

F.O.Y.

Field of the Year

FC Dallas Stadium, Frisco, TX



- **Level of Submission:** Professional
- **Category of Submission:** Soccer
- **Head Sports Turf Manager:** Allen Reed
- **Title:** Stadium Grounds Coordinator
- **Education:** Bachelor's degree in Turf Management

• **Work History:** Worked as a student worker for Texas A&M Athletic Field Staff for 3 years while attending Texas A&M University. I interned the summer of 2004 on the Texas Rangers' ground crew. I have been the Stadium Grounds Coordinator for FC Dallas/Pizza Hut Park since April 2005.

• **Full-time staff:** Sabino Garcia and Juan Rosales

- **Original construction:** 2005
- **Turfgrass variety:** A mix of Tifway 419 and Riviera bermudagrass. The Riviera was interseeded to help with transitioning.
- **Rootzone composition:** 85/15 Sand/Peat moss

• **Overseeding:** We overseed the field every fall with a perennial ryegrass blend. The ryegrass will grow from October through May or June. At that time we will transition back to our bermudagrass.

CHALLENGES

2011 was a record setting year in many ways for us here in Frisco. We dealt with record cold, snow fall, heat, lack of rain, and number of events at what was formerly known as Pizza Hut Park. Our biggest challenge this year was dealing with the extremes of the weather. February was one of the coldest months on record in North Texas.

Temperatures were about 15 degrees below normal and at one point we were below freezing for around 100 hours, sometimes dropping into the single digits. Our average low temperature for that time of year is around 40 degrees. We had about 10-14 inches of snow fall during January and February.

The other extreme to the weather was the heat. The summer of 2011 will go down as the hottest summer on record. We recorded the most 100 degree days in a year at 71 days. The previous record was 69, on average we have 18 days above 100 degrees a year. Forty of the 71 days were consecutive 100 degree days. We missed the record of 42 consecutive days above 100 degrees.

Not only was the heat a problem, but we are dealing with severe drought conditions throughout the summer and even [into the autumn]. We average around 32-40 inches of rainfall a year. This year we have had about 15 inches, with only about 4 inches falling since June. The city of Frisco recently voted to enforce Stage 3 watering restrictions, which is once a week watering. We are not affected by this because our water comes from a well and any runoff that fills our retention ponds.

In 2011, we had the most events in a year since the park opened at 115 events. We started out with the NCAA FCS National Championship football game in January. The MLS season started in March. We had three major concerts in April, May, and July. Each concert this year had a MLS soccer game following it the next day. It's a challenge to do such a drastic change over; you have to do everything that is normally done over 3 days to prepare for a soccer game down to 10 hours. In the fall, soccer and high school football overlap. Several of our football games are on Friday night before a soccer game on Saturday. We use temporary paint for football so that it can be washed and not visible during soccer games.

I implemented a new fertility program that helped the plant be stronger and handle a lot of events. I used more potassium and less nitrogen and saw great results and will continue to use it in the future. We were able to overcome every challenge we were faced with this year. It is very important to go in with a plan and stick to it.

SportsTurf: What channels of communication do you use to reach coaches, administrators and users of your facility? Any tips on communicating well?

Reed: The executives from each department in the organization meet weekly to discuss recent events and potential upcoming events. All events are setup through my boss, VP of Complex, and our VP of Operations. We work together and discuss the pros and cons of each event and whether or not it meets our criteria for hosting.

I believe face to face communication with coaches works the



best. I like to educate them on the role they play in keeping the pitch in top condition. I talk to them at least once a week to make sure everything is how they like it and make adjustments as needed. The turf plays a very important role in soccer, therefore the coaches and I need to be on the same page so that the needs of the team can be met and that I maintain a healthy pitch.

SportsTurf: What are your specific job responsibilities?

Reed: I am the Stadium Grounds Coordinator for FC Dallas. I schedule and manage all maintenance for FC Dallas' Stadium and practice field, which consist of a total of 5.5 acres of turf. Along with FC Dallas soccer matches, each year we host roughly 17 Frisco ISD football games, 5 major concerts, NCAA FCS National Football Championship, and numerous other soccer matches.

SportsTurf: What do you find most enjoyable

Reed: The most enjoyable part of my job is being able to see all

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of the hard work my crew and I put into each event pay off. One event we enjoy is the NCAA football game. It is enjoyable to get out of the normal routine of painting for soccer or just the basic lines, numbers, and hashes for high school football. It is a long week of painting logos and end zones, but when finished it is nice to see what normally is a soccer field converted into a championship football field.

SportsTurf: What task is your least favorite and why?

Reed: The least favorite part of the job would be anytime we have to cover the field for a concert or other special event. I always cringe when we do this knowing that all the work we put in to making the pitch perfect could be ruined in just a couple of days. The flooring we put down does a great job protecting the field and we normally have a 50-hour turn around on install and pick up, but we just never know how much damage will be done each time.



SportsTurf: How did you get started in turf management? What was your first sports turf job?

Reed: I started out college as a Sports Medicine major and found out quickly that was not what I wanted to do. I had mowed lawns while in high school and knew I wanted to work outside and be around sports, so I switched over to Turf Management. Shortly thereafter I started working as a student for Leo Goertz and Craig Potts on Texas A&M Athletic Field staff. I worked there the last 3 years of college and interned one summer for Tom Burns and the Texas Rangers. I have been with FC Dallas since 2005.

SportsTurf: What changes if any are you implementing for the winning field in 2012?

Reed: I am constantly tweaking what I do each year; with the extremes in weather conditions in Texas what worked one year may not work best the next. I look back at my records and see what I thought worked great from the previous year's maintenance. I keep doing these things and change areas I think will help improve the quality of the pitch. I attend my State and National conference every year looking for new and better ways to provide the best turf for the athletes.

SportsTurf: How do you see the sports turf manager's job changing in the future?

Reed: For the majority, multi-sport stadiums are a thing of the past, but multi-entertainment stadiums are a thing of the future. More and more sports venues are hosting concerts and other outdoor events that attract large crowds to make money for the organization. Most of the time these events happen during season squeezed between games and leave little time for recovery or resod. It will be our job as turf managers to keep field repair cost to a minimum when possible, depending on the event, and have it safe and ready for play soon after. We will need to plan our maintenance accordingly and if the opportunity arises, just know if done correctly and in a timely manner, the field can be saved and ready for play shortly thereafter. ■