

Toma visit highlights renovation project



The “Marquis de Sod” shared his knowledge and experience with the maintenance staff at Ralston Valley High School in Denver during a renovation project at the football field. George Toma, Sports Turf Managers Association founder and father to many Super Bowl fields, was visiting the Jefferson County public school system to dispense his wisdom. Lots of winterkill, followed by an early summer with consistent 90 degree temperatures, had damaged the field.

Toma was working with Hall-Irwin, the construction and development company, on the field’s renovation. Toma was there on behalf of Western Pozzolan, the soil amendment company that Hall-Irwin put together, with other vendors, to provide the expertise and products for the renovation as part of its “STACK” program. Toma helped decide what the soil profile’s issues were and then assisted with finding the right prescription. Other companies donating time and materials included GreenOne Industries, A-1 Organic, Extreme Weed Control, and Estes Chemical. Hall-Irwin did contract with the district for some services.

Eric Pollock, Hall-Irwin’s athletic field specialist, developed the STACK program that, after soil analysis and lab reports are complete, results in a custom-blended product that can successfully alleviate specific conditions found in the soil of any field. “We take different turf science products and put them together so that in one application we can begin to heal athletic fields,” Pollock said.

“For example if a Kentucky bluegrass field has a high sodium level, we might blend gypsum with some organic products to developing a leaching factor,” Pollock said.

Steve Beck, president of Western Pozzolan, said Hall-Irwin assists in “missionary work” when it approaches schools with serious field issues and shows them how they can go down a path of proper cultural practices versus building a costly new field. “So many schools spend a lot of money initially on their new fields but don’t provide enough, or any, maintenance budget,” Beck said. “With more athletes than ever, the wear and tear on these school fields is astronomical. By season’s end, some are hardly playable.

“It was impressive seeing George Toma talking with the turf manager at Ralston Valley about cultural practices that will provide a safe and long-lasting turf,” Beck said.

Hall-Irwin provides one-stop shopping with its STACK program, Beck said, so that turf managers don’t have to make a lot of calls trying to get vendors together. The STACK program brings in the company’s vendors for soil amendments, compost/peat, sand, etc., to improve a field’s soil profile.

Top photo: George Toma added his expertise to the renovation, courtesy of Western Pozzolan. Far left: Rootzone before “STACK” treatment. Near left: Rootzone after renovation. ■

