

Tibbetts, UNE win in new Sporting Grounds category



THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND'S FIELD HOCKEY AND WOMEN'S LACROSSE FIELD won the 2008 STMA College Sporting Grounds Field of the Year Award. Lance Tibbetts, CSFM, led the team to victory, ably assisted by Richard Burgess, Gary Jenness, and Phil Taschereau for the field in Biddeford, ME.

The field was built 11 years ago and sees well over 550 hours of action yearly. It features a wide variety of grasses but the two main species are ryegrass (Notable and Prototype mainly) and bluegrass (Award and Corsair). The field is 70% sand, 20% loam and 10% organics. Drainage is supplied by 4-inch perforated pipes, with 10 rows running the length of the field.

Tibbetts says the game and practice schedules and weather dictate if he uses a blend of ryegrass or a mixture of rye and bluegrass for overseeding. He tries to overseed every time he aerates, applying no less than 3 pounds per 1,000/sq.ft.; depending on wear he might go to a higher rate, he says.

Preparing for spring lacrosse last year was a challenge after the campus in Maine received more than 100 inches of snow from December through mid-March. After removing the snow, Tibbetts and crew spread Turface to help melt ice but battled conditions all spring to make the surface safe and playable for both sports as field hockey has a spring practice session.

The staff is also responsible for 88 landscaped acres on campus, as well as parking lots, sidewalks and snow removal. So in between spreading more than 200 tons of pine bark in mulch beds, aerating and overseeding continued in the spring. The challenge remains to balance care for common areas while ensuring quality, competitive-level ball fields.

Tibbetts says the weather continued not to cooperate throughout the year, with 23 inches of rain May through August, and in once instance, a tornado warning, which you don't see too often in Maine.

ST: How has the recession affected your operations?

Tibbetts: The recession really has not affected the grounds side of the University's operation. I don't see any major equipment purchases happening soon, but when it comes to ordering product and supplies we are still in pretty good shape. We have a great mechanic, John Hicks, who

» LEFT TO RIGHT: Lance Tibbetts, CSFM, Gary Jenness, Phil Taschereau, and Richard Burgess



keeps all equipment and fleet vehicles running and that saves us a lot of money, time and headaches.

ST: What changes to your maintenance plans are you expecting to make this year, if any?

Tibbetts: The maintenance plan is the same plan I have been using since 1998. Any alterations to the plan are dictated by Mother Nature.

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

Tibbetts: Randy Peters once told me that any turf damage after hours is called job security. I used to get really wound up over after hours damage, by cars, older user groups, etc. I have come to the point in my career that I can honestly leave work at work. Took a long time to get to this point, but it feels good.

ST: How do you balance your work and personal time?

Tibbetts: Family first!! There should be no questioning this by any member of the STMA. When it is all said and done and you are ready to retire, your families are the ones that are going to be there. There have been times I have done 30-hour shifts at work, but to ensure the home front is okay, I will take time off to spend time with the family. It can be as simple as bringing the kids to school before I go into work. My family knows the

nature of sports turf management—spring and fall are busy.

ST: Most field hockey is played on synthetic turf. Do you do anything out of the ordinary to help keep your surface good for this sport?

Tibbetts: We have to be aggressive with our fields. The field hockey field also has women's lacrosse on it in the spring. Usually they are on it early March. Once lacrosse is over we start to repair our goal areas. We will aerate and seed the field heavily up to about late July. After that we sneak in to aerate when the team is away. We purchased a Toro 5200 Reelmaster that made the biggest difference to that field. Before the Reelmaster we were mowing with a 72-inch rotary and keeping the field at 2 inches. Now we have the field down to 1.25 and the Blue/Rye field is like a tight knit carpet.

ST: How has being a Certified Sports Field Manager helped your career?

Tibbetts: When my current position was advertised, being a CSFM was part of the criteria. Being a CSFM has allowed me to be part of a great University. I would like to see more employers seek out CSFMs when positions become available. I am the same guy that started out in sports turf in 1998. I just have CSFM after my name now. ■

Monthly maintenance

▷ February/March

Remove snow if needed
Apply Turface to goals and any ice areas
Paint field for lacrosse

▷ April

Keep fields playable as frost comes up
Take soil samples
Paint lacrosse lines 3x/week
Aerate to correct footprints
Fertilize late in month with 19-0-6 with Dimension
Mow as needed at least 2 inches with rotary mower

▷ May

Mow M-W-F at 2 inches with rotary
Double aerate entire field late in month
Fertilize with 32-0-10 1 lb N/1000 sq. ft.
Remove and store goals

▷ June

Mow M-W-F at 2 inches with rotary
Aerate field with focus on worn goalmouths
Overseed with 50% ryegrass, 50% bluegrass at 3 lbs./1000 sq. ft.
Fertilize with 24-0-5 with Talstar, 1 lb./1000 sq. ft.
Line field for Field Hockey camp

▷ July

Start lowering height of cut with 5200 Reelmaster M-W-F
Double aerate and leave plugs
Topdress with 50 tons of washed Mason's sand
Overseed with 70% bluegrass, 30% ryegrass at 3 lbs./1000 sq. ft.
Fertilize with 24-0-8 with Merit, 1 lb./1000 sq. ft.

▷ August

Get turf height to 1.25 inches, mow as needed with Reelmaster
Fertilize with 32-0-10 at 1 lb./1000 sq. ft.
Put down field hockey lines; paint Tuesdays and Fridays
Huck and Hope grass seed in goalmouths

▷ September

Mow as needed, 1.25 inches with Reelmaster
Aerate one way
Apply Eagleblend ryegrass by hand to worn spots
Fertilize with 29-0-12 at 1 lb./1000 sq. ft.
Paint lines on Tuesdays and Fridays or as needed

▷ October

Mow as needed at 1.25 inches
Paint Tuesdays and Fridays or as needed
Do late season fertilization if timing is right
Blow out irrigation lines (late October)
If season is over remove and store goals
If season is not over, use Turface to keep field safe
Field starts to go dormant

▷ November

Lay out lacrosse lines in blue for spring
Make any repairs to low spots
Apply limestone per soil sample
Aerate and leave plugs

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