



Colleyville, Crawford champs in Schools/Parks Soccer category

Seated in front middle: Chris McCord; from left to right in the back, Mike Almy, Joey Newman, Troy Crawford, and Steve Strickert.

The Pleasant Run soccer fields in Colleyville, TX, and parks supervisor Troy Crawford were presented STMA's 2008 Schools/Parks Soccer Field of the Year Award earlier this year. This complex, built in 1992, has about 570,000 square feet (about 13 acres) and features Tifway 419 bermudagrass.

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

Crawford: We communicate via e-mail and phone like most organizations. If there are concerns from coaches or anyone in the youth sports organizations we will meet face to face to make sure their concerns are heard and we understand them fully.

As for getting good cooperation, it is just like any relationship, it requires some give and take. We will do everything in our power to

try and get games played. So when we cancel games due to weather, all the youth organizations are understanding and respectful of our decision. In order to increase cooperation with the youth sports organizations we have sent out surveys asking what they like and what changes they would like to see. We also have them rate us on our customer service and attentiveness to their needs.

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

Crawford: I was kind of lucky with how I got started in the turf management field. I was working for my brother, who is a graphic artist and he was designing logos and mailers for Jim Anglea, who at the time he owned Diamond Pro. During one of our meetings, Jim asked me if I'd like to come and work on the Texas Rangers grounds crew. I thought it would be fun and interesting so I agreed and the rest, as they say, is history. From there I was privileged enough to help construct the

field of The Ball Park in Arlington and I was then rewarded with a full time job.

I have had the opportunity to be the assistant at a few facilities and have even worked in the golf side. At each stop I learned a lot from my superiors which helped me develop my turf program here with the city of Colleyville. One thing I have learned over the years is I don't have all the answers but I do have a lot of good friends in the industry who are always willing to give me advice and direction when I call.

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

Crawford: The balance between family life and work is a tough one. I put my heart and soul into both, but my family is my number one priority. My wife is always there to support me and is very understanding when it comes to working late or working weekends. There were many times when I worked with the Rangers and the Astros that she would come up and watch the game with me so we

could spend some "quality time" together.

In my present position I have an extremely knowledgeable crew that I can delegate duties to, which allows me to not have to always be on the fields or at the office. With a knowledgeable crew and an understanding wife the balance has become easier to manage.

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

Crawford: We have made a few adjustments to our fertilization program this year. With the price of fertilizer going up so much we have found it more cost effective to eliminate some granular applications and substitute in liquid fertilizer. The rest of the cultural program will remain the same.

We were fortunate to receive some new equipment for this year. We purchased a new

drag machine and two new utility carts, one of which will also serve as a sprayer. The support we receive from our city council, city manager and park and recreation administration is second to none. They do an outstanding job getting us new equipment to help us stay efficient.

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

Crawford: I love to create the "WOW" factor. We have the tools, the equipment and the desire to create beautiful parks and athletic fields. My crew looks at these fields and works them as if they were their very own. The pride and attention to detail is exhibited daily by the results that they produce. This "WOW" factor is created because all of the crew believe in the idea and consistently help each other to achieve our common goal.

One major challenge that we face is the

way our facility was designed and laid out. The layout limits us from being able to rotate field directions. With each area being surrounded by walkways the fields can only be laid out in one direction, so we can never change our heavy wear areas.

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

Crawford: I'm not sure what the future may hold for all sports turf managers. In our little part of the world, water conservation, or water management, has become a major concern. I'm sure this is the same throughout the rest of the country as well. I do feel that it is our responsibility as professional sports turf managers to help educate others in our area about the importance of water management. Without water there will be no future for natural turfgrass sports fields or the industry professionals who maintain and supply products in support of these fields. ■

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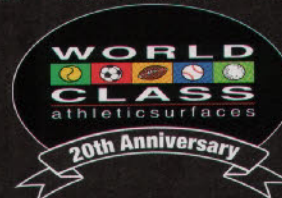


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FIELD OF THE YEAR

Pleasant Run monthly maintenance program

Fields are mowed every Monday, Wednesday and Friday; frequency decreases in the winter as weather dictates.

January

Spray Round-up and Trimec Classic on all dormant grass
Inspect irrigation system

February

Slice the playing surfaces one direction
Lay out fields for tournaments and paint
Move goals onto fields and secure
Spray Ferromec at 2 gal/acre
Spray Manage as needed
Inspect irrigation system

March

Slice the fields in one direction
Apply 24-4-12 25% SCU, 1% iron at 1 lb. of N per 1,000 sq. ft.
Spray wetting agent at a high rate
Re-paint fields every 10 days
Inspect irrigation system

April

Spray wetting agent at maintenance rate

Spray growth regulator
Apply 28-4-12 50% SCU, 4% iron at 1 lb. of N per 1,000 sq. ft.
Slice the playing surface in one direction
Re-paint fields every 10 days
Inspect irrigation system

May

Spray wetting agent at maintenance rate
Spray Ferromec at 2 gal/acre
Spray growth regulator
Spray for nutsedge as needed
Re-paint fields every 10 days
Lay out new fields for tournaments and move goals
Paint new fields for tournaments
Remove goals from fields
Verticut aggressively in four directions
Core aerify two directions
Vacuum all springs and cores
Scalp down all fields from 1 inch to ¾ inch
Sod any areas that need it
Topdress all fields with ¼ inch of sand
Drag in all the sand with cocoa mat
Roll all the fields one direction with 3-ton roller to help level
Inspect irrigation system

June

Spray wetting agent at maintenance rate
Spray growth regulator mixed with iron
Set up goals for soccer camps
Paint fields needed for camps
Water fields and let them recover
Inspect irrigation system

July

Fertilize fields with 24-4-10 50% SCU, 2% iron at 1 lb. per 1,000 sq. ft.
Spray wetting agent at maintenance rate
Spray growth regulator
Slice playing surfaces two directions
Inspect irrigation system

August

Spray wetting agent at maintenance rate
Spray Manage for nutsedge
Spray growth regulator
Spray Ferromec 15-0-0 6% iron
Core aerify all fields two directions
Lay out all fields
Paint all fields once every 10 days
Move all goals back onto fields and secure them
Inspect irrigation system

September

Apply K-Mg 7 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.
Apply 24-4-12 50% SCU 2% iron with trace elements 1 lb of N per 1,000 sq. ft.
Spray wetting agent at maintenance rate
Spray follow-up application of Manage
Spray fall pre-emergent on areas not overseeded
Re-paint fields every 10 days
Lightly verticut in one direction
Scalp grass from 1 in. to ¾ in.
Vacuum all grass and haul off site
Inspect irrigation system

October

Pull soil samples and send off for analysis
Spray all areas that are not going to be overseeded with Barricade
Overseed playing surface with 3-foot border
Spray all seed with wetting agent
Apply 15-15-15 50% SCU at a ½-lb. of N per 1,000 sq. ft.
Re-paint fields every 10 days
Inspect irrigation system

November

Re-paint fields every 10 days
Spray Ferromac 2 gal./acre to maintain color
Inspect irrigation system

December

Work on any projects associated with the fields
Service all equipment
Make sure welds on the goals are good, fix cracks
Inspect irrigation system

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