

FIELD OF THE YEAR

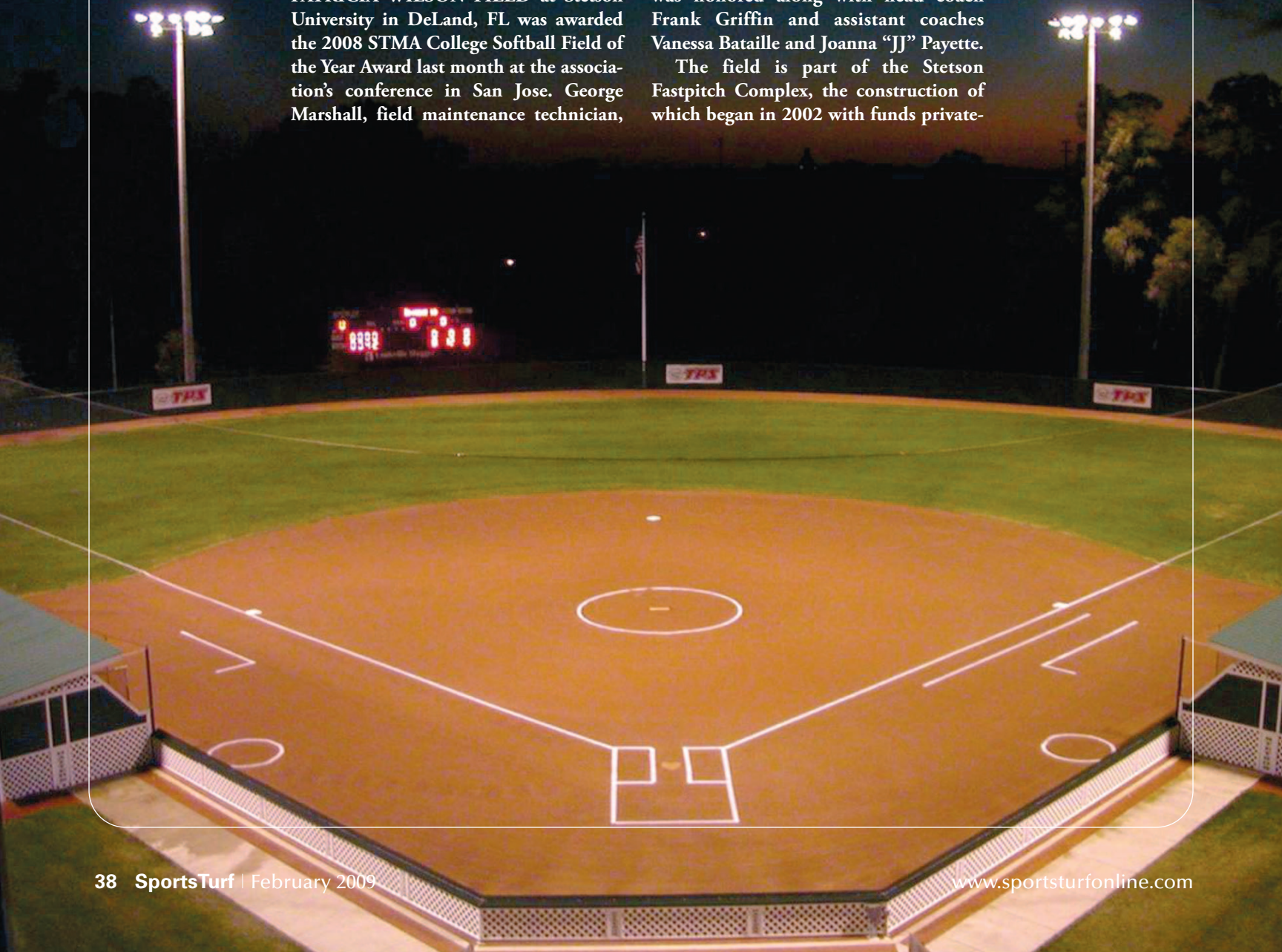


Hatters earn Softball Field of the Year crown

PATRICIA WILSON FIELD at Stetson University in DeLand, FL was awarded the 2008 STMA College Softball Field of the Year Award last month at the association's conference in San Jose. George Marshall, field maintenance technician,

was honored along with head coach Frank Griffin and assistant coaches Vanessa Bataille and Joanna "JJ" Payette.

The field is part of the Stetson Fastpitch Complex, the construction of which began in 2002 with funds private-



ly raised. Coach Griffin personally designed and built the backstop and dugouts; in 2003 TV-quality lighting and a concession stand were added, and in 2007 the press box and grandstand were completed in time to host the Atlantic Sun Conference tournament.

The 419 bermudagrass field hosted nearly 600 hours of play in 2008; high school tournaments, camps and clinics added another 164 hours of play. Marshall overseeds in late November or early December after a preemergent application, typically using 500 pounds of Eagle Supreme perennial ryegrass for the entire complex.

Marshall, formerly the grounds field supervisor for Stetson's entire campus (180 acres), now works exclusively at the softball complex, which includes painting, mowing, verticutting, aerating, topdressing, irrigation repairs, spraying, and infield skin maintenance.

Due to drought conditions the past few years, Marshall has had to deal with the rationing of reclaimed water by the city. During the main season, February to May, it was being turned off twice a week for nearly 40 hours total, making it a challenge to coordinate herbicide, insecticide, and fertilizer applications around practice and games. Marshall sometimes had to wet down areas before painting as well.

SportsTurf: What's most important piece of equipment or product in your program?

Marshall: I use almost all Toro equipment. For our turf, the most important piece of equipment is the Toro Aeravator, and I use a Toro Sand Pro with a Rahn grooming bar for our infield. I find both pieces of equipment highly effective for the overall appearance of the field.

ST: What are your biggest challenges and how do you approach them?

Marshall: The biggest challenge is maintaining the field because of heavy use during the season. We may have up to one hundred games in addition to four months of everyday practice on the field. Constant care is a must including fertilization, aerating, mowing and irrigating.

ST: How do you communicate with management and field users?

Marshall: Because we have a small staff made up of our coaching staff and me, communication is facilitated. We have a common goal of giving the best product we can to whomever uses our



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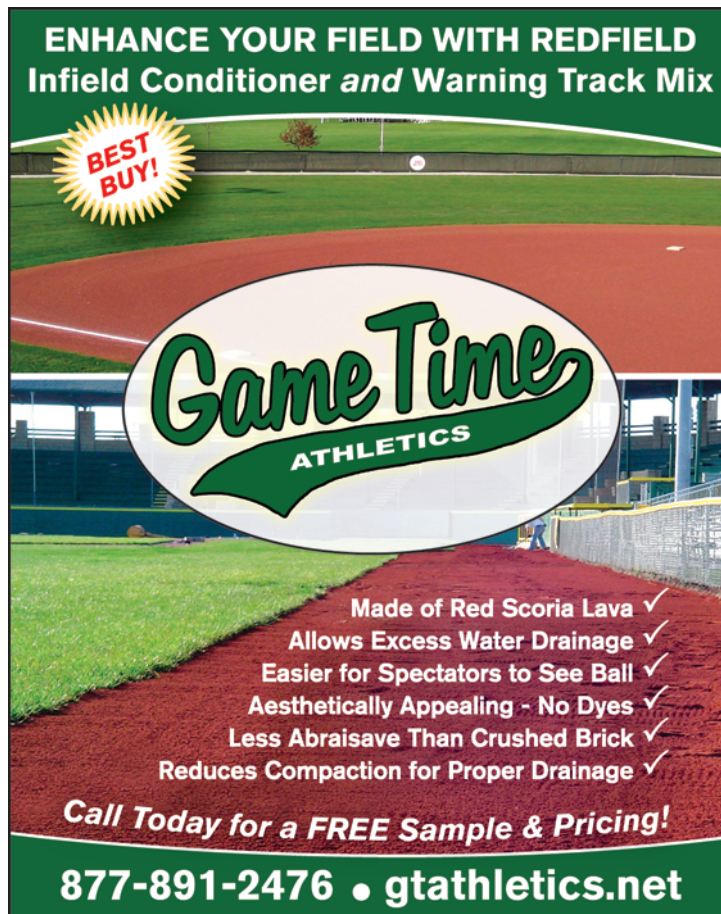
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field, and users are usually more than cooperative in return. Therefore, communication with field users is very smooth.

ST: What's the best piece of turf management advice you've ever received?

Marshall: The best advice I ever received is that bermudagrass grows by the inch, and is killed by the foot, from Floyd Perry. It needs rest.

ST: How do you keep your "engine" charged to do your best every day?

Marshall: When you have a beautiful facility like ours, a supportive staff, and an athletic director who is behind your program, coming to work with enthusiasm each day is easy. Keeping the facility looking good is just something I expect from myself.

ST: How do you balance work and personal life?

Marshall: I am a 25-year retired veteran of the Fire Service. Strange hours are something my family always had to adjust too. Working unusual hours is nothing new. Our program's philosophy is that God and family come first, education second, and softball third. Because of that, the balance just works out. ■

The STMA Field of the Year Awards Program has been made possible through the generous support of its sponsors. They include Carolina Green; Covermaster; Hunter Industries; Surface Athletics/Profile Products; Scotts Turf Seed; and World Class Athletic Surfaces.



Patricia Wilson Field, Stetson University—Maintenance Schedule

Maintenance	Frequency	Details
Aeration	3x/year	Late spring, summer, early fall
Fertilization	Monthly	Use various mixtures depending on growth and condition of grass desired. Walk-behind rotary spreader is used. Mixtures include: 24-2-11 15-3-15 with Ronstar 21-0-0 22-2-11
Irrigation	Average 4-5x/week	Varies with weather and temperature conditions; average 30-60 minutes per zone using reclamation water. Repairs made in-house as necessary.
Mowing	3x/week	2x/week in slower growing seasons
Overseeding	Annually	Usually late November to early December; approximately 500 pounds of Eagle Supreme perennial rye is used on entire complex; 275 pounds on outfield. Walk-behind drop spreader is used.
Spraying	As needed	As needed for insects or worms; 2x/year with pre-emergent. Post-emergent, middle of fall before overseeding, late spring to eliminate rye for transition. 50-gallon pull behind boom sprayer and 3-gallon backpack sprayer are used.
Tilling & Laser Grading	Annually	1x/year in December (contracted out)
Topdressing	Annually	1x/year in summer
Verticutting	Annually	1x/year in summer