

## Yoder, Balough use fire nozzles at Petco

**D**avid Milhalides, a former golf course superintendent-turned-entrepreneur who is also a rep with Reelcraft Industries, alerted us at the STMA Conference about two major league turf managers who had discovered that nozzles used by firemen work great for their purposes too.

Luke Yoder, director of field maintenance for the San Diego Padres, and his "aide-de-camp," Matt Balough, can't keep the secret any longer because Milhalides has worked out an agreement with the nozzle manufacturer to market them to turf managers. Yoder answered some questions via email on the nozzles:

**SportsTurf:** Where did you discover these nozzles?

**Yoder:** A friend who worked at a fire department supply warehouse referred us to Bill Black with Fire Etc. Bill sells us the nozzles direct.

**ST:** How did you find out they worked well for your purposes?

**Yoder:** We tried numerous nozzles with different spray patterns and orifices (the orifice affects the volume of water). These nozzles varied from 10 gallons per minute (gpm) to 90 gpm. There was such a wide variety we knew that something would work for our applications.

**ST:** What exactly about their performance is better for hand-watering?

**Yoder:** The 1.5-inch nozzle that has 40-90 gpm is perfect for hand-watering the turf areas. We always hand-water infield and foul turf areas and this nozzle cut our time in half compared to what we were using before. The more water that comes out the less time you hand-water. We also take advantage of this nozzle for watering in sand after topdressing. And finally, we use this nozzle for anytime we need to flood the infield skin, (before the team comes back [from the road] and post-game). Again, it saves us time.

We have so many choices for different conditions. We choose a certain nozzle for a certain application based on the volume of water and spray pattern we want. For a typical pre-game water I will use a 1-inch, 10 gpm to 30 gpm nozzle. This allows me to water with precision and even does a light mist if needed.

The nozzles are aluminum and come with or without rubber bumpers on the end. They are all adjustable from stream to fan. Some will create a light mist.

One of the nozzles is simply a 3/4-inch brass valve. This is good for mounds because you can create a very small stream to wet the packing area.

**ST:** What's your infield watering routine, both for off days as well as game days?



**Yoder:** When the team is out of town we do not water the infield skin. We start to flood out the infield 2 days before they return. We will flood the infield four times before the start of the homestand. We then flood the infield at post-game, work it all morning, and then flood it again before lunch. After that we just touch up with less water in between batting practice and at pre-game.

**ST:** What types of hoses and reels do you use?

**Yoder:** We use 1-inch, lightweight, clear hoses, and a Reelcraft reel system that is buried in the warning track.

**ST:** Any advice for others when it comes to hand-watering, regarding technique or efficiency?

**Yoder:** On hot, sunny days more water is usually better. Just think ahead and flood at the right times. You want to maintain a high amount of moisture in the base throughout the homestand. My opinion is that the infield should be under water at least once a day. We flood twice (again, this is assuming hot, sunny weather). ■

