

BARNEY LOPAS USES CREATIVITY AND ELBOW GREASE TO PRESENT A WORLD-CLASS PLAYING SURFACE

Editor's note: This article was supplied by Adam Slick, Jacobsen's public relations & communications manager.

AS THE HOME BALLPARK OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL'S LOS ANGELES ANGELS OF ANAHEIM, Angel Stadium, built in 1966, is one of the most storied and beloved sports venues in America. Famous milestones attained at the park include Mickey Mantle's last game-winning home run, Nolan Ryan's nine straight strikeouts against the Boston Red Sox and Reggie Jackson's 500th career home run. The ballpark has also served as the backdrop for several motion pictures including "The Naked Gun," "Angels in the Outfield" and "The Fan."

Today, Angel Stadium continues its historic lineage as the home field for baseball superstar Albert Pujols, who is starting his second season with the Angels as first baseman. Upon his arrival in Anaheim, Pujols asked Head Groundskeeper Barney Lopas to remove some turf in front of first base.

"He prefers to have more dirt in front of him so throws from third base get a hard bounce off dirt instead of grass," said Lopas. "It wasn't really a big deal and I enjoyed doing it for him because he's such a nice guy."

Lopas is quite the baseball veteran himself, currently in his 16th season at Angel Stadium. He

followed in his brother's footsteps through turf-grass management, starting in Wisconsin, then working for the Houston Astros training facility in Florida, the Florida Marlins, and Richmond Braves before starting with the Angels in 1996.

Lopas' famous field of Tifway 419 bermuda-grass has the unfortunate distinction of being the only major professional sports field—baseball, football and soccer included—that sits on native soil without any drainage.

"It makes it really hard for us, but we deal with it," said Lopas. "We have to be careful not to overwater. Because the water has nowhere to go, we can easily get root rot and black layer. So we do quite a bit of hand watering. We also aerify twice a month to get the water and nutrients down into the soil."

Lopas will aerate before every home stand, and occasionally uses deep tines, going deeper as the season progresses. His infield mix comes from Stabilizer in Phoenix and is approximately 50% silt clay and 50% sand. He'll nail drag 100 bags of calcite clay into the top ½ inch of mix before the season starts. Lopas will also steam-roll before every home stand and roll first base every day with a 2.5 ton roller.

"After 16 years, I pretty much have it down to a science. In fact, my buddies tell me I'd screw up a sand-based field. They're probably right," said Lopas with a laugh.

In addition to a very comprehensive soil management strategy, Lopas has also developed some very innovative mowing patterns over the years. After 9/11, Lopas mowed a giant "USA" pattern into the outfield, using riding mowers and brooms to push the grass away from home plate inside the letters and his walk mowers going the other way for the outline.

"We've been using Jacobsen equipment for almost a decade," said Lopas. "They're the best machines I've ever used and the service we get from Jacobsen West is top notch. If we give them a call, they're out here the same day."

Lopas also uses his Jacobsen machines for some very strategic outfield mowing patterns. "To reduce lateral movement of balls moving through the grass [known as snaking], I only cross-cut behind the short stop and second baseman, leaving the areas in front of our outfielders with grass going in just two directions rather than four [see photo]. This gives the outfielders confidence knowing that bouncing balls coming their way will not snake."

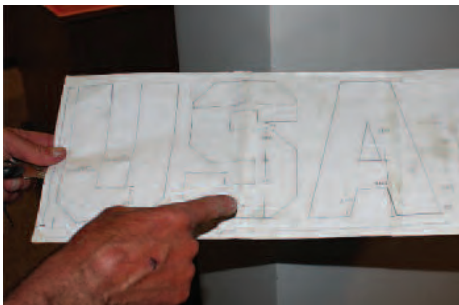
The strategy has been such a success that several other Major League teams have started using the same pattern.

Angels Owner Arte Moreno has also taken notice of Lopas' work and occasionally stops by to chat with the maintenance crew. During a post-game visit a few years ago, Moreno asked to

▼ **BARNEY LOPAS** operating a Jacobsen ECLIPSE 322 riding mower in the outfield.



◀ **BARNEY LOPAS**, Head Groundskeeper for the Anaheim Angels.



▲ **AFTER 9/11**, Lopas and his team mowed a giant USA in the outfield (top). The pattern started on a letter-sized template (bottom) he created to establish the dimensions. He mowed away from home plate inside the letters for the contrasting color, using a walk mower on the outlines.

use the non-existent restroom. One of the maintenance crew members replied that not only was there no bathroom, the crew didn't even have sink. Moreno was incredulous.

"Arte is a great, great owner and a wonderful guy," said Lopas. "He took me aside and said 'blow this place up and make it how you want it.'"

And that's exactly what Lopas did.

Half sports bar and half clubhouse, Lopas' maintenance office is an incredibly unique space. The main room is lined with authentic clubhouse lockers, complete with nameplate and number (year started) for each crew member. When the game is on, the guys watch the action from leather recliners perched in front of a huge flat-screen television.

But the creature comforts of home are important for Lopas because time off at this level just isn't an option. "I typically get here about 9 am and leave around 11 pm. My next day off will be in October. When you're grilling dogs on the Fourth of July or sleeping late on a Sunday morning, I'll be here," he said.

The grind of 81 home games provides all kinds of challenges for Lopas and his team. But like so many other turfgrass managers around the country, it's a vocation that's in his blood. Each day is another opportunity to prepare a world-class playing surface for the Angels.

A small red and dusty iron sign that hangs in the maintenance office sums it all up in just five words: "Rake like a champion today." ■

▼ **WHEN ALBERT PUJOLS** arrived in Anaheim last year, his one request of Lopas was to remove some grass in front of first base so that throws from the third baseman would bounce on dirt instead of grass. Lopas was happy to oblige the superstar, who he calls a "really nice guy."



▼ **A FEW YEARS AGO**, Lopas created a mowing pattern that reduces ball snaking in the outfield. By cross-cutting the only areas behind the short stop and second baseman (where very few balls sneak through), it allows him to mow the outfielder areas in just two directions – thus reducing the chance a bouncing ball will move laterally on its way to an outfielder.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HIGHER ETHANOL FUEL AND YOUR EQUIPMENT FLEET

By Kris Kiser

TURF AND FIELD MANAGERS must operate and maintain a host of outdoor power and small engine equipment, from mowers and blowers to utility vehicles, generators and trimmers. Along with safety and reliability, managers want equipment to enjoy a long product lifecycle. Through regular maintenance, one expects that equipment lasts long enough to more than payback on the original investment.

However, in the coming year, a new higher ethanol fuel, called Ethanol 15 (E15), will likely appear in gas stations across the country. Although mandated by law, when used in turf and grounds equipment, E15 can cause engine failure and damage product[DASH HERE]bringing your product lifecycle to an abrupt halt.

WHY HIGHER ETHANOL FUEL?

Energy independence and domestic security gave rise to fuels legislation. Signed into law in 2007, Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) program regulations were developed in collaboration

with refiners, renewable fuel producers, and many other stakeholders. Created under the Energy Policy Act (EPA), EPA was tasked with reaching the RFS requirement of 7.5 billion gallons of renewable-fuel to be blended into gasoline by 2012 and growing to 15 billion gallons of ethanol. As a result, ethanol use has been mandated by law.

The challenge has been that the underlying assumptions used to develop the RFS were not met.

For example, many believed that an E85 auto fleet and E85 infrastructure would expand and gasoline use would continue to climb and that E85 would absorb the mandated ethanol. Yet, E85 demand and availability remains low.

Further assumptions that have fallen short are:

- Flex fuel vehicles that use E85 have not expanded rapidly enough
- E85 use is not expanding
- Gasoline consumption peaked in 2007

and continues to fall, and

- Advanced and cellulosic fuels (non corn ethanol) are not available.

So why are you hearing that there will be 15% ethanol on the market although we know that it can damage outdoor power equipment used by your grounds crews?

THE BACK AND FORTH ON ETHANOL 15

In 2009, Growth Energy, an ethanol industry trade group, petitioned the EPA to raise the limit on ethanol in gasoline from 10 to 15%. Since gas consumption was falling and E85 was not taking hold, they wanted to increase the allowable level of ethanol to create more demand in the marketplace and to meet ever increasing ethanol mandates.

Understanding the corrosive effects of higher levels of ethanol, several engine product and auto manufacturers, including the outdoor power equipment, motorcycle and boating industry, urged EPA to be deliberative in its review process, and assure, with thorough

and adequate testing, that E15 would not harm existing products or pose safety risks.

As expected, Department of Energy testing of mid-level ethanol blends on outdoor power equipment and marine engines demonstrated performance irregularities, heat increases, and engine failure on tested product.

Unfortunately, the EPA moved forward to grant a partial waiver, the first-ever decision to bifurcate the gasoline marketplace. EPA initially wanted to issue a partial waiver approving the sale of gasoline containing 15% ethanol (E15) for 2007 model year and newer passenger cars and light trucks. This waiver was then amended to approve E15 for 2001 model year and newer passenger cars and light trucks. (*Automobile manufacturers refute this claim.)

Although E15 is specifically [START ITAL]not[END ITAL] approved for any non-road use, the outdoor power equipment industry recognized the danger of a partial waiver.

By approving E15 use in a subset of engines on the road, there is a high risk that consumers and businesses will unknowingly or mistakenly put E15 in products for which it has not been approved.

Remember the old saying: “What goes in the car, goes in the gerry can, and then goes in the mower?” Well, with E15, that doesn’t apply any longer to mowers or to any small engine equipment for that matter.

And, the totality of EPA’s education effort on E15 is a “3-by-3-inch” attention label at the gas pump. This will be wholly inadequate to keep not only turf managers, but their crews, from mis-fueling.

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As a result, on December 20, 2010, a newly formed Engine Products Group comprising the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (AIA), The Association of International Automobile Manufacturers, Inc. (AIAM), the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), and the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI)

filed a petition challenging the EPA’s decision to grant a partial waiver approving the sale of gasoline containing E15 for 2007 model year and newer passenger cars and light trucks.

In 2012, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit denied a rehearing on a suit brought forth by the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM) and OPEI stating that neither group could prove they had been “harmed” by EPA’s decision to allow E15 fuel and therefore, didn’t have ‘standing.’

This ruling alarmed the outdoor power equipment industry since the judges wanted to see personal or economic injury before they could take action, despite the fact that the EPA itself has admitted there will be mis-fueling

STEC Equipment announces new manufacturing alliances

STEC Equipment is excited to announce another strong year with positive growth. Since changing company names in 2009, from BLEC USA to STEC Equipment, we have forged many new partnerships and have our strongest equipment offering to date.

New for 2013, we are proud to announce several new manufacturing alliances, venturing into new territory and exploring new markets. The first of our new alliances is Trench It, a New Zealand-based manufacturer of trenchers and other drainage related equipment. Known for their unmatched build quality, Trench It machines also offer a host of options including conveyor clean up systems, electric over hydraulic controls and chains manufactured right here in the USA. This greatly increases availability and quality of replacement parts.

We have also launched a new range of roller mowers from UK manufacturer Broadwood International. Branded Wessex Pro-Line, these mowers offer a variety of features and come in a host of sizes from 4 ft to over 18ft of mowing width. Most mowers are rear discharge and fitted with free-swinging blade tips. Blade tip speeds of approximately 18,000 rpm guarantee a high quality of cut and great finish. In both 3-pt hitch and towed models, there are machines to fit any mowing need.

As always STEC is on the forefront of bringing the latest European innovations here to America. We are also offering several new items from our other manufacturers. GKB Machines, producer of the Combinator (frazze-mower) and Eco Dresser (recy-

cling dresser), have created the first-ever aerator for synthetic turf. This machine offers a ground-driven system that de-compacts both crumb rubber and sand-based infill systems. Initial testing shows that the aerator can reduce compaction approximately 10% in Gmax standards. This allows you to bring fields that are unplayable back to a usable condition and lengthening the life of your synthetic surface.

Trilo of Holland has introduced an economical range of their debris clean up equipment. With blowers producing as much CFM as any comparable blower on the market, and new turf vacuum sweeper capable of collecting almost any debris, Trilo has made their high quality products available at an affordable price.

Until now, these products have only been available directly from STEC Equipment’s home base in South Carolina. New for 2013, STEC is also pleased to announce a new dealer network stretching across America and into Canada. While constantly growing, we will be represented by the following: Storr Tractor (NY, NJ); Show Turf (FL); A-OK Turf Equipment (RI); Commercial Turf and Tractor (NE, IA, MO, KS, AR); Bonneville County Implement (ID); Turf and Industrial (Northern CA); and Canada-based G.C. Duke (Ontario). These dealers will have access to our full product range including infield groomers, RotaDairon Soil Renovators, GKB Machines, topdressers, laser graders and systems, Trilo, Reist, Trench It, and much more.

and engine and product failures with E15, and a variety of interests (lawn and garden, auto, power sports, motorcycle and marine equipment) have come out against the use of E15.

Insisting on the right to protect consumers before they get hurt economically or personally, The Engine Products Group filed a petition on March 25, 2013, asking the US Supreme Court to review the DC Circuit Court of Appeals' August 2012 decision that none of the trade associations or parties had standing in the case. The group is challenging the EPA decision to grant partial waivers approving the sale of gasoline containing E15 for 2001 model year and newer passenger cars and light trucks. The Court of Appeals dismissed the case for lack of jurisdiction in August 2012.

This appeal to the Supreme Court reflects the seriousness of this issue for the outdoor power equipment and small engine industry. We feel strongly that this challenge to the E-15 partial waiver needs to be considered on its merits, and not held back on a procedural issue.

In the meantime, other movements are underway to halt E15 sales.

- AAA's (Triple A) has called for the sale and

use of E15 to be suspended until additional gas pump labeling and consumer education efforts are implemented to mitigate problems for motorists and their vehicles.

- Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) introduced H.R. 875, which would require the EPA to stop the use of gasoline containing 15 percent ethanol until its harmful effects are investigated further.

- The Coordinating Research Council released a January 2013 report outlining fuel test results that show E15 fuel can damage fuel system components.

- OPEI has formed an industry task group to study the best and most effective ways to communicate the challenges and risks associated with using E15 to the public.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO RIGHT NOW

Turf managers should visit www.OPEI.org/ethanolwarning for more information and make sure employees are clear on the dangers of fueling up outdoor power equipment with anything greater than 10 percent ethanol fuel.

Specifically, turf managers should:

- Read and follow the owner's manual. The owner's manual will clearly explain what fuels can be used to ensure a properly functioning product.

- Not put any fuel containing more than 10 percent (E10) in small engine products, unless otherwise stated.

- Check the gas pump to be sure that it is dispensing E10. Some gas pumps at local gas stations may offer both E10 and E15, or have blender pumps that dispense mid-level ethanol fuels for "flex-fuel" automobiles. Higher ethanol fuel may be less expensive than regular E10 fuel, but putting E15 into an E10 approved product could cause product failure and void its warranty.

- Not assume that the fuel they put in their vehicle can also be dispensed in their gasoline can. Be sure that the gas can is filled only with E10 fuel. ■

Kris Kiser is president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, an international trade association representing 90 small engine, utility vehicle and outdoor power equipment manufacturers and suppliers of consumer and commercial outdoor power equipment.

Toro Pro Force blowers make debris gone with the wind

The new Toro Pro Force is the most powerful single nozzle turbine-type debris blower in its class. This air power provides fast removal of grass clippings, leaves, aeration cores, or other unwanted debris from your sports fields, golf course or other maintained turf areas, and hard surface areas such as park trails, parking lots or golf car paths.

The Toro Company



Turf Tidy 3000

The Turf Tidy 3000 from Redexim North America is one of the most versatile machines built today. It incorporates dethatching, flail mowing, core collection and debris clean up applications into one machine. The Turf Tidy's fully floating cutting head follows the grounds' contours, ensuring accurate cutting and pick-up. The unique turbo fan makes a clean sweep of leaves, pine needles, paper, aeration cores and grass clippings. The large hopper means less time emptying and its high lift allows greater clearance when tipping; it will easily dump into a utility vehicle or dumpster. The large turf tires mean less ground pressure even with a full hopper.

Redexim North America



Wiedenmann sweeper/blowers

To aid in the clean-up process, there are some new machines on the market that help with this clean-up process. The new Super 600 high dump is a heavy-duty sweeper/verticutter/flail mower collection system by Wiedenmann which is much like the Super 500; however, it has an increased hopper capacity of approximately 80%. The multi-purpose head allows for sweeping, verticutting, and flail mowing while collecting clippings into a 5.9 cubic yard hopper with a high dump reach up to 83". Another new product to aid in the clean-up process is the Mega Twister blower, which has approximately 14,500 CFMs and can swivel 270° on the ground. A third new product for sweeping artificial turf is the new Terra Clean 100 ground driven sweeper. The rotary brush of the Terra Clean 100 brings debris and some crumb rubber or infill onto a vibrating screen that separates the debris from the crumb rubber. The crumb rubber is redistributed back onto the field. This machine can be used either indoors or outdoors with just about any type of tow vehicle.

Wiedenmann North America

