

F.O.Y.

Field of the Year



Roger Dean Stadium, Jupiter, FL

Level of Submission: Professional
Category of Submission: Baseball
Head Sports Turf Manager: Jordan

Treadway

Title: Director of Grounds

Education: Bachelor's Degree

Field of Study: Agronomy & Turf
Management

Work History: Student member of
Mississippi State sports turf staff, intern-

ship at Roger Dean Stadium, Grounds
Crew Assistant at Corpus Christi Hooks,
Assistant Director of Ground at Roger
Dean Stadium for 3 years, and Director of
Grounds since June 2010.

Full Time Staff: Matt Eggerman and
Matt Dierdorff

**Students, interns, seasonal, part-
time staff:** Drew Wolcott, Phil Bathalon,
Tyler Potter, and Tim Gambrell

Original construction: 1998
Turfgrass variety: Celebration
bermudagrass

Overseeding: Overseed with Lesco
Double Eagle Perennial Rye Grass at
12#/1000 in early December

Drainage system: Subsurface; 4-inch
tiles on 20 foot centers

CHALLENGES

The field is home to the St. Louis Cardinals and Florida Marlins as well their Advanced A affiliates. One of the challenges that we face is the amount of use the field endures each year. Our field is the main attraction for a variety of events in the community. In addition to the 176 pro games, the field is used for more than 100 additional events as well. These included fantasy camps, Little League, high school, and college games, adult tournaments, corporate dinners, ticket holder receptions, musical performances, charity softball games, scout sleepovers, movie nights, boxing, a football game, a wedding, an Easter egg hunt, and a 10K marathon finish line.

Hosting these events requires a great deal of communication between the stadium staff and the tenants of the field. Making organizers of events aware of the field's limitations in advance, helps to prevent potential problems from occurring and ultimately protects the integrity of the field.

The main test faced by our grounds crew is finding ample time during our seasons to perform required periodic maintenance. For example, the Celebration bermudagrass that we use is very well suited for our high use and climate in South Florida; however, it requires frequent vertical mowing due to its abundant lateral growth. With a game virtually every day, there is little time to perform these tasks as often as needed. The only open dates we



Roger Dean Stadium equipment list

- John Deere 2653A Triplex Mower
- John Deere 260 infield mower
- John Deere 1200A infield groomer
- Wacker 3 ton roller
- Toro 5700D sprayer
- John Deere Turf Tx 4x2 Gator (3)
- 5105 John Deere tractor
- Toro 864 Procore aerator
- Diamond Aggressor verti-kutter
- Smithco Big Vac
- Vicon spreader
- Ford 3430 tractor
- Turfco topdresser

have are the 7-day break between spring training and Florida State League Opening Day and the 3-day All-Star break in June. At these times the field was vertically mowed and aerated. Also, all mounds re-built and sloped. As a result of our schedule, the field is not allowed the adequate recovery time before play returns.

The ever-changing south Florida climate can also be stressful to handle during the year. As summer approaches, sun can transform to a thunderstorm momentarily. These pop-up showers are capable of dumping high amounts of rain in short time. Pulling the infield tarp becomes a frequent occurrence. In 2011 we pulled the tarp 55 times during the season. This was an average number when compared to 2010 when it was pulled 38 and 2009 when it was called for a whopping 85 times! The main strategy that we employ is allowing some rain to fall on the clay as it is manageable. We rarely tarp overnight due to our mostly sand infield mix. We allow lighter rains that occur in the morning hours to go untarped so the field can absorb much needed natural rain and avoid the drawbacks that come from the field's constantly being covered.

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

Treadway: I think face to face meetings with coaches and players are the best way to go. I or one of my assistants will meet with each coach every morning or afternoon and decide on that day's plan, and what we can improve on from the day before. We meet with our front office twice weekly to discuss what's happening and how the field will be affected with special events or promotions. This way we are on the same page and there are no surprises.



During the week, email is probably the best way to communicate with everyone from my GM to the town of Jupiter's recreation department for schedules since we are all on the go most of the day. Our grounds and operations staff takes advantage of direct connect phones so we are always in touch no matter what part of the complex we are on.

ST: specific job responsibilities?

Treadway: My title is Director of Grounds and I am in charge of maintaining Roger Dean Stadium and the practice field complex as well as managing a crew of 20. We have 14 practice fields, a 7,000-seat stadium, and around 60 acres of landscape and common areas. We are home to Grapefruit League spring train-

ing, Florida State Class A-Advanced league, Gulf Coast rookie league, Town of Jupiter parks and recreation, and numerous amateur events throughout the year.

ST: What do find most enjoyable? What task is your least favorite and why?

Treadway: We enjoy hearing positive feedback whether it be from the pros or amateur teams about their experience at our complex and on our fields. It makes all the hard work and long hours of our dedicated staff, led by assistants Matt Eggerman and Matt Dierdorff, and lead groundskeepers, Cory Wilder and Johnny Simmons, all worth it.

I would say the least enjoyable part would be pulling tarp. With the unpredictable South Florida weather and a 170 professional game schedule, it makes for some grueling afternoons in the humidity and heat.

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

Treadway: My first turf job was at Cherokee Valley Golf Club in Olive Branch, MS under superintendent Rob Roy. I was very fortunate to be given an opportunity and it helped me decide my future career path. My first sports turf jobs were while enrolled at Mississippi State University in the turf program. I worked with Bart Prather on the athletic field crew for the Bulldogs. I did my first internship here at Roger Dean Stadium, under then head groundskeeper Marshall Jennings.

ST: What changes if any are you considering or implementing for the winning field in 2012?

Treadway: We are always trying to learn better and safer ways for all our athletes. We attend conferences and consult others in the industry to hear about changes and improvements. We are always looking to produce a more consistent infield skin playing surface with more than 200+ events yearly. This season

we are going to look into adding amendments. Time management is something we have to be very conscious of with our busy schedule. We are going to incorporate more vertical mowing this year during the season when we can to cut down on thatch and scalping on our Celebration bermuda.

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

Treadway: I think continuing education and research are going to keep being a big part of our job. With more fields being built, more athletes, more games, means we should keep raising awareness to constructing and maintaining safe and playable fields for our athletes for years to come. ■