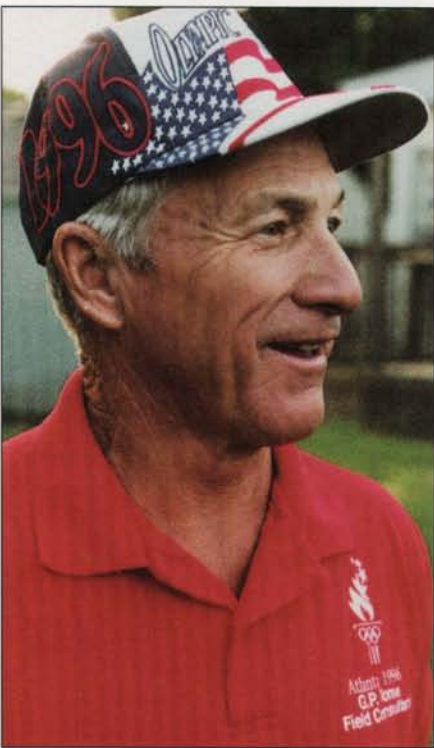


Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG), contacted Toma again in early July. Toma met with Stiles and Don Roberts and Greg Dent of Southern Turf Nurseries/STN Sports to clarify problems and develop a plan of attack. Since the field had dead grass, a dry sand-base and was one to 1-1/2 inches below the level of the track area, it was determined that all 13,500 square yards of the field would need resodding.

But that winter, cold across the Southeast had been devastating to the bermudagrass turf, tapping the resources of sod suppliers.

Track officials had also noted that in preliminary trials the discus, shot, hammer and javelin had sliced



A veteran of past Olympics and all 30 Super Bowls, George Toma is used to the whirlwind of activity it takes to pull off a successful extravaganza.

through the turf into the sand. The new sod would need some thatch to act as a cushion. Finding accessible, premium sod that fit the criteria in sufficient quantity at a reasonable price required a concentrated search.

From July 7th to the 12th, Toma checked out sod options around the country. Time was the major issue: 13,500 square yards of sod would need to be moved into the stadium and laid on the field within 24 hours.

Miracle Workers

Now Toma has a "Super Bowl team" of sports turf miracle workers from across the country, including Ed Mangan of Fulton County Stadium, Alan Sigwardt of Joe Robbie Stadium, Don Follet of Arizona State University, and Trevor Vance of the Kansas City Royals. But this was July, not January, and each of those pros had commitments to their own fields and teams. For example, Mangan had 48 baseball games scheduled in 18 days.

As Toma and Mohan discussed where to round up the extra crew with the necessary experience to tackle the job, Mohan pointed out the red trucks of Valley Crest Landscape Inc.'s Atlanta division. When contacted, Valley Crest committed their equipment and personnel for "whatever it took" to help get the job done.

Even with help available, Toma determined there wasn't time to strip off the old sod, regrade, soak the sand field with water and allow it to settle.

The new sod would be laid on top of the old sod, after verticutting to get the dead grass out of the field, sweeping up the debris, bringing in five- to six-ton rollers to ensure a smooth surface, aerifying to allow water into the sand, topdressing with sand, and fertilization.

Crews from Valley Crest Landscape spent the night of July 13 working their way around the track, peeling back the field cover, removing the sand and binder material, and installing a 12-inch strip of sod to form a gradual transition between the track surface and the field.

By July 15, plans were shaping up. The Olympic Committee determined that all costs for the project should be billed through one firm, which would serve as the general contractor. This also put one company in the position of incurring all the costs. Scott Clark of Burton F. Clark Inc. of Delhi, New York, agreed to tackle that assignment. So company representatives John Hilson and Paul Young came to Atlanta and brought the company's equipment and personnel to the project.

Staggering Order

Toma says, "The sod search continued. Trucking costs from West Coast Turf's California supply were far greater than the sod cost. Limited supply of refrigerated trucks ruled out bringing in sod from Virginia. Then

we found both bermudagrass and zoysiagrass sod at Quail Valley Sod Farm in Little Rock, AR, and enough trucks to handle it. We went with the zoysiagrass to get enough cushioning to hold up to the discus, shot, hammer and javelin."

Now, Toma explains, "The sod had to be precisely cut with a 1-1/2-inch soil base, watered to retain enough moisture to sustain it and let it roll out properly, and mowed uniformly. Trevor Vance flew into Arkansas to monitor these preparations."

Vance would start the sod cutting on the 20th so the refrigerated trucks would arrive in staggered order on the 22nd, just as the sod was needed.

During that last week, Toma and Mangan put in 22- and 23-hour days. Mangan was handling a full load at Fulton County Stadium and then heading to Olympic Stadium. Valley Crest Landscape crews were working round the clock at the field. For example, they launched a massive, overnight cleanup campaign on the area between the track and the stadium, bringing it back to "green space" with five tons of green sand and precisely applied green paint.

Crews Converge

Toma says, "The workforce was coming together. The Woerner Companies had just purchased Warren's Turf and Southern Turf Nurseries/STN Sports and combined them as Woerner Sports Turf International. They brought in the full crews of that new company and those of Rollin-Sod to handle the sod installation. The Valley Crest Landscape and Burton F. Clark companies had their full crews on hand, and then some. Managers and owners of these companies, including Ed Woerner, pitched in themselves."

The equipment was moving into place, too. There were the equipment forces of the companies above, and Mangan brought over his equipment. There were Goossen sweepers from Valley Crest Landscape and Mangan's two Bunton sweepers. Toro brought in more than \$100,000 of equipment for the project. Even with all this, Toma knew it would be a challenge to get everything done in the tight time frame.

He says, "The multi-company crews converged to verticut, sweep, roll, smooth, core aerify, break up cores, sweep again and roll the sur-

Continued on page 12

OLYMPIC FIELD

continued from page 11

face. Then came the water issue. Toro and Valley Crest Landscape irrigation crew members were concentrating on getting the system repaired and back to working order.

"In the meantime, we needed lots of water, fast. I'd called in the Atlanta Fire Department and their cooperation was tremendous. We hooked up three-inch hoses to big fire hydrants set into the stadium walls in each end zone. These led into 1-1/2-inch hoses equipped with flooding nozzles."

All pre-sodding preparations were completed in time for the Olympic Closing Ceremony rehearsals on July 21.

Making Ends Meet

At 6 a.m. on July 22, crews and equipment were in place, ready to sod. The 40 truckloads of sod coming from Arkansas were timed to arrive in sequence. Each truck had to be "sanitized" by working its way through the Olympic security system, a 20 to 30 minute process. The Burton F. Clark crews were ready with forklifts to take

the sod from the trucks to the field.

The first roll went down at 8:00 a.m. Now, Toma puts in "seamless" sod. Sod rolls are placed with a six-inch overlap. One piece is cut off straight. The other piece is cut with a one- to two-inch overlap. The two ends are lifted up, then pushed down tight so the sod is "puckered" into place. Ideally, crews work with 25- to 35-foot rolls cut 1-1/2 or 1-3/4 inches thick, which he's found faster and easier to handle than longer rolls, and easier on the equipment.

Besides a crew captain and the two "splicers," it takes five people with "potato" forks to pull the sod; five people with aluminum rakes to push the sod, and two people with hand-held hoses to water. That's a 15-person crew. Toma was running two such crews, one at each side of the field.

"Mangan was captain of one crew; Mike Eagen of Reddi Play captain of the other," says Toma. "Everyone pitched in. It didn't matter what company you worked for, or what your title was.

"Once the sod is in place we 'stand

up' the grass with bamboo rakes. Watering takes a special touch. It can't be too heavy when we'll have to put the roller on it, or the sand will ooze up. But with temperatures in the 100 degree range, too little water means wilting.

"With sodding in full swing, our water demands were hindering the stadium air conditioning system, and they shut us down. We ended up using a single three-inch hose, about 400 feet of it, connected to a hydrant outside the stadium to feed into the 1 1/2-inch hoses. It slowed things down a bit, but it worked."

Finally, the sod was rolled. It's a process Toma prefers not to do on newly laid sod, but with the events moving in, it was necessary.

At 6:00 a.m., exactly 22 hours from the time the first roll of sod went down, the job was completed.

Toma says, "The total focus, absolute 'no ego' cooperation, along with the 'and then some' work ethic of this entire team earned them gold medals in my book." □

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"We're a team," explains Gary Vandenberg, director of grounds for

the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club, when speaking of assistant Dave Mellor.

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scheduling of the crew while I handle the budgeting and management chores."

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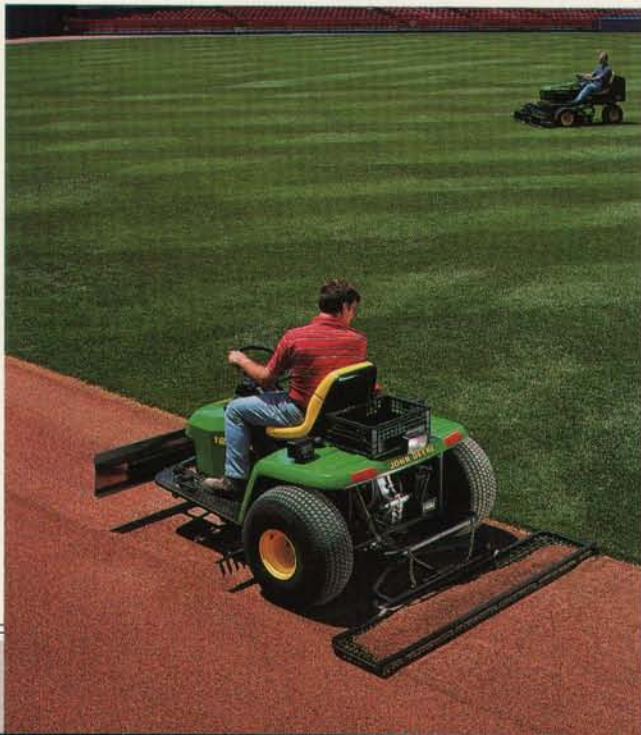
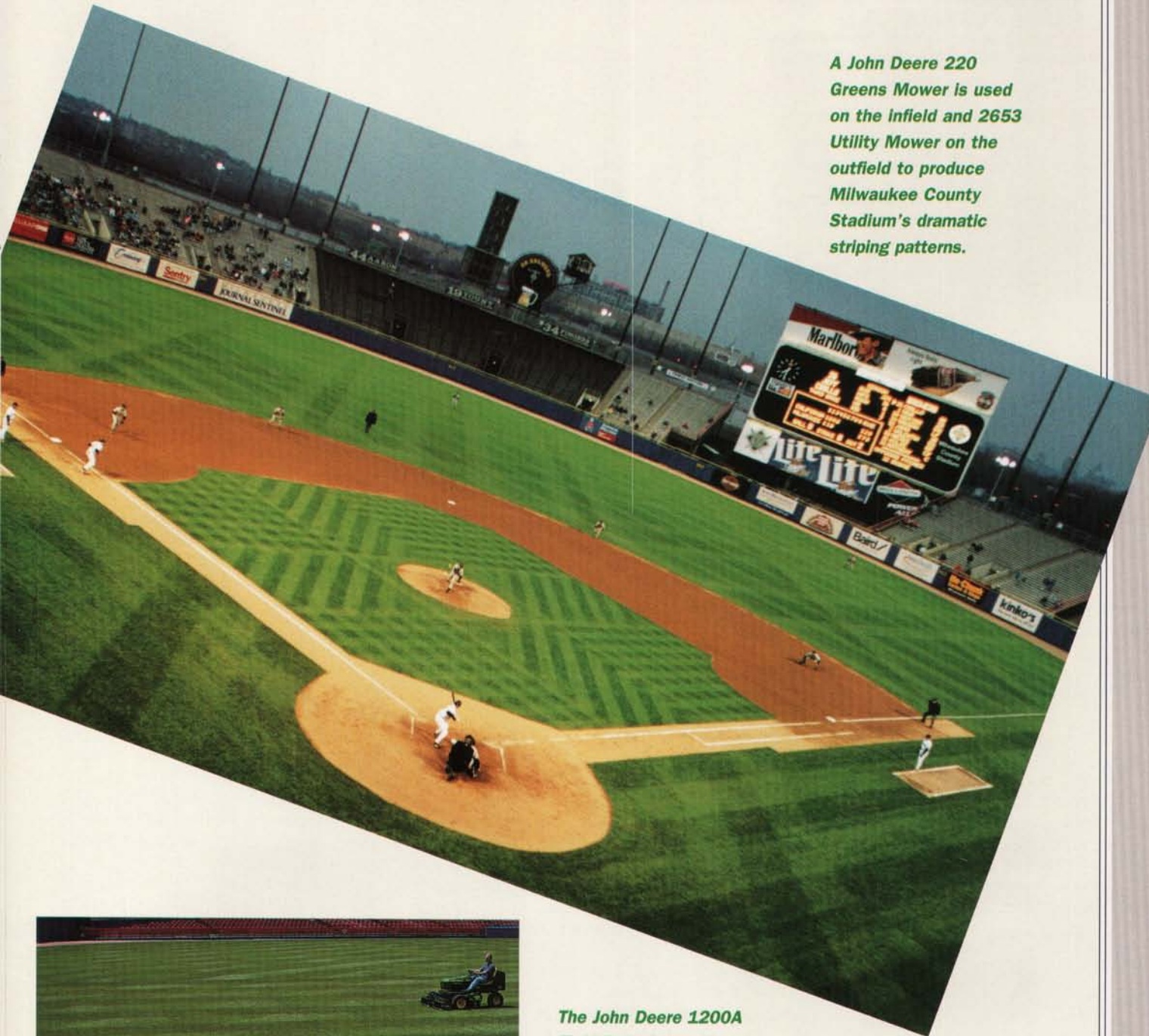
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Dave Mellor (left)
and Gary Vandenberg



A John Deere 220 Greens Mower is used on the infield and 2653 Utility Mower on the outfield to produce Milwaukee County Stadium's dramatic striping patterns.



The John Deere 1200A Field Rake is used to groom Milwaukee's infield and warning track. Hydraulic control of the rear field finisher allows an operator to adjust the down-pressure of the implement as needed.



What's Up at STMA's 8th Annual Conference

What better way to celebrate the New Year than by attending the 1997 STMA Conference & Exhibition — January 15 to 19, 1997, in Colorado Springs?

Besides the excellent educational sessions and trade show, the Colorado Chapter of the STMA (CSTMA) has planned two of the best ever Seminar on Wheels tours: (1) a Wednesday tour of Colorado Springs sites — The Olympic Training Center, Sky Sox Stadium and the Air Force Academy — and (2) a Sunday tour to Denver sites — Mile High Stadium, the Denver Broncos Practice Facility and Coors Field.

Another optional trip takes one back to the Old West with the Friday night Cripple Creek visit. Plus, there's a spouse trip to one of the nation's top outlet malls. And CSTMA has special plans in the works for the Wednesday night Welcome Reception.

There's plenty more. The following is a blow-by-blow listing of what you can expect.

Wednesday, January 15

7:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. Early Registration (Red Lion Lobby).

8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. Seminar on Wheels 1 (includes Olympic Training Center, Sky Sox Stadium & Air Force Academy).

7:00 P.M. Welcome Reception (Red Lion Hotel).

Thursday, January 16

7:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. Registration (Red Lion Lobby).

9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. General Session I. Moderator: Dave Rulli, Jeffco Stadium, Lakewood, CO, and president of Colorado Chapter.

9:00 A.M. – 9:10 A.M. Welcome & Conference Overview, Mike Schiller, STMA president, Rolling Meadows (IL) Park District.

9:10 A.M. – 10:10 A.M. Volunteers:

They Still Work! Dr. Richard Caton, New Jersey Turfgrass Foundation.

10:10 A.M. – 10:30 A.M. Break.

10:30 A.M. – 11:15 A.M. Surfing into the 21st Century: Internet & The World Wide Web, Rob Sklenar, Internet director, Green-Net.

11:15 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Update: NFL Players Association, John Kerr, NFLPA.

12:00 P.M. – 1:15 P.M. Lunch.

1:15 P.M. – 4:30 P.M. General Session II. Moderator: Chris Bunnell, Escondido (CA) Union School District.

1:15 – 2:00 P.M. Communications: An Essential Element in Risk Management, Fred Toloken, Metro Risk Management Agency.

2:00 P.M. – 2:45 P.M. Preventing Injuries Through Increasing Field Safety, Floyd Perry, Grounds Maintenance Services.

2:45 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. Break.

3:00 P.M. – 3:45 P.M. International Venues: Olympic, Hawaiian and Israeli Athletic Fields, Dr. Gil Landry, University of Georgia.

3:45 P.M. – 4:30 P.M. Reconstruction of the United States Air Force Academy Game Field, Michael Wehrmann, USAF Academy.

4:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. Grand Opening of the Trade Show & Reception with Exhibitors (Red Lion Ballroom).

Friday, January 17

7:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. Registration (Red Lion Lobby).

8:00 A.M. – 9:30 A.M. Concurrent Sessions I (select one): 1. Agronomic Fundamentals: Cool Season Selection & Establishment of Turfgrass, Dr. Richard J. Cooper, North Carolina State University; and Fertility/Maintenance, Dr. Anthony Koski, Colorado State University. 2. Agronomic Fundamentals: Warm Season Selection & Establishment of Turf-

grass, Dr. Eric K. Nelson, Medalist America; and Fertility/Maintenance, Dr. A.J. Powell, University of Kentucky.

9:30 A.M. – 9:45 A.M. Break.

9:45 A.M. – 10:30 A.M. Concurrent Sessions II (select one): 1. Water Management: The Basics & Beyond, Dr. Anthony Koski, Colorado State University. 2. Soil Management & Fertility: Understanding Physical Characteristics of Soils, Dr. Henry Indyk, Turfcon; and Making Sense of Soil Test Results, Dr. Eugene Mayer, The Scotts Company.

10:30 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. Trade Show & Lunch in Trade Show Area (Red Lion Ballroom).

3:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. Concurrent Sessions III (select one) 1. Compaction Relief & Stabilization Systems, Dr. David Minner, Iowa State University. 2. Maintenance Facilities: Efficiency & Safety, Floyd Perry, Grounds Maintenance Services.

4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. Concurrent Sessions IV (select one): 1. Making Roots: Biostimulants & Humic Acids, Dr. Richard J. Cooper, North Carolina State University. 2. Equipment Maintenance for Performance & Longevity, Eli Luster, John Deere.

Evening – Casino Night at Cripple Creek! (Bus transportation will be provided).

Saturday, January 18

8:30 – 10:00 A.M. Concurrent Sessions V (select one): 1. Winter Management of Cool-Season Grass Athletic Fields: Snow Removal, Ross Kurcab, Denver Broncos; and Tarping & Covering, Tony Burnett, RFK Stadium. 2. Winter Management of Warm-Season Grass Athletic Fields: Overseeding Bermudagrass Athletic Fields, Dr. Eric K. Nelson, Medalist America; Managing Fertility for Fall, Dr. Kent Kurtz, Cal Poly Pomona; and Transitioning from

Winter to Spring: "Managing Out" Overseeded Grass, Dr. A.J. Powell, University of Kentucky.

10:00 A.M. - 10:15 A.M. Break.

10:15 - 11:00 A.M. Concurrent Sessions VI (select one): 1. Management of Sand-Based Fields, Mr. Bob Campbell, University of Tennessee. 2. Management of Natural Soil Fields, Mark Altman, Altman & Altman Consulting.

11:00 A.M. - Noon. Concurrent Sessions VII (select one): 1. Heating Systems: Design, Installation & Management, Jeff Wiedemann, Wirsbo; Paul Franks, S.W. Franks; Vince Patterozzi, Baltimore Ravens. 2. Attention to Details: Infield & Mound Maintenance, Bucky Trotter, University of Kentucky; Mowing & Marking, David Mellor, Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club.

Noon - 1:00 P.M. Lunch.

1:00 P.M. - 4:45 P.M. General Session III. Session Moderator: Stephen Guise, Valley Crest Landscape Inc.

1:00 P.M. - 2:10 P.M. Round Table Discussions.

2:10 P.M. - 2:30 P.M. Break.

2:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M. What's Wrong With My Field? Dr. Gil Landry, University of Georgia

3:00 P.M. - 3:45 P.M. Keying in on Turfgrass Damaging Insects, Dr. Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University.

3:45 P.M. - 4:45 P.M. Personal Protection: Protecting Skin From Sun Damage, Dr. James A. McCoy, American Cancer Society; Personal Protection for Applicators, Steve Schlecht, Gempler's.

4:45 P.M. - 5:15 P.M. STMA Annual Meeting & Election of Officers

6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M. Pre-Banquet Cocktail Reception

7:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M. STMA Annual Awards Banquet. Banquet Speaker: George Toma, Kansas City Royals & NFL Playing Field Consultant.

Sunday, January 19

8:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. Seminar on Wheels II (includes Coors Field, Mile High Stadium, Denver Broncos Training Facility).

Partial List of Exhibitors (as of printing date)

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- Beacon Ballfields.
- Covermaster Inc.
- Floratine Products.
- Gempler's Inc.
- Golf Enviro Systems Inc.
- Hummer Turfgrass Systems.
- Jacobsen/Bunton Division of Textron.
- Promats Inc.
- Roots.
- Seed Research of Oregon Inc.
- Shamrock Irish Peat.
- Smithco Inc.
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Floyd Perry (center) conducts a workshop in Louisville, CO. Photos courtesy: Floyd Perry.

Floyd Perry — sportsTURF's Manager of the Year

By Chris Turner

Floyd Perry was trying to think of who it could have been to play such a telephone prank.

His wife, Libby, had just told him that a caller wanted to get his reaction to being named *sportsTURF* magazine's 1996 Manager of the Year.

"I was completely taken off guard," he said. "There are so many super people in the sports maintenance industry. It's truly unbelievable."

Unbelievable to Perry, maybe, but no prank. Perry is founder and owner of Grounds Maintenance Services, based in Orlando, FL, and is the author of many articles, a set of books titled *Pictorial Guide to Quality Grounds-keeping*, and two instructional videos titled "The ABC's of Grounds Maintenance for Baseball and Softball."

"The award goes to someone who has been very helpful to other sports turf managers through the contribution they have made to the profession," said Jim Williams, editor of the magazine. "Floyd has done that."

Working Around the Country

Much of Perry's contribution to grounds maintenance has come in the

way of 80 one-day workshops and four multi-day academies held around the country throughout the year. He travels thousands of miles toting subtle — but useful — gadgets to cities where parks and recreation departments are often short of manpower and low of budget.

In the workshop he introduces many tools that he has designed specifically for athletic grounds maintenance use. Some tools have evolved from the landscaping profession, but as Perry says, athletic field maintenance is not landscaping. Field maintenance is a precise profession, and landscaping tools often won't do the trick.

"The most satisfying aspect of these seminars is the people," he said. "I see a metamorphosis taking place on the grass roots level of athletic maintenance. The changes are being achieved by groundskeepers who creatively take home what they learn and actively make things happen. I also see more pride in the job expressed through staff uniforms, curbside appeal, extra effort, quality questions and, in general, more interest.

"I probably learn as much from the people who attend the academies as they do from me."

Moving Forward

Perry was once in the shoes of the people he now helps. He served for 20 years as a high school and college baseball coach and was director of baseball operations at Baseball City in Orlando, where he was responsible for field scheduling and tournaments. When Baseball City closed, he and Libby began Grounds Maintenance Services. Libby travels with Floyd and contributes much to his philosophy in helping people in the grounds industry.

"As someone who has had a passion for working on athletic facilities since as a player and coach, I know the value of what a little assistance can do," Perry said.

Perry sees a bright future for the grounds maintenance profession and believes that it will continue to evolve, somewhat out of necessity.

"I see the insurance companies setting standards of excellence for athletic facilities like they've done for playgrounds, automobiles, and the pest spraying industry. I then see more efficient equipment being used to accomplish that task. There is a real liability factor, and everyone is looking at the groundskeepers now as to why a field



In one of Perry's annual spring workshops, turf managers at the grass roots level learn the art of professional logo painting.

wasn't safe to play on. I see a real need for groundskeepers to be able to learn ways to make their jobs easier and for playing surfaces to be prepared in a safer manner."

It's been a busy year for Perry, who served as a volunteer on the all-volunteer grounds crew that prepared the playing surface for the Olympic softball competition. He was one of 20 or so members of the crew that battled much rain and high humidity — and 18-hour work days — to keep the softball tournament on schedule. It came off without a hitch, but was an exhausting experience that Perry wouldn't trade for anything.

"It was a super highlight of 1996," Perry said. "Working with the grounds crew from Columbus, GA, was fun, and seeing the success that the recreation staff received in self-accomplishment and personal pride was worth it."

Perry will take a little time to reflect on his award and to rest, but knows the future — and 1997 — are rapidly approaching.

"It's something that hasn't sunken into my conscious thought since there



The purpose of Perry's "gadgets" — such as this device for setting mound blocks in high stress areas — is to make turf managers' jobs easier and playing surfaces safer.

are so many quality men and women in our industry doing solid jobs and not getting recognition," he said. "I just encourage them to move forward."

"I am, however, honored to be selected and will do all I can to continue the forward movement in the sports maintenance field."

Chris Turner is the sports editor for The Millington Star, Millington, TN. □

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STMA in Action

Southern Cal's Envable Opportunity

Sunny California skies and mild temperatures greeted the 40 participants at 7 a.m. on Friday, October 25, at Rancho Buena Vista High School. Anticipation was high during the meet, mingle and munch registration hour. This two day meeting was to mark another Southern California Chapter tradition — the community service project — and this year's target was the high school's baseball field.

Friday morning's seminar sessions started at 8 a.m. with a short presentation by STMA Executive Director Steve Trusty. This headquarters-chapter connection provides a forum to answer questions and exchange ideas and is made possible through the chapter sponsorship of John Deere and The Scotts Company.

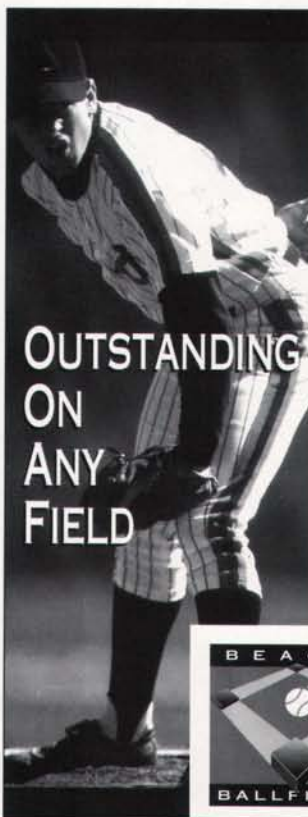
Next, John Donhauser of Envable Greens discussed the forms, methods and importance of aeration and compared the effects of deep aerification to other methods. He outlined the devel-



Southern California Chapter members look on as the sodding crew starts laying the infield turf. Photos courtesy: Steve and Suz Trusty.




After the sod is laid, the cut-out is made for the pitchers mound.



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