



Prepping soccer fields for fall

BY KEVIN VOS, CSFM

We begin getting ready for our fall season as soon as our spring season is over, which is at the end of June after four weekends of tournaments. The fall season kicks off the first weekend in August with a 4-day soccer tournament. That leaves us only a few weeks to get things ready.

The fields are thoroughly inspected for worn spots, low spots and anything else that needs to be changed or improved.

All fields are topdressed with 100 percent sand at approximately 1/8 inch thick, and low spots are leveled.

Deep tine aerification is done on the first of July after topdressing with 3/4-inch solid tines to a depth of 8-10 inches. Core aeration is also done over all fields in the middle part of August and again in late October/early November. During the remaining fall season, the high-use areas are aerified with solid tines approximately every 10-12 games or after a tournament.

Areas showing some wear and tear are slit seeded with Kentucky bluegrass at a rate of 2-3 pounds per one thousand square feet going in two to three directions. Seeding is done throughout the fall in high-use areas by slit seeding, divot mix or broadcasting. Either Kentucky bluegrass or perennial ryegrass is used, depending on the amount of wear and time of the year.

Depending on a mid-season soil test, the following applications are made for the remaining fall:

* Sand-based fields—equal parts of granular nitrogen and potassium applications are applied approximately every 14 to 21 days. Roots 1-2-3 nutrient package is applied every 21 days; Iron is applied as needed.

* Soil based fields—equal parts of granular nitrogen and potassium are applied at a rate of .5 pounds per one thousand square feet approximately the first week of July, a 20-0-20 slow release granular fertilizer is applied at a rate of one pound per one thousand



square feet approximately in mid-August, a 25-3-10 slow release granular fertilizer is applied at a rate of one pound per one thousand square feet approximately the end of September, and a 40-0-0 dormant granular fertilizer at one pound per one thousand square feet. Roots 1-2-3 nutrient package applied twice in the fall.

Fields are mowed a minimum of three times per week at 1 3/4 inch height. Fields are mowed every day of the week preceding and during tournaments.

The irrigation system is rechecked for proper distribution, soil moisture is continually monitored for either sand-based or soil-based fields. We try to apply 1-1 1/2 inches of water per week of rainfall and irrigation.

We follow IPM practices for pesticides, and applications are only made if needed.

Fields are then laid out according to the age level of the user group, and painted as needed with a growth regulator added to the paint.

Kevin Vos, CSFM, is athletic facilities manager, Muscatine Soccer Complex, Muscatine, IA.

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University favors slitting approach

Like many universities, Southeastern Missouri State University knows all about sports fields. The school maintains two practice football fields, two practice soccer fields, a football field-sized band practice field and a softball field. And Dennis Koeberl, the grounds crew foreman, is in charge of keeping these fields consistently safe and playable. That means Koeberl knows the in's and out's of overseeding.

For the past two years, Koeberl has relied on a Redexim Charterhouse overseeder called the Verti-Seed, and he couldn't be happier.

"Every time we used our old machine, it would end up tearing up the soil too much," he says. "The blades actually pulled up the Bermuda runners, making a mess of things. We couldn't afford to disturb the soil on those practice fields."

The problem was exacerbated by the fact

that the university wanted overseeding done on other areas around campus (for seeding fescues) including new intramural fields and highly visible common areas. "I was worried about the possibility of damage from that overseeder," Koeberl adds.

The school's new Verti-Seed seemed to answer their overseeding challenges. "This one slits open the sole, drops the seed right into the hole and then covers it up. We can put a lot more seed on in only two passes and it's a lot faster, and no other machine does this."

Koeberl notes that the old seeder required several passes to cover a given area with sufficient seed. "The Verti-Seed saves us a great deal of time, so we can spend it on other, more important jobs around campus."

-Jeff McGinnis

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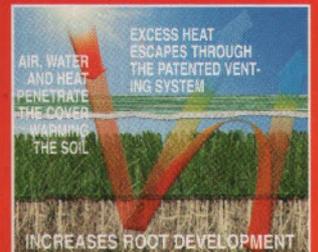
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