

# F.O.Y.

Field of the Year

## Crockett, Francis overcome increased use, rain & less money to win Field of the Year Award



### Fertility Program

#### 2-24-09

Regalstar 20-0-21 at rate 200 lbs/A, 1% Ronstar, 0.2% Prodiamine

#### 3-13-09

Revolver (20 oz/A), Certainty (1.5 oz/A), MSMA (84 oz/A), and Trillium at 96oz/A

#### 7-1-09

Harness & Regal Crown at rates 11 lb/A and 32 oz/A, respectively

#### 7-13-09

Solace (12 oz/A) & MultiGreen II (128 oz/A)

#### 8-25-09

Oasis wetting agent at rate 8 oz/A

#### 8-31-09

Regalstar 2 20-2-20 preemerge at rate 200 lbs/A, 1% Ronstar, 0.2% Prodiamine

#### 9-16-09

Harness & Regal Crown at rates 11 lb/A and 32 oz/A, respectively

**W**AR MEMORIAL STADIUM Field in Union City, TN won the Sports Turf Managers

Association's 2009 Football Field of the Year in the Schools/Parks category. Stephen C. Crockett, CSFM and his cohort Robin Francis are the only two full-time employees in a department formed in 2005 that is dedicated to all municipal athletic fields within both the park and school systems, an uncommon arrangement.

The native soil, sandy loam field, last renovated in 1988 when a drain system and sub-surface irrigation were put in, serves the band in practices and competitions and also sees Phys Ed classes. Crockett reports the Tifton 419 bermudagrass is not overseeded.

Crockett and Francis also maintain the municipal baseball stadium and field; an eight-field baseball/softball complex; the municipal

soccer complex (five fields); the band practice field and three school football practice fields.

Crockett reported that after several drought years, 2009 brought lots of rain and cool temperatures. The rainfall altered his water budgeting and mowing schedule throughout the summer, and the cool temps led to recovery time problems, he said. "With cool nights we started using the wetting agent Oasis in an attempt to improve recovery after play. This saw some limited success and led to an increased number of divot replacements with actual hex sod patching rather than filling in with sand, a practice we usually reserve for later in the season."

**SportsTurf:** What changes have you made to your maintenance plan this year?

**Crockett:** In 2008, we discovered toxicity due to iron; we adjusted the pH with three tons of lime, and no longer use iron. We switched to MultiGreen as part of our Regal Chemical plan. With this change we no longer have a problem.

Due to changes in our style of football from the spread set to the mid-line veer, and the fact that our team advanced to the state championship, for the first time we had to sod the field in the spring following graduation. We also had extensive winter kill due to an unusually harsh winter. Other than this our plan has stayed much the same.

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

**Crockett:** "You're only as big time as where you are." I had to think about this for a while and then it hit me. It doesn't matter what facility, or at what level you work; it is how much effort and time you put in where you are that matters. You have to take your facility to the next level, because that is why you are there. That one, perhaps, has had the greatest impact on my personal management philosophy.

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

**Crockett:** Managing work and personal time can be a challenge; however, having strong support staff members and an outstanding supervisor allows for time to get away on some weekends and vacation between spring/summer and fall sports seasons. Robin Francis and I work as a management team, and this allows us to have some time away from the facilities. From February through December it can be a grind, and in major tournament years there is no break between the summer and fall sports seasons. I have balance because of the talent level of our staff.

**ST:** How much input do you have regarding administration decisions?

**Crockett:** Our administrative system is unique to having an actual municipal turf management department that does not fall under the administration of the parks and recreation department or the school system.

In regards to the turf and facilities I have control of all decisions within the set budget. With full input on the budget, we are allowed to make decisions that will not jeopardize field quality. As the head of the department, I have the opportunity to make final decisions on all aspects of maintenance, building projects and employees with the approval of the city council and the support of the city manager. Over the past 5 years our city council and city manager have been extremely supportive of the department, which has allowed us to greatly improve our facilities and our athletic fields.

**ST:** How do you establish good working relationships with supervisors and end users?

**Crockett:** I maintain constant contact with all coaches and field users in regards to playing conditions. The coaches and other field users know to contact me regarding using the playing surface, and they also greatly respect the "Field closed" signs. They have come to understand that we do not put the sign out unless we are working on the surface or have sprayed the field. My staff also understands our goals and we communicate regularly as to what we are going to do to the field in both the short term and long term.

**ST:** How has the economic climate affected your operations?

**Crockett:** For the most part there has been little effect on our operations due to the economy; but it was a pivotal year to win the Field of the Year Award, and a football state championship going into the July budget meetings. These two factors probably had a



**Southern Athletic Fields**  
would like to congratulate  
**Stephen Crockett, CSFM, and his Staff**  
at **Union City Turf Management,**  
for winning the  
**STMA 2010 Field of the Year,**  
**Schools/Park, Football Division**  
**War Memorial Stadium,**  
**Union City, TN**

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major impact on the field maintenance budget staying the same. On other fronts we have become more frugal in our chemical and painting budgets so as to not go over on what we spent in the previous year.



## Maintenance and Mowing Schedule

### March

Mow as needed  
Field Prep for Soccer

### April

Mow as needed  
Field Prep for Soccer

### May

Mow Tues & Thurs  
Aerate & Drag Cores after soccer season

### June

Mow Mon/Wed/Fri  
Aerate/Topdress 125 tons (80% sand/20 peat)  
Verticut if necessary (three directions on June 15)  
(Core aerification/topdressing on July 3, pushed back by weather)

### July

Mow Mon/Wed/Fri  
Aerate & Drag Cores  
Verticut if necessary

### August

Mow Mon/Wed/Fri  
Aerate with Slitter Tines

### September

Mow Mon/Wed/Fri  
Aerate with Slitter Tines

### October

Mow Tue & Thur  
Irrigate to prevent frost

### November

Mow if needed  
Irrigate to prevent frost through playoffs ■

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### GIE+EXPO Workshops

Thursday, October 28

Session A, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

(Will be repeated in session C)

\*\*Adding Hardscape Installation to Your Company's Success"

Pat McCrindle, MW Hardscapes, Inc.

Session B, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

"Xtreme Service = Xtreme Profits"

Ed Laflamme, The Harvest Group

Friday, October 29

Session C, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

(A repeat of Session A)

\*\*Adding Hardscape Installation to Your Company's Success"

Pat McCrindle, MW Hardscapes, Inc.

Session D, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

"Growing Revenues in a Crowded/Price-Driven Market"

Kevin Kehoe, Three Point Group, Inc.

Saturday, October 30

Session E, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

"27 Tips to Making Some Sales RIGHT NOW!"

Marty Grunder, Marty Grunder, Inc.

\* As a bonus for signing up for Session A or C, you can attend - FREE - a series of eight live demos about hardscape installation and applications on Thursday and Friday afternoons.

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