

Training in Tucson

Nearly 60 groundskeepers participated in the inaugural Roger Bossard 3-day Professional Sportsfield Institute in Tucson, AZ, last December. This one-of-a-kind training camp was developed to give groundskeepers at all skill levels access to major league expertise.

During the 3-day seminar, attendees got to walk through the steps needed to renovate an actual professional field. Working through problems in irrigation, soil conditioning and mowing, the group gained a unique perspective into the profession. The training was headed up by Roger Bossard, a world-renowned sportsfield builder and heads groundskeeper for the Chicago White Sox.

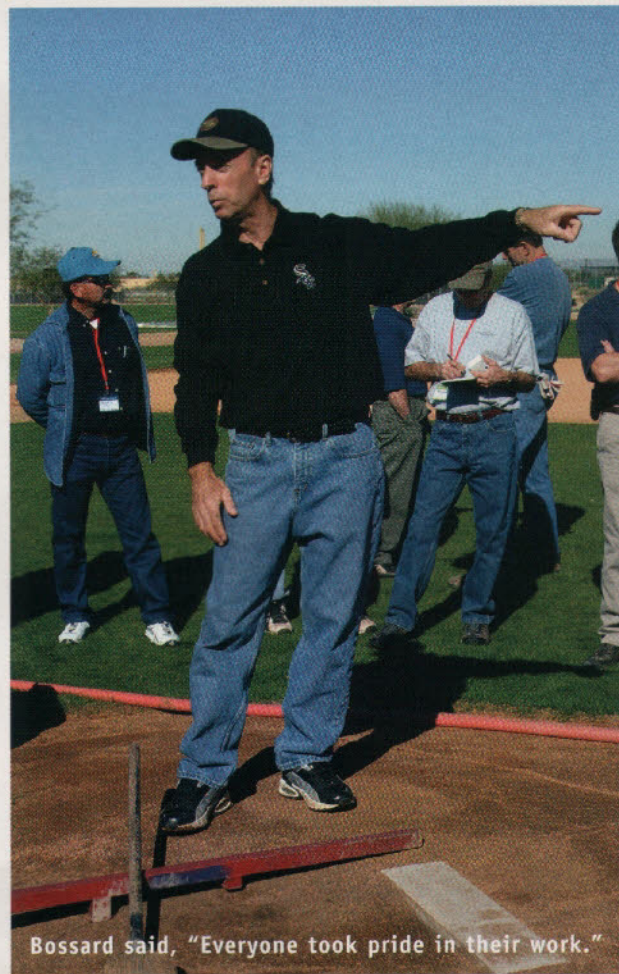
Alan Sigwardt, director of grounds and engineering for Pro Player Stadium, and Dr. Hank Wilkinson, a horticultural professor at the University of Illinois joined Bossard. Sigwardt brought a special knowledge of dual-use fields to the training and Wilkinson's expertise in building and maintaining natural grass sportsfields rounded out the curriculum.

"It was really a successful event," said Karl Rutherford, Professional Sportsfield Institute program coordinator. "We had people from many different jobs types and locations. There were groundskeepers from right there in Arizona and from as far away as Hawaii and Peru. I think the experience and knowledge they all brought with them made the event even more valuable."

Some of the topics covered during the program included design, construction and renovation of sportsfields; building of sportsfields from the ground up; disease, insects and weed control; daily upkeep; and special sportsfield problems.



Attendees came from as far as Peru.



Bossard said, "Everyone took pride in their work."

"The experience was fantastic," said Bossard. "I truly believe that it is our responsibility as groundskeepers to continue to develop our skills and enhance our value to the team. You could tell that everyone at the seminar took real pride in their work and they were all eager to learn ways to make their fields even better. I hope that everyone took away something new from the experience, I know I did."

Many of the attendees echoed Bossard's comments. "I've been to a lot of training seminars, but I learned more at this camp than the others com-

bined," one attendee stated. "I thought it was a great camp, it's nice to have training options out there," added another. "We got through an enormous amount of information in 3-days. We covered parts of field maintenance that I hadn't even considered."

"I thought the entire program was very professionally," said a parks and rec attendee. "If anything could make it better, I'd like it to be even more hands-on." One of the sportsfield builders added, "I thought the information was very extensive, if I could do one thing differently I would have brought along one or two of my colleagues so we could have shared the experience. It was a lot to learn in such a short time and I think having someone to talk about the program with when you get back home to your own field would help a lot." **ST**

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