

# THE VALUE OF CERTIFICATION



Under the tarp, checking his "baby," is Ross Kurcab, CSFM, the first-ever Certified Sports Field Manager.

**I**N ATHLETICS, it's all about the quality of the game. The quality of the sports field is measured by its safety and playability and to some extent its overall aesthetics. To make this happen, someone has to manage and care for the field. Whether this person directs a professional venue or the local recreational field, it is their skill and knowledge that sets them apart, especially when resources are limited. There is a need for qualified sports field managers, knowledgeable of fiscal management, environmental stewardship and agronomy. Having recognized the importance of fostering and improving professionalism within the sports turf industry, the Sports Turf Managers Association developed the Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) program.

Certification demonstrates that successful sports field job applicants have the knowledge to deliver safe, playable and attractive sports fields. It also demonstrates to employers a significant commitment to career and competence. Quite simply, in an increasingly competitive and changing work environment, certification is an essential investment in one's professional future.

When you become a CSFM, it means that you have taken your professionalism to the next level. After meeting the credentialing standards of education and experience, the applicant takes a written test. This exam is considered by many to be one of the most difficult in the industry to pass, which is one of the main reasons that those who do pass, display their credentials with pride. The sophistication of the exam development process also contributes to the preferred status of the credentials. Overseen by industry experts, the CSFM exams are specifically based on "real world" responsibilities of sports field management professionals. The program also requires that the CSFM stays current with trends and new development pertaining to sports field management through continuing education as well as an industry service obligation.

Over time, the CSFM designation has gained a reputation among employers, professionals and industry experts as the most respected and preferred sports field management credential. ■

*Don Savard, CSFM is athletic facility & grounds manager for the Salesianum School, Wilmington, DE.*

## 5 STEPS to becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager

- 1. Visit the STMA website,** click on the Professionalism tab and then scroll down and click in the CSFM Program heading. All of the information that you will need (including forms) is listed there and can be downloaded.
- 2. Determine if you meet the experience and educational requirements.** Experience and education are assigned point values. Forty points is the minimum requirement that needs to be attained in order to go to the next step.
- 3. Read the CSFM Detailed Competency List.** There are 20 pages that list all of the things that you must know in order to pass the test. Everything on the List is part of the essential knowledge base that every CSFM must possess. Compare your expertise with the List and prepare to increase your understanding where you are weak. A CSFM must be capable of managing different sports on all playing surfaces under extreme conditions. Gather your textbooks, magazines and online articles. The Study Resource List will help get you started. Start reading!
- 4. Prepare and submit your application form and the requisite paperwork.** This includes your resume, completed Educational Requirements Worksheet, your School Transcripts, your signed Code of Professional Practice Form and the application fee. STMA Headquarters will review your application, check your references and notify you of your eligibility to sit for the exam.
- 5. Schedule your exam.** You make take your exam locally with a proctor, or take the exam at the National STMA Conference (the advantage being the exam is administered on the first day and the last day giving a chance to retake sections if necessary). The test is a written multiple choice test comprised of four major Sections pertinent for a Sports Turf Manager. Each Section will be graded individually. A passing grade of 80% will be required for each Section. Sections for testing will include:

### Agronomics

- Basic horticultural calculations
- Basic soils
- Turfgrasses and their selection
- Turfgrass nutrition
- Water management
- Turfgrass cultural practices

### Pest Management - IPM, Cultural, Pesticides

- Weeds
- Insects
- Diseases

### Administration

- Budgeting
- Communication
- Supervision/Personnel Management
- Safety/Compliance/First Aid

### Sports Specific Field Management - Field design, layout, dimensions, lining/markings, maintenance, playability, aesthetics

- Baseball/Softball
- Football
- Soccer, Lacrosse, Field Hockey