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VOLUME TWELVE, NUMBER FIVE

MAY 1996

## MAIN EVENTS

### 10 Turf's Up at Legion Field for Olympic Soccer

One of the most recognizable stadiums in the country, Alabama's Legion Field has been synonymous over the years with American football. This summer it tackles Olympic "football" with a new turf that's proven surprisingly tough.

### 16 No Such Thing as a Safe Field

In today's litigious climate, you've got to think safety. STMA member Todd Detzel shares his research about what it takes to play it safe.

### 26 Preparing for Olympic Softball — Teamwork Counts

Field preparation for the Olympics begins far in advance of the "official" opening. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the development of two sites in Columbus, GA, for softball competition.

### 30 "Just Do It!" Triumphs at Fike High School

Coach Will Flowers has an "anything is possible with hard work" attitude. And it's contagious — which is the reason Fike High School's 36-year-old native-soil field, turfed with common Bermudagrass, is this year's Beam Clay High School Baseball Diamond of the Year.

### 33 Biological Insecticides — Natural Turf Management, Part 5

Environmental concerns have caused turf managers to rethink insect control. The past decade has seen a dramatic shift away from traditional "harsh" chemicals and toward approaches that integrate chemicals, beneficial insects and biological insecticides.

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#### On the Cover:

Sporting grass rather than artificial turf, Legion Field, the home of Alabama football, looks forward to a busy year, beginning with Olympic soccer this summer. Photo courtesy: Robert Bartels.

## About the Sports Turf Field and STMA

Sports turf managers represent a nearly \$1.5 billion dollar industry with over 40,000 facilities around the country. The average professional facility spends \$65,000 per year on sports turf/athletic field products and services, parks spend \$37,000, schools spend \$42,750, while colleges and universities spend approximately \$34,000 per year.

Because people believed that sports turf could be better through the sharing of knowledge and the exchange of ideas, the Sports Turf Managers Association came into being in 1981. The key leaders in STMA's infancy were Harry "Pops" Gill (Milwaukee County Stadium), Dr. William Daniel (Professor Emeritus, Purdue University), Dick Ericson (Minneapolis Metrodome) and George Toma (NFL, Kansas City Royals and Chiefs).

STMA members work to combine the science of growing grass and the art of maintaining both natural and artificial sports turf to produce safe and aesthetically pleasing playing surfaces. STMA represents all segments of the sports turf industry with more than 60 percent involved in management of school, municipal and university facilities. More than fifty professional facilities are represented including baseball, football, polo, and horse racing stadiums. Members are also full-time students, landscaping contractors, and commercial affiliates. Sports played on member facilities include soccer, baseball, football, polo, golf, racing, field hockey, bocce, lawn tennis, rugby, lacrosse and cricket. STMA is spreading country by country across the globe.

Join today! Just return your payment with the form on reverse.

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Membership Application

# STMA

Sports Turf Managers Association  
Promoting Better & Safer Sports Turf Areas

Sports Turf Managers Association  
1375 Rolling Hills Loop  
Council Bluffs, IA 51503-8552

## What is STMA?

*Mission Statement of the Sports Turf Managers Association:*  
 "To be the leader in the sports turf industry, to enhance, promote and improve professionalism through excellence in communication, training, research, education and services."

*Positioning Statement:* "Promoting Better and Safer Sports Turf Areas."

## What Do I Get For My Membership?

### What about publications?

*sportsTURF Magazine:* STMA's official monthly four color, premier publication, is bursting with necessary information and helpful new ideas in every issue.



Our bimonthly newsletter, *Sports Turf Manager* provides every member with news of the association, including pertinent information on plans for conventions, workshops, regional Institutes and trade shows.

### Does STMA offer educational information?

STMA publishes the annual Sports Turf Topics compendium of STMA articles from several leading industry trade publications. Each article is authored by an STMA member with practical suggestions for better and safer sports turf areas.

STMA has a network of knowledgeable professionals that can be tapped to answer tough questions on your sports turf problems. STMA is also helping to establish standards for construction of safe sports turf areas which we share with our members.



### How can I compare my operation with my peers?

Sports turf professionals from around the country compete in STMA's Annual Awards Program. Categories include Baseball Diamond of the Year, Football Field of the Year, Soccer Field of the Year and Excellence in Research. There are separate competition levels for professional, college, and parks and recreation fields.

### Is there an annual conference?

STMA's Annual Conference & Exhibition allows members to share information with other successful members of the sports turf industry at exciting locations around the country. In addition to educational seminars, hands-on workshops and the latest technology on display from commercial vendors, conference attendees are able to tour professional, college and municipal facilities that offer a range of insightful ideas to make your sports turf better and safer.



### Are there local chapters in my area?

There are chapters forming in many areas of the country. Call STMA headquarters if you would like more information.

### How can STMA help me network with other sports turf professionals?

The annual Membership Roster & Resource Manual is a comprehensive listing of all Professional and Commercial STMA members, affiliated associations and trade publications. The manual has handy breakdowns by state and products and services available that can make finding someone in your area or a service you need a breeze.

### How can STMA save me money?

In addition to the creative ideas offered through networking with fellow members, tremendous Member Discounts provide substantial savings on registrations for meetings, workshops, Institutes and trade show registrations, publications and more.

## Application for Membership



### Member Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional sports turf facility manager                        | \$75  |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial (U.S. or International)                               | \$175 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional members from same company                             | \$45  |
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| (must be in U.S. dollars)   |       |

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## STMA MESSAGE



By Mike Schiller

The weather is warming, and our sports fields are under attack. With spring in full swing, eager athletes of all ages and skill levels are swarming upon all available playing surfaces to get on with the game.

It's during such periods that all the skills of the sports turf manager are put to the test. Rapidly fluctuating weather conditions, alternating between hot and cold, wet and dry, windy and still, make turf care and basic field pre-practice and pre-game preparations a constant challenge.

Field user groups, faced with ever more players, seek additional practice and game time.

With increased field use come increased numbers of spectators, stressing already limited facility amenities such as parking areas, stands, rest rooms and concessions.

Often the sports turf manager becomes the official or unofficial "communications center," coordinating field and facility use to protect the physical condition and safety levels of the fields, while still allowing players to make the most of their athletic abilities. Player safety and a facility's exposure to liability are constant considerations. There's a fine line between repairable stress to the field and damage. The final call should be made by the sports turf manager.

Besides all that, this is a time for sports turf managers to showcase their expertise. There's nothing better to enhance the experience of the game — for the players and the spectators — than a well-maintained field.



# The Grass is "Riz"

In this issue, we'll read about doing just that. We'll see how Coach Will Flowers maintains an award-winning field at Fike High School in spite of a limited budget. We'll learn about one of the major sports turf projects connected with the Summer Olympic Games: STMA member Aaron McWhorter's development and renovation of some of the Games' softball venues.

As spring rapidly draws to a close and summer moves in, we, as members of the sports turf industry, can watch with pride as athletes everywhere perform on venues prepared by some of our own.

I have renewed interest in the Olympics now, knowing that STMA members have

had a part in preparing these fine, world-class facilities, and I hope the general press will give credit to Aaron, his staff, and the rest of our Olympic-involved STMA members for the results of their hard work.

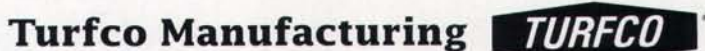
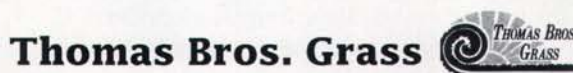
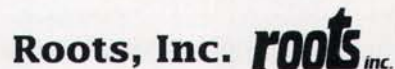
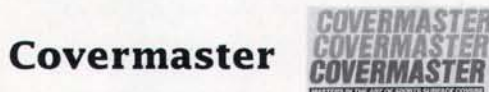
One of the benefits of STMA membership is meeting such people, not only from this country, but around the world, both in person and through our membership roster. By phone, these people become "instant" information resources; in person, they often serve as area and facility "guides." Either way, they frequently become your friends.

**Get into the swing  
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**Look for your special membership application in  
this issue of sportsTURF**

The members of the STMA wish to thank the following sponsors for their generous donations, making this special membership drive possible. Please show your support for:



# THE FRONT OFFICE

## OPINION PAGE



### Feds Cut Turfgrass

**W**e regretted to hear the federal government cut funds for the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) from its 1997 budget. Although NTEP's work can (and should) continue through a privately funded group like the STMA, the drawback is that it will take time for another group to set up and function as well.

To our knowledge, the agency has been admirably achieving its objectives: "to develop and coordinate uniform evaluation trials of turfgrass varieties and experimental selections in the United States and Canada." Working with university and private industry personnel, the NTEP has produced and mailed 13 annual summary reports to approximately 1,800 individuals and companies. The reports targeted the following turfgrasses: Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, fine-leaf fescue, tall fescue, Bermudagrass, St. Augustinegrass, buffalograss, zoysiagrass and bentgrass (for golf course greens, fairways and tees). So far, the agency has issued final reports, containing data collected from 1990-93, for the three bentgrass tests and the fine-leaf fescue test established in 1989.

The NTEP's studies have already been used extensively by the turfgrass industry, and if the agency's work proceeds, the industry will continue to benefit from improved grasses and management systems that reduce pesticide, water and fertilizer use while maintaining acceptable quality.

If the NTEP is "budget-cided" and no one replaces it, a "dilemma" A.J. Turgeon describes will grow worse. In the fourth edition of *Turfgrass Management* (Prentice Hall, 1996), Professor Turgeon notes, "The development and commercialization of many new turfgrasses has created some confusion — commonly expressed as *varietal dilemma*. The amount of testing required to clearly establish the environmental adaptation and cultural requirements of each new cultivar often exceeds the resources available at university experiment stations. Furthermore, conclusions drawn from results at one location may not apply to conditions existing at sites located several hundred miles away. Thus, complete information on the performance characteristics of newer turfgrass cultivars is usually not available until many years after a cultivar has been introduced."

It would be a shame to see NTEP bite the dust before its many years of research could be released.

Since turf managers obviously can't count on government to support their needs, they better plan to do it themselves. Organization is the key, and in this issue, readers who don't belong to a turf organization have a golden opportunity to join one of the best, the STMA. Bound into the magazine is an application that takes little time to fill out and send in. The only part that'll make you wince is writing out the \$75 check for the membership fee, which for most people will be tax-deductible. But don't even think about it: "Just do it!" It's an investment in your future — your very immediate future. If you use your membership properly, you'll easily find yourself saving five times that amount during the year through STMA's various benefits.

# EVENTS

## CALENDAR

### May

**15-16** Environmental Landscape & Equipment Conference & Show. Sheraton Suites Hotel and the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds, Pomona, CA. Contact: (800) 877-3107 or (702) 736-5958.

**21** Meeting of Florida Chapter of STMA. Joe Robbie Stadium, Miami, FL. Contact: John Mascaro, (305) 938-7477.

**23** Tree Pruning Seminar: Management on a Tight Budget for Quality, Safety and Production. Sequoia Conference Center, Buena Park, CA. Contact: Ted Stamen & Associates, (909) 656-3431.

### June

**5** University of Massachusetts Turfgrass Research Field Day, sponsored by the UMass Extension and the Dept. of Plant and Soil Sciences. University of MA Turf Research Facility on River Road in South Deerfield, MA. Contact: Thom Griffin, manager, (413) 545-3066 or Mary Owen, extension educator, (508) 892-0382.

**12-13** Groundskeepers Management Academy. Millington, TN. Contact: Floyd Perry, Grounds Maintenance Services, (800) 227-9381.

**14-18** American Society for Plasticulture 26th Conference. Atlantic City, NJ. Contact: Cook College, Rutgers University, Office of Continuing Professional Education, (908) 932-9271.

### July

**25-27** Turfgrass Producers International Summer Convention and Field Days. Hyatt Regency, Sacramento, CA. Contact: Tom Ford, TPI, (800) 405-TURF or (708) 705-9898.

Send announcements of your events two months in advance to: Editor, **sportsTURF**, 68-860 Perez Road, Suite J, Cathedral City, CA 92234. Fax: (619) 770-8019.

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# LETTERS

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## Hope for the Future

As sports turf managers, we all know the importance of team management. Every day we read in the paper or hear on the news broadcasts of some manager being replaced by someone else because his team did not meet or exceed expectations of the fans or the owners.

By now, you are aware that STMA national and local chapters have a new director, Steve Trusty of Trusty & Associates. Steve has been a member of STMA for several years and has served on some of the committees set up by the board of directors. Now, thanks to our board of directors, those hard working individuals who give of their time to make this association one to be proud of, we have a manager who understands who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

Those of you who know me personally are aware that I have been very vocal in regard to the service the local chapters receive from the national office. Even after I was awarded the Man of the Year honor at our conference in Bradenton, FL, in January 1995, I did not renew my membership in STMA National for two reasons. First, I wasn't happy with the management, and second, I never received a renewal notice from the national office in Chicago. So if they didn't care, why should I?

When I heard that Steve Trusty had been appointed executive director, I called his office and asked what I could do to help. Steve explained that STMA was going to have a booth at the International Golf Course Conference and Show in Orlando, FL. Along with several other members of the Florida Chapter, I volunteered to help out by manning the STMA booth. It was worth the effort!

For my part, I have renewed my membership in the national association and in the Florida Chapter, even though I am now retired. I look forward to a working relationship with our new director and will assist in any way that will help promote the association on any level. I would ask all of you to reevaluate the position of National's operations, give them your support, encourage your local chapter members to be a part of the national association, and work toward that common goal of pro-

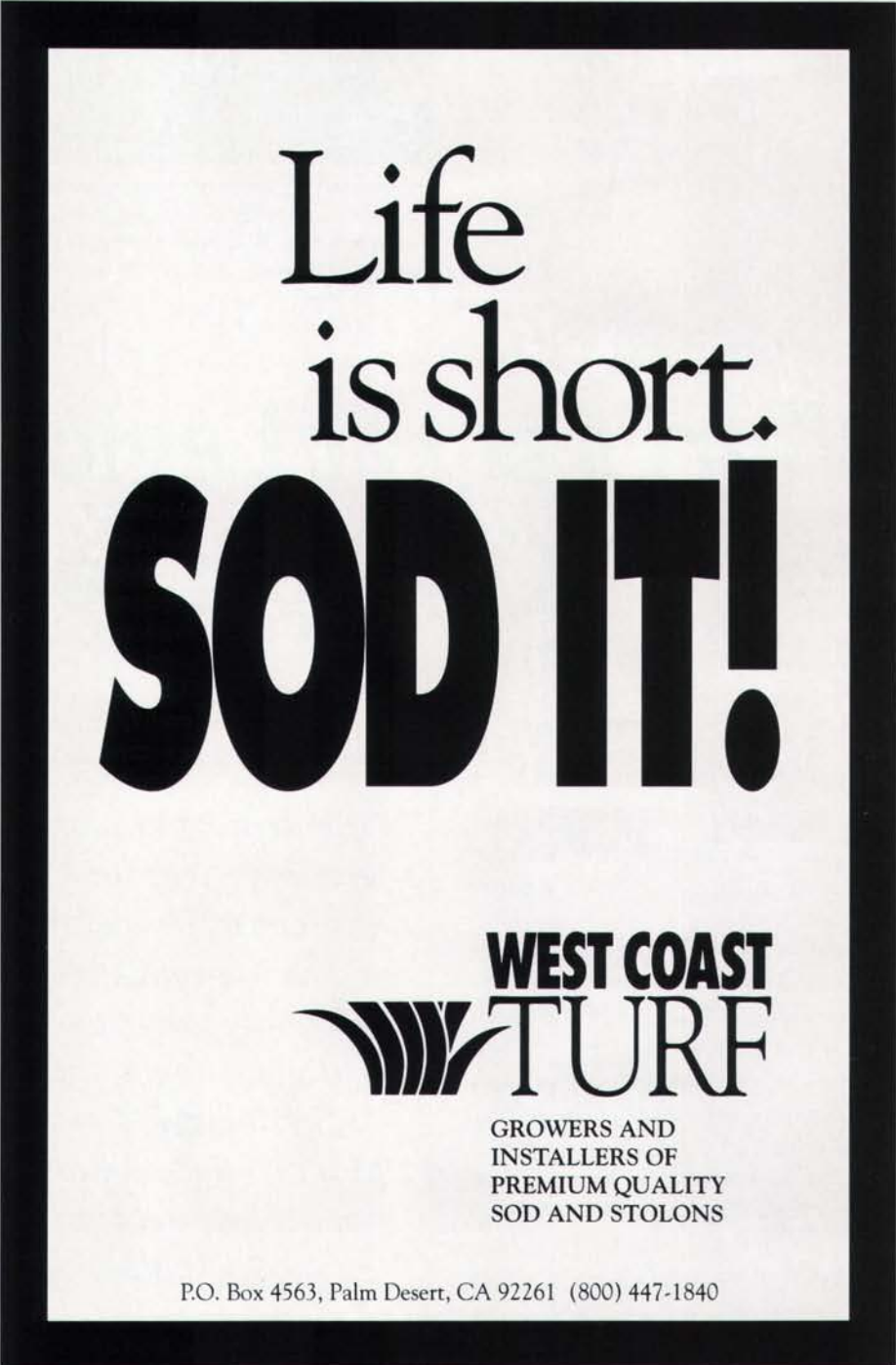
ducing and improving the image of the sports turf manager.

We are under *new management*. We have only one way to go, and that is forward. But we must do it together as a

*team* and give the manager of that team, Steve Trusty & Associates, "a helping hand for our growing needs."

Ed Birch

Port St. Lucie, FL



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Legion's new turf held up extremely well after extensive use this past football season, when 20 games were played on the natural surface. Photos courtesy: Robert Bartels.

# Turf's Up at Legion Field for Olympic Soccer

By Robert J. Bartels

One of the most recognizable stadium names in the country, Legion Field, has been synonymous over the years with Alabama football at all levels, including the University of Alabama, Auburn University, the University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB), the Magic City Classic, and small colleges and high schools. Hundreds of games have been and continue to be played in this historic edifice.

Sports fans often label Birmingham the "Football Capital of the South" – American football, that is. However, during the month of July, the eyes of the whole world will focus on the Magic City when football – what we call soccer – invades the city.

*"It is critical to employ proper maintenance techniques, particularly on a sand profile field. Mowing, watering, fertilizing, application of herbicides, iron and turf dyes are all critical elements to an excellent playing surface."*

In 1994, Birmingham captured a piece of Olympic gold by securing a bid to hold part of the 1996 soccer matches. Legion Field, along with the Orange Bowl in Miami, the Citrus Bowl in Orlando, and R.F.K. Stadium in Washington, DC, were chosen to host the first and quarter-final Olympic men's and women's soccer matches.

## A Great Piano

"There's an old saying that if you have a good piano, you will attract good piano players," says Walter Garrett, stadium manager. "The same is true in football stadiums, such as Legion Field."

Great stadium, great coaches, great players. A partial list of coaches includes General Bob Neyland, Frank Thomas, Bobby Dodd, John Vaught, Wally Butts,