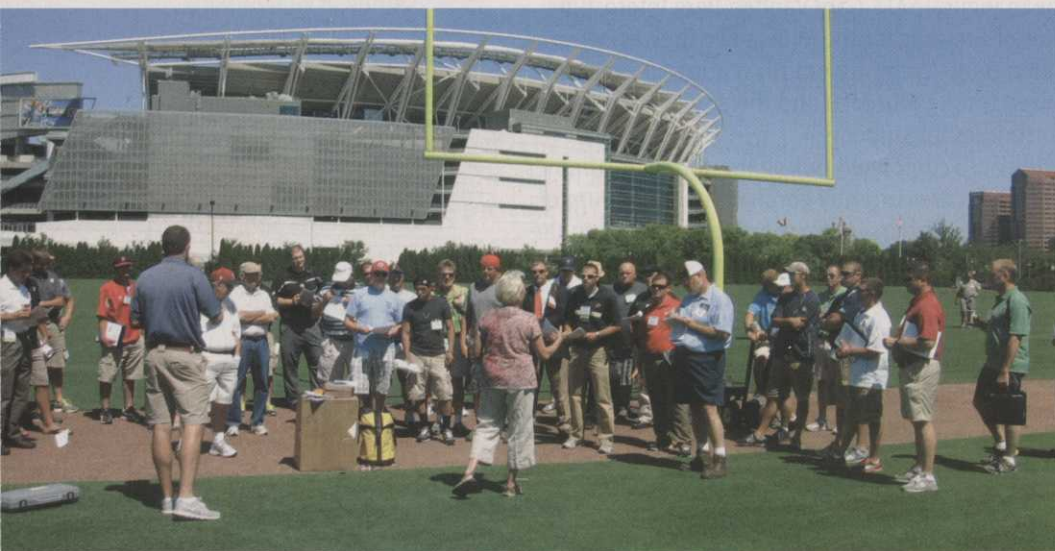


## Cincinnati proves great venue for STMA Mid-American Regional Conference



**PERFECTLY TIMED** before the Midwest experienced a late June heat wave, the 2012 STMA Regional Conference drew more than 120 attendees and 33 exhibiting companies from as far away as Florida to Cincinnati, the Queen City on the Ohio River. Registrants enjoyed the vibrant downtown with the host hotel just minutes from legendary Fountain Square, while the main attractions, Great American Ballpark and Paul Brown Stadium, were an easy walk down the hill to their riverside locations.

Historically these STMA regional events feature tours of some of the USA's best-known stadiums and the aforementioned professional facilities fit the bill perfectly. Highlight of the first day was visiting Great American Ballpark, home of the country's oldest professional baseball franchise, and meeting Doug Gallant, the Reds' head groundskeeper. Gallant said his field features a blend of five perennial ryegrasses in a hybrid system that features an artificial stabilizer. The TS2 system, developed by The Motz Group, has a stabilizer mat or carpet that is rolled out and backfilled with sand. The carpet comprises polypropylene fibers weaved into an open-weave mesh backing and biodegradable jute. Once the carpet has been topdressed with sand, it is seeded with your choice of grass.

Gallant said the current field is in its sixth, and final, season, and that his new

sod is currently growing in Indiana. Though very happy with the field's performance, he said the field has a few high and low spots now and the re-grading and re-sodding is necessary. Because of the low-humidity, breezy day the attendees were enjoying, Gallant had to water his in-field mix every 45 minutes that day to keep moisture in the clay.

An attendee asked Gallant what kind of weeds he saw and he replied, "I don't believe in weeds" and added if you grow a good stand of turfgrass, you shouldn't have that many weeds. "The strongest plant's going to win," he said.

Rich Apuzzo, a meteorologist with skyeyeweather.com in Cincinnati, gave an interesting presentation that he began by saying, "Climate change is a hoax!" He shared his model of forecasting longer range climate trends, including how important the amount of energy being produced by the sun affects our weather, and how our oceans' 20 to 30-year cycles between warmer and colder affect weather (think El Nino).

Apuzzo said both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans are getting colder now and the solar cycle is now putting out less energy, which means shorter growing seasons, colder winters and cooler summers for "at least the next two decades," he said.

Along with the cooling, he expects more droughts as well, and he reminded the audience that drought conditions don't nec-

essarily correlate with higher temps; climate can be dry and cool as well. Therefore, water will continue to be an increasingly valuable commodity, and research into drought-resistance turfgrasses will be that much more important.

Other educational sessions on Day 1 included Dr. Aaron Patton of Purdue on controlling *poa annua* in both cool and warm-season grasses; improving native soil fields by Ohio State Extension Turf expert Pamela Sherratt; troubleshooting small air-cooled engine repairs, with Carl Osterhaus of Toro; and a live irrigation audit led by Hunter Industries' Lynda Wightman on the Cincinnati Bengals' practice fields outside Paul Brown Stadium.

Part of the package for the event was a ticket to the Brewers v. Reds game that night, preceded by a networking event at Great American Ballpark. The hometown Reds won the game with a homerun in the bottom of the 8th inning, and many attendees followed that up with a night-cap (or two) at Toby Keith's nearby watering hole.

Highlights of Day Two included the trade show in the shaded parking lot for Bengal players, and education sessions featuring Wes Ganobcik on baseball field maintenance practices; Brian Bornino on "Using Bermudagrass on Athletic Fields in Colder Climates"; Dr. David Gardner of Ohio State on pesticides and athletic fields; and Jeff White and Kenny Nichols on "Safe, Playable, and Pleasing Fields on a Limited Budget – What Can You Do?"

The day concluded with a tour of Paul Brown Stadium, led by Darian Daily and James Hlavaty.

### Sponsors

STMA would like to thank the following companies for their generous sponsorship of the Mid-American Regional event: Fairmount Sports+Recreation, Hunter Industries; Pioneer Manufacturing; Pennington Seed; Turface Athletics; UBU Sports; World Class Athletic Surfaces; Central Farm and Garden; Century Equipment; Oakwood Sod Farm; Redexim North America; Reynolds Golf and Turf; SportsEdge; TurfNet; and TurfTime Equipment. ■