

McCarty, East Peoria win softball field award



Though Doug McCarty won the 2006 Sports Turf Managers Association School/Park Soccer Field of the Year Award, his job responsibilities encompass an entire sports complex. Mizuno Field is just one field on the 108-acre complex named EastSide Centre (www.eastsidecentre.com). There are a total of 10 baseball/softball fields, four soccer fields, a multi-purpose stadium primarily used for football and track, an indoor recreation facility, and a water park. McCarty manages all grounds of the complex, which includes hiring workers, scheduling work hours, managing youth league and tournament schedules, and all aspects of grounds maintenance.

A renovation in late 2004 assured the facility would continue to host the Illinois High School Association Class A and AA softball state finals, and also attract new events such as the Super 60 high school All-Star weekends.

McCarty began working on East Peoria's city ballfields as a teenager. "I grew up playing on those fields. As a 16-year-old I got a summer job helping with the field work. I caught on quickly and really enjoyed being outside and working on the diamonds," he says. "The next year I took over doing the field prep at age 17. The next year EastSide Centre opened."

He continued to do field work throughout the rest of high school and as a summer job through college with the Park District. But it wasn't until the summer before his senior year in college that he worked on the grounds crew at EastSide Centre. Three years later, in 2004, he was named grounds manager.

"Being 27 and single gives me a lot of time to devote to work," McCarty says. "I think that is a big reason why I have been successful at a young age."

"There are a lot of demands in this profession. I think about all the late nights and early mornings; all the weekends that are tied up

with tournaments and it doesn't leave you with much free time," he says.

"Every year of experience gives me that much more knowledge going into the next season. I keep notes on things that have worked well and use them every season to become more efficient and become a better time manager so someday I will have that balance between work and family," McCarty says.

Changes in '07?

"I don't see many changes in my maintenance plan this year. Since 2004 our summer schedule has remained consistent," he says. "That summer we jumped from around 2000 games played to around 2500 games. In 2005 we had a severe drought that caused me to change some things, and I incorporated those changes in 2006 just to be better prepared for a dry summer. "The more we can get done in the fall, the easier it seems to make things in the spring. Once the games start being played, it's



really tough to get out and get any maintenance projects done," he says.

McCarty derives his greatest pleasure from "just being outside around sports and the kids. I have been a sports guy all my life and when we crown a tournament champion or a state championship team, the excitement from the athletes and the parents is amazing," he says. "The memories that are made here will be remembered forever and I am just glad to be a part of that. I am always pleased to hear someone say that they can't wait to come back. The preparation that goes into a big game or tournament sometimes seems overwhelming, but when it all comes together and everything looks great before the event, that's a great feeling."

Like all turf managers, McCarty is beholden to Mother Nature. "The biggest headache has to be the same for me as it is for many others – the weather. It plays such a critical role in everything," he says. "The toughest decisions I make are based on weather." ■

John Mascaro's Photo Quiz



Answer: from page 27

The brown parallel lines running across this soccer field appeared in early January 1989 on this high school field in South Florida. When the supervisor for the school board maintenance department first saw the damage, he was puzzled. The brown lines were not only parallel to each other, but also appeared on both sides of the center of the field in uniform distance. There were also numerous other lines that were not brown, going across the field, sideline to sideline. After further investigation, it turned out that the field had been used for the Super Bowl XXIII halftime show practice entitled "Bo Bop Bamboozled," which was also played in South Florida that same January. The halftime show practice was mostly done during Christmas break when the students were off the field and the maintenance department was not informed of the practice until after the event.

If you would like to submit a photograph for John Mascaro's Photo Quiz please send it to Turf-Tec International, John Mascaro, 1471 Capital Circle NW, Suite # 13, Tallahassee, FL 32303 or email to john@turf-tec.com. If your photograph is selected, you will receive full credit. All photos submitted become property of SportsTurf Magazine.

Photo submitted by Ed Birch, retired maintenance supervisor for Broward County School Board, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.