Construction specs 101

Time really does go by faster as you age. It’s difficult to believe that July is here already, which means time for our annual Football Issue. Of course softball or soccer or lacrosse (America’s next big game?) contests are still being waged on many readers’ football fields. Raise your hand if you have worked your plan to assure some “down time” for that turf before the gridders start tearing it up.

Last spring Tony Strickland, CSFM, sent me a list of construction specifications for football and soccer fields. Tony’s company builds athletic fields; he also has built and managed a large sod farm, and has built several large athletic field complexes in the southeast. Here are some of Tony’s definitions and product descriptions:

Topsoil: Friable surface soil, if included, which is reasonably free of subsoil, rocks, stones, sticks and other debris more than 2 inches in diameter and without weeds, roots and other objectionable material.

Sub-surface soil: That soil directly below the topsoil existing in place soil and/or properly compacted imported soil, both being stable as a supporting medium and acceptable as a part of a rootzone for Sports Field Contractor.

Sand: USA Greens sand or sand meeting the USGA specification per particle size analysis, or pre-approved sand.

Topsoil being existing in place soil and/or properly compacted imported soil, both being stable as a supporting medium and acceptable as a part of a rootzone for Sports Field Contractor.

Sod/Sprigs: [For example] certified Tifway II Hybrid Bermudagrass produced under the rules shall be removed upon installation.

Fertilizer: A commercial mixed grade fertilizer including 100 lbs. of nitrogen, 200 lbs. of phosphorus and 300 lbs. of potassium.

Lime: Dolomitic lime, stone ground to meet agricultural standards containing a minimum of 95% carbonates.

Laser Grading: Shall include the use of a land leveler that is equipped with a laser controlled hydraulic system that automatically raises and lowers the implementing an agricultural type tractor to reduce compaction shall tow this implement. Laser grading shall be a multiple step process beginning with the sub grade and continuing with each layer of amendments including the topsoil layer (if included), sand layer and the final rootzone. Each of these four (4) individual layers will require a laser grading process and will meet the following degrees of variation to desired slopes and elevations: the sub grade +1/2 inch, the topsoil layer +1/2 inch, and the finished surface grade +1/4 inch.