

TEAM'S SUCCESS LEADS TO NEW FIELD AT U OF AKRON



NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS and close finishes tend to bring a lot of attention to collegiate athletic programs and in the case of the men's soccer team at the University of Akron in Ohio, that attention translated into a new, state-of-the-art natural turf pitch. Within a year of opening the new soccer facility, Akron beat Louisville 1-0 to win the NCAA men's championship.

"At the behest of Coach Caleb Porter we wanted to create a European atmosphere with our new field," said Ted Curtis, the university's vice president of capital planning and facilities management. "That meant seating close to the field and natural grass."

Curtis said the men's team has

been competing at a high level for years but the straw that broke the camel's back regarding their no-drainage home field came 3 years ago when heavy rains dictated that the team give up a home NCAA playoff game, which they lost. The new field has a chevron drainage system under it and a continuous slotted drain around the field.

"The number one reason we built a new field on a new site was to get more seating, followed by needing to eliminate the drainage problems," said Curtis. "We also had bad lighting, with leaning telephone poles and not enough light to televise night games."

Curtis said he was "extremely enlightened" by working with the turf

professionals who designed and built the field, including consultant Stan Moscrip of Athletic Field Development, LLC. "He really knew his business; I was so impressed, for example when he was checking the work of the GPS-operated laser leveler. My hat's off to the turf industry."

Curtis relayed a story that turf managers can appreciate. While speaking at a function, Coach Porter said, "My grounds people tell me . . ." and went on to make his point. Curtis rightly believes that that statement shows the good relationship his grounds staff has with their championship winning coach.

WINNING RELATIONSHIP

Cub Cadet Field was really born out of a great relationship between the University of Akron and Cub Cadet. "Cub Cadet equipment is used to help care for the grounds, we've filmed our products in use on campus and hired interns from their top-ranked programs," said Jeff Salamon, Cub Cadet director of brand marketing. "So considering Cub Cadet's commitment to caring for high-profile grounds, campuses and yards, the opportunity to have our name associated with one of the most impressive campuses and a showcase, state-of-the-art soccer fields in the country was a natural extension of this relationship."

A commitment to impeccable grounds care extends beyond the playing field. In fact, the University of Akron has been recognized nationally as Campus of the Year multiple times. It is a remarkable institution—progressive and innovative—in a very vibrant, thriving market that is important to Cub Cadet. "The opportunity to extend our relationship with a university that fits so closely with our brand was a very exciting opportunity that really got our attention," Salamon added.

"Cub Cadet's reputation is progressive, innovative, premium quality and high performance, qualities that can also be said of the many universities and colleges like the University of Akron and its National Championship soccer team. The fact that we can also leverage the visibility of a #1 ranked college team in an important geographical market and to the university and college market made this a very smart decision for our brand." ■

SMART PRACTICES FOR REEL MOWERS

ACHIEVING GREAT AFTER-CUT APPEARANCE isn't purely a function of machine adjustments. It is an equal combination of precise machine adjustments, smart maintenance practices, and proper agronomic practices. Achieving two while neglecting the third can lead to poor turf conditions or an unsightly after-cut appearance.

PRECISE MACHINE ADJUSTMENTS

The cardinal rule when setting up the cutting units within a machine is consistency. All cutting units within a machine and all traction units within a fleet should be set up the same for consistent results. Many times, an operator or technician will experiment with different settings or accessories on one or a few of the cutting units and leave the other cutting units on the machine untouched. This typically leads to inconsistent cut quality and appearance. If things appear to go awry or you've lost track