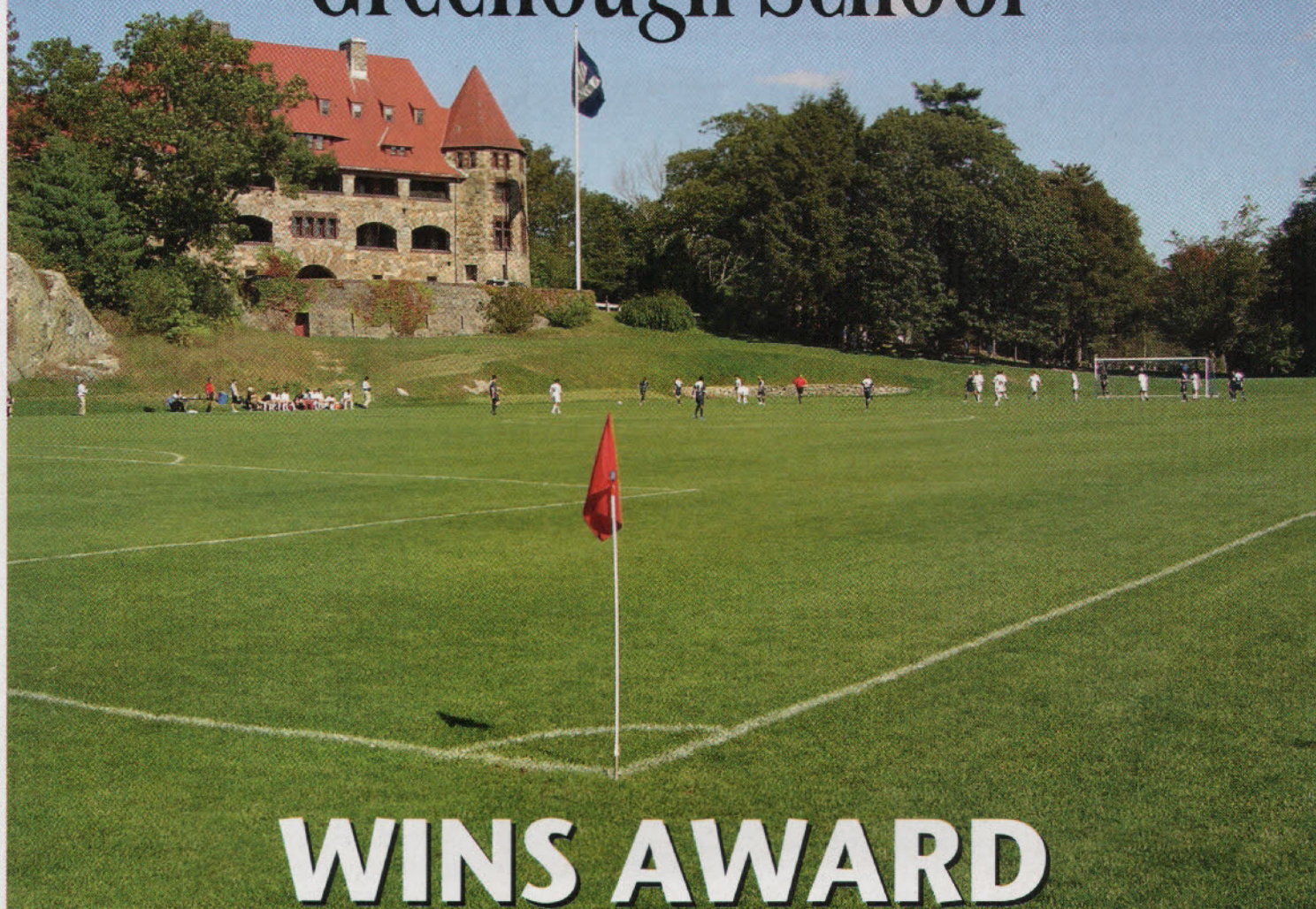


Greene Field at Noble and Greenough School



WINS AWARD

The 2006 STMA School/Parks Soccer Field of the Year belongs to Greene Field at Noble and Greenough School in Dedham, MA. Peter Thibeault and Joe Caseault lead the turf management team there.

Here are some highlights from their award-

winning entry:

"Seeding is done constantly. We employ several methods. One is to broadcast seed throughout thinning areas and then let the kids' cleats help make good seed-to-soil contact. We also use a divot mix and seed combination for very worn areas in front of goals and benches. The divot mix is a blend of sand, peat, and organics.

"We aerate every 3-4 weeks, depending on the time of year and type of aeration, we will broadcast seed afterward. If compaction is high, such as after graduation ceremonies, we verti-drain 6-8 inches and, depending on thatch layer, we may topdress with a 2-mil sand. Before topdressing we broadcast seed over high-traffic areas at a rate of 14-20 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

"We use three different seed mixes depending on soil temperature and activity on the field. A 50/50 mix of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass is used throughout the season, while a 70/30 mix of perennial rye and bluegrass is used early and late in the season. A triple perennial ryegrass is used very early and late in the season and in less active periods. We sometimes pre-germinate seed to get quicker establishment."

Historic backdrop

Greene Field's backdrop is castle, built by in the 1800's. Its builder envisioned green space along the Charles River and this area continues to be green, with four other fields also occupying the space. The field hosts spring baseball as well as fall soccer, summer day camps, and other school events, including the important Jimmy Fund Picnic.

Greene Field is the low point for all these fields, as well as the indoor athletic center, and has drainage built into the corners. The field may host many practices in a day, so grid spaces were made alongside it for drills such as speed and agility work. A goal area is also available for goalie workouts off the field. The grids are 5 x 5 yards and stacked together for side-by-side or lengthwise drills.

SportsTurf: What channels of communication do you use to reach coaches and users of your facility? Any tips on getting good cooperation?

Thibeault: We are very fortunate to have many channels of communication. The most important is our recordkeeping on Monday mornings. We use spreadsheets to track a lot of info on all fields. We track soil temperatures, percentage of turf cover, events, mowing height, soil moisture percentage, compaction levels among others.

I give this spreadsheet to the director of facilities, who then meets with the athletic director to draw up the week's schedule. We have also come up with a newsletter called "Joe and Pete's Sportsturf Rules" (see

sidebar). This newsletter, given to all coaches and users, contains some basic info on turf and some other info such as how many acres, how much paint it takes to paint the fields, types of grass varieties and also gives some tips on field use, for example, moving nets using grid spaces for cone drills.

We are also fortunate that most coaches are teachers so we can catch up with them through the day and ask if there is anything else we can do. With these three methods we have had great success in educating our users to have a greater respect for their playing surfaces. All I can say is patience is key and you need to be consistent with what you are telling them.

SportsTurf: How did you get started in turf management? What was your first sports turf job?

Thibeault: I have always been fascinated with nice landscapes, even as a kid cutting my parent's lawn and raking leaves. Fifteen years ago I decided outdoors was where I needed to be so I left the office rat race and went to work for Trugreen Chemlawn where my obsession with nice turf began. Later I moved to a landscape company where I had the opportunity to work on sports fields and that is where it all started.

SportsTurf: How do you balance your family life with work demands?

Thibeault: This is an epic struggle that I think the most appropriate way to answer is "Less sleep, more coffee." Fortunately there are



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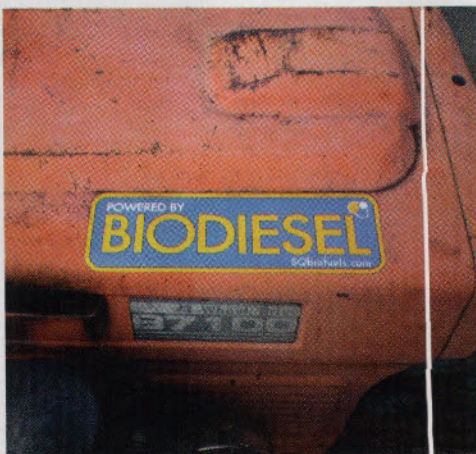
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SportsTurf: Do you plan any adjustments, large or small, to your maintenance plan in 2008? Did you purchase any new equipment or product for this year?

Thibeault: There are always adjustments in the maintenance plan. Our New England weather is constantly changing and so is our plan to keep the athletes safe. As always we plan to use less water and grow more dense strong turf.

We had to make an emergency purchase last fall; 2 weeks before preseason the Ransomes AR250 made its last cut in a cloud of smoke, which left us in quite the pickle. Three days before preseason started our new Toro Sidewinder was delivered—what an awesome machine, it helped get our fields back in shape for preseason with a day to spare.

SportsTurf: What's the greatest pleasure you derive from your job? What's the biggest headache?

Thibeault: I get the greatest pleasure knowing that I gave our athletes the safest surface they could have for that day. The biggest headache is Canadian geese!

SportsTurf: How do you see the sports turf manager's job changing in the future?

Thibeault: It is changing constantly with restrictions to what, where, and how we do things. I can see us being looked upon for education and also as being stewards to our environment, after all our crop does eat up a lot of the CO2 other things put out. ■

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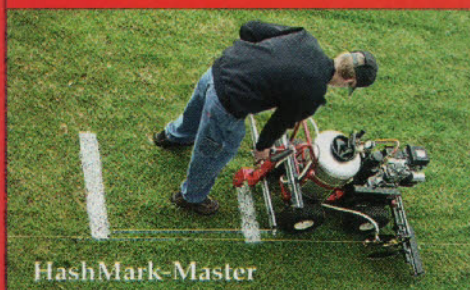


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Coaches' handout

Peter Thibeault and Joe Caseault have also developed a trifold handout for coaches that helps educate them on the proper use of space to help prevent the usual wear areas. They constantly work with users to help build a team atmosphere and so they can better understand how the space will be used and how we might prepare better for that. The trifolded information given to coaches is called "Joe & Pete's Sportsturf Rules." Its contents include a section on "Sportsturf Etiquette":

- Replace your divots
- Move goals off playing surface at end of session
- Do stretching, warm-up, and quickness drills in different areas
- Rotate warm-ups daily to different areas
- Try to practice in areas where normal play doesn't occur
- Use practice areas

Another section is titled "Do's and Don'ts":

- Do take a moment to enjoy the turf
- Don't stand there too long
- Do use the practice areas for drills that require being in one place for an extended time
- Don't continue to sue that same spot for that same drill
- Do feel free to move nets around to help reduce wear in goals and center of field
- Don't leave nets out in the middle of the playing surface
- Do leave the field picked up of trash and equipment
- Don't worry about the plugs, they are not goose droppings