



## Bowlin Stadium in Lincoln is college softball showcase

**B**owlin Stadium in Haymarket Park, in northwest Lincoln, NE, won the 2004 STMA College Softball Field of the Year Award. Jennifer Roeber, the University of Nebraska's Assistant Athletic Turf Manager, was honored as chief caretaker of the winning field.

Bowlin's field is sand-based and built according to USGA specifications, and features a Kentucky bluegrass blend of Arcadia, Award, NuGlade, and Freedom II. Roeber's cultural practices allows her to forego using insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides. The infield is MarMix red sand-clay topped with red Diamond Pro infield conditioner. The four-zone irrigation system features Toro 640 heads with six quick couplers.

Roeber says, "I am in charge of the softball field and also help take care of the baseball field that is used by the University baseball team and the Lincoln Saltdogs, a Northern League independent team. We also care for the landscape inside and outside of the ballpark facilities.

"The most important thing I like about my job is being able to do what I love and that is care for turf at a first-rate softball and baseball complex," Roeber says. "I also like my job because the coaches and players treat me with respect. The coaches and girls appreciate the work that is done for them to have a field that they can proudly call their home."

Roeber says she became interested in a career in turf management when I started working for a lawn service in high school. "Studying turfgrass management in college also was a way to stay involved in a sport that I loved."

### Solving problems

"The biggest problem that we faced was the field didn't have adequate drainage on the edges of the infield and dugouts. The clay was all the way to the wall and there was only four little drains," says Roeber. "All the water from the tarp and seating

bowl drained on to the clay.

"To fix the problem we took the clay out to the foul lines and put in drain tiles and sand for a base. Then we made a warning track against the wall and dugouts. Next we put in a strip of grass that was between the warning track and the clay. The improvements have helped; we don't have to worry about pulling the track off to find water under it and the dugouts don't wash full of conditioner."

The Huskers' field has an advantage over most: a SubAir system that offers reg-





# Maintenance Program

## Jan/Feb

Begin heating the field to allow practices  
 Plow/melt snow to allow practices  
 Manage infield rain tarp to allow practices  
 Irrigate turf as necessary to prevent winter desiccation  
 Maintain sub-surface heating system  
 Attend STMA annual conference

## March

Warm field to prepare turf for home games  
 Begin bi-weekly liquid fertilization program to jump-start turf (30-0-0, micronutrient package, biostimulant, and wetting agent)  
 Begin mowing turf daily  
 Irrigate turf as needed

## April/May

Fertilize bi-weekly with 17-0-34 at rate of 1/2-lb. N per 1,000 sq. ft.  
 Apply extra fertilizer to wear areas as needed  
 Apply seed to areas as needed  
 Continue liquid fertilization program bi-weekly  
 Mow turf daily to 7/8-in. height using triplex ride-on reel mower  
 Irrigate as needed

## June/July

Reduce amount of N applied to field to help disease control  
 Continue liquid fertilization program bi-weekly

Irrigate/Syringe/Hand-water based on turf needs and event schedules  
 Mow aggressively, but cut back in extreme heat

## August

Mow turf daily to 7/8-in. height  
 Fertilize with liquid and granular products bi-weekly  
 Irrigate/Syringe/Hand-water based on turf needs and event schedules  
 Spot-treat diseased areas if necessary following standard IPM

## September

Continue bi-weekly fertilization program  
 Irrigate/Syringe/Hand-water based on turf needs and event schedules  
 Mow field 4-5 times per week to 7/8 inches

## Oct/Nov

Core aerate the entire field with 5/8-in. hollow tines at the rate of 25-30 holes per square foot  
 Topdress field with 90:10 sand/peat mix to match rootzone  
 Continue granular and liquid fertilization programs  
 Mow as needed  
 Irrigate as needed

## December

Prepare equipment for upcoming season  
 Take vacation

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ulated airflow, allowing sub-surface heating, which in turns allow practices when most fields in the north aren't open. Of course, this means Roeber and crew sometimes need to remove snow from the infield cover before January practices. They use a tractor with a rear blade (featuring a rubber edge) to push snow off the infield tarp to the warning track, then use a blower to remove it from the track and bullpens.

Rhonda Revelle, Nebraska's head softball coach, said in a letter to the STMA: "I have been a part of Nebraska softball for 20 years . . . the new stadium and the pride with which Jennifer and her staff maintain and innovatively improve it has affected Nebraska Softball in every way imaginable. Bowlin Stadium has become a very important rung in our recruiting process. Athletes are able to see the pride and the tradition of our program."

Bowlin Stadium has hosted NCAA Regional tournaments in two of the three years the national tournament has existed.

