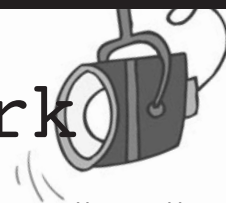




Mark Razum, Colorado Rockies, courtesy of Pro's Choice

Spotlight on Mark



Mark Razum recently finished his 13th season as the head groundskeeper for the Colorado Rockies and has been a groundskeeping professional for 30 years. He began his distinguished career as a member of the Cleveland Indians grounds crew, working under the direction of Marshall and Harold Bossard. He later moved to the Oakland Athletics, first tending to spring training fields and working his way up to head groundskeeper.

Mark has been recognized with numerous awards throughout his three decades in the business. Chief among them is the 1998 Turf/Grass Professional of the Year, an award presented by the Rocky Mountain Turf/Grass Association. This award was a direct result of his efforts during the '98 All Star Game, where Mark and his team created an elaborate star design cut into the grass of the field. During his tenure with Oakland players voted his field the best in the American League for three straight seasons (1992-1994).

Mark is passionate about his fields and is constantly looking for ways to improve them. That being said, he knows that players need a consistent playing surface. He balances the need for improvement and consistency by experimenting with products on little league or community fields before implementing on Coors Field.

Each March Razum prepares his field, starting with leveling the infield dirt and adding soil conditioners to give him a solid base he can maintain through the season. He says Colorado's volatile weather presents a big challenge and he relies on such products to help get the

field back to playable condition as quickly as possible, as well as when the climate becomes dry in the summer and the dirt needs moisture.

Razum says uniform conditioner particle size keeps his field consistent. "Our players are counting on us to deliver a consistent playing surface every time they step onto the field. We make it our goal for the field to play the same on opening day through the playoffs. The grounds crew's contribution is to worry about the field, so the players can concentrate on the game," he says. "Last season, when the team set two major league records for the lowest number of errors and highest team fielding percent, I know the crew directly contributed by providing our team with a consistent playing surface they were familiar with and could trust."

Razum says young turf managers should keep learning as much as they can from people in the business. "I started when I was 17 on a crew in Cleveland and absorbed all the knowledge I could from those around me," he says. "Remember that your fields are your calling card. People will see your fields and comment on them. Scouts look at fields and make recommendations on what they see."

"As far as products go—experiment with the options available. If you have access to high school or little league fields, see what works on those before implementing for larger stadiums. Get opinions from players and coaches. That said, be sure to be consistent; players need to know they can trust that the field will play the same every game," says Razum. ■

Spotlight: illustration courtesy of istockphoto.com.

New groomer machine

The PR72 Pro Groomer from Infield-Drage.com is a multi-function machine that that will save you labor when it counts the most. It restores, maintains and keeps infields level, and well-groomed. Levels by cutting off high spots and filling in low areas. Breaks up hard, compacted surfaces. Saves labor, reduces water puddling, and controls weeds. No need for hydraulics or 3 pt. hitch. Pull with a variety of machines. No tools needed to adjust. Available with manual or electric lift.

Heying Company, infield-drag.com

