

F.O.Y.

Field of the Year



San Diego Jewish Academy wins Schools/Park Soccer Field of the Year

THE WINNING FIELD, tended to by Joshua Koss, is the centerpiece to San Diego Jewish Academy (SDJA)'s 22-acre campus, which sits on a bluff at the intersection of Interstate 5 and highway 56 in the Carmel Valley area of north San Diego County. The school also boasts a view of the Pacific Ocean, which is less than 2 miles from campus at Torrey Pines State Beach.

The field was contracted out to a landscape maintenance contractor after its construction in 2005, according to Koss, who was hired in September 2008 after that contractor was dismissed. "Actual man hours and costs that were incurred for their services from January-August 2008 were unavailable to me," Koss wrote in his entry. "We were fortunate not to encounter any major problems that compromised the appearance or playability of the field. Traffic control is and was our biggest struggle. All in all, we had a great year keeping the turf where it needed to be to withstand the wear and tear of the school year.

Future entrants might take note of how Koss handled the photos. "Additionally, the digital photography class at SDJA assisted in preparing the STMA application. I shared the photography guidelines in the application with the class instructor and he then developed a lesson plan and class assignment. The students shot the field during two 90-minute periods. It proved to be a challenging assignment for the instructor and his students alike. The results were positive and some of the student's pictures are included with this application," Koss wrote.

SPORTSTURF: What changes did you make to your maintenance plan this year, if any?

KOSS: Not many. I've tweaked my fertility program somewhat to correct nutrient deficiencies. I plan on increasing the seeding rate and seeding earlier in the fall this year. I decreased my overseeding rate last fall to promote the bermudagrass, but didn't see the weather necessary to really

get it running before preseason football started and my HOC was raised.

San Diego's coast does not provide weather conditions during the early summer months to allow a complete and successful transition to and vigorous growth of bermudagrass. This summer we did not see sunny skies and soil temps above 70 until August. I try to do the right thing agronomically for the bermuda, but because of the ambient climate, I have been tempted to grow ryegrass year round. I also have plans to top level the entire field with approximately 180 tons of sand at the conclusion of the school year. The field has not been topdressed since its construction in 2005.



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

KOSS: I have worked for many talented head groundskeepers and golf course superintendents. Patrick Coakley, CSFM once told me as we were walking off the field after pre-game in Myrtle Beach, "Leave no questions. At game time, you always want to leave the field in a condition where nobody will have any question about it."

It's been almost 10 years since my time as Pat's assistant with the Pelicans.

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

KOSS: I have no problem balancing my work and personal time. In fact, this question would be more accurately asked "How do I balance my personal and work time?" SDJA's campus is closed on all Jewish holidays. When the campus is closed I am not allowed to work. The campus is also closed on Fridays at sundown to Saturday at sundown to observe Shabbat (Jewish Sabbath). For instance, there are 22 Jewish holidays this school year that fall within the work week. Add on top of that eight traditional holidays, two weeks for Christmas break and two weeks for spring break.

When the campus is open on traditional holidays, the teams are training on the field. I have a lot of personal time

away from the field, a lot more than most in this industry I recognize that and take advantage of it. Although, due to this schedule the field sometimes suffers because I struggle finding time to keep up with its needs.

ST: How much input do you have regarding administration decisions? How do you establish good working relationships with both supervisors and end users?

KOSS: When the decision is field related, I have a lot of input. Not one of my requests has been denied during my tenure here, and I am grateful for that. Membership in the STMA and this Field of the Year Award help my requests get fulfilled. It brings credibility to my profession and national recognition to my operation.

Our manpower at SDJA is limited. It is important to keep in mind how my operation impacts others. I try to operate without needing much assistance. My job is to protect the investment made in the field and provide a safe and playable surface for our student athletes. Consistent education and communication have built and continue to build good working relationships with supervisors and administrators.

Relationships with end users continue to be a challenge. First and foremost, I always have to keep our institution's goals in mind: safety and revenue. Secondly, I have to keep the end user group's goal in mind: a safe and playable surface. These user groups are the customer and I try my best to treat them as such.

More importantly, I have to communicate my goal: maintaining the condition of the field. I have to make sure the maintenance demands for the field never exceed what is feasible for me to accomplish with the tools, time and labor (myself) that I have. I am fortunate that most facility rental requests end up on my desk for approval before a contract is signed. There are many occasions where a request comes in and I deny it because the field would need to be aerated after the event. I budget my aerations around the SDJA athletic schedule and not outside rentals.



SDJA FIELD MONTHLY MAINTENANCE AND FERTILITY PROGRAM

AUGUST

Football season begins
Slice (Fracture Tine) field in three directions
Fertilize 19-6-12 w/ 0.2% Mn @ 1 lb.N/1000 sq. ft.
Apply wetting agent to localized dry spots if needed
Hand water localized dry spots as needed

SEPTEMBER

Fertilize 19-6-12 w/ 0.2% Mn @ 1lb.N/ 1000 sq. ft
Raise HOC to 1 ¼" prior to first home game
Mow on game days and every other non-game day
Apply wetting agent to localized dry spots if needed
Topdress wear areas as needed
Hand water localized dry spots as needed

OCTOBER

Fertilize 21-7-14 Slow Release @ 1lb.N/ 1000 ft.
Topdress wear areas and poke thoroughly with pitchfork
Mow on game days and every other non-game day
Fill divots after every game

NOVEMBER

Football season concludes; soccer seasons begin
Aeravate field in two directions
Overseed field with Perennial Ryegrass
Fertilize 21-7-14 Slow Release @ 1 lb.N/1000 sq. ft.
Topdress wear areas and poke thoroughly with pitchfork
Mow on game days (double cut) and every other non-game day (single)
Fill divots after every game

DECEMBER

Fertilize 21-7-14 Slow Release @ 1 lb.N/1000 sq. ft.
Topdress wear areas and poke thoroughly with pitchfork
Mow on game days (double cut) and every other non-game day (single)
Fill divots after every game

JANUARY

Fertilize 21-7-14 Slow Release @ 1 lb.N/1000 sq. ft.
Topdress wear areas and poke thoroughly with pitchfork
Mow on game days (double cut) and every other non-game day (single)
Fill divots after every game

FEBRUARY

Fertilize 21-7-14 Slow Release @ 1lb. N/1000 sq. ft.
Topdress wear areas and poke thoroughly with pitchfork
Mow on game days (double cut) and every other non-game day (single)
Fill divots after every game

MARCH

Soccer season concludes and baseball and softball seasons begin
Pop Warner youth football season begins
Aeravate field in three directions
Topdress wear areas
Fertilize 16-8-8 w/ 2.0% Dimension @ .6lb.N/1000 sq. ft.
Fertilize 18-1-8 Organic Turkey Litter @ .5 lb. N/1000 sq. ft.
Mow on game days and every other non-game day

APRIL

Drop HOC to 1" to promote Bermudagrass transition
Hollow tine aerate in three directions
Fertilize 19-6-12 All-Season w/ 0.2% Mn @ 1 lb.N/1000 sq. ft.
Mow on game days and every other game day
Hand water localized dry spots on field as needed

MAY

Fertilize 19-6-12 All-Season w/ 0.2% Mn @ 1 lb. N/1000 sq. ft.
Mow on game day and every other non-game day
Baseball and softball seasons conclude
Pop Warner youth football league concludes
Prepare field for end of school year events (field days, ceremonies, etc.)
Apply granular wetting agent to localized dry spots
Hand water localized dry spots on field

JUNE

School is out; SDJA events end
Summer camps begin
Drop HOC to 7/8" to promote Bermudagrass transition
Hollow tine aerate in three directions
Fertilize 19-6-12 All-Season w/ 0.2% Mn @ 1 lb. N/1000 sq. ft.
Re-sod areas as needed
Raise and replace sunken and weathered heads
Mow 3-4 times/week
Topdress worn areas
Hand water localized dry spots as needed

JULY

Hollow tine aerate in four directions
Fertilize 19-6-12 All-Season w/ 0.2% Mn @ 1 lb. N/1000 sq. ft.
Mow 3-4 times a week
Topdress worn areas as needed
Raise and replace sunken and weathered heads
Hand water localized dry spots as needed



ST: How has the economic climate affected your operations?

KOSS: Thankfully, the economy has not fiscally affected my operations. However, the economy does dictate the number of facility rentals which directly affects turf health. We packed in the facility rentals last school year and over the summer to pull in revenue and the traffic load took a toll on field conditions.

The school's enrollment numbers are down this year, but the roster numbers have

remained the same within the athletic department. Facility rental requests have been put on hold until the spring to let the turf recover from the summer baseball camps and the lack of suitable bermuda-grass growing weather. The absence of field rental tenants should help the field return to the condition it needs to be in to withstand the wear and tear of the 14 teams that train and compete on the field throughout the school year. ■

SDJA Field Use 2009

HOURS

AUGUST

Football practice starts (2 per day) 9AM-11AM, 4PM-6PM (Monday-Friday)20
Del Mar Baseball and Softball Academy Camp 9AM-3PM (Monday-Friday)30

SEPTEMBER

School Starts
Gym Classes 1PM-2PM (Monday-Friday)5
Middle School Football 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
Varsity football practice 3PM-5PM (Monday-Friday, Sunday)12
Varsity football home games (as scheduled)
Middle school football home games (as scheduled)
Fall Baseball Workouts (Sunday)3

OCTOBER

Classes 1PM-2PM (Monday-Friday)5
Middle School Football 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
Varsity Football practice 3PM-5PM (Monday-Friday, Sunday)12
Varsity Football home games (as scheduled)
Middle School Football home games (as scheduled)
Fall Baseball workouts 3PM-5PM (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday)6

NOVEMBER

Gym Classes 1PM-2PM (Monday-Friday)5
Middle School Soccer 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
Boys and Girls Varsity practice 3PM-5PM (Monday-Friday, Sunday)12
Boys and Girls MS home soccer games (as scheduled)
MS softball practice 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
MS softball home games (as scheduled)
Fall Baseball workouts 3PM-5PM (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday)6

DECEMBER

Gym Classes 1PM-2PM (Monday-Friday)5
Middle School Soccer 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
Boys and Girls Varsity practice 3PM-5PM (Monday-Friday, Sunday)12
Boys and Girls MS home soccer games (as scheduled)
MS softball practice 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
MS softball home games (as scheduled)
Winter Baseball workouts 3PM-5PM (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday)6

JANUARY

Gym Classes 1PM-2PM (Monday-Friday)5
Middle School Soccer 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
Boys and Girls Varsity practice 3PM-5PM (Monday-Friday, Sunday)12
Boys and Girls MS home soccer games (as scheduled)
MS softball practice 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
MS softball home games (as scheduled)
Winter Baseball workouts 3PM-5PM (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday)6

FEBRUARY

Gym Classes 1PM-2PM (Monday-Friday)5

Middle School Soccer 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
Boys and Girls Varsity practice 3PM-5PM (Monday-Friday, Sunday)12
Boys and Girls MS home soccer games (as scheduled)
MS softball practice 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
MS softball home games (as scheduled)
Winter Baseball workouts 3PM-5PM (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday)6

MARCH

Soccer season and MS softball season concludes
Gym Classes 1PM-2PM (Monday-Friday)
Middle School Baseball 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
Varsity baseball and softball practice 3PM-5PM (Mon-Fri, Sunday)12
Varsity baseball and softball home games (as scheduled)
MS baseball home games (as scheduled)
MS track team practice 3PM-4PM (Monday-Friday)5
American Youth football practice (Mon, Wed, Fri) 3PM-5PM6
American Youth football home games (as scheduled)

APRIL

Gym Classes 1PM-2PM (Monday-Friday)5
Middle School Baseball 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
Varsity baseball and softball practice 3PM-5PM (Mon-Fri, Sun)12
Varsity baseball and softball home games (as scheduled)
MS baseball home games (as scheduled)
MS track team practice 3PM-4PM (Monday-Friday)5
American Youth football practice 3PM-5PM (Mon, Wed, Fri)6
American Youth football home games (as scheduled)

MAY

Gym Classes 1PM-2PM (Monday-Friday)5
Middle School Baseball 2PM-3PM (Monday-Friday)5
Varsity baseball and softball practice 3PM-5PM (Mo-Fri, Sun)6
Varsity baseball and softball home games (as scheduled)
MS baseball home games (as scheduled)
MS track team practice 3PM-4PM Monday-Friday)5
American Youth football practice 3PM-5PM (Mon, Wed, Fri)6
American Youth football home games (as scheduled)

JUNE

Gym classes 1PM-2PM (Monday-Friday)5
Off season football workouts 5-7PM (Monday-Thursday)8
Strength and Conditioning Camp (Tues, Thurs 9AM-10:30AM)3
Del Mar Baseball and Softball Academy Camp 9-3PM (Mon-Fri)30

JULY

Off season football workouts 5-7PM (Monday-Thursday)
Strength and Conditioning Camp (Tues, Thurs 9AM-10:30AM)3
Del Mar Baseball and Softball Academy Camp 9-3PM (Mon-Fri)30
1st and 2nd -Mexican National Soccer Team Practice 5PM-9PM8
12th -Kick for Hope Soccer Tournament (6 games) 7AM-6PM11