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sportsTURF Magazine

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MAIN EVENTS

10 PALM BEACH POLO CLUB OFFERS SPORT OF PRINCES

When Prince Charles of England married Diana, the president of Palm Beach Polo Club gave the couple the use of a villa at the exclusive Florida club. The architect and the field manager at the club describe the design and care of the polo fields.

12 MEETING COACHES' NEEDS IS THE GAME AT PENN STATE

As a student at Pennsylvania State University, Bob Hudzik didn't realize that one day he would be responsible for Beaver Stadium, the campus grounds, and 65 acres of intramural fields. A major part of his rise in turfdom at the university was due to his attention to coaches and their needs regarding field care.

20 BASEBALL AND RYEGRASS FIT THE NEED IN NORTH TEXAS

Baseball's season of play and the growth pattern of bermudagrass just don't fit together well in many parts of the South. Bill Knoop of Texas A&M and eight area high schools are instead trying perennial ryegrass baseball fields. Knoop calls it the annual concept and thinks the result will be better fields during baseball season.

26 MILKSHAKE TURF STANDS UP TO DOWNPOURS AND THE KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

A three-layer rootzone called a milkshake is the choice of George and Chip Toma for the Kansas City Chiefs practice field at William Jewell College in Liberty, MO. Part of the irony of the Chiefs caring so much about their natural fields in Liberty, is the fact their home field at Arrowhead Stadium is artificial. The Tomas have to know how to keep both natural and artificial in top condition.

LINE-UP

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COVER: Firm footing is critical in polo for the balance of the horse and the player. Photo courtesy of the Palm Beach Polo and Country Club.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER



I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to thank all of you for the overwhelming response we have received on our premiere issue of **sportsTURF** magazine. We have received thousands of return cards.

I must thank our advertisers who had the courage to accept a new dimension in the turf marketing area, and to back it up with dollars. This shows a confidence I hope we never betray.

But it is you the reader who is most important. If we don't fill your needs . . . if we can't relate to what you are doing and be able to tell your story, then we are on the wrong track.

Based on the response we have received, I am pleased to say that we are on the right track. It is to you that we pledge to put our best effort forward to make this publication meaningful to you.

The sports turf market encompasses many different sports played on different types of turf surfaces. From golf to polo to baseball to soccer to football to park recreational areas . . . the common bond being the management of large, high-traffic turf areas. Here is where professional help is required.

Safe sports turf should be foremost in the minds of those who tend the fields and coach the players. Yes, even management must be made more aware of the importance of safer sports turf and how it can prolong a player's career. However you look at it, the responsibility usually lies with the field manager. These people toil endlessly throughout the year to maintain their fields. Yet these unsung professionals have a tendency to be overlooked- perhaps ignored is a better word.

For the past dozen or so years, a controversy has existed regarding the use of natural and artificial turf. I am partial to natural turf. Maybe its because I have been involved in this market for the past twenty years. I do however try to keep an open mind. I try to look at both surfaces objectively. There is no question that artificial turf has its place in sports indoor stadiums. It is there that artificial turf cannot be grown successfully, i.e. I do feel that wherever natural turf can be used it should be. Playing surfaces should have eye appeal, and that is the point artificial sales use best. However, I know that with professional management, natural turf playing surfaces can have even better eye appeal.

I'm not knocking artificial turf, but some of the reasons why stadiums use it do not make sense.

First, it is more expensive to install than natural turf. Second, it certainly is not any less expensive to maintain, especially when you consider that it is washed periodically, cleaned occasionally, and requires a capital expenditure for equipment. It does wear and eventually needs to be replaced. That requires another major expenditure.

What seems to make artificial turf desirable is television. The demands put on stadiums by television surely do not have the players best interests at heart. Their concern is that they send back a good picture to their audience.

The new generation of artificial turf has some improvements in helping to cushion a fall. But cementing a thin piece of carpet to blacktop is hard to play on, it is even harder if one falls.

This market needs to be looked at with a different point of view. There are a number of different ways to approach the subject. We should be objective.

We all need to continuously seek the challenge to ensure safe sports turf. From myself and our entire **sportsTURF** staff, we would like to wish you all Happy Holidays!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis E. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a background of horizontal lines.



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REBOUND

LETTERS FROM READERS

Bravo! Just read your premiere issue of **sportsTURF** and must say—well done. I especially enjoyed the article on artificial turf. I discussed rugs versus grass with several turf managers and have been told that carpets can be harder to maintain than natural turf. You might want to follow up with an article based on interviews with grounds maintenance managers of professional baseball and football teams about what's involved in keeping the plastic grass in top condition for longer life.

I look forward to reading upcoming issues. Please keep them coming.

Robert Tracinski, Public Relations Department

Deere & Company, Moline, IL

Congratulations on your first issue. I share your excitement and enthusiasm for this new publication. I'm proud to be one of your advisory board members and will do all I can to continue the pace set by your first issue. It's just great!

William B. Knoop, Extension Turf Specialist

Texas A&M University, Dallas, TX

Congratulations on your new publication. Looks great!

Cheryl Van Vliet, Communications Director

Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Washington, D.C.

Congratulations on your **sportsTURF** magazine. Looks good.

Paul Voykin, Superintendent,

Briarwood Country Club, Deerfield, IL

Golf is golf is golf. Sports turf can be golf, football, baseball, soccer, bowling, tennis, and so on down the list. Won't it be great when every sport played on grass can look to a central source where all the data and answers can be found?

Total consolidation of turfgrass interests and total cooperation among agencies will be the answer to efficient operation of research and education facilities for sports turf.

Those of us who are involved in Safer Sports Turf feel fortunate to have a close working relationship with the new **sportsTURF** publication.

Fred V. Grau, President,

The Musser International Turfgrass Foundation

College Park, MD

We are very impressed with the first issue received of your **sportsTURF** magazine. It would be greatly appreciated if you would send a sample copy to our campus coordinator of plant operations.

David L. Ross, Director of Athletics, Suffolk Community College, Selden, NY

Congratulations to you and your staff for having the guts to proceed with your vision relative to the need for a viable magazine to service the sports turf marketplace. If your first issue is any indication, I think you have hit "a home run."

Please allow me to make some comments which are dear to my heart.

I read with great interest the editorial in your premiere issue about the Sports Illustrated issue of August 12, concerning artificial turf. Let me say up front that our Enkaturf System positions my company on the natural side of the fence.

Since we are all aware of the power of the advertising dollar, the artificial turf proponents have had a field day over the past 10-15 years. Whenever a stadium is in the decision making process, the artificial turf people rally their forces as one, and there is no one out there who represents the other side of the fence. A number of small players do present the information about their products (seed companies, watering systems, etc.) but there is no unified front to counteract the artificial turf guys.

Two specific comments about your article. No matter what the artificial turf guys would like us to believe, the issue concerning greater incidence of injury on artificial turf is well-documented.

Point of fact one: The settlement of the player's strike several years ago included a paragraph in which it was agreed by the Owners and Players Association that a joint task force would be formed to decide whether a moratorium should be placed on the installation of any additional artificial turf fields. To the best of my knowledge, this task force has never been formed.

Point of fact two: I am told by some very knowledgeable people that the European Soccer Federation refuses to play on artificial turf in the U.S. on any of their tours.

Second, your article as well as the Sports Illustrated article both missed the key issue that in my opinion is the major reason for the continued increase in the use of artificial turf—the power of the television media! They don't care about injuries, they don't care about anything

except their ratings, and their tremendous buying power has been used to pressure the stadiums into installing artificial turf.

I hope your new magazine will at least consider taking a stand on this issue. We need the facts presented fairly, representing both sides of the argument. Then let the chips fall where they may.

Again, good luck with your new venture. We at American Enka will look forward to working with you in the future.

P. L. Skoglund, Jr., Director, Enka Geomatrix Systems, Enka, NC

The best thing I've ever read on turf problems and maintenance. Keep 'em coming.

Maxie Tyndall, Director of Parks and Recreation

Elizabethtown, N.C.

Being so busy, I was glad to get **sportsTURF** magazine and to see that you are there. I missed you in *Weeds Trees & Turf*.

The magazine is great! Your entire staff should be congratulated; people around the world need a good magazine devoted to athletic fields. We need to get the word to people involved in athletic fields. As is my speech, I always bring up that the athletic director, business manager, general manager, head of parks and recreation, and even the owner of professional teams should get involved.

George Toma, Turf Manager, Kansas City Chiefs, Kansas City, MO

I would like to congratulate you on your new publication. I have just finished reading it and feel you have a lot to be proud of. It is a nicely written magazine and I am sure it will be an outstanding success, and a great contribution to the industry.

Avram Ben-Yehuda, President, Irri-Trol Manufacturing, Inc., Valencia, CA

I was at a resort the other day and saw your first issue of **sportsTURF** and was very impressed. I am a chemical, fertilizer, grass seed, and parts distributor for Northern Michigan calling on some 100 school systems and cities using large turf areas for football, baseball and many other outdoor sports.

Tom Reed, President Tri-Turf, Traverse City, MI

EVENTS

CALENDAR

JANUARY

8-10 North Carolina Annual Turf-grass Conference, Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem, N.C. Contact Leon Lucas, North Carolina State University, (919) 737-2712.

8-9 Indiana Golf Course Superintendents Association, annual two day seminar, Holiday Inn North, Indianapolis, IN. Contact J. L. Harris, IGCSA, (317) 736-7226.

14 Turf Basics Short Course, University of Florida Extension Service Auditorium, Orlando, FL. Contact Uday Yadav, (305) 420-3265.

14 University of California Horticulture Short Course, evenings through February 13, held at three different locations in the Los Angeles area. Contact Ed McNeil, 2492 E. Mountain St., Pasadena, CA 91104, (818) 798-1715.

14-17 Golf Course Association Annual Meeting, Palm Springs, CA, (312) 644-6610.

26 Super Bowl XX, Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans, LA

27-3 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and Sports Turf Managers Association combined conference and show, Moscone Convention Center, San Francisco, CA. Sports Turf Program Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 1-2. (913) 841-2240.

MARCH

20 Sports Turf Clinic and Equipment Rodeo, Ranger Stadium, Arlington, TX. There will be three hours of instruction and demonstration of equipment. Contact Bill Knoop, Texas A&M, 17360 Coit Rd., Dallas, TX 75252. (214) 231-5362.

27 Third Annual Sports Turf Institute and Trade Show, California Polytechnic University, Pomona; in cooperation with the Sports Turf Managers Association. Contact Kent Kurtz or Mary Giles, (714) 598-4167, or 598-4168.

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE



MAKING SPORTS TURF HISTORY

I find it hard to understand after 12 years of covering the turf industry, why the sports turf market has been so neglected. After speaking with many extension agents and sports field managers, it was clear they felt the same way. After all, isn't quality, safe sports turf important to society?

Not all sports turf is forgotten. The gridirons of major college and professional football games and major league baseball have become monuments to the importance of sports to Americans.

Perhaps the apparent health and success of these athletic facilities makes the public assume all is well with all sports turf. It is too easy to forget the condition of the fields not shown on television.

But as I dig deeper into this double standard for fields, there are signs that the public is beginning to wake up. More and more sports facilities are reevaluating the condition of their fields. Transition is definitely underway.

Still, what took the market so long to wake up? An interesting idea comes to mind. Try imagining that you are a student sitting in an agronomy class in 2,000 A.D. listening to the instructor describe the sports turf market of the 1980s. Might he say something like this?

"In the 20th Century, the world of sports turf was in chaos. Sports field managers were broken into rebel groups, some blindly worshipping artificial turf. A few managers tried any new field concept without question. Confusion, and a lack of standard construction and maintenance specifications, caused many to ignore all recommendations for field care, leaving fields in primitive condition.

"Many athletes had their careers shortened by poor sports surfaces. Far too many fields were in pitiful condition causing injuries to kids anxious to develop their sports skills. Sports turf managers needed leadership.

Will that professor say that chaos ended in the '80s, that the market got organized, and all available technology was put to use? If letters from our readers are any indication, the answer is a resounding yes!

We are all getting it together. Let's not blame artificial turf for every injury. You have to admit, the owners of artificial turf fields at least recognize the need to invest in the field surface. In many cases, they chose artificial turf because of a lack of agreement on how to make natural fields meet professional appearance and playability standards.

We can't say that about those who build fields with no consideration to modern technology, those who deny the field manager the necessary money to maintain them, and those who think they can cut corners on field construction and care and get away with it.

To me, these people are the main problem with the industry. Their rehearsed excuse is always "We don't have the budget for proper field construction and care." My question to them is, "Do you have the budget for higher insurance premiums, lawyers in the event of an injury on fields inadequately cared for, or regular reconstruction because fields fall apart for lack of maintenance?"

I believe strongly that, with needed information, sports turf managers can build a strong case to their superiors for more investment in field construction and maintenance. They can overcome artificial turf worship. They can be the leading edge in a fight for better and safer fields.

In the year 2,000, an agronomy professor will tell his students that sports turf came alive in the 1980s and in the '90s achieved a status equal to golf course maintenance. And those students will go on to become sports turf managers working with advanced technology.

Bruce F. Shank

Palm Beach Polo Club

By Ron Garl and JoAnne Dyer

When Prince Charles of England married his Diana in a resplendent ceremony at St. Paul's Cathedral in London in 1981, they received a highly unusual wedding present, but one that the Prince especially cherished.

William Ylvisaker, president of the Palm Beach Polo Club, gave the couple the use of a villa at the exclusive Palm Beach Polo and Country Club if they should ever be in that posh Florida neighborhood.

Finally, on November 12 of this year, the Prince and Princess of Wales dropped by to enjoy their gift while Charles indulged his princely passion for polo—and scored a goal for the winning team.

Charles ignored a stray shot that whacked him in the right shoulder as he scored his second-half goal for the Palm Beach polo team, a goal that made the crucial difference as the prince and his teammates defeated an all-star squad in an 11-10 squeaker.

All in all, it was a much more rewarding game than his last foray at the Palm Beach Polo Club in 1980, when he had to be treated for heat exhaustion.

Presumably holding their breath on the sidelines as the prince chased the four-ounce ball over the field were Hal Porcher, director of turf care and maintenance for the ten polo fields, and his colleague, Leroy Newman, head superintendent at the Polo Club. Newman manages the 20-man crew that keeps the turf immaculate and as accident-free as humanly possible. A serious spill during the royal visit, as the prince's visit focused world attention on the club, would have been reported around the globe.

Fortunately the two men and the crew had done their work well, and the turf didn't let them—or the prince—down.

There was one heart-stopping moment early in the match when Charles nearly fell off his horse. However, he managed to recover and pull his mount upright, to the immense relief of the crowd of 12,000.

Clearly the prince was enjoying himself thoroughly as he sped over the immaculately groomed turf. Wearing a bright green shirt labeled No. 4, he played defensive back, using a string of thoroughbred polo horses—which had been chosen for him by his polo manager.

Polo horses weigh a hefty 1,200 pounds and streak across the field at 25 mph, which means that when two of them collide—as they are carefully trained to do when necessary—a one-ton-plus, 50 mph force could make mincemeat of the turf if it were not in top shape.

Indeed, polo is the roughest imaginable



Polo ponies, weighing a hefty 1,200 pounds, streak across the field at 25 mph. They are trained to collide with other horses when necessary.

sport when it comes to torturing the turf, even under the best of circumstances. During Charles' match a billboard flashed between every period (called a chukker) to inform all those present, "It's divot-stopping time." That was the signal for hasty on-the-spot repairs to the Tifway (T-419) bermudagrass field, as divots were replaced across its ten acres—vast as seven football fields.

After the match, divots removed during play would be filled with a mixture of 60 percent dark sand and 40 percent muck. The dark sand mixture is used for aesthetic purposes. When the divots have been filled, loose divots are pulverized by mowing and scattered over the playing area. The fields are then topdressed with sand and a boxblade is used to smooth the surface. Finally, after the fields have been topdressed and smoothed, they are fertilized and watered. Soluble nitrogen fertilizer is injected into the irrigation system once a week during the polo season.

The season runs from December through April, but nobody expected Charles to wait till December to indulge his love of the princely sport—which is kept exclusive not so much by snobbery as by the need for a player to support a

hay-loving string of half-ton eating machines all year round.

As one of the world's richest young men, that presents no problem to the prince, who plays with a four handicap out of a possible ten. He is "sort of a good-to-very-good player," says Michael Shea, press secretary for Buckingham Palace.

Diana, the Princess of Wales, kept her eyes on Charles as he galloped across the close-cropped, emerald-green turf. Watching anxiously to be sure that her husband was not hit by a mallet or toppled from his horse, she presumably could not have cared less about all the work that had gone into preparing the field for this memorable day. However, in a sense every day is special for the crew that keeps the polo fields in shape at the Palm Beach Polo and Country Club.

After all, this is one of the premier polo clubs in the United States. Situated on 1,650 acres of lushly wooded terrain on Florida's Gold Coast, it is a world-class resort that plays host to some of the world's most prestigious polo tournaments. They include the \$100,000 World Cup Championships and the United States Polo Association's Gold Cup Tournament.