

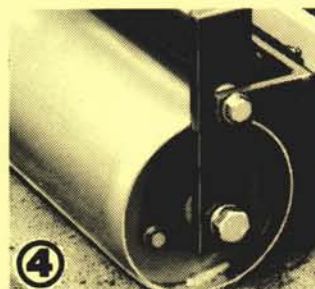
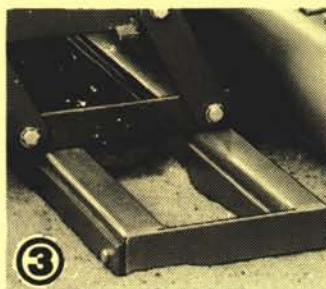
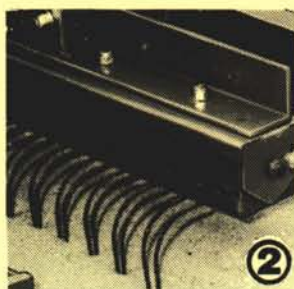
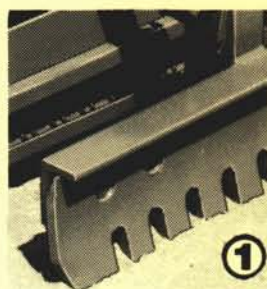


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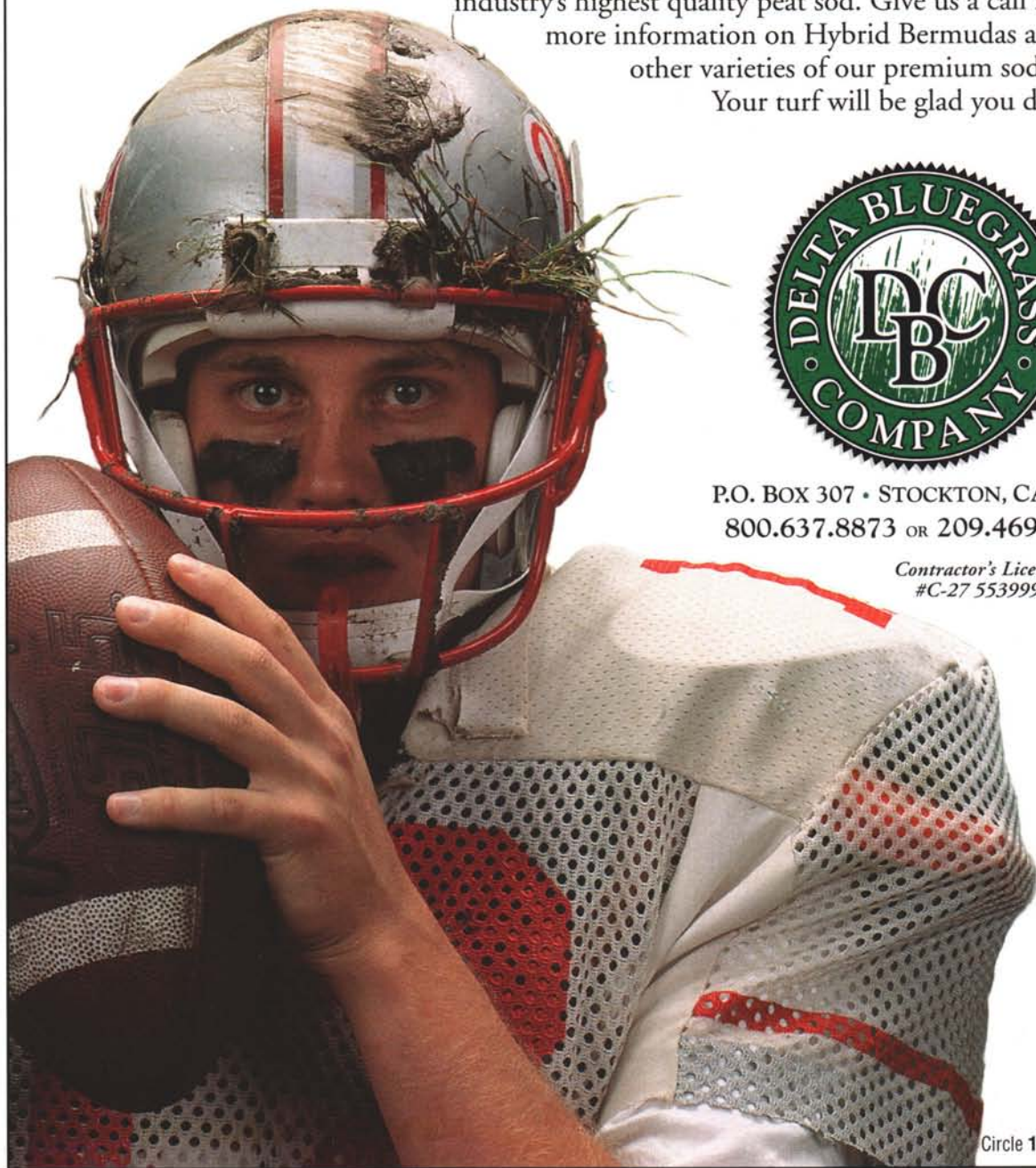
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VOLUME THIRTEEN, NUMBER SIX

JUNE 1997

MAIN EVENTS

10 Drikakis Wins STMA's Softball Field of the Year

A consistent, safe, highly playable surface is the rule, not the exception, at Jim Drikakis Field. STMA's 1996-1997 Softball Field of the Year shines as a successful balancing act between heavy use and a good maintenance program.

14 Disney Constructs a Wide World of Sports

Imagine a theme park for athletes and sports addicts — a live version of ESPN where the action surrounds you. The Walt Disney Company did and recently opened a unique nine-venue, year-round competition and training complex with state-of-the-art facilities that cater to more than 30 sports.

18 Giants Stadium Tests a New Field-on-Wheels

For a soccer game recently, Giants Stadium temporarily buried its AstroTurf beneath mobile squares of turfgrass. It's part of an experiment that, if successful, will add a new dimension to sports-field management.

LINE-UP

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On the Cover:

Workers, installing "Grass Squares," convert Giants Stadium's field from artificial to natural turf. Photo by Chris Scott.

STMA Chapter News

Midwest Chapter: The Midwest Chapter of STMA will meet on June 12 at Demaree Stadium of Merrillville High School, Merrillville, Indiana, STMA's 1994 Football Field of the Year. Activities will include a tour of the facility and sessions on field construction and maintenance.

August 12 marks the chapter's Seminar on Wheels tour. Plan now to join this behind-the-scenes tour of the athletic fields of Northwestern University, Wrigley Field, Soldier Field and the University of Illinois — Chicago campus.

Because of injuries sustained in a serious accident this past fall, Midwest Chapter President Lonnie Berg felt that she couldn't devote the necessary time to the association and has resigned her position. Stepping up to the president's position for the remainder of Lonnie's term is Scott Pippen, Village of Lincolnshire. John Anderson, Cannon Turf Supply Inc., has been asked to fill the vice president position. The rest of the board remains the same with Marc Van Landuyt, Van's Enterprises, as past president; Donald Michaels, Conserv FS, as treasurer; and Mike Trigg, Waukegan Park District as secretary.

For more information, call The Chapter Hotline (847) 439-4727.

Colorado Chapter: The Colorado Chapter of STMA will hold its next meeting on Friday, June 13, at Sky Sox Stadium. The meeting will open with Dave Rulli's President's Message and an introduction by Mark Leasure. Activities will include vendor talks, a session on infield mix presented by Ken Norkosky and a tour of the stadium. Attendees will also enjoy a cook-out and the Sky Sox baseball game.

The Mid-Summer Workshop is scheduled for July 18th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Wagner Park in Aspen, Colorado, the home of the World Rugby Tournament. Topics will include field renovation and irrigation.

The chapter's Second Annual Lawn Mower Man Open golf outing is scheduled for August 5 at West Wood Golf Course in Arvada, Colorado.

Due to snow in April, the Spring Vendor Expo was canceled. This event has been tentatively rescheduled for September 18 at Jeffco Stadium. Look for more details on this in August.

For more information, call the 24-Hour CSTMA Chapter Hotline/FAX: (303) 438-9645.

KAFMO: Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO Chapter STMA) is now in the planning stages for its fall field day. Details will be announced soon.

For more information, contact Dan Douglas, Reading Phillies Baseball Club, at (610) 375-8469, extension 212.

Minnesota Chapter: The Minnesota Chapter will

hold its 3rd Annual Seminar on Wheels July 16. Participants will gather at Midway Stadium, then board a bus for McMurray Fields, where vendors will show their aeration equipment in action in a mini-aeration clinic. Next, the group will take the bus for tours of the City of Plymouth Athletic Facility; Goodrich Field, Anoka, Minnesota, where a high sand-based field is being constructed; Blaine Sports Center, site of USA Cup Soccer; the Turfco factory; Bethel College; Urban Ventures; and the Rice and Arlington Sports Dome. The workshop will wrap up with a tail-gate party at Midway Stadium and a St. Paul Saints game.

For information, contact Connie Rudolph at (612) 644-0639.

Iowa STMA: The Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association will hold a Baseball Workshop from 1:30 to 4

continued on page 13

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THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE



Stadium of the Near Future?

When the idea for grass squares originated seven years ago, several factors had provoked a brainstorming session among members of the Greenway Group (pictured on page 19):

1. the increasing interest being expressed by athletes for a natural-turf playing surface, particularly at the professional level;

2. the economic necessity for the multi-purpose use of stadiums, including many activities that did not require a natural-turf surface;

3. the World Cup Soccer standards requiring a natural-turf playing surface (certain venues under consideration utilized a synthetic surface for athletic activities).

From the brainstorming session came a set of criteria required to convert a synthetic surface to a natural-turf surface: (1) rapid conversion, (2) instant playability, (3) instant restoration. To meet those criteria, Dr. Henry Indyk proposed a transportable modular system. This led to the development of the original one-foot-square model, followed by improvements that evolved into the present system.

The present system, however, is only one step in a grander scheme. When Indyk proposed the idea of grass squares, he envisioned their use within a "Stadium of the Future." Pursuing the concept, GreenTech has developed a proprietary prototype design for such a venue where a field is moved directly into a stadium on a platform — truly a field-on-wheels. If the present experiment at Giants Stadium succeeds, the Stadium of the Future may be right around the corner.

Turf Training for the Future

In other areas, Disney's Wide World of Sports heralds things to come. As a "theme park" for athletes, it is the first of its kind and will likely spawn others down the road, at the same time providing a professional boost to the sports turf industry.

Among other present and future activities, the 110 acres of sports fields will supply a training ground for young and old sports-turf managers to broaden their skills in sports they may not have experience in handling. The complex has established a new Department of Sporticulture, which is beginning to organize a Central Florida Chapter for the STMA. Also, discussions have taken place about STMA's proposed Certified Sports Turf Manager Program using the complex for its yearly training grounds — a program Major and Minor League Baseball Associations along with other professional sports are planning to endorse.

As things shape up now, the complex will likely become not only a premier sports destination in the world, but a premier sports *turf* destination as well. Under the guidance of Murray Cook, *sportsTURF*'s Man of the Year in 1991, and his staff, the complex may be blazing trails for both the sports and the sports-turf industries to follow into the millennium.

Correction

In the April 1997 *sportsTURF*, on page 9 under the heading "Maintenance," the products of the following manufacturers should be included in the list of additives for drying turfed and skinned areas after a rain: Diamond Pro, Partac/Beam Clay, and Turface/Aimcor.

EVENTS

CALENDAR

June

25

Pesticide Applicators Professional Association's (PAPA's) Pesticide Applicators Seminar. Ventura, California. Contact: PAPA. Phone: (408) 442-3536.

July

17-

Turfgrass Producers International Summer Convention and Field Days. Minneapolis, Minnesota. Contact: Tom Ford. Phone: (847) 705-9898. Fax: (847) 705-8347.

23

PAPA Pesticide Applicators Seminar. San Jose, California. Contact: PAPA. Phone: (408) 442-3536.

26-28

International Lawn, Garden and Power Equipment Expo 1997. Louisville, Kentucky. Contact: Sellers Expositions. Phone: (800) 558-8767 or (502) 562-1962.

29

Midwest Regional Turf Foundation's Turf Field Day. West Lafayette, Indiana. Contact: Bev Bratton. Phone: (765) 494-8039 or (317) 494-8039.

August

5

August 5 PAPA Pesticide Applicators Seminar. Fresno, California. Contact: PAPA. Phone: (408) 442-3536.

5

Golf Course Seminar at SUNY-Delhi. Delhi, New York. Contact: Dominic Morales at (607) 746-4413; or NYSTA at (800) 873-8873, (518) 783-1229.

6

PAPA Hands-On Pesticide Applicators Seminar. Ventura, California. Contact: PAPA. Phone: (408) 442-3536.

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.

STMA MESSAGE



Networking Pays Dividends

By
Mike Schiller

Have you ever found yourself in a social setting trying to explain to a group of casual acquaintances just what it is you actually "do" as a sports turf manager? If, like me, you've been there, done that, you've likely seen a glazed look of total incomprehension come into their eyes. The more you try to clarify, the less they seem to understand.

Contrast that experience to one of your recent conversations with a group of your peers. The idea exchange is fast and furious, with technical terms dropped into the conversation and comprehended as easily as those secret codes you probably shared with friends as a kid. You focus on key bits of information that have a direct bearing on the maintenance practices you've

programmed for your field, on equipment or supplies you're thinking about purchasing, on personnel management issues, or on suggestions that will help make your tasks more efficient.

A few minutes of this kind of conversation can become a "mini-seminar" giving you ideas you can put to work.

Another key educational experience comes in visiting other sports turf managers at their facilities. This may be part of a national or chapter workshop or seminar-on-wheels tour, or a one-on-one session you've arranged as part of a business or family trip.

Welcoming another sports turf manager to your facility can be as much a learning experience for you as for the visitor. A question about how you handle a certain problem or perform a specific procedure may help put some of your "standard" practices in better focus for both of you. Or, it may raise an issue or bring up a solution you hadn't previously considered.

If nothing else, you'll gather information on your facility from the viewpoint of a knowledgeable "outsider,"

and probably gain a better perspective on how others — including field users and spectators — view it.

I'm sure you'll be fortunate enough to discover, as I have, that some of those "networking" contacts develop into long-term friendships. You'll find yourself picking up the phone to ask some of these networking friends for their perspective on a tough problem you're facing (and they may have already solved); or to share a success story with someone who understands the reason it's a success; or to garner some sympathy and encouragement after a failure. And you'll be on the giving end of those conversations as well.

So — what does all this have to do with STMA? Everything! STMA can be your conduit to these networking opportunities, as current members already know.

If you're not yet a member and want to find out more about how this networking works, just call our headquarters at 800/323-3875. We'd love to share the good news with you.



Get Serious With STMA

Application for Membership

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) is an organization of professionals representing all segments of the sports turf industry. Our members work to combine the science of growing grass and the art of maintaining sports turf to produce playing fields that are both safe and aesthetically pleasing.

STMA provides members with a variety of benefits, including: education through regional institutes and conferences; support for sports turf research; facilities tours; a national awards program; access to the STMA National Conference and Exhibition; complimentary subscriptions to Sports Turf Manager and sportsTURF Magazine; and much more.

If you're serious about the sports turf industry, then it's time to become a member of STMA. Join today!

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Type of Business _____
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City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Fax _____
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional sports turf facility manager | \$75 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and recreational sports turf facilities | \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial (US or International) | \$175 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (non-voting) | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International (other than commercial)
(must be in US dollars) | \$75 |

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For more information, contact STMA Headquarters at 800/323-3875

"Promoting Better and Safer Sports Turf Areas"



Because of the field's busy schedule, maintenance must be worked in between morning league games, day-time practices and games. Photo courtesy: Mike Varner.

Drikakis Field Wins STMA's Softball Field of the Year

By Bob Tracinski

A consistent, safe and highly playable surface is the rule, not the exception, at Jim Drikakis Field in John Bailey Park, Battle Creek, Michigan. The STMA's 1996-1997 Softball Field of the Year is a shining example of a successful balancing act between heavy use and a good maintenance program.

"Bailey Park is the center of outdoor activity in Battle Creek," says Head Groundskeeper Mike Varner.

The park has 11 playing fields, including C.O. Brown Stadium (home of the Michigan Battle Cats, the Class A Midwest League affiliate of the Boston Red Sox). Drikakis Field in Flannery Complex opened in 1993 and is where all the important games are played: adult slow-pitch, adult fast-pitch, high school and college fast-pitch, and the Michigan High School Athletic Association girls fast-pitch state finals.

All that differentiates Drikakis Field from the other seven softball fields in the complex is that "it faces the main entrance and that's where they put the bleachers," Varner observes.

Working in Maintenance

Weekday evening games begin at 6 p.m. On weekends, fields are in use from 9 a.m. to dark — and longer on the lighted fields. Maintenance procedures are worked in between the morning league games, day-time practices and games.

"Checklists are provided," Varner says, "for each of the three maintenance categories: daily, weekly and periodically — so no one can forget what needs to be done."

"Our infield playing surfaces," Varner says, "are made of crushed limestone screenings [also called 'stone dust']. Good native clay/sand mixtures are hard to find in Michigan, and then we face the additional challenge of getting them screened properly because most of the native clay is very rocky. Stone dust is relatively inexpensive at \$13 per ton. It's easy to maintain and works well when wet. The only drawbacks are that it does not compact very well in batter's boxes and gets pretty dusty when it dries out."

Added to the middle of each of the infields this year is an additional sprinkler head.

"We can manually turn a ball valve to activate this head to keep the dust

down," Varner says. "We plan to run each of these heads two or three times a day for 10-minute intervals during the driest periods."

During daily infield maintenance, the front blade on the field rake is used to push material back into holes and depressions. With the stone-dust surface, the broom is used by itself unless wet conditions require use of the spikes to promote better drying. Spiking is needed only occasionally once the freeze-thaw cycles of March and April have passed. Stone dust is added to the infields as needed, and lips are washed twice a year.

For some supplies, Varner has an innovative arrangement.

"We have an advertising/ticket trade-out," Varner says, "with TruGreen/Chemlawn for the granular fertilization of all the park fields. This includes signage in the C.O. Brown Stadium, an ad in the Battle Cats program, and advertising during the radio broadcasts of the Battle Cats games."

He keeps a master record of all games scheduled on each of the 10 fields and the stadium field each day, and makes adjustments for rain-outs and other cancellations. The actual game figures are totaled for each field