

Surprise Rec Campus wins unprecedented 3 in a row



ed by baseball maintenance manager Joe Kennedy III, the Surprise Recreation Campus, Surprise, AZ won its third consecutive Professional Complex

of the Year Award from the Sports Turf Managers Association earlier this year. The facility has been winning awards since it opened in 2003; the \$73 million, 170-acre facility includes a 37-acre community park that includes a fishing lake, a library, rec center, aquatics center, all surrounding the centerpiece Surprise Stadium. This stadium and other baseball features are spring training home to the Kansas City Royals and Texas Rangers, as well as MLB's Arizona Fall League and the independent minor league Surprise Fightin' Falcons.

We exchanged emails recently with Joe Kennedy, which is becoming routine:

SportsTurf: How do you maintain the standard of excellence that you've set by winning three consecutive Complex of the Year awards?

Kennedy: I believe the most important philosophy or concept that everyone on our staff and management team has bought into is that everyone is a true team member and has ownership of all aspects of the Campus, both positive and negative. This has translated into an incredible team that I am very proud to be a part of.

SportsTurf: What are your keys for success in your interactions with all the different "user groups" with whom you have to work?

Kennedy: Here at the Recreation Campus we have a diverse group of users and

activities. I deal with major league managers to youth league managers, athletic trainers to animal trainers, city management to union members, concert enthusiast to demolition experts and everything in between.

With that in mind here are my top five keys to success in no particular order: honesty, consistency, "team" mentality, positive attitude, and prayer.

SportsTurf: Do or did you plan any adjustments, large or small, to your maintenance plan in 2007? Did you purchase any new equipment or product for this year?

Kennedy: We constantly have to make adjustments to our maintenance plan according to scheduling of events and budgetary constraints. Our maintenance program has developed over the years by these minor and



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sometimes major changes that have been made by these two main factors.

I am not sure if you would ever find some of our practices in turf manuals as a "How To in Sports Turf Management" but in real life experiences sometimes you are asked to do the impossible and a simple "No" answer isn't acceptable. You then have to think out of the box and brainstorm with your staff and that is how new maintenance programs are developed and successful programs are maintained. You are only truly limited by your imagination and attitude.

SportsTurf: What tips would you give parks & rec and scholastic turf managers for conserving water while still providing safe fields?

Kennedy: I would recommend that they would use all tools available. The number one recommendation of course would be to use a central control system with weather station to accurately prescribe the exact amount of water needed and see that the exact amount of water being applied.

That being said, many times you aren't in

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the position to have a computerized irrigation system. With the availability of the Internet most of the information you need is found at your fingertips. You can get the approximate ET values from local weather stations or military bases. ET values are pretty constant in your local area. Don't forget to use the network of STMA professionals in your area. One of our best resources is one another. Who can give you better advice than a neighboring professional who struggles with the same climate and environmental issues you do? Remember, "membership does have its privileges"!

Now that you know exactly how much water needs to be applied, make sure it is applied where it is needed. I believe you can conserve the most amount of water through hard work and a sense of pride by instituting a strict regiment of irrigation maintenance to insure your system is working properly and efficiently. This is hard work and involves constant monitoring but the overall water conservation is extremely beneficial. ■



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