



Roser going out on top

Steve Roser and his Sportscore II soccer complex have won the 2005 STMA High School/Parks & Recreation Soccer Field of the Year. Roser has spent 35 years as the sports turf manager at the complex in Rockford, IL and retires next spring, leaving a legacy of safe playing fields for thousands of young people.

SportsTurf: Do you plan any adjustments, large or small, to your maintenance plan in 2006? Did you purchase or plan to

purchase any new equipment or product for this year?

Steve Roser: We are purchasing two new field painters. We demo'd a Toro 1200 and the crew liked it. We have more than 60 fields to paint each week and they really liked the pull-behind cart to stand on. We also are picking up a couple of EZ-GO work carts and hopefully a new Kifco.

Our maintenance plan should be pretty close to last season except we should be breaking ground our 6-8 new tournament fields on some land we purchased last year.

We could use more rainfall. Last season we experienced our worst drought in 30 years. We'll spend more time at Sportscore I ball diamonds because we picked up some national tournaments this year. We also picked up the 2008 Region II soccer championships, which will be our 4th time in the past 14 years.

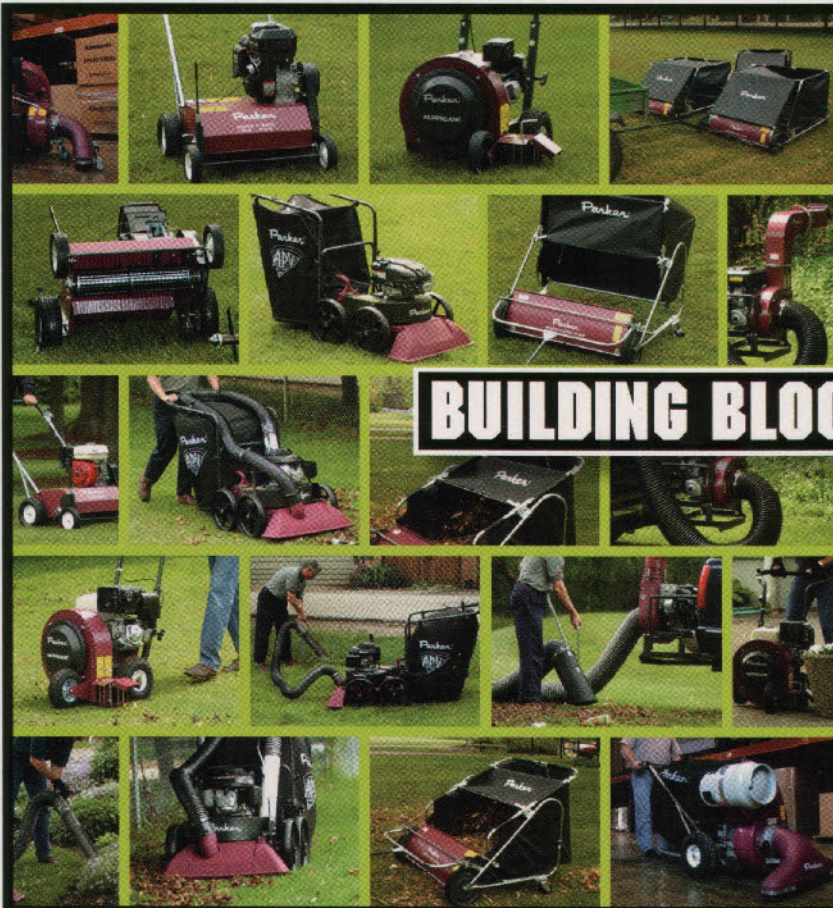
I'm retiring next spring after 37 and a half years, all but one of them in sportsturf. I hope to keep working part-time, maybe moving south to warmer weather, and staying involved in STMA.

ST: What are your keys to communicating with users of your fields?

Roser: Since I am onsite so often during the season, usually 6-7 days a week and many evenings, I often see our users and coaches. I see them as well at our indoor complex during indoor training. We meet with all soccer groups before the season and send a newsletter as well.

ST: Any advice for a turf manager who is preparing his or her soccer fields for a tournament?

Roser: We run tournaments every weekend from mid-April through mid-October and have been for 15 years. We've become really good at it. We aim to have everything ready by Thursday afternoon for a weekend tournament. That leaves Friday to move the goals, check the nets, flag the fields, setting up for parking, security and concessions and so on.



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Maintenance Program

December

Close outdoor facilities; perform preventive maintenance on equipment; assist with indoor events; remove snow; inventory for new season's supplies.

January

Continue preventive maintenance and assisting indoors; remove snow; order new season's supplies.

February

Continue preventive maintenance and assisting indoors; remove snow.

March

Continue preventive maintenance and assisting indoors; begin outside work weathering permitting; move to shop and prepare for season; begin laying out fields and painting; work on bleachers, benches, goals.

April

Set up bleachers, benches, goals, etc.; fertilize all fields 0-0-50 green grade; fertilize sand fields 11-52-0 map; mow as needed; turn on irrigation; start crabgrass control.

May

Broadleaf control; fertilize all fields 15-1-10, 50% organic, 50% nutralene; fertilize sand fields 11-52-0 map; mow 2X week; double-slice fields with 6-in. knives.

June

Second crabgrass control as needed; double aerify all fields, follow with a top-dressing of Turface or Pro's Choice; mow 2X week; late in the month, preventive grub control.

July

Move and adjust all fields for fall season; renovate weak areas, seed, sod, and lots of irrigation; mowing.

August

Continue renovations; fertilize all fields 15-1-10, 50% organic, 50% nutralene; double-slice fields early in the month with 6-in. knives; start aggressive overseeding program.

September

Fertilize all fields 0-0-50 green grade; fertilize sand fields 11-52-0 map; continue overseeding; double aerify early in the month, follow with Turface or Pro's Choice.

October

Fertilize all fields 20-5-20, 50% SCU, slow one-release N/SOP; fertilize sand fields 11-52-0 map; aerify fields late in the month; close fields as needed and start renovation work.

November

Shut down irrigation; continue renovating as able; dormant seeding as needed; fertilize all fields 21-0-0-4 ammonium; store all benches, bleachers, goals, etc.; put fields to bed for winter; begin work on next year's budget.

Main assistant is Tom Edell

We don't mow on Fridays unless it rains. The crew really appreciates this, the senior citizens who mow get 3-day weekends, and the younger guys who work weekends get Fridays off as well.

During tournaments I assign one soccer supervisor per six fields. He or she remains in their zone during the games, picking up, checking nets & flags, cleaning, etc. The supervisors also contact EMTs if necessary by radio. We always have a roamer during larger tournaments who gives breaks and empties garbage cans. This guy needs to be a troubleshooter.

As the last game of the day begins, I gather a garbage crew to pick up everywhere before we can go home. Doing it then gives everyone a chance to sleep in a little and be ready to go the next morning. This does mean long, 14-15 hour days but everyone likes it because it means more money.

The biggest challenge in tournament preparation is switching field sizes between tournaments of different age groups. We use several colors of paint, white, orange, blue, and yellow. Most often, tournament prep begins Monday morning when we measure new field dimensions. Sometimes we paint



I would like to see turf managers and officials' groups work together and try to make it a rule that officials switch diagonals at half time. We're all interested in good fields, not just the turf managers.



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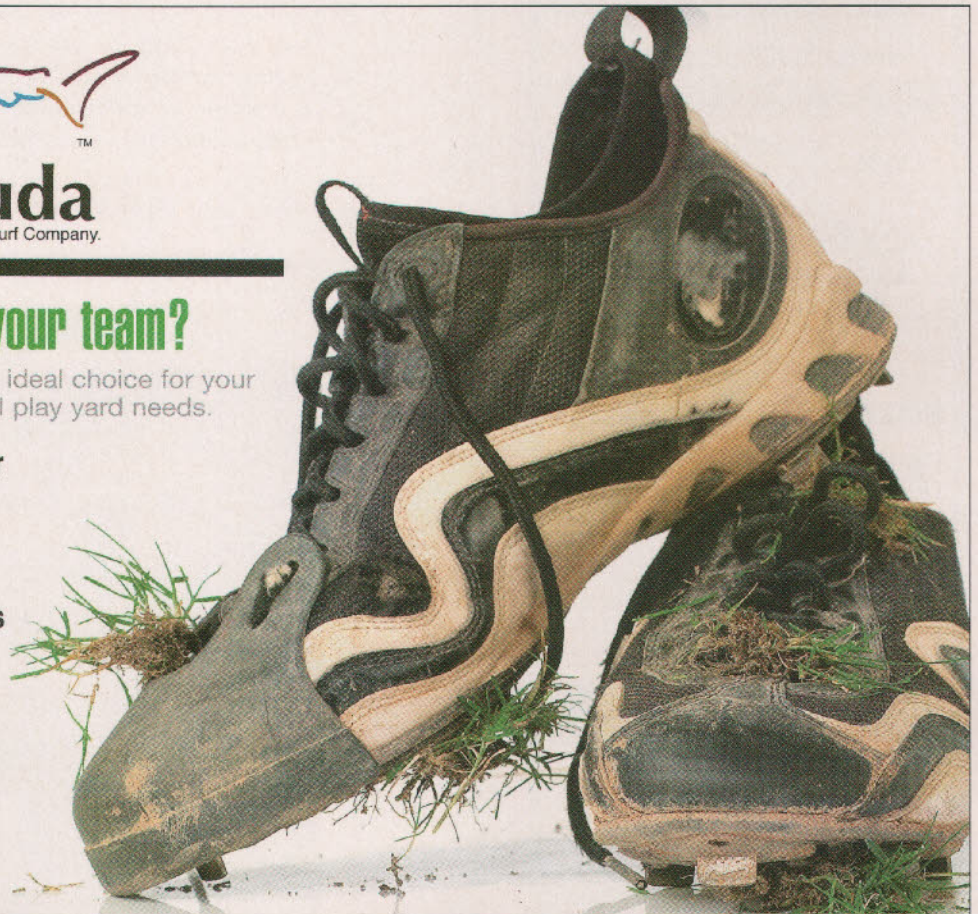
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FIELD OF THE YEAR

the fields twice a week; the regular fields white for league play, and smaller fields inside the white with another color.

ST: What's the greatest pleasure you derive from your job? What's the biggest headache?

Roser: As with any turf manager, my biggest headache can be the weather, or should I say the wrong weather at the wrong time. Getting a heavy rain the night before or during an all-day tournament on a weekend is tough. We can and have cancelled league play and practice but for tournaments it's much harder to do. One day or one weekend of play like that can destroy weeks or even months of hard work and it sets you back.

The referee lines are a problem. Almost every week we narrow or widen our fields; we use six different widths. Two-man crews did not create a problem but the three-man system does. Several times we've had success

with officials switching diagonals every other game when the fields were wet, but it is a real chore.

I would like to see turf managers and officials' groups work together and try to make it a rule that officials switch diagonals at half time. We're all interested in good fields, not just the turf managers.

I have many pleasures at my job. Seeing kids of all ages, boys and girls, playing on nice fields is great. I still love planning my week over a fresh cup of coffee, early in the morning. Working outside every day, cooking out with crew for lunch.

Probably my greatest treasure of 35 years was working with my staff. I have worked with hundreds of young men and women since 1971 and I've seen so many of them go on to be successful. When they stop by and see me they usually thank me for helping them prepare for the workforce. They remember the 60-hour weeks, working 30 days in a row at the Sportscores. ■

