Jimmy Rodgers, CSFM, wanted a new challenge and he got one. After five successful years at the University of Virginia, last spring Jimmy took over as head turf manager at RFK Stadium, new home to the Washington Nationals as well as pro soccer's DC United. We checked in with Jimmy in mid-July:

"On Opening Day we simply did not have enough hard packing pitcher's mound clay incorporated into our pressure points. I corrected it the next day, but some players had heard about the opener and saw problems where there were none," Jimmy said. "I took some grief for about a week when things settled down.

"In the interim, the front office instructed me to use a different mound clay product. So I excavated all of the clay that I had placed on and after April 15, and replaced it with this new product, which failed miserably. The third game on it, with 300-game winner Greg Maddux pitching, the umpires asked for our assistance to fix the mound," Jimmy said. "After that fiasco, I re-excavated the inferior clay and placed my preferred brand, which we'd used originally. We have had no mound issues since."

The RFK mound disappears into the infield for soccer set-ups. "We have had a few glitchy areas, mound and home plate, be grassed for their games. Different fertility, different mowing heights, different fungicidal needs, certainly different aesthetics," Jimmy said.

I asked Jimmy what are the biggest issues in changing the field from baseball to soccer or vice versa. "The wear that the field receives from the conversions. Soccer has required that all infield clay areas, mound and home plate, be grassed for their games. Converting back to baseball is difficult work," Jimmy said. "During baseball road trips I can't fine tune because it's a soccer field. I didn't realize how stressful both physically and mentally it would be. What we're trying to do is too big a bite."

ERIC SCHRODER, EDITOR

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