RALLY 'ROUND THE FLAG... That call has been heard many times over the years. I'm sure that as each call went out it awakened a body of people. Well, the call is going out again, this time to a very select group—you, the professionals who maintain our golf courses, stadiums, recreational areas, campus grounds, etc.

The call is for awareness of those who maintain our country's sports and golf complexes. You need to be recognized for the professionals you are. I hope the call is answered. I believe the companies and municipalities that you toil for don't fully understand the challenges you are faced with each day. They don't realize the vast areas of knowledge that are required for one to be able to supervise a crew of people to maintain these complexes. How can they appreciate the skills you possess if they don't know about them?

In my mind a professional must have a knowledge of trees. Which tree will do well in a northern exposure and which will thrive in a southern exposure? This professional should know what insects and diseases attack the trees and how the problem should be treated. Many complexes have shrubs and flowers for color around their buildings. The professional should have a working knowledge of these groundcovers, shrubs and flowers, how to identify insect and diseases and how to treat them.

A professional should know about hardscapes, softscapes and waterscapes. He needs to know about grading and drainage. Surely he must be knowledgable about irrigation and the many components that make up his system. He must know how to troubleshoot when something goes wrong.

Most importantly he must have a good knowledge of turfgrasses. Should he use sod, sprigs or seed? What grass or mixture of grasses will do well in his climatic area? What will hold up better for his purposes. He must be able to diagnose the insect and disease problems and be able to treat for them. He will probably employ preventive care, before the damage is done. He needs to know about fertilizers and what combination of formulas to use at what time of the year.

He surely has to know how to manage people. He makes decisions on capital expenditures. He is educated in these skills. Many of them are not taught at universities. They are developed in the field and polished with experience.

Electricians must have knowledge of electricity and wiring. Plumbers must know about pipe fitting and hydraulics. They, too, are craftsmen, but their skills are limited to their one craft. The professional grounds manager is truly a Jack of all trades—and Master of all as well.

With all of the knowledge we have, the need to maintain our properties, we are constantly defending ourselves in front of our Green's Committees or city managers or whoever else we report to, because someone feels our grounds are not always in the best condition. We complain that we have a budget, 'So why don't our grounds look good?' Although one can try to explain that you are dealing with nature, and sometimes Mother Nature doesn't cooperate, you end up being the scapegoat.

We can't control Mother Nature, but we can use our skills and knowledge to make the best out of any condition. Still, we have to let management know that we are doing the best we are capable of with the tools we have. Somehow we have not been doing too good a job on getting this message out. That could be one reason we don't have the high respect we deserve.

If we are not doing our best, if we do not continue to learn, we are helping to project a poor image.

You deserve better than that. The skills you have polished took years to attain. I hope to see you put down because management doesn't understand what you are up against. SportsTURF magazine is an integral part of the learning process. We try to give you insight into what others are doing. We report on the newest technology and we report the industry happenings. This journal is for you, by you and of you. So use it. Let SportsTURF be your flag, and... RALLY 'ROUND THE FLAG, BOYS!
The future of sports turf is really in the hands of a few people compared to the enormity of the industry. By a few, I mean the 18,000 readers of this magazine. That's a pretty bold statement to make. The industry is huge: some 15,000 park districts, another 15,000 public school districts, roughly 8,000 resorts, thousands of colleges and universities, 10,000 golf courses and hundreds of stadia in the country. The managers of sports turf at all these different facilities have operated with limited support for years. They have been limited largely by an inability to communicate with each other.

As we said in the last issue, it's not that the technology doesn't exist to achieve safe, quality turf under heavy use. There just wasn't a vehicle to get the word of this technology out to those who need it. That is why the readers of SPORTS-TURF can and will make the difference in the future.

Obviously, the magazine alone won't make the difference. Many sports turf managers were successful before the magazine was launched. But, not enough. As a whole, the condition of sports turf in the U.S. is far worse than it should be. A comparison of the condition of most sports turf in this country to that in England proves it. As an industry, we have a long way to go to catch up with the United Kingdom.

This is a huge challenge—one too great for many to accept or our fields wouldn't be in the condition they are. Only a few have accepted the challenge in the past or will accept it in the future. But, from those who encouraged us to start the magazine and those who continue to spur us on, we believe that many more sports turf managers are willing to accept the challenge—enough to make the difference.

That is why you are so extremely important to this industry. Only you can really improve the state of sports turf in this country.

The characteristics that make great turf managers are energy, determination and goal orientation. Each person featured this month has those qualities. When I spoke with them they didn't complain about salary, benefits or management. They spoke only of the challenge of their job and how rewarding it was to achieve difficult goals.

Ken Novak at Rancho Park could just hide in the huge Los Angeles Park System—it's so big. He chose to go the extra mile and gain the support of his management to make a municipal golf course more challenging to golfers and profitable to the city. Fred Allen at Seabright Lawn Tennis Club went back to school to better understand his bentgrass tennis courts. Dick Hahne at Daytona Speedway creatively linked the need for dust control on the motocross course with quality turf to a very quality-conscious management.

These people provide inspiration for other sports turf managers. Now that you know about them and are hopefully inspired by them, maybe you will go the extra mile and accept the challenge of better sports turf.

**EVENTS**

**CALENDAR**

**MAY**

21 North Carolina Turf and Landscape Field Day, NCSU Turf Field Center, Raleigh, NC. Contact J.M. DiPaola, Box 7620, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-7620, (919) 737-2657.

**JUNE**

8-11 National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, Marriott Resort, Marco Island, FL. Contact Michael Cleary, NACDA, (216) 892-4000.


19 Fourth Annual Turf Field Day, Turf Seed, Inc., Research Center, Hubbard, OR. Contact Tom Stanley, Turf-Seed, Inc, P.O. Box 250, Hubbard, OR 97032.

26 Midwest Sports Turf Institute, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL. Presented by the Sports Turf Managers' Association. Contact Susan Benson, Business and Technical Institute, College of DuPage (312) 858-2800, ext. 2196.

**JULY**

11 Troubleshooting Ornamental Horticulture Problems, University of California Riverside. Contact Ted Stamen, University of California, 21150 Box Springs Rd., Riverside, CA 92507. (714) 683-6491.

20-22 Mississippi Turfgrass Association summer meeting, Biloxi, MS. Contact Jim Perry, P.O. Box 5426, Mississippi State, MS 39762.
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**TENNIS: The Sport of Choice**

Tennis has the widest choice of surfaces of any sport played outdoors. While this choice continues to grow, so does the number of tennis aficionados who want to test their game on a variety of surfaces. Once they grasp the basic strokes and strategy on hard surfaces, they start hungering for a few sets on clay, hard-true or the ultimate—grass.

Graduates of public courts to date have been limited to a relatively small number of tennis clubs and resorts. Reputedly high maintenance costs have discouraged many recreational facilities from building hard-true or grass courts. The latest concept in tennis courts surfaces is a sand-filled artificial surface which originated in Australia. One version called Omnicourt is touted to play like grass without the maintenance needed by natural turf. Proponents of grass courts have labelled the sand-filled courts "mod sod" in a less than complimentary fashion.

The truth of the matter is tennis fanatics want to try all types of courts whatever they cost to maintain. They will support facilities with a variety of court surfaces. Then it becomes the sports turf manager's job to maintain them. A review of the various types of surfaces and their maintenance might be wise.

The ultimate threat to any tennis court is poor drainage. Subsurface water can defeat even all-weather courts by making the base of the court unstable or by heaving and cracking during freezing weather. A perimeter drain separating the court from surrounding run-off is important in preventing subsurface drainage damage.

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Tennis—Sport of Choice
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but can provide a smoother surface and a "truer" bounce. A good sealant applied per-iodically is well worth the expense consider-ing the longer life and improved appearance of hard surface courts. Sealants retard the oxidation of the binder in asphalt by shielding the surface from infra red and ultraviolet radia-tion. Oxidation of the binder is what makes asphalt brittle and likely to crack.

Laykold hard surface courts use a spe-cial asphalt binder and acrylic coatings to reduce the damage caused by radiation and weather. The company also makes tracks and offers a rubberized asphalt tennis court surface and a non-acrylic coating. Sportec International in Kenmore, NY, builds both Laykold and Omnicourt tennis courts.

Maintaining enough moisture is a con-cern with clay or hard-true courts. The material is very similar to baseball basepath mix and needs to be wet down periodical-ly for firmness and dust control. The court needs a dry skin but a sufficiently damp base. The topmix and the base mix affect maintenance. Fred Allen, superintendent at Seabright Lawn Tennis Club in Rumson, NJ, says his six cinder-based hard-true courts are the best on the East Coast because they retain moisture so well. "We also have nine stone-based hard-true courts that require considerably more care," says Al-len. "The difference is in the base."

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Even though grass courts require more year-round care, 95 percent of the members at Seabright Lawn Tennis Club prefer them over clay.

One reason people like clay or hard-true is the surface absorbs some of the impact and the ball does not bounce as far. "You can't stand on the baseline and pound away at your opponent," says Allen. "Actually the court may be slower but the tennis player has to be faster to get to the ball. Tennis players drag their toes and play the net in your opponent. "Dust is our biggest problem with clay or hard-true courts. The courts are dragged, rolled and brushed daily and wet down at night and at noon. During the summer the stone-based courts need to be watered every hour. We also keep an eye on the courts for any extra care like brushing off line tapes and net adjustments.

"Even though grass courts require more year-round care, 95 percent of our mem-
bers prefer them over clay. Allen claims. The club is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, yet work on the grass courts continues during the off season. Bentgrass courts were the rule when the club was first opened to play 110 years ago. The 30 grass courts are maintained "just like a golf green," says Allen. That's why Allen attended the winter turf management course at Rutgers University for two years to gain an associate's degree in turf management.

Fred Allen, superintendent of Seabright Lawn Tennis Club.

"After Labor Day we aerify with a Dedoes drum aerifier and vertigroove with a Rogers 512. The vertigroover uses a 1/8-inch blade to cut into the topsoil in rows three inches apart. This gets the seed in contact with the soil. Then 14 tons of topdressing (60 percent sand and 20 percent loam) are applied with a Gandy drop spreader to the three acres of bentgrass. We then apply fertilizer (1 lb. nitrogen/1,000 sq. ft) followed by a 50:50 blend of Colonial and Seaside bent-grasses spread at a rate of one half pound per 1,000 sq. ft. Late in the fall we apply fungicide to guard against snow mold."

The preventative disease program con-

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Once tennis players grasp the basics on hard surfaces, they start hungering for a few sets on clay, hard-true or the ultimate—grass.

Jack Wilson, president of Surfmark, the Omniturf distributor for the area, met with Jackson to explain the construction process. The asphalt base of the courts has a sub-tile end-to-end slope (1 inch drop per 10 inches of surface). A porous polypropylene grass-like fiber carpet is placed over the base. All lines are inlaid into the carpet so the need for painting is eliminated. Then a sand dressing is applied over the top of the carpet. The amount of sand can be varied to control the surface speed of the tennis ball upon impact. Knoxville uses a fairly high level of sand for a medium-to-slow speed.

The manufacturer calls the first five to six weeks of use the "break-in period" during which the court should be watered and

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A sports stadium complex in downtown Phoenix, AZ, is one step nearer to reality after a nine-member evaluation panel picked a site and four proposals to study for feasibility. The price tag for the four proposals ranges from $150 million to $575 million.

Geoffrey Gonsher, sports complex coordinator for Phoenix, said, "We're excited about the interest that has been shown, but we have a long way to go. During the second stage each of the proposals will undergo thorough analysis and interpretation to determine how they would benefit the citizens of Phoenix."

Gonsher said the evaluation panel will look with greatest favor upon proposals requiring the least amount of public investment. Most of the proposals currently ask for some financial assistance with the majority stipulating the city acquire the land for the stadium site. The panel will submit its recommendations this spring to the mayor's sports advisory committee. Then, the City Council is expected to select one of the four developers to enter into exclusive negotiations with the city.

Three of the proposals call for a single domed arena. One developer presented plans for three separate stadia. Two of the proposals would surround the stadium with offices, hotels and retail developments. The most costly is a fully-enclosed stadium surrounded by condominiums with picture window views of the playing fields.

The Capital Mall Development Group proposes to construct an open-air 65,000-seat football stadium ($80 million), a domed 42,000-seat baseball stadium ($60 million) and a 17,000-seat arena for basketball and hockey ($30 million). The city would be responsible for land acquisition and infrastructure costs.

The Phoenix Octadome Development Company is offering to build a combined sports and condominium development that would seat 92,000 for football, 71,000 for baseball, 105,000 for hockey and basketball and 110,000 for boxing and concerts. The $575 million project would be financed through sales of 6,000 condominiums, nearly half of which would have a view inside the stadium.

The Phoenix Stadium Group Ltd. wants to construct a multi-purpose hard-topped domed stadium seating 70,000 for football, 50,000 for baseball and 30,000 for basketball. The projected cost of $266.6 million includes surrounding offices, retail shopping, a hotel, athletic club and residential units.

The Phoenix Sports and Entertainment Complex would like to construct a $150 million retractable dome stadium that could seat 73,000 for football, 47,500 for baseball and 19,000 to 25,000 for basketball, hockey and concerts. Offices, a trade mart, hotel and retail facilities would be built adjacent to the stadium.

Sandoz, Ltd., the $4 billion, 100-year-old Swiss-based chemical firm, has acquired Velsicol Chemical Company's agrichemical business from Farley/Northwest Industries, Chicago, IL.

A new company named VS Crop Protection Corp. has been formed according to Dale Miller, its president and chief executive officer. It will be headquartered in Chicago and will employ about 300 people there and 850 worldwide. Miller, 39, was formerly vice president of Velsicol's agricultural business group.

"The new company will stress new product development, growth and stability," states Miller. "It will pursue specific market niches and strengthen its ties with customers." "We see our company not as an agrichemical producer," Miller asserts, "but as a market-driven, close-to-the-customer solver of weed control problems." The company's best-known product is Banvel, one of the three components in Trimec broadleaf herbicide. It has four new herbicides in vari-

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ous stages of registration, one being a preemergence herbicide for turf weeds. “This new company seems especially noteworthy as a bold step forward at a time when agriculture is in a severe depression and when many of our competitors are cutting back,” said Miller.

AGRONOMY UPDATES PRESENTED IN CHICAGO

More than 2,000 agronomists gathered in Chicago recently to share their research findings during the annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy. Roy Goss, extension agronomist at Washington State University was there and reports some updated items on turf management.

During the meeting J.F. Barber from the University of Nebraska and Robert Carrow from the University of Georgia reported that core cultivation outperforms slicing in adjusting soil response and improving oxygen diffusion in the soil. The two scientists also indicated plants react quickly in a negative way to soil compaction but are slow to recover from it.

Drs. Bruce Brannum and Paul Reike from Michigan State University told the group that aerification and vertical mowing immediately after application of three different preemer- gence herbicides did not reduce their ability to control crabgrass. The three herbicides were benefin, bensulide and DCPA. This indicates that core cultivation can be safely carried out without significantly reducing annual bluegrass control as well as crabgrass control says Goss.

J.L. Brede of Oklahoma State reported Kentucky bluegrass can be treated before planting in combination with perennial ryegrasses so both turfgrasses in a seed mixture will germinate at the same time. Treating the seed took three days off standard germination time and also increased survival of the Kentucky bluegrass seedlings by more than 25 percent. Brede treated the seed with three different chemicals for his research, including sodium chloride, potassium nitrate and polyethylene glycol.

A report from Ohio State University agronomists showed Embark suppressed Poa annua seedheads applied at .06 to .19 lbs. per acre. Preventing seedhead formation increased the carbohydrate reserves in the roots of the annual ryegrass. The reserves may help annual bluegrass survive heat and moisture stress.

CAL POLY SPORTS TURF INSTITUTE ATTRACTS 500

Nearly 500 sports turf managers were able to see equipment demonstrations and hear the leaders in the field speak on pressing problems of budgets, compaction, drainage and maintenance during the third annual Sports Turf Institute held recently at California Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA.
Fighting the Muni Blues
Rancho Park Overcomes Bureaucracy

Maintenance crews can't stop to wait for golfers to putt or tee off. A careful public relations program is applied to involve golfers in the condition of the course.

Ken Novak is a fighter. He's part of a team of fighters in the Pacific Region of the Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. The opponent is the stereotype of a municipal golf course so bogged down by bureaucracy, unmotivated employees and dwindling budget that the fairways are turning to dust.

Novak is the superintendent of Rancho Park Golf Complex in Los Angeles, site of the Los Angeles Open many times. It happens to be adjacent to the elite Hillcrest Country Club and across the street from 20th Century Fox headquarters. Real estate in the area sells by the foot not by the acre so the 132 acres occupied by one 18-hole course and one nine-hole pitch and putt are priceless.

Rancho Park was constructed in the late '30s as a private course. During World War II, the course fell on hard times like many golf courses in the country. In 1948, the Los Angeles Park System took the course over. Park staff did all the necessary redesign work to update the course; there was no big name golf course architect involved. Mature trees tower over the old clay greens which are 80 percent Poa annua and 20 percent bentgrass. Fairways are entirely kikuyugrass.

The first sign Rancho Park doesn't fit the stereotype is the amount of construction going on all over the course. Three greens are under construction with three new alternate greens taking their place. Tees are being expanded, a contour mowing program for