Ask a CSFM ▶ Mark Frever, CSFM, Director of Grounds, Albion College, MI

Benefits of certification verified

Editor’s note: This is the last of six installments on how becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) can benefit turf managers professionally as well as improve their facilities.

How did you prepare for the CSFM Exam?

Frever: I studied notes, tests and books, preserved in my bookcase, from my turfgrass management courses at Michigan State University. Other study sources, saved in my bookcase, are conference proceedings and sports turf topics, both in periodical form. Looking over test guides and practicing math examples provided by the STMA and the State of Michigan, for the pesticide applicators test, was very helpful. In some cases, especially math, I searched for more material with the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) at the MSU Libraries. A quick link is provided on your STMA member page.

How did you approach your employer to support your certification, both financially and in the time needed to prepare for the exam?

Frever: The support for the STMA from my employer was my number one priority when I first interviewed and taking the CSFM examine was established as a mutual goal. It was never a matter of approaching my employer because my employer is engaged in my participation with the local STMA chapter and national conferences. My employer understands what I expect to learn at events when I requested financial support and would receive a debriefing of my experiences shortly after I return. Even more employer engagement can be developed, if you can host a local STMA event and invite key people from your organization to attend.

Why did you decide to pursue certification?

Frever: The four letters, CSFM, identifies you as a member of an international community of professionals committed to a common goal. I wanted to be a part of that community and promote our profession.

How has certification helped your career?

Frever: The certification has opened up opportunities, like this, to share experiences. It also has identified me with local coaches, parents, faculty, administrators, and fellow groundkeepers as a person to call for advice. I enjoy spreading the gospel of safe athletic fields and I take every chance to speak with people willing to learn.