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VOLUME TWELVE, NUMBER NINE

SEPTEMBER 1996

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14 From a Player's Perspective

A University of Kentucky standout drafted by the Arizona Diamondbacks, Chip Rhea views baseball fields more critically than most players. He's an agronomy major — and he shares, from a player's perspective, what he likes and doesn't like in a ball field.

16 Winterizing Pump Stations

If a few simple steps are taken each year, a pump station will be ready for action come next spring. In some areas, winterization begins this month.

18 The Greening of Brown

While some may think that an Ivy League school might resist change, this does not hold true when it comes to athletic field management at Brown. The university's new irrigation system is an excellent example of the school's look to the future.

24 Maintaining a Uniform Playing Surface

Uniform water movement through the rootzone helps ensure uniform turf. For hydrophobic soils, wetting agents often give sports turf managers the winning edge.

26 Olympic Softball's Invisible Gold Medalists

The U.S. women's team won the Olympic gold medal for softball in front of a packed stadium and a nationwide TV audience. Behind the scenes, a second, unofficial gold medal went to the stadium's grounds crew, who turned in a "simply amazing" performance to give the players an error-free field.

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On the Cover: The New York Mets' training facility at St. Lucie County Sports Complex in Port St. Lucie, FL, receives early morning irrigation. Photo courtesy: Hunter Industries.

STMA MESSAGE

A Lesson Learned



*By Bucky Trotter,
sports turf
manager,
University of
Kentucky, and
STMA board
member,
category II*

Some years ago, I began to distance myself from STMA. I had been involved with STMA from the start, but I was disappointed in the direction I perceived STMA was taking. I didn't renew my membership and for two to three years had no contact with anyone in the association. For some reason, I even felt proud of myself.

It was a mistake I will always regret, both personally and professionally. I did something that my parents, teachers, high school coaches and teammates had always taught and encouraged me not to do. I gave up when I thought things were not

going well. At the time, it even felt like the best thing to do.

At a meeting of the Sports Turf Managers of the Southeastern Conference, Dr. Gil Landry and I talked about STMA. Gil is a friend I respect and listen to. During that meeting at Auburn University in January, 1992, Gil told me something that changed my feelings about STMA and, more importantly, reminded me of those past lessons about life. He said that if I had such good ideas, I should get involved and become active. Gil reminded me that you should never give up and all my whining and complaining would never help the situation. He said it's easy to be negative and coach from the stands, but all that complaining is non-productive.

Gil's comments were made with the passion of someone who had labored for years to maintain something that he felt was very important. He is right — and I will always appreciate him for making me understand that perseverance is a vital quality that unfortunately is disappearing in our society. Instant grat-

ification seems to be what everyone wants, without the sacrifice and hard work required to accomplish something worthwhile.

Gil Landry is one of many who weathered the storm through the growth and "hard times" of STMA. There are far too many such people to mention, and I, for one, am glad they had the guts to hang in there and see a commitment through. I'll always be grateful for my second chance at participating in STMA.

Come join in and be an active member of the Sports Turf Managers Association. Together, we and this association will both prosper and reach lofty goals.

Make the 1997 Conference part of your plans. The outstanding educational program will offer a broad range of topics — something for everyone. STMA can be your conduit to friends and colleagues, where you'll always find supporters ready to offer assistance and lend a hand.



Rocky Mountain High-er Education

**Sports Turf Managers Association
8th Annual Conference & Exhibition
January 15-19, 1997 - Colorado Springs, CO**



Make plans now to join your colleagues and the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) in beautiful Colorado Springs. Let the beauty of the Rocky Mountains create the perfect backdrop for our many educational sessions and the trade show.

Highlights of the 8th Annual Conference & Exhibition

- o Educational sessions ranging from the basics of agronomics to surf in' the World Wide Web
- o A new and improved Trade Show.
- o TWO "Seminar on Wheels" tours
- o At the Annual Banquet, STMA will present the Field of the Year Awards and the Harry C. Gill Memorial Award for the Sports Turf Manager of the Year.

Highlighting the Conference, "the nitty gritty dirt man" -- George Toma -- reflects on the Centennial Olympics...AND THEN SOME

**For More Information contact:
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(800) 323-3875**

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE



Kent Kurtz Recovering

Dr. Kent W. Kurtz, first executive director and longtime supporter of STMA, is recovering at home after an accident in which he broke three vertebrae. Among other honors, Dr. Kurtz has won, in 1986, the Harry C. Gill Memorial Award (STMA Groundskeeper of the Year) and has been named an honorary life member of the STMA. Dr. Kurtz is expected to resume teaching this winter at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, where he serves as professor of turfgrass and ornamental horticulture.

This writer, among a legion of other admirers, wishes Dr. Kurtz a speedy, full recovery — partly out of self interest. Last year I had the good fortune to attend several of Dr. Kurtz's seminars and, after the first one, began looking forward to subsequent conferences that featured one of his sessions. He never disappointed. His stand-up comic humor along with the clarity, depth and usefulness of his information made even an early morning seminar worth attending. I look forward to more of his wit and wisdom this year.

Everything You Need to Know

Are you looking for the single best source of information about sports turf and athletic facilities maintenance? It's now available: the fourth annual *Sports Turf Topics: A Compendium of STMA Articles*. STMA members receive the book free, and nonmembers may purchase it for \$30 from STMA Headquarters (1375 Rolling Hills Loop, Council Bluffs, IA 51503; 712/366-2669).

Like previous compendiums, the fourth comes in an eight-by-ten-inch, soft-cover format and consists of articles written and published by STMA members during the preceding 12 months. Over a hundred pages long with almost 40 articles, the fourth compendium has grown by leaps over earlier editions and is bound to enlighten virtually anyone who works with sports turf or other high-traffic areas. Topics concern seeding, sodding, mowing, aeration, topdressing, plant growth regulators as well as other maintenance practices — and that's just Section I, titled "Cultural Management of Sports Turf." Four other sections follow: "Special Sports Turf Management" (striping, infield preparation, safety, field covers, pest control, to name a few topics); "General Sports Turf Management" (calibration, equipment maintenance, irrigation, personnel and others); "Award Winners" (focusing on facilities that have succeeded, often despite hellish weather and high water); and "Profiles" (about people who exemplify STMA's mission of promoting better, safer sports turf areas). As a set, the four compendiums comprise an encyclopedia that can answer almost any question about athletic facilities and their high-tech turf.

STMA on the Web

For high-tech turf managers, STMA has recently opened a site on the World Wide Web at the following address: <http://www.aip.com/STMA>. The site currently offers a description of STMA, a membership application, chapter information and a message from President Mike Schiller. Under construction, and therefore imminently available at the site, are sections devoted to related Internet sites, excerpts from *Sports Turf Manager* (STMA's bimonthly newsletter), a calendar of events and a sports turf industry profile.

Like the organization itself, STMA's site is on the grow, so tune in periodically to catch late-breaking additions. Among them will be details about STMA's 1997 Conference & Exhibition scheduled for January 15-19 in Colorado Springs.

Stimulant Sources

Last issue's "Chemical Log," concerning biostimulants, raised questions about whom readers can contact to learn more about the biologically based products. The article mentioned two sources of information: Terry Lee of AgPro Systems, Big Sandy, TX, at (800) 946-5545; and Darrell Kinsey of Greenbelt Turf Consultants, Lindale, TX, at (800) 822-9886. Talking to Kinsey, we learned of two other sources: EcoSoils, San Diego, CA, at (619) 675-1660; and Floratine, Collierville, TN, at (901) 853-2898.

EVENTS

CALENDAR

September/October

29-3 Groundskeepers Management Academy. Peoria, AZ. Contact: Floyd Perry, Grounds Maintenance Services, (800) 227-9381.

30-3 Northwest Turfgrass Conference. Victoria, BC, Canada. Contact: (206) 754-0825.

October

1-3 Pacific International Exposition. Reno-Sparks Convention Center, NV. Contact: Russ Dubbels, (800) 624-2569 or (503) 682-2162.

2-3 Southern California Turfgrass Conference. Costa Mesa, CA. Contact: (714) 951-8547.

7 22nd Annual Western Pennsylvania Turfgrass Tournament. Diamond Run Golf Course, Sewickley. Contact: Michael Zedreck, (412) 963-2398, or P.T.C., (814) 863-3475.

27-29 California Fertilizer Association Annual Meeting. Loews Coronado Bay Resort, Coronado, CA. Contact: CFA, (916) 441-1584.

November

3-6 International Conference on Evapotranspiration and Irrigation Scheduling, in conjunction with the Irrigation Association EXPO, sponsored by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. Convention Center, San Antonio, TX. Contact: ASAE, (616) 429-0300.

17-21 Green Industry Expo. Cincinnati, OH. Contact: (770) 973-2019, fax (770) 578-6071.

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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Jeff Kershaw
Supervisor of Athletic Fields and Stadiums



Grounds Crew Safety Practices



Renovating a diamond, Dave Ashman (left) and Chris Bunnell install unfired clay bricks on both sides of home plate to strengthen one of the most heavily used areas.

By Scott Maclean

Sports, including summer baseball and softball programs, are very popular with the public. As a result, many park districts and recreation departments are facing higher field use than ever before. Your athletic fields and facilities are likely to be “in play” every possible hour from the moment the season breaks in the spring until the cold weather of fall closes in.

At the Waukegan Park District, we believe that proper playing conditions and maintenance of fields are extremely important. From a good customer service standpoint we, as sports turf managers, should feel obligated to provide the best and safest recreational areas possible, all the while keeping in mind that litigation involving injuries is an extremely real concern that faces any agency that provides a service for the public or private sector.

For these reasons, we at the Waukegan Park District have developed a ball diamond prepping and safety checklist that focuses directly on the integration of ball diamond prepping, maintenance and, most importantly, safety. Our checklist contains six basic safety-related items that prep crews need to consider when preparing fields. Facilities with multiple sports fields and fields that are “changed over” seasonally from one sport to another should have similar checklists to cover all crew preparation, maintenance and safety on those fields.

It is important to understand that this

safety inspection sheet is used on a daily basis for field prepping. It is not, and should not be, used as the sole maintenance or safety plan, as it is not comprehensive and only allows for basic or routine maintenance. The Waukegan Park District incorporates a seasonal, annual and long-range maintenance and safety plan into its complete program, as do most other public or private entities. These overall maintenance and improvement elements in combination with the basic, routine maintenance plan form the comprehensive program.

Field Checklist

While the comprehensive program will vary greatly according to the size, scope and budget of the district or department, daily maintenance and safety scheduling for each type of field will have many common elements.

Debris. Following our daily ball diamond prep crew checklist, fields first need to be inspected for trash and debris. It is important that the prep crew take the time to physically walk the outfield and infield looking for such items as bottles, cans, sticks, rocks, or anything else foreign to the playing surface. This practice should also encompass player benches, dugouts, and bleacher areas. All items that don't belong on the fields or surrounding premises need to be removed.

Uneven Areas. Secondly, holes need to be filled. Areas such as the pitchers mound, bases, and home plate present the most problems with holes. These areas need to be filled and properly

packed down, ideally with a mixture of water and clay-style ball diamond mix. By adding water with the mix, it allows for a material more conducive to packing and leveling.

Also during this step, uneven areas such as mounds and depressions should be corrected, resulting in a level playing surface. Mounds are generally obvious. Depressions may be harder to see, but present as great a hazard for participants. If you're not sure whether your fields have depression areas, arrange an inspection of each of your fields after a rain storm. Any area that puddles, or is more than damp, is a good indicator of a problem.

Base Anchors. Third, the prep crews need to expose and cover up Hollywood (base) pegs. Many of the Waukegan Park District fields are set up to be used by a variety of groups. For this reason, our infields may have three different Hollywood peg distances. For example, women's 12-inch softball may use the field for a 10 a.m. game at a Hollywood distance of 60 feet. Men's 12-inch baseball may use the same field at 6 p.m. with a peg setting of 65 feet. This means the prep crews need to return to the field after the women's game, fill in the 60-foot peg and dig up the 65-foot peg. Hollywood pegs can either be covered with a cap or buried with the regular infield mix for that field. Either way, the goal is to keep them covered and below the playing surface.

Fencing. Fourth, all fencing for the field needs to be inspected. Crews should