

from the sidelines

Throw your spear in this!

While working on a previously (unsuccessful) column idea, I received a response from Brian Donaway, Landscaping/Groundskeeping Supervisor for Florida State, to an email I'd sent him about new fields making their major college debuts in 2004. Brian wrote:

"Those who watched the FSU/Miami game of 2003 know that it was time for Doak Campbell Stadium's 20-year-old PAT System field to be renovated. At kickoff the bottom fell out, it continued to rain throughout the game, and puddles covered the entire field.

"In March, Southeastern Field Construction began digging up the entire field to a depth of 16 inches. During this phase we found objects such as concrete pillars from the old grandstands, asphalt behind the goalpost in the endzones, and wires for the 25-second clock.

"Of course while digging we found our problem with the previous drainage system. The old drainpipes were completely filled with sand; therefore the pump system was no longer working due to the cracks and breaks in the drain lines.

"Once the field was completely excavated, we laser graded the sub-grade to 0.8 percent, then used a self-loading laser trencher. The drains were put on 15-foot centers. The next step was putting in the geo-textile. Due to having only one entrance to the field, the field had to be built in four quadrants to avoid contamination.

"After the quadrant was geo-textiled the drain lines were added and the trenches were filled with gravel and the entire quadrant was also covered with a 3-inch gravel layer.

Then we added 9 inches of sand to each quadrant, followed by a 4-inch rootzone. We went with a 90/10 mix of sand and Canadian Peat.

"Then the field was laser graded 3 more times to a 0.8 percent slope, and we put the grass down. We went with Tif Certified 419 supplied by Pike Creek Turf Farms. We also added a new irrigation system, consisting of Hunter I40 heads and a Rain Bird clock."

Good luck to Brian and the Seminoles this year; the Atlantic Coast Conference sure will be more interesting with Miami and Virginia Tech on board, but I feel the Big East's pain.

NTEP's Kevin Morris says an agreement has been signed to develop a national turfgrass research program. The \$32.4 million National Turfgrass Research Initiative will be run by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and will allow for the hiring of up to 72 turfgrass scientists within ARS and also provide about \$10 million in annual funding to universities for cooperative research with ARS.

Bad news is Morris reports that Congress will now need to provide funding for the Initiative. Given some of the appropriations coming out of that bunch recently, one would think turfgrass would be relatively innocuous. After all, every senator and representative has some alma mater that must have the finest field around, right?



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