



BY MIKE TRIGG, CSFM

# PRODUCE FIELDS N



**A**s with many park districts and recreation departments, summer baseball and softball programs are very popular with the public. For this reason, it is important that your playing facilities are in proper condition. At the Waukegan Park District, we believe that proper playing conditions and maintenance of fields are extremely important. But before the first player takes the field, getting the field into a safe, playable condition may require extensive work, and the unpredictability of spring weather might not allow sufficient time.

We all have nightmare problems from the spring and summer seasons. Perhaps it's that one infield that we constantly have to cancel after a rain because of inability to remove excess water; maybe worn turf areas, or perhaps soil build-up between skinned area and turf. Plan and prepare to correct these problems in the fall.

Our goal is to prepare the ball diamond for next year's use. Just as fall is prime time for turf cultural practices, so should be field renovations. Fall renovations are scheduled at season's end to repair worn turf areas, such as the front of the pitcher's mound. Our renovation procedure includes removing the worn area to re-sod, and also reduce the skin area back to its proper dimension. We use the same procedure for removing the "lip" build-up along an arc.

Some of our fall renovation projects have been extensive using an outside contractor to improve the surface drainage of the skinned area and reduce the skinned area back to proper field dimensions. The perimeter ball mix material is pushed to the center of the field to be reused. Topsoil is brought in, leveled and graded; then the skinned infield is graded with a center crown for proper surface drainage. The renovation is completed with big roll sod. Using in-house equipment and labor to assist the contractor, we saved several hundred dollars on the cost of the renovation. Also, reducing the skin area down to proper dimension reduces daily prep time. In addition, it is great hands-on experience for staff members, who now appreciate what it takes to reno-



# BETTER EXT SPRING

vate an infield.

Fall field renovations can simply be field edging, which gives you that crisp, clean, finished look. Edging also gives you a professional look, and, more importantly, provides good ball roll and playability. Late in the fall, as turf growth is slowed, we use a sidewalk edger to trim 2-3 inches along a base line or arc edge. After removal of the turf debris, we push back and compact the ball mix to the newly established edge. We complete edging by adding additional mix to provide a level surface between the grass and skinned area.

We are also diligent with herbicide applications for weed control on skinned areas. Backpack applications of Roundup herbicide, with a color dye indicator, control miscellaneous weeds that appear on skinned areas, fence lines, and warning tracks. This is particularly beneficial to ball diamonds that go out of play in August, with no scheduled use until the following spring.

Don't wait to communicate your field renovation project ideas. Prepare months in advance and communicate your intentions and expectations to coaches, athletic directors, and park and recreation staff. Develop a checklist of items with projected start and completion dates of field renovations or improvements you want to undertake. Communicate what the results will be when given the chance to do these fall field renovation projects.

In Waukegan, we conduct regular sports field inspections in order to prevent accidents. The inspections identify hazards that can be corrected before causing injuries to patrons or employees.

No matter what level of sports turf maintenance, the aim is to identify and correct hazardous conditions that may exist on your facilities. The goal is to reduce frequency and possible severity of player injury and unnecessary accidents through proper field inspection and maintenance.

On a playing field there are many hazardous conditions that can be easily identified because they are visible and obvious. However, there can be problem areas that are not so obvious, and often only detected

through an inspection process.

The following are items in our sports field inspection checklist that we conduct annually:

#### Maintenance of Skinned Area

- \* Inspection of infield composition.
- \* Leveling of worn area near bases/rubbers.
- \* Correct build-up between turf and skinned area.

#### Selection and Anchoring of Bases

- \* Base anchors correctly installed.
- \* Inspecting pitcher rubbers and home plates.

#### Maintenance of Fencing and Backstops

- \* Exposed concrete footings.
- \* Chain link fence properly secured.

#### Additional Safety Considerations

- \* Bleacher/player benches inspection and maintenance.
- \* Athletic field lighting inspection and maintenance.

Take the time to review those items on your sports field inspection checklist that can possibly be addressed this fall. Most importantly, document any repairs or work completed relating to safety hazards. Specifically, document all work done, when, and by whom, the problem identified, and actions taken to rectify or repair.

Take advantage of the fall months to prepare your fields for spring use. Coaches and players will want to begin practices as soon as spring weather permits. Next spring your efforts will be appreciated by many who will have fun, and will play safely because of the prior planning and prudent preparation you undertook in the fall.

**ST**

Mike Trigg, CSFM, from the Waukegan Park District, Waukegan, IL, is President-Elect of the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA).



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Jacobsen/888-922-8873  
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### SITE CLEAN UP

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### TORO AERATORS

Toro ProCore 660 and 880 aerators relieve compaction, control thatch, and enable positive gas exchange leading to healthier turf. The 660 covers a 60-in. swath and produces quality holes due to the RotaLink centering mechanism, which requires no maintenance and ensures tines remain vertical as they enter and exit the ground, producing a consistently circular hole while the tractor moves forward.

The Toro Co./800-803-8676

For information, circle 075 or see [www.oners.ims.ca/2084-075](http://www.oners.ims.ca/2084-075)



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## TORO SPRAYER

Toro's Multi Pro 5600 sprayers deliver accurate spray coverage for better control of turf disease, pests, and your budget. The spray system has a dual diaphragm pump that can be run dry without damage to the seals or pump.

"By replacing the centrifugal pump with this positive-displacement diaphragm pump on all Multi Pro sprayers, we've effectively eliminated the biggest headache associated with sprayers and turned it into a significant positive advantage."

The Toro Co./800-803-8676

For information, circle 076 or  
see [www.oners.ims.ca/2084-076](http://www.oners.ims.ca/2084-076)

## COMPACT SKID-STEER

Vermeer Manufacturing's S600 compact skid-steer loader is a gas or diesel ride-on machine that can be mounted on rubber tires or rubber tracks over tires, and has eight separate attachments. Machine is made to save labor on jobs such as small-scale dirt handling, utility installation, and lifting projects. Units have oil coolers and easy access to battery.

Vermeer Manufacturing/888-837-6337

For information, circle 081 or  
see [www.oners.ims.ca/2084-081](http://www.oners.ims.ca/2084-081)



## SNOW PUSHERS

FFC Attachments designed its 12- and 14-ft. Snow Push models to remove more snow, more efficiently. Each model is made of heavy-duty, fully welded steel with 3/8-in. thick end plates to capture and remove even the heaviest snow without leaving windrows or spillover. Using the patent-pending pull back kit, the operator can roll the blade forward to finish the job.

FFC Attachments, a Sweepster Co./800-747-2132

For information, circle 056 or  
see [www.oners.ims.ca/2084-056](http://www.oners.ims.ca/2084-056)



## SNOWPLOWS

Hiniker Company designed its HDX line of snowplows specifically for 4-wheel-drive, pick-up trucks to effectively handle the demands of wet, heavy snowfalls. The HDX snowplows use a split trip edge with a 9-in. high pivot point to provide protection from higher obstacles such as curbs and parking barriers.

Hiniker Co./507-625-6621

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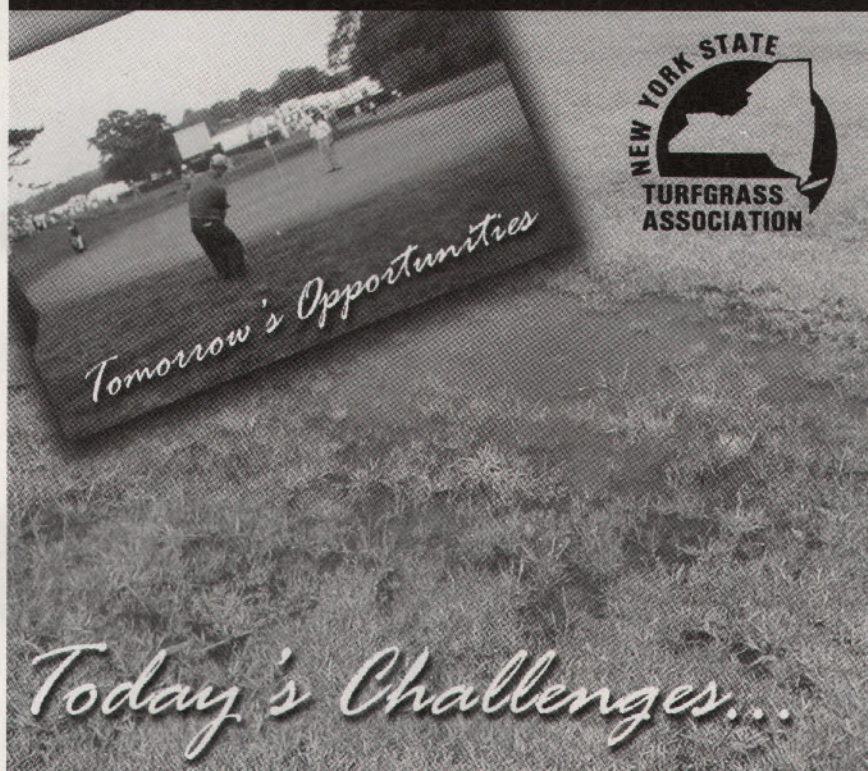
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"As designers of both natural grass and synthetic turf athletic fields, laser surface grading is a critical component of each and every specification we write. Whether it is a recreational field or a major college stadium, a smooth consistent grade is an absolute requirement for proper surface drainage, safety, playability and aesthetics. A poor surface grade will result in puddling, ankle breaking irregularities, bad bounces and crooked game lines."

Patrick Maguire - President, Geller Sport Inc, Boston.

Geller Sport Inc/617-523-8103

For information, circle 101 or

see [www.oners.ims.ca/2084-101](http://www.oners.ims.ca/2084-101)



## DOZER BLADES

Grasshopper offers 48- and 60-in. multipurpose dozer blades for use with all of its True ZeroTurn FrontMount power units. These blades move dirt, sand, gravel and snow, as well as dislodge stubborn ice from sidewalks and drives. They are adjustable to allow operation straight ahead or 25 degrees left

or right. An easy-to-use control lever permits pre-set height adjustment, while a quick-response foot control allows intermittent height adjustment. A new 60-inch PowerBlade uses a self-contained hydraulic system for lift and variable left-to-right angling.

The Grasshopper Co./620-345-8621

For information, circle 063 or

see [www.oners.ims.ca/2084-063](http://www.oners.ims.ca/2084-063)

## SNOW BLADE

Sno-Way's 7 ft., 6 in. snow blade with polycarbonate or steel moldboard is 29 in. high and includes an optional wireless control to provide maximum flexibility. Five-year limited warranty; tight moldboard radius efficiently rolls snow off the blade, and the Flex Force Frame allows quick moldboard upgrade.

Sno-Way International, Inc/800-662-1453

For information, circle 062 or

see [www.oners.ims.ca/2084-062](http://www.oners.ims.ca/2084-062)



# CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESSES OF THE FUTURE!

**THE FOUNDATION FOR** Safer Athletic Field Environments (SAFE) was created by the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) to provide research, educational programs, and scholarships geared to sports fields.

As part of our mission, SAFE is dedicated to supporting students focused on the profession of sports turf management through our scholarship program. Now is your chance to help the future of our industry, STMA, and the SAFE Foundation by helping to fund the scholarship program through your contribution of items for the SAFE Live and Silent Auctions and the Raffle. These events all will take place at the STMA Conference in San Diego, January 21-25, 2004.

Tom Curran, STMA member and Florida STMA Chapter President, also is an award-winning auctioneer. Tom has been organizing and running this auction for SAFE and urges everyone in the sports turf industry to contribute something to these great fund raising events. Items such as memorabilia, autographs, clothing, vacation packages, and equipment all help raise funds for this great cause! The 2004 Live Auction will be held January 22 from 8-9 PM in the Conference trade show area. The Silent Auction will take place on the trade show floor on Thursday, January 22, and Friday, January 23.

Scholarship funds are earmarked for students of 2-year programs, students in 4-year undergraduate programs, and for grad students focused on a future in the sports turf industry. Information on the SAFE Scholarship program is posted on the STMA website [www.sportsturfmanager.com](http://www.sportsturfmanager.com). Click on 'About Us,' go to the SAFE Foundation, and visit the Scholarship section for the link.

All items that you donate to SAFE are tax deductible. Items should be sent to STMA/SAFE HQ, Attn: Jaci Pettie, at 1027 S. 3rd Street, Council Bluffs, IA 51503-6875. Or, to save on shipping and handling, send a description of your donations, and bring them with you to the Conference.

The SAFE Foundation has much work to complete before it can supply the sports turf industry with the desired level of programs. Additional funding is needed to fulfill not only the scholarship program, but also the research and education arms of our mission. Your willingness to consider the SAFE Foundation's request for funding and item donations is truly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Tom via email ([CTomSell@aol.com](mailto:CTomSell@aol.com)) or Steve Trusty at SAFE Headquarters by email ([Steve@st.omhcoxmail.com](mailto:Steve@st.omhcoxmail.com)) or by phone at 800-323-3875.

**Want to help us start a Sports Field revolution?**

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