

Where are they now? Following up with 2010 Student Challenge winners

Purdue University

Our students typically begin preparing for the Student Challenge 3-4 months before Conference by attending 1-2 hour review meetings every 2 weeks. Teams begin taking mock exams from September until one week before leaving for the Conference; these mock exams include all aspects covered on the actual Challenge exam. We bring in local superintendents and sports turf managers to cover real life scenarios for the short answer/essay sections and maintain our own greenhouse for turf and weed identification.

Zak Peterson and Joey Gerking will be graduating in May 2012 and are actively pursuing employment upon graduation. Justin Shirley graduated May 2011 and is working as an intern for the Milwaukee Brewers grounds crew. Cody Whitis is currently working in the golf sector in Indiana.

The students chose to use the prize money to help a local middle school (Klondike Elementary) repair their practice pitching mounds on the baseball field and slit-seed and establish a fertility regiment for their football field. The team re-graded the pitching mounds with new clay and set new pitching rubbers. The football field wear areas were prepped to establish good seed to soil contact, slit-seeded and fertilized to aid in good recovery before the season began. Plans are to revisit the two fields to repair any seasonal damage and



WINNERS FROM MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE (L to R): Steve Dugas (coach), Pat Escalera, Kevin Marsh, Chaz Perea, Wade Anderseck, Matthew Janney, Chris Romo, Brian Scott (coach) and Tom Skelton.

apply additional fertilizer as needed. The team also spoke with the athletic director regarding additional maintenance such as irrigation practices and weed management.-Tracy Tudor, graduate research assistant-turfgrass science, Purdue University

Mt. San Antonio College, Walnut, CA

With our winnings we are constructing a 50% scale Little League field for Wiffle ball. It will have a pitcher's mound, turf infield and outfield with skin base paths and an outfield fence. This will be used to demonstrate the many facets of maintaining a baseball field (as well as much needed departmental recreation!). Gail Materials donated the infield mix and pitcher's mound

clay, Hunter Industries donated irrigation equipment, and Spears Manufacturing donated the fittings. Thank you!

We have also installed sports turf demonstration plots for turfgrass identification and observation. These were installed on May 14, 2011 by agriculture students from Buena Park High School and Mt. SAC Horticulture Science students. Many thanks to West Coast Turf for donating the turf and to Sports Field Turf Services for donating the Axis soil amendment.

Here's an update on our team: Pat Escalera is currently employed at Mt. SAC as an equipment operator/sports turf specialist. Chris Romo was just hired at Mt. SAC to help care for the athletic facilities. Kevin Marsh works for Brookside Golf Course as an interim assistant superintendent. Chaz Perea is the landscape manager at Dodger Stadium. Tom Skelton and Wade Andersek work for a water management firm in southern California. Matt Janney is currently not working in this industry.

Pat, Kevin, Matt and Chris are all still in school working toward their A.S. degree in Park and Sports Turf Management. Chaz just graduated with his degree and is teaching an Integrated Pest Management class here at Mt. SAC. He is planning on enrolling at Penn State Spring 2012 using their distance learning courses to obtain his bachelor's degree in turf science.-Brian Scott, horticulture professor, Mt. San Antonio College. ■



PURDUE'S WINNING TEAM (L TO R): Team coach Tracy Tudor, Zak Peterson, Cody Whitis, Justin Shirley, and Joey Gerking pose with Challenge sponsor Hunter Industries' Lynda Wightman.