

TOP 1



ways to
get the
most out
of the

STMA Conference

By Mike Andresen, CSFM

As our national STMA Conference and Exhibition rolls our way, it is important to begin planning strategies on how to make the most effective use of our time in Phoenix. While we know we attend for the education, networking, and the trade show, there are a number of ways we can make certain we come back with information we need now in our jobs and for the future.

1. Create your "must attend" list.

Review the schedule of speakers and topics and determine the "must see" sessions of all that are offered. I keep in mind the short-term issues of field and facility management that I'm directly responsible for, and highlight those talks that will address immediate concerns.

Each of us also has an idea of our adminis-

tration's long range goals and plans. Sessions that may help me become a more valuable asset when planning for the future are also circled as "must see." I have a responsibility to upgrade my value to my employer when presented with the opportunity, and the STMA conference offers this chance. The Conference brochure will be on your desk soon (if it already has not arrived), and you will notice it has much greater detail about each session to help you create that perfect conference schedule. Check out the new online version, too, which is electronic, so you do not have to worry about downloading a huge file. You can also easily register online.

2. Ask key questions. The educators and your peers teaching the sessions and workshops offer a tremendous wealth of knowledge and experience. They are the experts who can advise you about the issues

you're facing. Go to these sessions with an idea of how they can benefit you. Attend with an open mind. Be prepared to soak in the presentation, actively pull ideas from it, and then adapt them to your world. This helps us to be engaged in the presentation and really allows the presenter to connect with us.

3. Work the trade show floor. The STMA Exposition is the perfect place to evaluate products, find out what's new in the industry, and meet face-to-face with company representatives. Approach your time on the trade show as thoughtfully as you do your conference education schedule. Usually attendees work the floor in one of two ways: 1) divide the floor in half and slowly work the first half one day and the other half on the next day; or 2) visit all the booths the first day, and hone in on the ones you need more information from on the second day. No matter which strategy



you use, wear comfortable shoes! Rather than carrying home a mountain of literature, leave your business card or have the company scan your badge and mail the material to you.

4. Use the Exposition for better decision-making. In this era of electronic shopping and information gathering, it is easy for attendees to forgo this important opportunity to meet face to face with exhibitors. An initial discovery from an online search can help you develop questions about a product, but talking face-to-face with a company representative will give you the chance to touch, sit on, and/or feel a piece of equipment that interests you.

Many times I've gone to a trade show booth with an entirely incorrect perception of the "how's and why's" of a product or service. Oftentimes we don't have an immediate need for the represented product or service, but can predict a future need at our facility. When the time comes to act on the future purchase or contract, you will already have a basis of understanding and hopefully you will have developed a relationship with a trusted industry professional that can help guide you through the selection process.

5. Tap into exhibitors' expertise. We have an obligation to our employers to take full advantage of new technology, new services, and new ways of thinking about our jobs. Exhibitors are one of our greatest resources. They travel the region and the country, sometimes the world, observing successful and unsuccessful operations. Their success depends on our success as sports turf and facility managers.

I know that too many of us see commercial representatives and sales professionals as

adversaries. The fact is because of their travels, expertise, and experience we can learn a great deal from them about being better turf-grass professionals! Exhibitors have a great opportunity at the STMA trade show to help add to the conference education experience.

6. Think partner, not vendor. My interest in the trade show is to experience the existing and leading technology available to me as a sports turf manager, and to maximize the chance to develop solid professional relationships with those with the same interests. The relationship between commercial representatives and sports turf management professionals is symbiotic. Each exhibitor feels their product can be beneficial in our quest to produce safe and aesthetically pleasing playing fields and facilities. Without properly examining each of the products and services we cannot be sure we are doing all we can to ensure the same.

Just as we incur a financial expense to attend conferences and upgrade our expertise, commercial representatives also incur costs in support of that same upgrade in our expertise. Supporting those that support us by purchasing their goods and services ensures that our entire profession remains healthy and full of committed professionals. I truly feel, and have been told so many times, that our trade show is "different" in that we truly value our commercial partners and stand arm-in-arm with them in the mission of producing safer athletic fields. Their role is very important to each of us personally and also to the health of our association. The trade show is part of our education; our education sessions are part of their enrichment. Please always remember that some of our best friends work inside trade

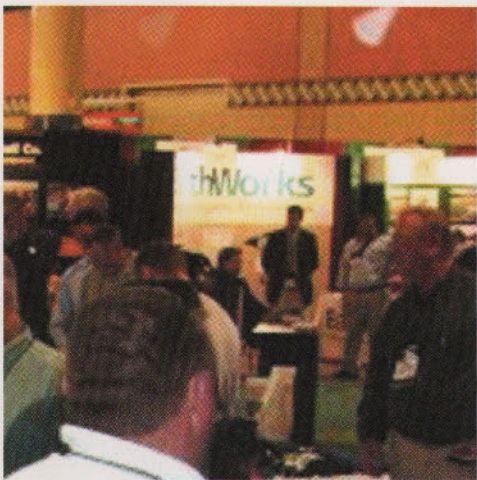
show booths during that one week in January.

7. Report back. We too often fail to report back to our administration on what we learned. Write up a small summary of what you learned and how it will benefit your operation. This is vital in securing the next opportunity and positively reflects on you as a professional, ultimately making you a more valuable employee. My administrators feel the time and expense to attend the STMA conference is worthwhile in my professional development. The tangible solutions I've learned at STMA and then implemented at our facility also reinforce how important my attendance is at the conference and trade show. It adds to my credibility when I acknowledge that importance by way of a short summary upon my return.

8. Have your house in order. Make certain that your facility will be running smoothly while you are away. Develop a plan for how operations will continue in your absence. Designate who is in charge and let your administration and peers know. You should consider leaving contact information so that you can be kept current of any concerns that arise in your absence.

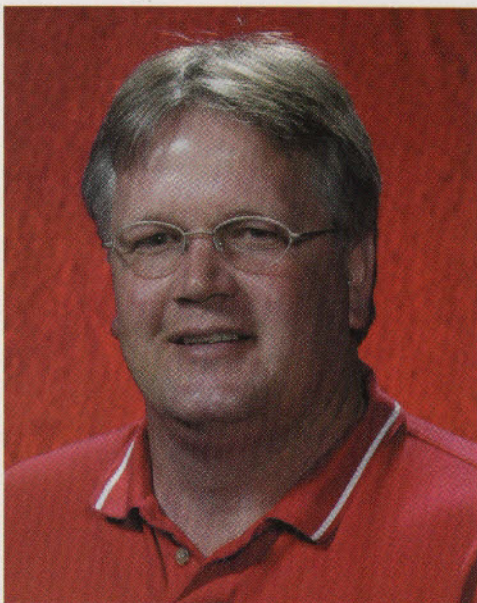
9. Spend time renewing old friendships. The conference is a great time to catch up with friends in our business. It's our one time during the year that we are totally surrounded by those who are involved in this profession — whom we can share our war stories with and empathize with when they tell us about their challenges. Some of the very best people in this world are in our profession. Take the time to reconnect, learn from them, and rejuvenate!

FACILITY & OPERATIONS



10. Spend time meeting new friends. Networking is very important and very rewarding. Of all the "green" industries, ours may maximize the networking as well as, or better than, any of the others. Your new contacts will bring new ideas and solutions to you. We are an industry willing to share our knowledge, experiences, and practices with each other. We need all the teammates we can gather throughout our journey of sports turf management.

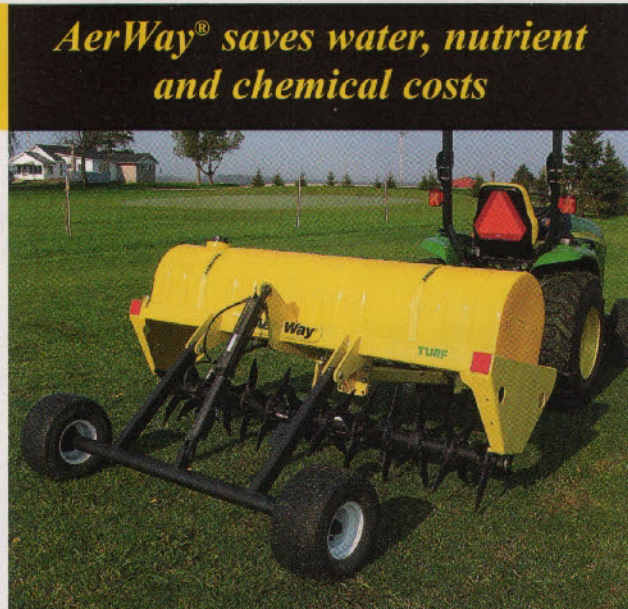
I encourage each of us to prepare for the STMA Conference and Exposition to maximize our opportunities to grow and become even better professionals. ■



Mike Andresen, CSFM, is athletic turf manager, Iowa State University, and president of the Sports Turf Managers Association.

AerWay®

AerWay® venting tines can be used all season to keep the soil surface open. Water and nutrient applications are more efficient because they are absorbed immediately into the soil profile.



AerWay® saves water, nutrient and chemical costs

for more information call

1-800-457-8310

Advanced Aeration Systems

www.aerway.com email: aerway@aerway.com

Fill in 125 on reader service form or visit <http://oners.hotims.com/13974-125>

AERA-VATOR™



Eric Hansen
Head Grounds Keeper
LA Dodgers



"We have used the AERA-VATOR for several years on our warning track for compaction relief. It is capable of fracturing the hardest clay areas with ease. We recently started using it on the infield skin to incorporate new material into the existing profile. The AERA-VATOR is a multi-purpose tool that is easy to operate and affordable. I THINK IT IS A MUST-HAVE TOOL FOR ALL TURF MAINTENANCE PROFESSIONALS."

f First Products
INNOVATIVE TURF EQUIPMENT

CALL FOR A FREE VIDEO TODAY
800-363-8780

SALES@1STPRODUCTS.COM • WWW.1STPRODUCTS.COM
164 OAKRIDGE RD, TIFTON GA 31794

MRSA and synthetic fields: more research is in

Editor's note: In our May 2006 issue we ran a story about a study that found that "infilled systems are not a hospitable environment for microbial activity." There are other views on this subject however, including that of the manufacturer of TurfAide, an antimicrobial product marketed to owners of synthetic turf systems. In the spirit of fairness, we offered them an opportunity to present their information.

When Midwest high school athletes from one school last year contracted MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), a powerful bacteria. The luckier of the bunch came out with deep scars while others emerged from hospital beds after weeks of strong antibiotics. All felt relief that the microorganism hadn't taken a bigger toll.

"When my son contracted MRSA, he had to take heavy antibiotics, bleach baths, wash with antibacterial soap, and de-contaminate all textiles that he touched, including our couches and everything in his room, with scalding hot water for weeks," says Sue Schnitz, mother of Robert Schnitz, who was one of the first to contract MRSA on the team. "We were lucky. I thought his leg would have to be amputated. Instead my son is left with bullet-sized scars on the back of his leg."

Teams from high school levels to the pros such as the Washington Redskins and Cleveland Browns have dealt with cases of staph outbreaks. All, no doubt, would tell the athletic community one simple fact: MRSA and staph infections are indeed a threat and awareness and action is a must.

MRSA defined

MRSA is a strain of the staph bacteria and is otherwise known as a "super bug" because of its resistance to methicillin. In athletics,



FACILITY & OPERATIONS

staph and MRSA infections create problems when scrapes, burns, and cuts are involved, enabling the bacteria to enter the body's bloodstream; instances that are far too common in sports and on synthetic turf fields.

"Athletes in all arenas need to be aware of MRSA's growing threat on the community. Staph infections are not to be taken lightly," says Dr. Rod Walters, doctor of sports education formerly at the University of South Carolina.

The bacteria usually cause mild skin infections such as boils or pimples, but by entering the bloodstream through open wounds, it can instigate infections such as sever pneumonia, internal organ and joint infections and toxic shock syndrome.

Staph, once believed to be confined to hospital settings, has over time become more resistant and increased in virulence; the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that from 1995 to 2004, the percentage of staph infections caused by MRSA has increased from 22% to 63% [1]. The CDC also

estimates that around 130,000 people are hospitalized with MRSA each year. This year the Archives of Internal Medicine reported that MRSA's frequent occurrence is around 11 times greater than past estimates reported [2]. Sports Illustrated states that staph is so highly contagious that a "quick high five" can transmit the bacteria if both athletes have turf burns or abrasions in their skin [3].

"A higher percentage of Staphylococcus aureus have become resistant in recent years," says Dr. Bruce Muma, chief medical officer at Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital. "As community outbreaks become more prevalent outside of hospitals, healthcare experts nationally are facing a crisis that needs the help of a proactive community to beat."

Where is MRSA found?

Staph infections, including MRSA, are pathogens that can be found everywhere; in fact, it lives in the skin and nose of about 30% of the population [4]. The bacteria can survive in

indoor and outdoor environments and surfaces such as playgrounds, hospitals, prisons, health clubs and athletic settings for long periods (days and months). Specifically in the athletic environment, staph can live in locker rooms, whirlpools, towels, uniforms, mats, sporting equipment, and synthetic turf fields. Increasing knowledge in the medical community has brought to attention that staph can be transferred by textile and other surfaces as well as person to person contact.

Though the presence of Staphylococcus aureus in athletic settings such as locker rooms, health clubs, mats, exercise balls and weight rooms is commonly accepted in the community, its presence on synthetic turf fields has been debated. Today, recent independent studies confirm what doctors and athletic officials have suspected all along; the non-discriminatory staph bacteria indeed can live on synthetic fields. According to the Journal of Clinical Microbiology, who clinically studied staph's ability to survive on a variety of substrates,



Southern Athletic Fields

- ◆ MuleMix Field Conditioners
- ◆ MuleMix Sure Dry
- ◆ Infield Mix
- ◆ Mar Mound Clay
- ◆ SAF Coat
- ◆ SAF Trac
- ◆ Field Accessories
- ◆ Field Consulting



Minimizes Compaction —
Results in a safer, more constant playing surface!

Athletic Field Conditioner

Use Marbet's MULE MIX on your field and you'll

- * Have a compaction-free, safer playing surface.
- * Reduce moisture — you get fewer rainouts.
- * Control maintenance costs.
- * Hold down dust.

MEMBER
STMA
Sports Turf
Managers
Association

Southern Athletic Fields, Inc.
 1309 Mainsail Drive
 Columbia, TN 38401
 Call 1-800-837-8062 Nationwide Toll Free
 for a distributor near you.
NET WT. 50 LBS / 22.68 KG

1.800.837.8062

www.mulemix.com

CYGNET TURF travels the country stripping and installing sportsfields with its patented equipment. In addition, we've also supplied the following teams with our sand-based sports turf:

- ◆ CHICAGO BEARS PRACTICE FACILITY
- ◆ MINNESOTA VIKINGS PRACTICE FACILITY
- ◆ INDIANAPOLIS COLTS PRACTICE FACILITY
- ◆ ST. LOUIS RAMS PRACTICE FACILITY
- ◆ BALTIMORE RAVENS PRACTICE FACILITY
- ◆ SOLDIER FIELD
- ◆ KANSAS CITY ROYALS
- ◆ CLEVELAND BROWNS
- ◆ TOLEDO MUD HENS
- ◆ CINCINNATI BENGALS

Our patented machines carry the rolls, turn them at ground speed, and install down a controllable slide for tighter seams.

**NO ONE ELSE
CAN MAKE THIS CLAIM.**

U.S. Pat. #5,215,248, & 5,307,880

So whether it's your turf or ours,
call

CYGNET TURF

when it's time to install!



Phone: (419) 354-1112
Farm: (419) 655-2020
Fax: (419) 352-1244

Fill in 127 on reader service form or visit <http://oners.hotims.com/13974-127>

Fill in 128 on reader service form or visit <http://oners.hotims.com/13974-128>

"Staphylococcal viability was longest on . . . polyethylene plastic (22 to 90 days)." [5]

As recent as May 2007, an independent laboratory tested an indoor synthetic turf field at a Midwest Division I school and found five samples with significant indication of presumptive staph on separate areas of the field tested [6]. Other independent studies conducted on five separate indoor and outdoor synthetic turf systems at multiple college and professional athletic facilities confirmed the presence of staph on three of the five fields tested [7]. A Clinical Infectious Disease study in 2004 showed that players who have sustained turf burns are seven times more likely to acquire an infection compared to players without turf burns [8].

Dr. Gregory M. Colores, a Department of Biology professor at Central Michigan University, states that, "CMU has been helping in the development of test techniques appropriate for the detection and characterization of bacteria from synthetic turf. Using

PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) we have confirmed that there are detectable levels of bacteria that can be retrieved from synthetic turf surface samples."

With the presence of fluids such as sweat, blood, spit, vomit and urine or bird droppings, and high physical contact, sports played on synthetic turf fields could be an ideal place where the non-discriminatory staph bacteria can flourish or serve as a transmission point. Staph's proven ability to live on synthetic turf systems and in other athletic settings can lead to the conclusion that MRSA can survive here also. In fact, according to the New England Journal of Medicine, during the 2003 football season in which eight MRSA infections occurred among the Rams players, all of the infections developed at turf-abrasion sites [9].

Defending against MRSA

In the case of MRSA, prevention is key. The CDC offers the following tips for microbial safety:

- Keep your hands clean by washing then thoroughly with soap and water.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.
- Regularly clean surfaces of gym equipment with disinfectant before and after use.

The antimicrobial treatment TurfAide, a product of the Sports Antimicrobial System (SAS) from SportCoatings, Rochester Hills, MI, is being used now by the Minnesota Vikings, Cleveland Browns, Ohio State University, and Virginia Tech, and many others, as well as at the high school level. SAS is designed to inhibit and minimize microbial contamination on all sport surfaces for extended periods.

SAS is a family of treatments that are powered by the ÆGIS Microbe Shield technology.

EVERGREEN™ Turf Blankets... ...trusted around the world!

**"Results Outstanding...,
Could Not Believe..."**

wrote **Dann Daly**, Park Maintenance Supervisor,
Parks & Recr. Dept., North Smithfield, RI

- Earlier spring green-up
- Faster seed germination
- Deeper root development
- Delays dormancy in fall
- Ideal winter blanket
- 3 & 7 yr. warranty covers
- Best for quick turf repairs
- Available in any size

**Want to know more?
CALL TOLL FREE
1-800-387-5808**

**COVERMASTER™
COVERMASTER
COVERMASTER**

MASTERS IN THE ART OF SPORTS SURFACE COVERS

COVERMASTER INC., 100 WESTMORE DR. 11-D, REXDALE, ON, M9V 5C3 TEL 416-745-1811 FAX 416-742-6837



Covers for football and soccer fields are also readily available.



Covered...

Uncovered...



It works on the greenhouse principle, every time!

covermaster.com

E-MAIL: info@covermaster.com



Fill in 131 on reader service form or visit <http://oners.hotims.com/13974-131>

FACILITY & OPERATIONS

gy, which has been safely used in consumer goods and medical applications for more than 30 years. Registered with the EPA, the shield imparts an invisible layer of antimicrobial protection that will not leach any chemicals or heavy metals into the environment and will not rub off onto a player's skin.

"Using the SAS system is like having an airbag in your car," said Mike Goforth, Director of Athletics Training at Virginia Tech "You may not be able to see it, but the parents of our athletes can feel confident knowing that their sons and daughters are training in safe facilities when they come to Virginia Tech."

On a microscopic level, the SAS treatments bond to the surface and create a matrix of positively charged sword-shaped molecules. Upon direct contact, the membrane of the microbe is physically ruptured by a stabbing and electrocution action. Since the treatment is not consumed or dissipated, it remains active 24/7. ■

Sources:

1. "MRSA In Healthcare Settings". Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. October 6, 2006.
2. "The Burden of Staphylococcus aureus Infections on Hospitals in the United States: An Analysis of the 2000 and 2001 Nationwide Inpatient Sample Database." Gary A. Noskin, MD. Archives of Internal Medicine. Vol. 165 No. 15, Aug 8/22, 2005.
3. "Menace in the Locker Room". Phil Gross. Sports Illustrated. February 23, 2006.
4. "Healthbeat: How to stop Staph infections". Jen Christensen. Hoi News. January 4, 2006.
5. "Survival of Enterococci and Staphylococci on Hospital Fabrics and Plastic." Alice N. Neely and Matthew P. Maley. Journal of Clinical Microbiology. Feb. 2000, p. 724-726, Vol. 38, No. 2.
6. "Microbial Retrievals from an Indoor Synthetic Field at the University Field # 8." White IEQ Consulting, LLC.
7. "Microbial Analysis of Synthetic Turf". January 2007.
8. "A High-Morbidity Outbreak of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus among Players on a College Football Team, Facilitated by Cosmetic Body Shaving and Turf Burns." Elizabeth M. Begier. Clinical Infectious Diseases. Nov. 15, 2004.
9. "A Clone of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus among Professional Football Players". Sophia V. Kazakova. The New England Journal of Medicine. Volume 352:468-475. Feb. 3, 2005.

SANITIZE IT ALL IN MINUTES



The SaniTurf by Broyhill will have you sanitizing large areas quickly with a 30' spray swath at 40 psi. SaniTurf is designed to work with TurfStat Pro™ and is ideal for synthetic athletic surfaces, artificial turf, all purpose flooring and indoor field house turf.

SaniTurf

Broyhill
when only perfection will do

800.228.1003, ext. 34 • sales@broyhill.com • www.broyhill.com

THE GAME MUST GO ON.

An Airfield is the ultimate sports turf drainage system whether you are playing on natural or artificial turf.

Artificial Turf Benefits:

- Drains remarkably faster
- Reduces installation time
- Reduces G-Max
- Eliminates rubber migration
- Eliminates standing water
- Strong enough for vehicles
- Below entire playing surface
- Air void for heating and cooling
- Allows flushing and sanitizing
- Maintains level playing surface

Natural Turf Benefits:

- Drains remarkably faster
- Reduces installation time
- Reduces irrigation requirements
- Extends playing season
- Eliminates standing water
- Reduces maintenance costs
- Below entire playing surface
- Superior perched water table
- Greater root mass
- Gas circulation through soil



405.359.3775
airfieldsystems.com

Fill in 132 on reader service form or visit <http://oners.hotims.com/13974-132>

Fill in 133 on reader service form or visit <http://oners.hotims.com/13974-133>