

# Talkin' Turf

## with Doug Gallant

**The best way to get the most out of any crew is leading by example.**

**D**oug Gallant is head groundskeeper for the Cincinnati Reds and their new home, Great American Ball Park. He took a few minutes during preparation for their opener to talk to SPORTSTURF:

**Q: How did you get started working with turf? Who was your mentor?**

A: I started in sports turf when I was 17 working for Worthington City (OH) schools. Tim Gerhring, Dave Wickline, and Kevin Boll really gave me every opportunity to learn as much as I wanted at a young age. I was fortunate because the fields we maintained were considered high profile and we had the resources to do the necessary aerification, topdressing, fertility, etc. I worked around classes and in the summers for 6 years. After graduating from Ohio State I landed a job with The Motz Group and built on my knowledge by working on a variety of fields

all across the country.

I do not have one mentor. There have definitely been many people that have influenced me and have helped me along the way. It seems at every step along the way good people have been there to help me move to the next step. In the early years it was the staff at Worthington and then Joe Motz really took over from there and here I am. My wife, Lisa, has also always been there to encourage and support me along the way.

**Q: What was your biggest challenge last year?**

A: My biggest challenge last year was modifying our infield dirt. After several trial and errors we got it to meet the players expectations and they really liked the way it played. This year we have the challenge of opening a new ballpark and everyone who has been through that knows all the challenges that entails.

**Q: How do you get the most out of your crew?**

A: I think the best way to get the most out of any crew is to lead by example. I would never ask a crewmember to do anything I have not done myself. I try to do as much as possible to spread the workload evenly so no one person is burdened with more work than anyone else does. A head groundskeeper is only as good as his crew.

**Q: What do you do to relax away from your field?**

A: Away from the field I love to spend as much time with my wife and kids as possible. I enjoy my time at our house that is located in a rural county 45 miles east of Cincinnati. We live in a tight knit community and I enjoy helping where I can.

**Q: What advice do you have for turf managers?**

A: Work hard and never lose sight of the big picture. There are a lot of times when our hard work goes unnoticed, but if you have the pride that burns inside then it is all worth it.

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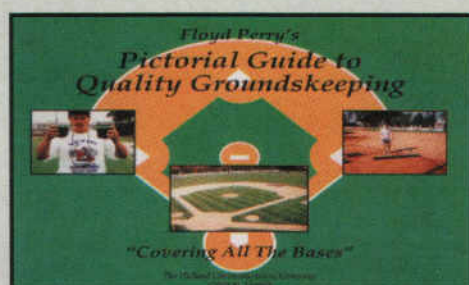
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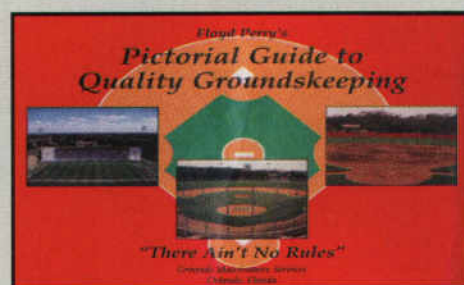
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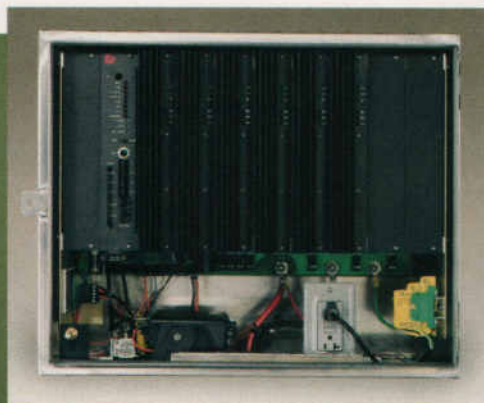
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Federal Signal Corp./708-534-3400

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## DRY-GAS V-TWINS

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Honda Engines/800-426-7701

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## NEW EDGER BLADES

Shindaiwa, Inc. has a new and durable blade for its line of commercial hand-held lawn edgers. The new blade features a sharp beveled edge for easier cutting, greater durability, and less resistance, and the 7.75-in. blade bolts on in just seconds. The part number for the Shindaiwa Cyclone edger blade is 80419.

Shindaiwa, Inc./800-521-7733

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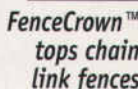
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## SAFE Foundation endorses infill research project

**D**uring the 2002 STMA meeting in Las Vegas, the SAFE Foundation listed research projects on infilled synthetic turf systems as one of its research goals. We currently are conducting research at Penn State to meet those goals by evaluating the playing surface characteristics of various infilled systems over time and over several simulated wear intensities.

There is limited research on infilled systems available. Much of the data that is available has been generated by accelerated testing methods where the surface is exposed to several hours of very intensive wear that is supposed to simulate 5+ years of use. Our study is different. The plots will stay in place and be exposed to the elements and to typical levels of simulated use. We plan to conduct this study for up to 8 years.

Surface evaluation will occur at numerous designated dates throughout each playing season and will include evaluation during moisture and temperature extremes. Evaluation will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Surface hardness using both the ASTM F 355 method and the Clegg impact tester (2.25 kg missile).
- Traction using PENNFOOT at varying loading weights (90 to 300 lbs.) and using different shoe types.
- Relative abrasiveness of the surface using ASTM F 1015 method.
- Turf system ball bounce and ball rebound as well as rolling resistance (speed) using ASTM 1551 suffix 31.

The objective of the study is *not* to somehow announce a "winner." It is possible that the study will identify the conditions that affect the various systems (e.g., product X might have higher traction on a cold day, under no wear, using a Nike Destroyer and a 280 lb loading weight, when first installed; while Product Z ends up having a higher traction on a warm day under high wear, using an Adidas turf shoe and a 170 lb loading weight after 2 years of medium wear).

This project will likely generate an enormous amount of data on the performance of the various infilled systems and will be available via the internet to provide consumers non-biased data on which to base their decisions. Since the study is just getting underway, initial results will be available to the public this fall.

Andrew S. McNitt, Ph. D.

Assistant Professor of Soil Science - Turfgrass  
The Pennsylvania State University

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