SAVING A WORLD CUP PITCH

When officials look back on the situation, it could have been a tremendous national embarrassment. South Korea's prestigious Daegu Stadium was the site for the FIFA World Cup soccer games and the first match was scheduled for June 6, 2002. However, just months before the match, the turf started falling apart during practice exhibitions.

"The South Korean press started to get wind of the situation and it was a potential public relations nightmare for the stadium, the city and South Korea," recalls Jeong Nam Choe, South Korea sales manager for Novozymes Biologicals, one of the resources called in to help fix the turf. "However, a cooperative effort quickly helped turn the situation around before the start of the World Cup."

Daegu Stadium is Korea's largest, with room for 65,000 fans. Construction of the new stadium was completed on May 20, 2001. It was a coup in itself for the stadium and South Korea to host the World Cup games and city officials had great expectations for the matches.

Daegu Stadium is a pride of South Korea.

EVEN DAEGU'S MAYOR DEMANDED THE GROUNDS MANAGER TAKE ACTION

When the stadium was constructed, the field's pitch was initially established with sod but it did not take root. During an exhibition game in the fall of 2001, the newly hired head coach of the South Korean team noticed the turf was uprooted and the players were sliding on the field. He complained to the mayor of Daegu City, who personally came to inspect the turf. Recognizing that he had a serious problem on his hands, the mayor ordered the grounds manager, Soung Yong Tak, to find an immediate solution.

"The grounds manager immediately consulted with the Korean Turf Research Institute (KTRI), which was called in to help," Choe says.

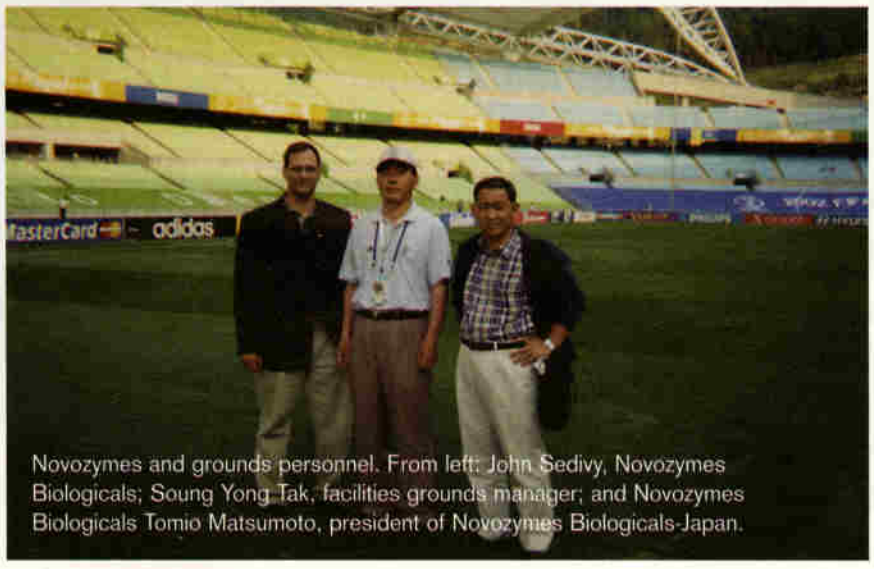
A microbial solution

In the case of Daegu Stadium, KTRI recommended the use of TurfVigor to correct the root quality problem. TurfVigor contains a formulation of beneficial microbes and a blend of nutrients and biostimulants to provide turf with the compounds it needs for growth, health, and stress tolerance. For the Daegu turf, the product helped establish the turf by promoting healthier roots and more efficient water uptake. "I remember that the groundskeeper was doubtful that the product would work at the time, but he had no choice. He went with KTRI's recommendation," recalls Choe.

TurfVigor was applied according to the product label starting in October 2001. After timely watering and a month of waiting, the turf managers noticed that the rooting depth increased to 10 centimeters or more and the entire turf condition, including color and growth, soon started to improve. It wasn't long before the stadium had the best pitch of all the Korean football stadiums (there are 10). Once the roots were established, exhibition games were resumed on the turf without incident. And in June 2002, the stadium and the city hosted three first-round matches and the third-place match on a healthy, showcase turf. As Choe recalls, there was a collective sigh of relief. **ST**

This story was provided by Novozymes Biologicals, a worldwide leader in the research, development, and manufacture of applied microbiology for commercial use.

The turf at Daegu Stadium looked spectacular during the FIFA World Cup Games in 2002.



Novozymes and grounds personnel. From left: John Sedivy, Novozymes Biologicals; Soung Yong Tak, facilities grounds manager; and Novozymes Biologicals Tomio Matsumoto, president of Novozymes Biologicals-Japan.