



Eric Schroder
Editor

eschroder@m2media360.com

717-805-4197

STMA members represent in MiLB awards

NINE SPORTS TURF MANAGERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS are among the groundskeepers honored by their respective minor leagues with post-season awards. Most winners are selected through votes by managers, coaches and umpires. Each of the 16 minor leagues select a winner and all winners are invited to enter the STMA Minor League Sports Turf Managers of the Year Awards that CEO Kim Heck presents at the Baseball Winter Meetings each December. The STMA Awards Committee judges the entries based on the fields performance, cultural practices, game day routine, field use, staffing, budgeting, resources, etc. There are four winners, one each from AAA, AA, A, and Short Season/Rookie leagues.

Tom Nielsen of the Louisville Bats was voted International League Sports Turf Manager of the Year. Voted on by International League field managers and pitching coaches, the award was established in 1992 to recognize outstanding effort and excellence in the care and maintenance of a baseball playing surface.

Corpus Christi Hooks field superintendent Garrett Reddehase was named the Texas League's Turf Manager of the Year in voting by league managers and umpires. Reddehase, who has been involved with the grounds crew at Whataburger Field since the building of the facility in 2005, has been the club's head groundskeeper since October 2007.

Reno Aces grounds manager Eric Blanton was the Pacific Coast League winner. "It is a great honor to receive this award," Blanton said. "My crews, both day and night, deserve much of the credit, as I would not have been able to maintain at such a high level without their hard work and dedication."

Dan "Dirt" Douglas of the Reading Phillies was named the winner of the 2009 Eastern League Diamond Pro Sports Field Manager of the Year Award for the fourth time in his career, as voted on by EL field staff and umpires.

In the Carolina League there was a tie between Kinston's Stephen Watson and Myrtle Beach's Chris Ball, while in the California League Peter Hayes of the Lake Elsinore Storm won the award. Opie Cheek was named tops in the Florida State League for his work with the Clearwater Threshers, and Brennan Prestley of the Spokane Indians won in the Northwest League.

SAFE Jacobsen golf tournament returns

The SAFE Jacobsen Golf Tournament, one of the highlights of the STMA Conference every year, returns to Greg Norman's ChampionsGate, world Headquarters of David Leadbetter Golf Academy. This time around we'll play the National Course, a more traditional American layout; in 2006, the event was played on the links-style International Course at ChampionsGate. The course is located just 10 minutes from the STMA Conference headquarters hotel. Proceeds from the tournament benefit the SAFE Foundation. A great way to kickoff your time in Orlando.

SportsTurf

1030 W. Higgins Road
Suite 230
Park Ridge, IL 60068
Phone 847-720-5600
Fax 847-720-5601

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STMA Office

805 New Hampshire Suite E

Lawrence, Ks 66044

Phone 800-323-3875 Fax 800-366-0391

Email STMAinfo@STMA.org

www.STMA.org

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