

MIDWEST CHAPTER'S FIELD DAY BETTER EVERY YEAR

BY MIKE SCHILLER, CSFM

A crisp and clear Friday greeted attendees gathered at Alexian Field, home of the Schaumburg Flyers of the independent Class A Northern League. Eric Fasbender, Director of Field and Stadium Operations for the Flyers, hosted this Midwest STMA Chapter event.

First off, the attendees broke into groups, with each assigned a different starting point of the demonstration/presentation stations, which were strategi-

cally placed around the field and covered aspects of baseball field maintenance, including game day preparations.

Eric covered game day preparations and maintaining the areas around home plate. Connie Rudolph, CSFM, head sports turf manager for the St. Paul Saints of the Northern League, covered details of mound building and maintenance. Jeff Eckert, head sports turf manager of the Northern League Joliet Jackhammers, covered maintenance of the skinned infield portion of the field. Jeff Salmond, CSFM, agronomist for Northwestern University, and Dr. Dave Minner, Iowa State University agronomist (see page 54), covered the turf maintenance segment of field care. Ryan Nieuwsma, head sports turf manager for the Kane County Cougars, Class A affiliate of the Oakland As, covered all aspects of mowing ballfields, including how to make those intriguing patterns that have become a point of aesthetics in many ballparks.

During the lunch break, keynote speaker Mike Veeck, promotions and public relations specialist for the Detroit Tigers and joint owner of several minor league baseball clubs, took the floor. Mike, the son of baseball innovator Bill Veeck, is equally innovative if not more so. The Veeck family practically invented the concept of "fan-friendly" with such ideas as Bat Day and post-game fire-



Attendees spread across infield of Alexian Field, home of the Schaumburg Flyers Class A Baseball team



Connie Rudolph, CSFM, discusses mound building techniques

MIKE VEECK ENTERTAINED WITH HIS "TOP 10 REASONS FOR TURF MANAGER SUICIDES."

works. Mike was the creator of the infamous "Disco Demolition Night" staged with disastrous results many years ago at the old Comiskey Park.

Mike is a long-time supporter of STMA and gave a humorous and very entertaining presentation on "The Top Ten Reasons for Turf Managers Suicide," with #6 on this list being "Stupid (Damaging) Field Promotions - A Veeck Specialty." Mike is well known for his thinking "out of the box" and his talk had the group laughing at his wit and wisdom. He wrapped up the presentation on a more serious note with his list of "Ten Attributes of All Good Grounds Experts."

The last session of a great day was "Quiz the Experts" with all the speakers on the spot to field questions from attendees. The day ended with the staple of all STMA chapter activities, The Raffle!

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