

▼ Infinity Park crew & friends. L to R: Christi Clay with Jackson Bertrand; Carter Harryman, Noel Harryman, and Cole Harryman; and Joe Ferrera with Cael Ferrera.



Infinity Park, Glendale, Colorado

- **Level of Submission:** Schools/Parks
- **Category of Submission:** Sporting Grounds
- **Head Sports Turf Manager:** Noel Harryman
- **Title:** Manager, Turf Operations
- **Education:** Bachelor's Degree in Business Management
- **Experience:** 2002-2003 Landscape Supervisor (Fresh Aire Enterprises) 2002-2007 Material Supplier Manager/Designer (Landscape Solutions) 2007-2009 Project Manager (Graff's Turf Farms) (Fields worked on Coors, Invesco, Dicks, Folsom, Wrigley, Infinity Park, Haymarket) 2009-Current Manager Turf Operations
- **Other crew to recognize:** Josh Bertrand, Gene Hazlett, Vickie Allen, Kevin Brown, Matt McCord, Jody Yonke, Joe Ferrera, Christi Clay
- **Original construction:** 2007
- **Renovation:** Irrigation replacement on the playing surface. The laterals had to be lowered because they were not installed

according to the specs. The lines were punctured to deep tine aeration. The sod was stripped out along the laterals running east to west on the field and then new sod was installed. We were forced to use thick cut sod in order to be able to play on the surface shortly after the renovation.

- **Reason for renovation:** The renovation was done because of the punctured irrigation lines and because the original installation did not follow the irrigation specifications. The lines were anywhere from 4-8" depths. By lowering the laterals we are able to deep tine aerate up to 12" depth and still be safe. The city has also thought about putting in the Desso system in the grass and would not have been able to entertain this system without lowering the lines. The renovation went very well in 2011 and is barely noticeable at this point. In hindsight I would probably push to have the entire field pulled out and laser leveled and a complete resod. Pulling out a 4' wide area is difficult to get a perfect grade. We

still notice a few imperfections.

- **Turfgrass variety:** Midnight, Awesome, Impact, Nu-Destiny-Kentucky bluegrass (70%) Caddieshack, Accent, Top-Gun-perennial ryegrass (30%)
- **Overseed:** Overseeding is done with Kentucky bluegrass. The pitch is overseeded four times a year (last week of March, first week of May, mid-June, and the last week of August). The first three overseedings were done with 10#/1000 square feet and the last overseeding in August was done with 15#/1000 square feet. The seed mix is Midnight, Awesome, Impact, and NuDestiny Kentucky bluegrass. For divot repair we use a 1:3:1 ratio of pregerminated seed, USGA Sand, and fertilizer.
- **Rootzone composition:** 92% sand, 4% silt, 2% clay, 2% organic matter
- **Drainage:** GraviTURF designed by Dan Almond of Millennium Sports. Using 4" ADS drain pipe, located on 15' centers, set in pea gravel, 10" below surface.

CHALLENGES

The season opened this year on March 3, 2012. We had a fair amount of snow in February and one corner of our field remained frozen through January and February. We were hoping that the corner would thaw out enough to have a safe playing surface, however with 2 weeks until the season opener we were forced to come up with a different plan. We had to rent a heating system that they use to thaw the ground before they pour concrete. The system was very labor intensive and also expensive to rent. The thawing process took about a week to complete but we were able to get in the scheduled game and made sure the field was safe for play. On July 21 Newfield exploration rented the field and wanted to host a "retro Carnival." The company requested that a Ferris wheel be built on the field the morning of the event. This was very challenging for our team because it meant that a semi had to pull onto the field and setup. In the entrance to the field there is a bridge that was designed to come on and off just for this type of occasion. The bridge had not ever been removed since its installation which left us with a lot of unknowns. However, the bridge came on and on well and the plywood road with inca mat held up well and no damage was done to the field.

Rugby is a unique sport in that the game must go on. Games are played regardless of any limiting factors. There could be a foot of snow on the ground and they will still play.

Another challenge that we had was Colorado State asked to host a spring scrimmage at Infinity Park to try and rally the Denver alumni. The field was already scheduled for rugby tournaments the following day so we had to figure out how to effectively and efficiently flip the field from football to rugby. We spoke directly with the CSU coaching staff and convinced them that since it was only a practice to leave the goal posts where they were. This made the field 10 yards shorter than a normal field but no one knew because we did not paint numbers on the yardage markers. The evening after the practice we painted the football lines green (big thanks to Bret Baird Dicks Sporting Good Park on green paint selection) and then restriped the field for the next day.

Rugby is a unique sport in that the game must go on. Games are played regardless of any limiting factors. There could be a foot of snow on the ground and they will still play. The culture of rugby is that the players are tough and if there is an injury that is just part of the game. For example, during a rugby game if a player is hurt the play does not end until the ball is kicked out of play.

SportsTurf: What are your specific job responsibilities?

Harryman: My responsibilities at Infinity Park are to maintain a safe professional playing surface. We have one synthetic playing field and also sand-based natural grass field. Outside of taking care of these surfaces our department falls into public works so every day can be different from doing asphalt to water main breaks or taking care of one of our parks around the city.

ST: What do find most enjoyable?

Harryman: The finished product is what I find most enjoyable



about my job. I enjoy looking at a field that is freshly mowed and painted and ready for game time. I also enjoy the challenge of my job hosting different events and trying to figure out how to make everything work.

ST: What task is your least favorite and why?

Harryman: My least favorite part of my job is the winter when the field is covered up. Mainly because this time is spent away from the pitch and really what I enjoy doing most.

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ST: How did you get started in turf management?

Harryman: Before getting into strictly turf management I did landscaping install, design, and sales. A door opened up at Graff's Turf Farm for sports field renovation and I took the opportunity to focus solely on sports fields. After working there for a few years I realized that I wanted to be on a sports field every day.

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

Harryman: Graff's Turf Farm was really my first sports turf job. I worked there as a project manager and did sports field renovation. After this I joined the City of Glendale and became the assistant turf manager for Infinity Park.

ST: What are the major challenges in managing turf for so many different uses? What have you learned in the past 5 years to help you meet those challenges?

Harryman: The biggest challenge to managing a field that gets used in many different ways is that every event is different and comes with its own set of problems. It is important to try and figure out what areas need more attention and what protection to have in place. The biggest thing for any of the different uses that come in is to make sure to be proactive instead of trying to fix something that could have been prevented.

ST: What have you learned in the past 5 years to help you meet those challenges?

Harryman: I have learned that despite my aversion to meetings it is important to have a seat at the table and the planning stages of these events. It is way better to know what is coming down the pipe than to learn about on the day of an event.

ST: What changes if any are you considering or implementing for the winning field in 2013?

Harryman: One change that is going to take place this year is a reduced practice on the pitch this year at least in the spring. More practices will be held on the synthetic field giving us more time on the main field to get everything up and growing.

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

Harryman: As everyone else's job changes are always taking place. I think that the sports turf manager's position will always continually be asked to do more with less. ■

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