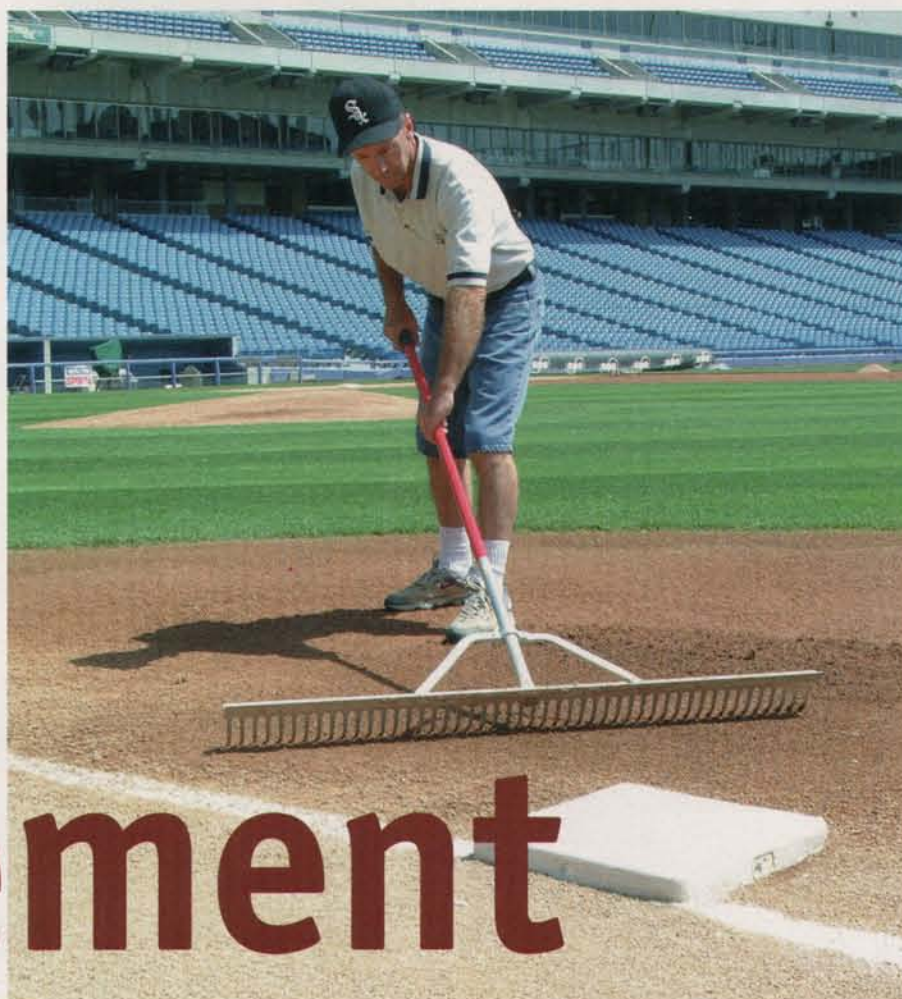


Hands-on training: key to advancement



Head groundskeeper of the Chicago White Sox, Roger Bossard, believes one of the most important issues in the industry is finding good, experienced people. "We don't do enough to train our groundskeepers," he said.

It is exceedingly important to understand the dynamics of good groundskeeping practices and continue to develop skills to enhance this time-honored trade. This December he will be hosting a groundskeeping training event unlike any in the industry. This 3-day intensive workshop will go beyond the basics of field care and delve into problems every groundskeeper and maintenance crew have faced.

"This is truly an education you can't get in a classroom. There has never been a

training program like this in the industry," added Bossard. The courses will focus on building fields from the ground up, managing daily upkeep (including disease, insects, weeds and seasonal issues), and designing sportsfields. Participants will rebuild three of the Spring Training fields at Tucson Electric Park where the White Sox and Diamondbacks play.

The program gives valuable experience needed by sportsfield professionals at every level of play. Because the training is hands-on, everyone will leave with a real understanding of the work and how technique is crucial. Coaches, athletic directors, team owners and managers can pick up valuable insight into the profession's best practices.

"I had a minor league owner once say he'd love to spend a day with me, to better understand what his groundskeeping staff does and how he can make decisions that help them work more effectively," said Bossard. "This is the perfect program for that."

Bossard's 35 years of experience and family history uniquely qualify him for this kind of extensive, hands-on training institute.

Bossard inherited the spirit of invention from his grandfather, Emil, and father Gene, legends in baseball lore. Roger developed a patented process for installing sand-based fields that speed drainage that is now being used at parks around the league.

As a sportsfield builder, Bossard and his team pioneered the techniques used in retractable dome installations. Because of his specialized knowledge and experience, he is recognized as the premier sportsfield builder, designing high-profile projects around the world. Other teams around the league to consult on their projects often call Roger, and he's known for doing all his own soil analysis. His famed hands-on style keeps him down in the trenches with his crew every game day.

In addition to Bossard's insight, several other industry professionals, including Alan Sigwardt, director of grounds and engineering for Pro Player Stadium in Miami, and Dr. Hank Wilkinson, former STMA Scientist of the Year, will be contributing at the institute in Tucson.

Speaking from experience

When asked about the projects that have shaped his experience, Bossard said, "Every construction project has its own unique challenge. However, the Miller Park installation was extraordinary."

"Because of construction delays at the stadium, we were installing the field in December of the worst winter on record. There was 14 inches of snow when we started



One of Bossard's most challenging stadium projects was Miller Park in Milwaukee. With over a foot of snow on the field and frozen turf, specially designed heating tents had to be brought in to house the 2-million BTU heaters for 12 days to install the irrigation system and the turf.

and upwards of 30 inches before we were through," said Bossard. "The dome was scheduled to be finished before we started putting in the field, so the outdoor temperature shouldn't have had any effect on us. It wasn't finished though, so we had to devise a way to install the field on frozen ground."

The field had to be thawed before the sod could be installed. A foot of snow had to be plowed away and a 6-inch trench of frozen ground had to be torn out by frost teeth on D8 bulldozers to put in the irrigation system. "But we were ready for opening day and that's all that matters," added Bossard.

Bossard and his team also developed a unique irrigation strategy for Miller Park. Its overhead, integrated hydraulic irrigation system was the first of its kind. It heats water from 80-93 degrees, then runs it through the irrigation system to help bring the turf out



Bossard says,
"When I work on my field, I get all these great ideas in my head that I know can help other groundskeepers, techniques they don't teach you in school. This is my opportunity to pass on valuable experience."

of dormancy and establish growth in the cool weather. "Sure, projects like this may push the envelope of creative sportsfield care," said Bossard. "But the point is that the best way to broaden your skills is to work with the most experienced people in the game. This forum provides that opportunity."

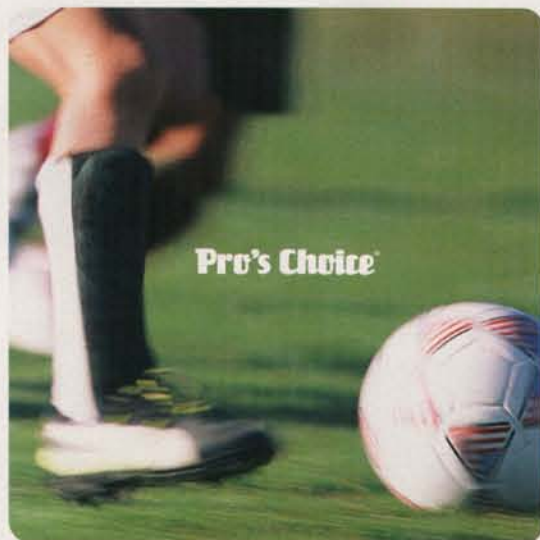
"In the end, it's what you do on your field that counts. This course will teach you how to properly maintain your field, but more importantly how to fix mistakes that may have happened in the past. You'll design a program that meets your specific maintenance needs and be able to apply it."

"And if the attendees are really lucky," added Bossard, "I may even reveal a few of my grandfather's famous '17 Tricks of the Trade'—strictly for nostalgia, of course."

For more information on the Professional Sportsfield Institute and the Roger Bossard Training Camp, contact www.sportsfieldinstitute.com or 800-851-2399.

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