



**Eric Schroder**  
Editor

[eschroder@m2media360.com](mailto:eschroder@m2media360.com)

717-805-4197

## Turf managers can do (nearly) anything

**T**his column was due the day of the “Monday Night Football” game between the Minnesota Vikings and the Chicago Bears, December 20, so I don’t know how the attempt to ready the University of Minnesota’s TCF Bank Stadium for that contest turned out. But my money’s on Mike McDonald, CSFM, the Golden Gophers’ turf manager, Steve Berg, grounds superintendent for the St. Paul Academy and Summit School and president of the Minnesota STMA chapter, and the sports turf managers of the North Star State successfully completing the task.

Prepping the stadium is more than just clearing snow from the seats and the playing surface, by the way. McDonald and Company had already “winterized” the stadium, meaning the water had been shut off and drained, the toilets disassembled, etc. I have asked MSTMA Executive Secretary Jeff Turtinen to report on the whole process when it’s over but I’m sure he’s been busting his butt just like everyone else so if we don’t get a first-hand report it’s understandable.

Of course whether the field will be safe isn’t up to them—the choice to play it in Minnesota is the NFL’s (with a BIG push from ESPN, which certainly thinks they’ll get a larger audience for a telecast in this setting rather than an antiseptic indoor stadium in a neutral city). The playing surface could well be frozen; in fact Vikings punter Chris Kluwe tweeted (see p. 28) after a team walk-through the day before the game, “Serious time - All respect to the people that cleared the field and got it ready, you did an amazing job. That being said, it’s unplayable. The field is as hard as concrete an hour and a half after they took the tarp off, and anyone that hits their head is getting a concussion.”

We’ll all know how it turned out by the time you read this, and after some of the wacky occurrences in NFL games yesterday (Dec. 19), like the Eagles beating the Giants on a “walk-off” punt return or that Patriots lineman who rumbled for a record 71 yards with a kickoff, something extraordinary is bound to happen. Let’s hope it wasn’t a bunch of concussions.

### This doesn’t happen every day

RPR turfgrass was recently re-categorized as a subspecies within perennial ryegrass. Although RPR is still recognized as a perennial ryegrass species, it has been clearly recognized as a different type of perennial ryegrass, and has been identified as belonging to the category of *Lolium perenne subsp. Stoloniferum*, a regenerating perennial ryegrass. First cited in 1836 (!), no varieties have been recognized as a *Lolium perenne stoloniferum* since (regular perennial ryegrass is called *Lolium perenne*).

In 1836 a Dr. Lawson described a class of regenerating perennial ryegrass as *Lolium perenne var. stoloniferum*. Since then nothing has been bred or identified in this class of perennial ryegrass. Barenbrug USA launched the RPR program after more than 10 years of breeding and is the only company to have its varieties listed as *Lolium perenne subsp. Stoloniferum*. Dr. Joseph Wipff, breeder of the RPR varieties said, “I am very happy with this recognition as it clearly shows the difference between RPR and other regular perennial ryegrasses.”

Congratulations to Barenbrug USA for making turfgrass history.

# SportsTurf

1030 W. Higgins Road  
Suite 230  
Park Ridge, IL 60068  
Phone 847-720-5600  
Fax 847-720-5601

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### STMA Office

805 New Hampshire Suite E  
Lawrence, Ks 66044  
Phone 800-323-3875 Fax 800-366-0391  
Email [STMAinfo@STMA.org](mailto:STMAinfo@STMA.org)  
[www.STMA.org](http://www.STMA.org)

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