ted Baker—Superintendent of Parks, Highland Park Park District (Ill.)

Mike Schiller—Superintendent of Parks, Rolling Meadows Park District (Ill.)

Congratulations are in order for these highly-qualified and motivated individuals. Way to go!

If you haven't received an applicant packet and would like one, or if you have any questions about the certification process, contact STMA Headquarters: phone (800) 323-3875; fax (712) 366-9119; or e-mail SportsTMgr@aol.com. Good luck!

*Michael SanFilippo*

**Michael SanFilippo**

(847) 427-2083

## Tip of the Month

### Controlling Field Traffic

by Floyd Perry



Unchecked public use of sports fields leads to damage on and around the turf.

Many school boards and municipalities are stretched to the limit in daily field care. Some parents say the maintenance staff just doesn't care about their facilities. I find that statement somewhat shallow because I know there is an honest attempt to prepare the fields properly. There's just too much extra traffic on the fields to get them game ready.

continued on page 12