

STMA Northwest Regional Conference features top sports turf professionals

SEATTLE HOSTED some sports turf VIPs July 21-22 as the Sports Turf Managers Association partnered with the Intermountain, Northern California, Oregon, and Pacific Northwest chapters to produce an STMA Northwest Regional Conference that featured sports turf specific education, a trade show, hands-on demonstrations, and tours of some of the city's major league facilities.

The sponsors handed out Seattle Mariner tickets to the more than 175 attendees who enjoyed a beautiful evening at the ballpark while watching the home team beat the Chicago White Sox in extra innings. Attendees earlier that day had walked on the field (outside the lines of course!) while meeting with head groundskeeper Bob Christofferson and his crew during a tour of Safeco Field.

Another highlight was a drop-in visit from new Seahawks coach Pete Carroll during the group's visit to the Virginia Mason Athletic Center, the team's practice facility and office in Renton. Carroll snuck up on an unsuspecting Seahawk fields & grounds manager Sean Vanos as he was leading a tour of the cool site on the shores of huge Lake Washington and told the crowd how much he and his team appreciate the turf care.

On another stop the group visited and lunched at Starfire Sports, a non-profit soccer complex in Tukwila, which was most impressive. The facility is open 24/7 and sees action from Major League Soccer's Seattle Sounders and every other level imaginable. Here the group had a chance to meet with vendors and their number included several nationally known sports turf advocates, including Lynda Wightman of Hunter Industries, Boyd Montgomery of Toro, Christiaan Arends of Barenbrug USA, Jay Warnick of World Class and Charlie Vestal of Turface Athletics.

Starfire also allowed some painting demonstrations on one of their synthetic surfaces. Scott MacVicar from the University of Washington painted some logos while John Wright from the Seahawks and some of his guys showed how to remove those logos from the carpet.

This regional event featured two other nationally recognized bigwigs in sports turf, Dr. Dave Minner from Ames, IA and Dr. Andy McNitt from State College, PA. Minner held court on repairing high traffic areas and presided over a lively give and take panel discussion on natural turf, while McNitt led the group covering synthetic turf issues.

The event included a chance to get on the FieldTurf at Qwest Field and see some of the equipment the crew led by Jason Kingrey use on a surface that now serves as home of the MLS Sounders as well as the 12th Man-led Seahawks. Kingrey also presented on converting his field from synthetic to natural back to synthetic in a matter of days.

STMA's 22nd Annual Conference & Exhibition will be in Austin, TX January 11-15, 2011. For information see www.stma.org ■



Above: **SCOTT MACVICAR**, Grounds Supervisor for University of Washington Athletics, demonstrates how to paint a logo on synthetic turf.



Above Left: **DR. DAVE MINNER** has put a lot of traffic on fields in preparing his talks on repairing high traffic areas of fields. Above Right: **SEAHAWKS COACH PETE CARROLL** surprised turfman Sean Vanos (right) during a tour of the team's training facility.

Innovative Awards deadline is October 1

THE DEADLINE for STMA's new Innovative Awards Program, October 1, is approaching. This program will recognize those member companies that have a product, piece of equipment, a service or technology that advances the profession. Specifically, entries will be judged on how well the effectiveness of the sports turf manager is enhanced or if the play-

ing surface is made safer or more playable. The STMA Awards Committee will judge the entries and the winners will be announced during the opening of the STMA Exhibition Thursday, January 13, 2011 in Austin. For a complete description of the program and to access the on-line form, go to STMA's home page, www.STMA.org. ■