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Fresh start

I like a fresh start, be it a new year, beginning to work on the next issue of SPORTSTURF, or teeing off on the back after three-putting the 9th green. Last fall I had a big fresh start you don't get too often when my family and I moved from the suburbs of Chicago to Pennsylvania's capital city, Harrisburg. This new beginning hasn't fully flowered as yet since I'm living at my mother-in-law's until February (only 53 more days as of this writing!) so have some sympathy if you run into me during the STMA Conference and Exhibition.

It is high school football playoff season here and the newspaper's coverage has included several stories and columns about the playing surfaces involved. One Saturday morning game was postponed until Monday night because FOUR soccer playoff games were scheduled for the same field that afternoon and we'd had some heavy rain. This same field hosted the football state finals 2 weeks later, played in frigid conditions less than 48 hours after a major snowstorm.

State championship games apparently used to be played on an artificial surface in Altoona and the fan call-in section of the *Patriot-News* had yielded several callers asking "Why not play such important games on best surface available?" A columnist ripped both the interscholastic organization that runs the playoffs as well as those in charge of the natural turf facility hosting all these games. I kept reading his pre-finals column expecting a comment from a PR person about how tough it is to maintain a heavily trafficked, multi-sport field during a wet November but there was none.

But in Sunday's paper that same column's headline was "Hershey's field among winners." This piece credited by name STMA member Steve LeGros, stadium superintendent, and said of the games, "Field condition was never a factor."

Just another story in how "high profile" turf has become in the public's eye. I doubt many readers seek out such attention, but don't be surprised if it comes your way some day. Any pressure involved in turf management presumably rises with every promotion so your ability to deal with it is important.

So as Old Man Winter flaps his coat hard enough that everyone feels his presence, many of you I'm sure are champing at the bit to get going with your own fresh start, namely your fields this spring. Good luck to all.

I look forward to the STMA Conference and a chance to meet more readers and find out what you'd like to read about or see in SPORTSTURF, and encourage you to send me your stories, pictures, ideas, or questions. And I also will need plenty of product and service news copy for upcoming issues, so I invite our advertising partners and STMA Commercial Members to send me material as well. Enjoy the Conference, I'll see you there.



Comments always welcome.

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