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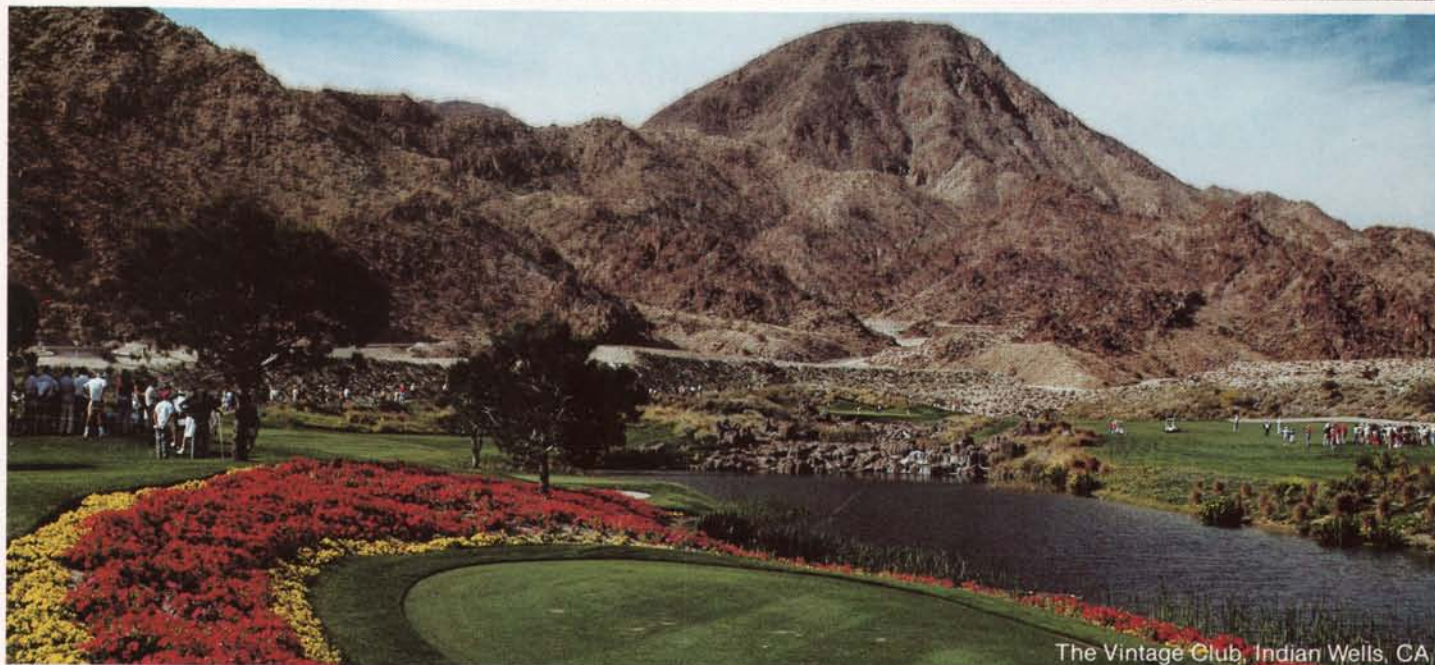
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sportsTURF

PROGRAM

VOLUME ONE, NUMBER ONE

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1985

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FROM THE PUBLISHER



It is my pleasure to be able to introduce you to our premiere issue of **sportsTURF**. So that we all start off from the same position let me give you a little insight into who we are and where we came from.

I was living on Long Island in the metropolitan New York area when in 1961, I became involved with the first lawn care company of the modern era. I moved to New Jersey in 1963 and continued my involvement with lawn care (in those days it was barely in the embryonic stages). In 1966, I moved to the west coast and opened a western branch of that lawn care company. By 1975, we had 15 franchises operating in Southern California.

As things progressed I became more involved with landscaping, irrigation and turf management. I hold a California State Contractors License from the State of California, exactly nine years ago, to the date, we introduced our first publication, **LANDSCAPE & IRRIGATION**. When L&I moved from a western regional to a national publication, we felt it would be impossible to cover the entire spectrum of the turf/landscape/irrigation industry. **LANDSCAPE & IRRIGATION** directs its editorial content to the needs of the landscape contractor, irrigation contractor, landscape architect, etc. Oh, sure, occasionally we did a feature on golf courses or sports turf, but the emphasis was and still is on the professional contractor.

In 1980, we started a journal called **ARBOR AGE**. This publication is geared to the needs of the urban tree care industry. In 1984, we took over **IRRIGATION JOURNAL**, a magazine which addresses itself to irrigation as it pertains to agriculture. During this period I have watched our industry grow from seven billion dollars annually to over 17 billion dollars annually today. It was my opinion that no one publication could truly cover all aspects of an industry this size. It is impossible to cover sports turf, golf courses, commercial and residential landscapes, and do them all well.

sportsTURF was born out of a need to address the problems of this segment of the industry. We hope to help communicate information on all aspects of high-traffic, large turf areas.

As I was formulating the concept in my mind, I ran into Bruce Shank. Bruce as many of you know was executive editor at another trade publication. He was actively involved in helping form the Sports Turf Managers Association. As Bruce became more involved, he too realized the need for a publication to serve this segment. It was logical that we join forces.

sportsTURF is a special magazine for a special market. Although the problems that confront the stadium manager may vary with the sport and differ somewhat from the golf course superintendent or resort manager, the common interest is that they manage large, high-traffic turf areas. This requires special skills. It is to these skilled professionals — recreation and sports stadium managers, golf course superintendents, greenskeepers and groundskeepers at colleges, parks and universities — that **sportsTURF** magazine is directed. We would like you to consider **sportsTURF** your publication. We encourage your comments. If you feel we are missing the mark please let us know.

Many academicians who are involved with turf at the various universities have expressed a strong feeling about the work we are doing and the area we are about to jump into with both feet.

Recently Sports Illustrated ran a 20 page feature article on ersatz turf. I believe this article pointed out the necessity of a trade journal like **sportsTURF**. As we all know, publications depend on advertising to help make it happen. Without advertisers, either the subscription cost would be prohibitive or there would be no publication. I want to personally thank all our charter advertisers for having the courage to support such an endeavor and for having the foresight in seeing the need to address this portion of the market.

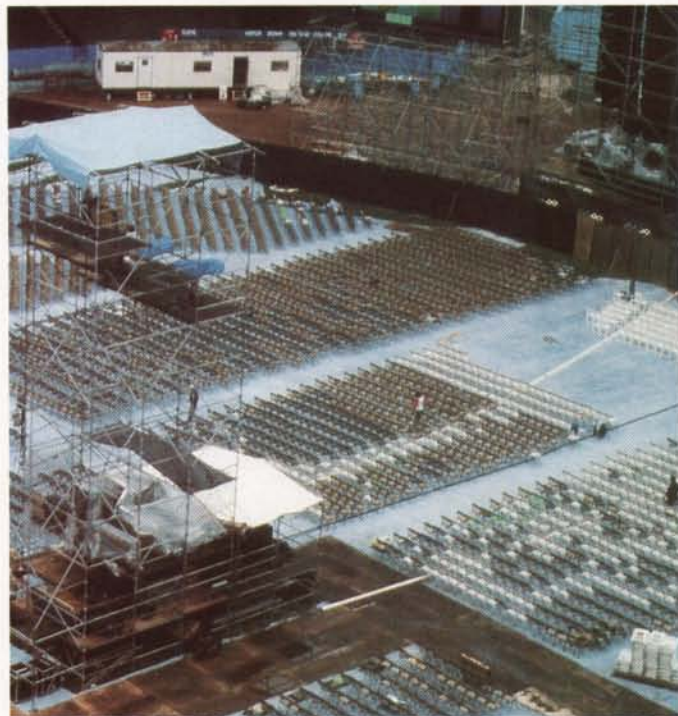
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Shank".

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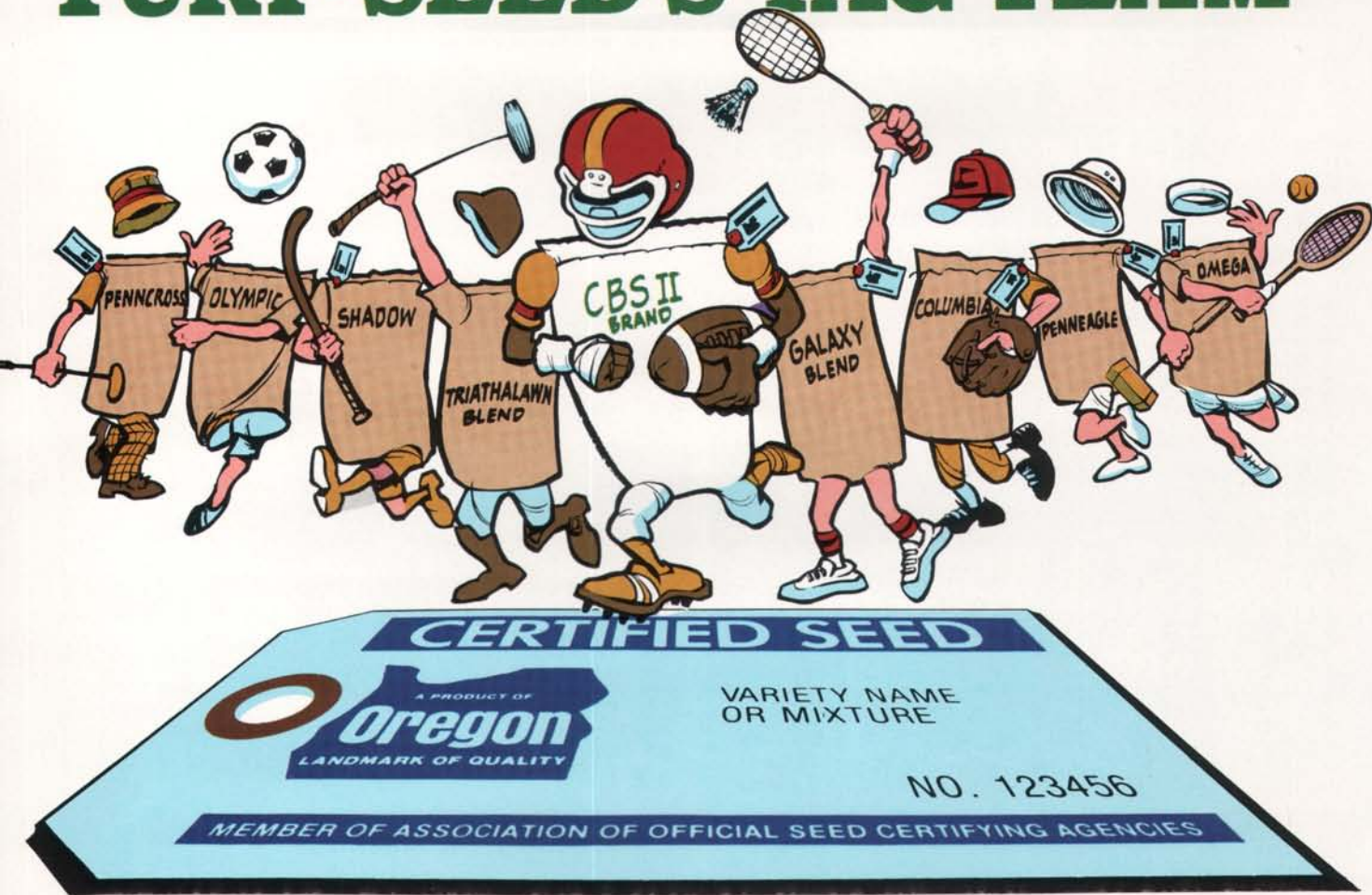
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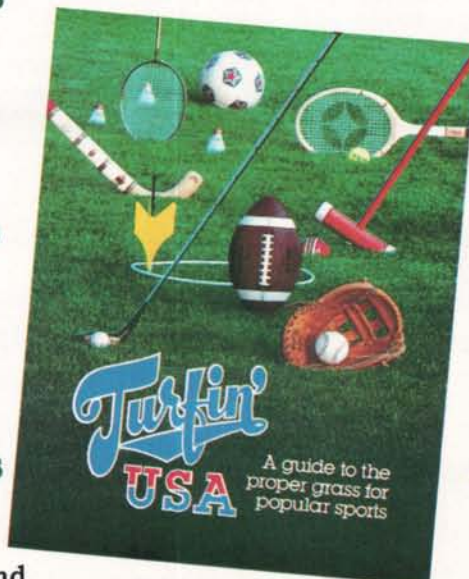
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EVENTS

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

9-10 25th Annual Southern California Turfgrass and Landscape Equipment & Materials Education Exposition, Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa

12-15 American Society of Landscape Architects 85th Annual Meeting and Educational Exhibit, Cincinnati Convention Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, (202) 466-7730

20-23 73rd Conference and Trade Show of the Professional Grounds Management Society, Flagship Inn, Arlington, Tex., (201) 653-2742

29-30 Athletic Field Seminars, Anaheim Holiday Inn, Anaheim, Ca., (415) 898-1281

29 Sports Turf Information Forum of the Musser Foundation USDA Research Center, Beltsville, Md., (301) 344-3655

NOVEMBER

3-7 National Institute on Parks and Grounds Management Annual Conference, Holiday Inn, Worlds Fair & Conference Center, Knoxville, Tn., (414) 733-2301

12-13 Athletic Field Seminar San Francisco Holiday Inn San Francisco, Ca., (415) 898-1281

DECEMBER

2-5 New Jersey Turfgrass Expo '85, Resorts International Hotel, Atlantic City, N.J., (201) 932-9453

JANUARY

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

26 Super Bowl XX Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans, La.

27 Golf Course Superintendents Association Annual Conference San Francisco, Ca., (913) 841-2240

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

COCK THE GUN, THE RACE IS ABOUT TO START



Welcome to **sportsTURF** magazine, the publication devoted entirely to sports turf! It's my job to help you do your job and to keep you informed of new trends and techniques.

You may ask, "Why a new magazine?" Until this first issue, the only publications covering the problems and technology of sports turf were either coaches magazines, general landscape or grounds care publications, or magazines that really focus on food service, general services, or janitorial

maintenance. These magazines devote very little space to the needs of the playing surface and the people responsible for it.

The future of sports turf as part of the American recreation scene is more solid than ever. Current usage is wearing fields out at a rapid pace. More and better built fields are urgently needed. The problem can no longer be swept under the rug. The Baby Boomlet is starting to hit, and hit hard.

sportsTURF is the first magazine to address the needs of all sports turf. It will reconnect golf with the other sports played on turf. Multisport facilities, such as parks, schools and resorts, will be covered to the same degree as single sports facilities, such as college and professional stadia.

sportsTURF will be free to cover any controversial topic, free of association politics, free of competition from any other publication we own, and even free from tradition that has hampered the advance of technology. We are not out to condemn any particular technology, rather we'd like to see all available technologies combined and put to their most effective use.

Initially, we will focus on outdoor sports surfaces, since the need is greatest there. But, over time, we will broaden our range to include indoor sports surfaces as well. Natural and artificial surfaces will be thoroughly covered.

Most importantly, we will address those areas you want us to cover. We will research and report on subjects you want to know more about. Your input is most important. Let us know regularly what your needs are.

One of the first issues will focus on the connection between field budgets and player injuries. No one doubts the importance and cost of helmets, padding, or proper shoes in sports. Yet management seems to be reluctant to spend the money necessary to make and keep a field safe. Notice I said safe, not just green.

Statistics prove that many injuries take place without any contact from another player. The only contact in these injuries is between the player and the surface beneath him. If we make the investment to protect players from one another, we should make the more obvious investment to protect the player from the turf and the turf from the player.

Another major shift taking place in sports turf is in public golf. The National Golf Foundation has been reporting a shift away from private golf to public. Contract golf course management of municipal and resort golf courses is growing rapidly. Baby boomers are now in the peak age group for golf and lines at first tees across the country are starting to grow.

Also, President Reagan's tax proposals threaten to eliminate ticket sales and membership fees as corporate business expenses. They also threaten to disallow tax and interest for second homes which could hurt condominium and resort sales. Both of these would directly affect sports turf.

Starting with Volume one, Number one, let's make the most of this opportunity. We are starting none too soon. In fact, we have plenty of catching up to do.

Bruce F. Shank

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED CHALLENGES ERSATZ TURF

There was one primary topic of conversation at Monsanto headquarters when the August 12th issue of Sports Illustrated arrived: Astroturf. The national sports magazine devoted 21 pages to a special report, "The Case Against Artificial Turf."

The story asked the question, "If all the reports of greater injuries on artificial turf are true, why are more college and professional stadia switching to it?" For the answer, three different writers interviewed players, coaches, sports turf managers, and manufacturers.

The headline of the story tells their conclusion: Injuries are worse on artificial turf, player health is not being properly considered, and, in most cases, the disadvantages of the materials are being intentionally disregarded by stadium owners and alumni. In other words, except in certain cases, such as indoor stadia and heavily used urban fields, artificial turf is not safer or easier to maintain than natural turf.

Astroturf was just one brand of artificial turf mentioned by the authors. Monsanto has consistently held a number one position in the market nationally and internationally while other manufacturers have come and gone. According to Sports Illustrated, annual sales of Astroturf are \$20 million.

Since 1965, when Astroturf was installed in the Houston Astrodome, where natural grass had failed to grow, the surface has been improved and can be found on 60 percent of 550 artificial turf installations in the world. Astroturf is the playing surface in 19 out of 41 major stadia in the U. S. and a growing percentage of major conference universities.

Monsanto installs or replaces 30 to 40 fields each year at an average cost of \$500,000 each.

Astroturf product manager Tony Morillo stands by his number one product repeating his pitch of more hours of use, more uniform surface, less maintenance, and reliable appearance. So far, he has been winning the war against both competition and "bad press."

The vulnerable point is injuries. Field use is clearly greater on the plastic turf, but players are applying more and more pressure on team owners and university presidents. They are most concerned about losing years of career play to the unforgiving surface. Insurance companies are starting to respond to the charges against artificial turf, doing studies of their own.

John Macik, representing the player's associations of both the National Football League and the United States Football League, told SportsTURF the players will

continue to demand natural turf where possible during contract negotiations.

Meanwhile, the only thing certain is the momentum favors artificial turf despite the injury statistics and player demands. Although the surface has an important place in sports turf, players and insurance companies want to know what the limits will be in the future.

Perhaps more critical is artificial turf is now fodder for the popular press. Sports Illustrated, Forbes, The Washington Post, Kansas City Times, and Los Angeles Times have devoted critical coverage to artificial turf. Organizations, such as the Musser Foundation and the Lawn Insti-

tute, are reaching the Parent Teachers Association and other influential national groups with the story on injuries.

Professional stadium managers have a business to run. The more events in their facility, the more revenue is generated. A decision in favor of natural turf requires limitations on the use of the facility. Many stadium managers are not ready to compromise for natural turf.

Macik and others believe only two things can slow the momentum of artificial turf, a rash of injury settlements against the manufacturers of the surface and a resultant increase in insurance rates. ▶

MONSANTO REBUTS SPORTS ILLUSTRATED STORY

Francis Reining, general manager of engineered product for Monsanto Company, maker of Astroturf, wrote Sports Illustrated magazine in response to the article "The Case Against Artificial Turf" in the August 12 issue of that magazine. Monsanto has given SportsTURF permission to run the letter to provide a balanced look at the artificial turf controversy.

Mr. Reining's letter follows:
Sir:

I feel compelled to respond to the special section on artificial turf, which presents (as you admit on your cover), a one-sided "Case Against Artificial Turf."

The first article by Bill Johnson was a reasonably balanced discussion of the artificial turf business. I only wish that in the second and third articles the same balanced approach had been taken and the information checked as carefully for accuracy.

The baseball section, by Ron Fimrite, is another exercise in sports purism. Did it occur to you that some players prefer artificial turf? Several have spoken publicly on the matter. The Kansas City Royals played on a new Astroturf field this year. Hal McRae said it is "really better than grass, because there are no holes or rocks." Frank White said: "All I can tell you is that it's soft" and "I'm convinced that it can add a year or two to my career."

Some years ago, Brooks Robinson of the Baltimore Orioles said: "I feel invincible on Astroturf. It's much easier to play third on it than on grass." Certainly, these players were not the ones contacted and quoted in the article.

And the third article by John Underwood. Talk about one-sided overkill. Underwood never admitted that there is another side to the story. His interpretations of the various injury studies are highly debatable, and his choice of sources was carefully designed to support one side of the argument.

You apparently made no effort to talk to many highly respected sports medicine specialists who would take exception to the anecdotal sensationalism of your story on injuries. Why did you not contact Dr. Kenneth Clark, director of sports medicine for the U.S. Olympic Committee, who is probably the leading authority on sports-injury epidemiology? Or Dr. Fred Mueller, director of football injury studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who puts out the "Annual Survey of Football Fatalities"? Or Dr. James Nicholas, of the Institute of Sports Medicine and team physician of the New York Jets, who has just conducted a 25-year study of football injuries?

Why did your author choose to ignore the conclusions of a committee of former professional football players that artificial turf does not represent "a significant health hazard" to football players? That committee was headed by Dr. William McColl, a prominent orthopedic surgeon who played for the Chicago Bears and became a member of the National Football Hall of Fame. It included other football greats such as Gale Sayers, John Brodie, and Bart Starr.

Opinion is one thing. But when you attempt to unilaterally denigrate an industry, you have a responsibility to present conflicting opinions of acknowledged experts and facts on both sides of the argument.

Letting your section's statements stand unchallenged would be an unforgivable disservice to the dedicated professionals in the artificial surface business as well as to the customers who depend on us for a valuable and proven product.