

BY KURT STAAL

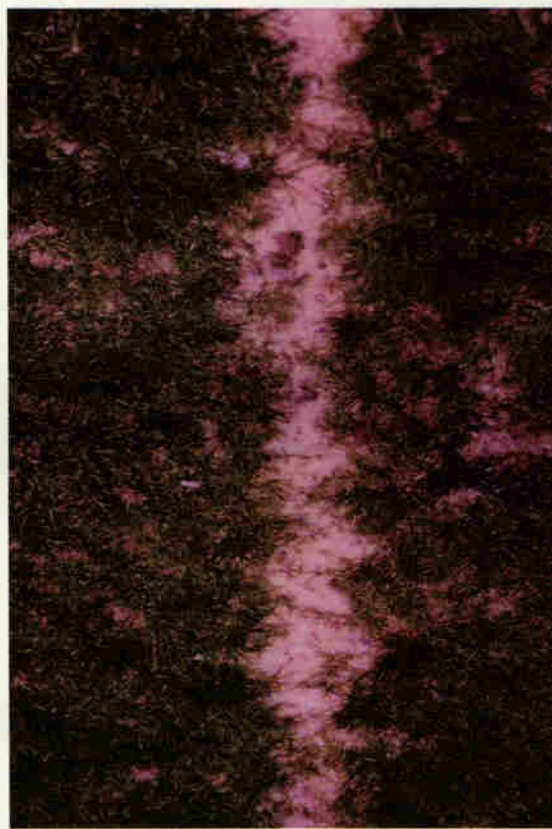
CAMBRIDGE DRAINAGE OPTION EXPLAINED

Over the past 20 years or so many sports fields have been planned without giving proper consideration to how well they will drain. In most cases with the exception of sand base construction not enough thought or money had been invested, and too much faith put in a simple crown.

As a result, our company and many others now provide a way to protect playability during the wettest of conditions using the Cambridge Drainage System. Special equipment means we install an entire drainage system on an existing natural turf field with minimum disturbance and recovery in as little as 2 weeks.

On a typical soccer or football field this system begins with manifold installed along each sideline then discharged into the storm water system or retention basins. Solid PVC pipe is used for the manifold so that you can attach a suction pump or an air pump to either draw water from the system or introduce air into the growing medium.

Step two is to install the Mini Sports field drains. These are typically placed on 5-foot centers crossing the field and connected to the main collector or manifold. These drains are excavated with specialized



equipment that elevates the spoils into a dump trailer traveling alongside the trencher. Special corrugated perforated plastic pipe is installed at the bottom of the trench, then filled with pea gravel and then USGA sand, to the surface.

This back-filling phase compacts the sand fill three times to prevent any future settling. Step 3 is to install the Sand Injection 24 inches on center 9 inches deep x 1 inch wide from goal to goal over the entire field. Step 4 we install the Hydraulically Linked Surface and then sprig, sod or seed.

Mike Bunting from UNC Chapel Hill said, "Our football program has two grass practice fields. Over the last few years the amount of water needed to render the fields unplayable has steadily decreased. During one football season we were required to move 44 percent of our scheduled practices to an Astroturf field because our grass fields were too wet.

"After installing this system, the next season we were required to practice on our Astroturf field for less than 5 percent of our practices."

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Players name favorite turf

Results of a poll in Sports Illustrated showed that 23.2 percent of the players who responded chose Dodger Stadium as having the best-quality playing field. Edison Field, home to the Anaheim Angels, received the second-highest number of votes with 11.2 percent. (Can't beat that SoCal climate!)

The fields at Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City and Bank One Ballpark in Phoenix (pictured) together received 10.1 percent of the votes and were ranked fifth and sixth, respectively, in the SI poll. All feature West Coast Turf products.

Eric Hansen, turf manager of Dodger Stadium, cites his sod as one of several features that helped Dodger Stadium earn top field honors. Hansen says, "Quite often an event is scheduled shortly after installation, so the service and quality of sod we receive is critical."

A tight-knit turf, along with grass that Dodger Stadium's grounds crew keeps cut at between

9/16 to 3/4 of an inch, are keys to providing a player-pleasing surface, Hansen says.

At Bank One Ballpark, the Diamondbacks' organization re-sods the field at the start of every baseball season with Bull's-Eye Bermuda sod, which is overseeded with Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass.

"Players seem to like its density and playability," says Grant Trenbeath, Bank One Ballpark's head groundskeeper. "Batted balls don't zigzag or follow mowing patterns, which would obviously make fielding more of a challenge."

Challenges, however, do exist for Trenbeath and his crew in managing the turf throughout the year. With its retractable roof, BOB's field is often



Photo by AP Worldwide Photos

exposed to rash temperature changes in a matter of a few moments. And on top of the Diamondbacks' 81 home games, numerous concerts, sporting events and shows are held on the field every year.

But a 3 1/2-acre sod farm with sod specifically for the field nearby helps ensure that healthy, tight-knit sod will be installed each year, Trenbeath says.