

from the sidelines

RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY (DUH!)

Last November I drove through a dense fog to visit the Philadelphia Eagles' new home, lavish Lincoln Financial Field, south of famous Broad Street, and across Pattison Avenue from the Phillies' new home opening this spring (Citizens Bank Park). The ghost that is Veterans Stadium was nearby, awaiting implosion.

I was the guest of Stull Equipment, which sponsored a Field Day for area turf managers and has a 6-year agreement to supply field care equipment to the Eagles. I was lucky enough to spend some one-on-one time with Tony Leonard, the Eagles' sports and landscape manager, who took me on a tour of the facility, including a look at the SubAir System as well as his "command center" and equipment and supply areas. And naturally we spent some time on the field, which is 97 percent natural grass and features the same DD GrassMaster system as Denver's Invesco Field. Leonard says two machines stitched the GrassMaster material into the turf for two and a half weeks, 6 days a week, 24 hours a day. (For more from Tony Leonard, see page 29.)

Since I was there courtesy of his equipment dealer, I asked Leonard about his experiences and relationships with suppliers. "Number one is the product; if what's being sold doesn't cut it, that's obviously a problem," he said. "And service is a high priority. I can get a part I need the next day from Stull.

"I need to have a trust level with my suppliers, which is built over time. As the relationship becomes stronger, you get better service, no doubt," Leonard added.

What about entertaining sales pitches from your current suppliers' competitors?

"I'll listen to what others have to say though my philosophy is, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it,'" he said. "For example we get our field paint from a local supplier who can deliver within 2 hours of my calling him, and that works out great for us."

Leonard still prefers face-to-face dealings with local suppliers or using the phone. He said he isn't yet comfortable with buying via the internet.

Rod Smith, president of Stull Equipment, a Jacobsen dealer, follows a simple formula to meet customers' needs and expectations: Reliability + Availability = Investment.

"Reliability comes from providing consistent quality in all areas and responding quickly to every input. Availability is a function of having and delivering the right product when and where the customer wants it. And to have these traits requires a considerable investment in people, vehicles, inventory, and systems," said Smith.

"We strive to do what's right for the customer as well as our company. Many times these principles are in direct conflict; what the customer wants may be very costly for us to deliver," said Smith. "Our relationship with the Eagles has played on the need for a balance, a win-win philosophy that should sustain a successful business relationship."



ERIC SCHRODER, EDITOR

Comments always welcome.
Call Eric at 717-805-4197,
email eschroder@aip.com, or write
PO Box 280, Dauphin, PA 17018.

SPORTSTURF®

833 W. Jackson, 7th Floor Chicago, IL 60607
Ph: (312) 846-4600 Fax: (312) 846-4638
Web: <http://www.greenmediaonline.com>

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SPORTS TURF MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

president **BOB CAMPBELL, CSFM**
past president **MURRAY COOK**
president elect **MIKE TRIGG, CSFM**
commercial v.p. **MONTY MONTAGUE**
secretary **MIKE ANDRESEN, CSFM**
treasurer **TIM MOORE, CSFM**
stma board members **ERIC ADKINS, CSFM, DR. TONY KOSKI,
BOYD MONTGOMERY, CSFM, ABBY MCNEAL, CSFM,
GEORGE TRIVETT, CSFM, VICKIE WALLACE**
executive director **STEVE TRUSTY**

STMA OFFICE

1027 SOUTH 3RD ST., COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51503
phone (800) 323-3875
email STMAHQ@st.omhcoxmail.com
website www.sportsturfmanager.com

INTEGRATED CONTENT TEAM

vice president/ group publisher **STEVE BRACKETT**
editor **ERIC SCHRODER**
senior editor **JOHN KMITTA**

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

MIKE ANDRESEN, CSFM, Iowa State
CHRIS CALCATERRA, CSFM, Peoria, AZ
JEFF FOWLER, Penn State Extension
BOYD MONTGOMERY, CSFM, Sylvania, OH
PAM SHERRATT, Ohio State Extension
SUZ TRUSTY, STMA

PRODUCTION TEAM

art director **MAGGIE CIVIK**
production manager **GABRIELLE MOUIZERH**

ADAMS BUSINESS MEDIA

ceo **MARK ADAMS**
sr. v.p.h.r. & administration **MARGIE DAVIS**
director of internet operations **CHRIS CASAREZ**
it director **STEVE SMITH**
v.p., marketing svcs. group **ELIZABETH SANTELLI**
director of circulation **JOANNE JUDA-PRAINITO**

DIRECT MAIL LIST SALES

JAN LEONARD (847) 526-2599

READER SERVICE SERVICES

associate director of circulation & director of reader service
JOANNE JUDA-PRAINITO
readerservice@aip.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

phone: (847) 763-9565 fax: (847) 763-9569

REPRINTS

Fostereprints (800) 382-0808

Publisher's Notice: We assume no responsibility for the validity of claims in connection with items appearing in Sportsturf. Reader Service Numbers are given to facilitate further inquiry. Commercial product names are used for the convenience of the reader. Mention of a commercial product does not imply endorsement by Sportsturf or Adams Business Media, or preference over similar products not mentioned.

Adams
BUSINESS MEDIA

Sportsturf
MANAGERS ASSOCIATION



SPORTSTURF • <http://www.greenmediaonline.com>