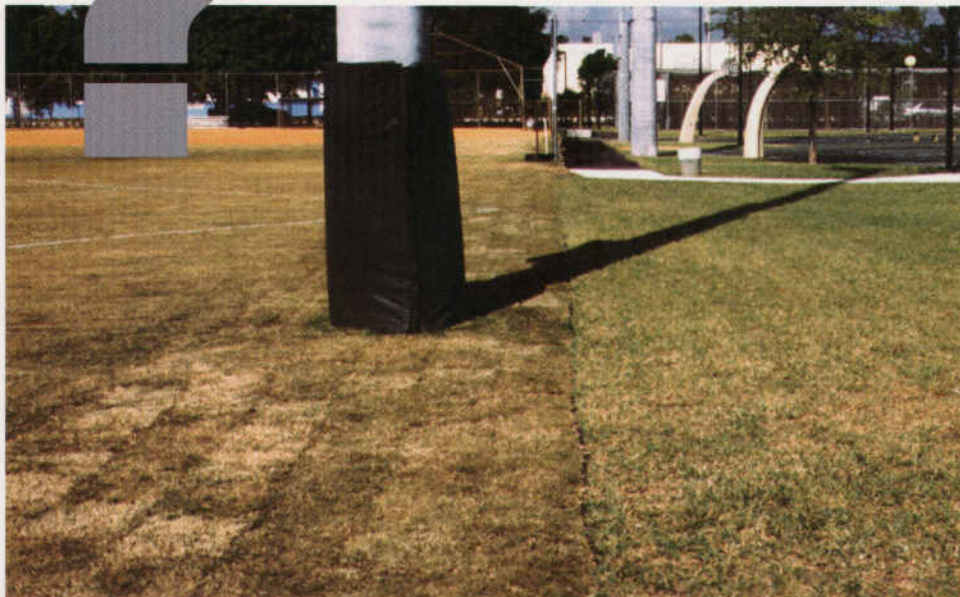


Can you identify this sports turf problem?



Problem: Black line between field and common area

Turfgrass Area: Athletic Field

Location: Pinecrest Village, FL

Grass Variety: Bermudagrass athletic field and St. Augustine grass common area.

Answer to John Mascaro's Photo Quiz on Page 48

*John Mascaro is President
of Turf-Tec International*



IT'S AN "UNWRITTEN RULE" ACCORDING TO NEWPHER THAT ONLY THE DAYTONA 500 WINNER CAN SPIN OUT ON THE TURF LOGO IN THE TRI-OVAL.

"By the day of the Daytona 500 (the "Super Bowl" of NASCAR) only 40 acres of those 550 are not being used for something," says Newpher. "Fans take over about 10 acres, for example, and the drivers' RV park is another four acres, and it goes on and on. That one day we need to look our best and often, the turf looks its worst,

at least to the crew and me. People are all over it that week so we irrigate as little as possible."

The most famous, and visible, section of Newpher's turf is 5 acres known as the "tri-oval" that sports the huge Daytona logo. This logo is 200 feet long, with 34-foot high letters and an apex of 68 feet at the top of the flag in the middle. It's this tri-oval, so close to the track itself, that periodically gets an out of control race car skidding across it. (Newpher has an acre of replacement turf growing near the track.)

"We used to string out the logo ourselves until our 50th anniversary (in 1998)," says Newpher. "To celebrate the anniversary we changed the logo and added more logos to the tri-oval, as well to the backstretch and Turn #3, and it became a lot more work. Now Missouri Turf Paint does

all the logos because they are so complicated and time-consuming. They bring a 200-foot stencil for the main logo and work exclusively at night since it's way too dangerous to be that close to the track when it's 'hot'."

It's an "unwritten rule" according to Newpher that only the Daytona 500 winner can spin out on the turf logo in the tri-oval. He says his greatest memory of the great race was when the late Dale Earnhardt, driver of the black #3 Chevy and known as "The Intimidator," finally won Daytona after 20 tries and proceeded to spin doughnuts on top of the logo's flag. "The fans went absolutely nuts, and after the race many of them grabbed some sprigs that had chipped up from his doughnuts," says Newpher.

Another memorable moment came 3 years later, during the Pepsi 400 race in July. Earlier that year, Earnhardt had passed away after hitting the wall at Daytona. This day, his son, Dale Earnhardt, Jr., took the lead in the backstretch near the end of the race. "I was in the pit area and you could actually hear the crowd's roar over the noise from the racecars," Newpher recalls.

By the way, if you're thinking you'd be angry if a millionaire race car driver tore up your perfect turf on purpose, you need to know that immediately following the Daytona 500, Newpher every year begins tearing out the turf on the tri-oval for a motocross event the next week. ■

FACILITY & OPERATIONS

IMPROBABLE THOUGH IT MAY SOUND, THE SEED OFTEN TAKES ROOT IN THE INFILL OF THE FIELD, CREATING AN ADDITIONAL CHALLENGE TO THE MAINTENANCE STAFF.

grassing to insure that positive drainage and a smooth transition is maintained.”

How the surrounding surfaces are maintained, says Huard, and what effect maintenance has on the turf has to be considered closely. “The number one maintenance issue I see from in connection with synthetic turf fields surrounded by natural grass areas is the direction of the mower discharge. If the synthetic field is separated from a natural grass area by only the curbing, the maintenance staff mowing the lawns tends to blow the discharge onto the turf, introducing unnecessary foreign debris that needs to be removed. By simply discharging the mower away from the synthetic field, the maintenance staff can reduce the amount of debris they need to remove from the playing surface.”

Huard also sees problems in cases where freshly spread grass seed finds its way into the edges of a synthetic field. Improbable though it may sound, the seed often takes root in the infill of the field, creating an additional challenge to the maintenance staff.

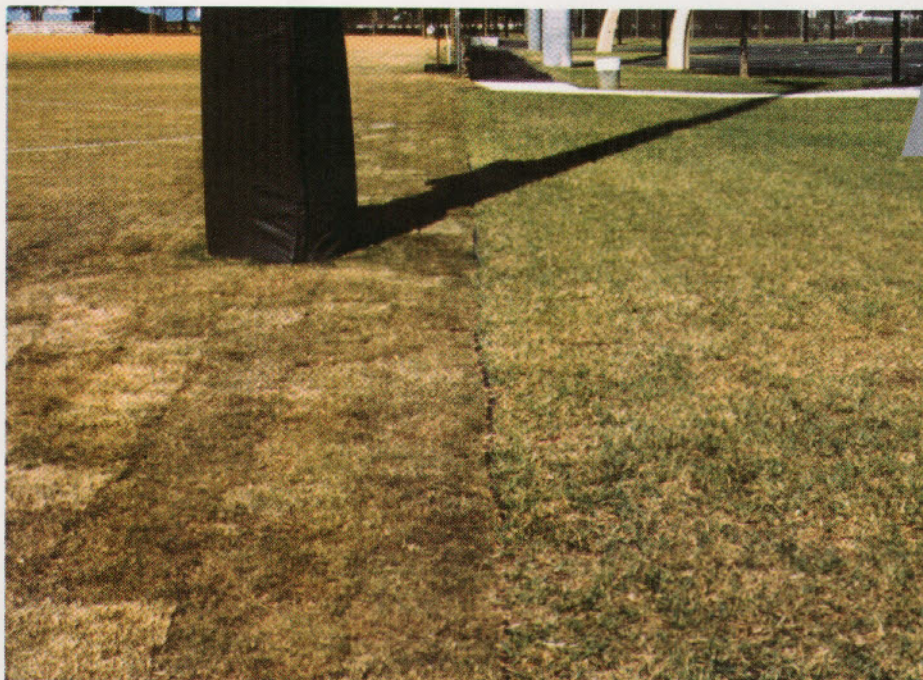
Water, either from irrigation systems or from rain, can carry seed and other contaminants onto a synthetic turf field or onto a track, according to Sam Fisher. It happens naturally, but there is no reason to tempt fate by carrying watering to extremes.

“One of the biggest problems we see across the country with the natural grass fields is the desire to water (and in some cases almost flood) the grass to the very edge of the track. The drainage is not adequate to handle all of this water and asphalt stripping begins to take place. It is nearly impossible to design a sprinkler head that is going to hold a perfect edge when spraying water and, of course, wind will move that water such that the track is inundated on a consistent basis.”

With proper placement of irrigation equipment, says Ed Norton, the potential for problems can be minimized.

Mary Helen Sprecher wrote this article on behalf of the American Sports Builders Association. See www.sportsbuilders.org. ■

John Mascaro's Photo Quiz



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*.

Answer: from page 28

The black line between field and common area of this newly sodded sports complex was actually plastic landscape edging. This edging was inserted between the bermudagrass athletic field and the St. Augustine grass common area as a barrier to keep the bermudagrass from invading the St. Augustine grass. The original plan for this area was to have the sidewalk intersect these two areas creating a walking path and also a barrier for the different varieties of grass. In an attempt to save money, the city decided to eliminate the sidewalk. In its place, a contractor inserted the plastic landscape edging to keep the different grass varieties separate. This is a good example of how changing one small detail on paper does not necessarily translate well on turf. Interestingly enough, the city eventually ended up installing the sidewalk that was in the original plans, which solved the problem of keeping the two varieties of grass from encroaching and continued the walking path around the ball fields.

Thank you to Loren Matthews, Director Parks and Recreation Department at the Village of Pinecrest, for allowing me to take this photograph. ■