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PROGRAM

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 5

MAY 1998

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Quality logos helped Iowa State's Jack Trice Field at Cyclone Stadium win STMA's 1996 College Football Field of the Year Award.

Courtesy: Mike Andresen

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Sports
Turf
Managers Association

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Will the Controversy Blow Over?

The controversy swirling around gas-powered leaf blowers has become a hot topic in the landscape industry of late, as stringent restrictions of their use have recently gone into effect in Los Angeles. Many are wondering where the legislation will end.

Robin Pendergrast of International Marketing Exchange, which represents Echo, Inc., has been speaking out against the movement to ban the devices. He recently spoke to our editorial staff about the issue, as its effects quickly spread across the country.

A complaint filed in the Superior Court of California by residents of Los Angeles, "who share a common interest in the elimination of all leaf blowers," cited the air and water pollution caused by the devices, as well as the "disruptive" noise they produce. Celebrities such as TV's original Catwoman, Julie Newmar, and *Family Ties* mom, Meredith Baxter, rallied to rid their neighborhoods of the machines.

The courts responded by banning the use of gas-powered blowers within 500 feet of residences. This action drew immediate fire from opponents of the ban. They claim that the movement is politically motivated, and some are even calling it racist.

Peter Gumbel of the *Wall Street Journal* reports that "tending the lawns of affluent Angelenos was once the domain of Japanese-Americans. But it has increasingly become an entry-level job for Latino immigrants, many of whom, it turns out, are a lot more political." The ban poses a major threat to these jobs, since it dramatically increases the time needed to complete each assignment.

A study conducted by the City of Whittier, Calif. in 1992, showed that the same task that would take a backpack blower 2-1/2 hours and approximately \$35 to complete, would require 282 labor hours and more than \$4,000 in labor costs if done with a broom. In an interview with *newtimesla.com*, landscape laborer Javier Salazar explains, "The blowers make my work easier. If I didn't have one, I'd be cleaning about six homes a day. That wouldn't be enough. I'd have to get another job to be able to feed my family."

The controversy is not confined to the city of Los Angeles, either. Similar legislation has already taken effect in parts of New York and in other counties in California. Here in the Midwest, the City of Evanston banned the use of blowers between May 15 and October 1. This has created a headache for the groundscrew at Northwestern University, who have to work around the ordinance to prepare for two football games in September.

If this issue does not already affect your ability to perform your job as a sports turf manager effectively, the controversy may be closer to your community than you think. Like the groundscrew at N.U., you may be stripped of a piece of equipment that you take for granted until it's gone.

All this leaves me wondering which noisy power tool will be the next to incur the wrath of angry residents. Before long we may be pulling the old manual push clippers out of the attic.

Steve Berens, Editor

TIP O' THE MONTH

Gypsum Supplies Calcium

In last month's Q&A, Dave Minner told readers when gypsum applications are not helpful to soil. In the following, he takes us through applications that will help your turf. See sportsTURF March 1998 for more details.

Application of gypsum in the following situations increases plant calcium and improves turf growth:

- When a soil's pH is above 6.7 and calcium (Ca) is deficient, gypsum (CaCO_3) should be used to supply Ca instead of lime. Lime applied to an already high pH further increases pH, and may lead to iron deficiency.

Gypsum supplies Ca without increasing pH. A suggested target range for Ca in a turf plant is 0.4 to 1.2%.

- Water supplies are often high in sodium (Na^+). Sand based systems irrigated with high Na^+ water may have excessive Na^+ on the exchange complex. Since sands do not deflocculate, the high Na^+ will not result in reduced drainage.

Sands retain macroporosity through particle size arrangement rather than by aggregation of particles. The high Na^+ irrigation water can easily displace Ca^{++} , and can make it deficient in sandy soils with low cation exchange capacity.

Gypsum can be used in this case as a source of Ca^{++} . Testing both soil and plants associated with sand based sports turf has revealed that apparently adequate levels of Ca^{++} in the rootzone have produced apparently deficient levels of Ca^{++} in the plant. □

David D. Minner, Ph.D., is an associate professor with the Department of Horticulture at Iowa State University. He also serves on STMA's Certification Committee.



June 15-16

The Environmental Horticulture Integrated Pest Management Conference, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA. Contact: Bob Rice, (805) 756-2830.

July 6-10

Floyd Perry's Groundskeeper's Management Academy, Millington, TN. Phone: (800) 227-9381.

July 16-18

Turfgrass Producers International's (TPI) Summer Convention & Field Days, Sheraton Premier, Tysons Corner, VA. Contact: TPI, (800) 405-8873; or Tom Ford, (847) 705-9898.

July 25-27

International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo, Kentucky Expo Center, Louisville, KY. Phone: (800) 558-8767 or (502) 562-1962.

August 17-21

Floyd Perry's Groundskeeper's Management Academy, Bethel, CT. Phone: (800) 227-9381.

August 24-28

Floyd Perry's Groundskeeper's Management Academy, Colonial Heights, VA. Phone: (800) 227-9381.

August 31-September 4

Floyd Perry's Groundskeeper's Management Academy, Kissimmee, FL. Phone: (800) 227-9381.

September 14-18

University of California-Riverside Extension's Turfgrass Management Intensive Institute, Riverside, CA. Contact: Jan Crump, (909) 787-5804, ext. 1621.

September 16-18

National Lawn and Garden Trade Show, Philadelphia, PA. Contact: Liza Wylie, (203) 847-9599.

STMA MESSAGE

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Managers Association



Striving for Excellence

You hear the chant after every championship game: "We're number one!" Accepting the challenge of a tough competition and performing at the very top level is a great accomplishment for the winning team - one that earns the respect and admiration of other teams, spectators, the media and the public at large.

In sports turf management, the opponents may be many. Scores aren't racked up on a scoreboard, but the competition is every bit as challenging. Sports turf managers have the opportunity to put themselves, their crews and their fields to the test in many ways.

First and foremost, managers must meet the daily challenge of providing fields that are consistently in the best possible condition. They must work through variables such as the initial quality of the field, weather and other environmental circumstances, budgetary constraints, and on-field activities. In other words, sports turf managers must consistently do the best possible job with the available resources.

The primary consideration is always the safety of the athlete. Playability ranks second, and aesthetics comes in third. Sports turf managers across the world emphasize that they'd rather have an ugly field that is safe and highly playable, than a beautiful field that is unsafe or one that adversely affects the game in any way.

Of course, the importance of aesthetics can't be ignored. For many of those in a position to judge the sports turf manager's job performance, perception is reality. If the field looks good then it must *be* good.

Often, that is the fact. Healthy, well managed turfgrasses will look better than sickly, poorly managed turfgrasses. An excellent field maintenance program with attention to detail will produce good results - *if* the combination of such negative factors as poor initial field design or construction, adverse weather conditions, funding cuts or overuse don't overwhelm the positives.

Excellent field appearance is also an image builder and a 'selling' factor. It serves a key role in the promotion of a school system, university, park district or professional team with fans, funding entities and the general public.

So, since you're already concentrating on all these important facets of field care anyway, why not take those extra steps to put your field and your program into the running for one of the Sports Turf Managers Association's Field of the Year awards? The STMA issues the awards annually to football, soccer and softball fields. We also present Baseball Diamond of the Year awards, in conjunction with *sportsTURF Magazine* and Beam Clay.

These are highly competitive awards programs, but fair ones. Each entry is judged independently by a panel of judges. Results, in the form of superior fields, are considered jointly with available resources. Management matters. It may take several years of fine-tuning your program to earn your way to number one, but the recognition for you, your crews and your field, within the industry and throughout your community, is well worth the effort.

Interested? Please contact STMA Headquarters for details on entering your field in any of these categories.

Stephen Guise, STMA President

Striping and Lining

by Mike Andresen

Striping, lining and logos are the finishing touches on your playing field. Safety and playability must come before aesthetics, but aesthetics are a very important aspect of a sports turf manager's job.

Accuracy

In striping and lining, accuracy is essential. Games are won or lost by inches, and many of those inches are marked by what you've painted, and how precisely you've painted it.

If you're getting a new logo stencil, put the extra time and money into getting one that's detailed. Invest in quality paint and quality painting equipment, it will pay for itself in the long run. Don't be afraid to try out new paints and to work with your paint supplier to get the paint you want.

Logos are more than a pretty design. They project the image of your organization and your team. They're also a marketing tool. A great logo sells those shirts, hats and other paraphernalia that help fund the program.

Speed

After accuracy, your second priority is speed, because crew time is precious. The biggest factor in fast and accurate

field painting is in-ground markers. Placed at strategic points, these markers eliminate the need to establish base measuring points each time you paint. They may be purchased or made, and the type required will vary with the game.

ground with the top of the PVC pipe approximately 1/4-inch below the grass line.

For soccer, the in-ground markers are located within the playing area. We use a store-bought, ground-socket marker that has a cap on top. When sunk into the ground, the top of this marker is right at the soil line.

The covered top eliminates the chance of a player sinking a shoe spike into the open center of the marker. The cap comes off so we can slip in a purchased peg that has string on it to run the lines. The sleeve is also used to hold the flags that mark the field corners.

Football

When painting the lines on our football field, we set our string lines and run the painter right down the center of the string. We paint two inches on each side of the string. Others paint a four-inch band at the edge of the string. Overall, their lines will each be two inches 'off' of our lines, but it's the consistency within the field that's

important.

We paint the white lines on the field with a Jiffy model 8000 self-propelled, walk-behind line painter with a 12-gallon tank. We mix our paint with water



The quality of field painting at Jack Trice Field demonstrates the pride Mike Andresen's team puts into their work. Their efforts won them STMA's College Football Field of the Year Award in 1996.

Courtesy: Mike Andresen

For football, all of our in-ground markers are located off the playing area of the field. We cut 1-1/2-inch PVC pipe into sections six to eight inches long. We sink these into the



1.



2.



3.



4.

Logos are complex; most are copyrighted, and all must be accurate. These images demonstrate the painting process, as the crew at Sec Taylor Stadium in Des Moines, Iowa, prepares the logo for the 1997 AAA All-Star Game.

Courtesy: Mike Andresen

to a 1:1 ratio, and it takes approximately 50 gallons of mix to paint the lines.

When temperatures drop in late fall, we add a little alcohol to the paint. The ratio differs, depending on weather conditions. The alcohol sucks the moisture out of the paint and allows it to dry before it freezes. Alcohol is hard on the grass, but our turfgrasses are dormant before we need to use it, and the rates are very small.

We paint all of the five-yard lines first, and then paint the sidelines so the painter won't run over fresh paint. An in-ground marker is located at each five-yard line on both sides of the field. They are placed just outside the three-foot border that the NCAA requires around the field. The string line is stretched across the field from marker to marker.

The NCAA requires a four-inch gap between the yard lines and the sidelines, so the sideline string lines need to be stretched out when the yard lines are painted. We place a four-inch piece of aluminum beneath the "X" made by the sideline string and the yard-line string to set the space.

The sideline markers are located outside the three-foot border. They are placed at the end of the field to set the horizontal line, and at the end of the endzone to create the vertical line.

Once line painting is complete, we break into two crews: a logo crew and a field crew. Our field crew goes straight to work on the inside hashmarks. We have an in-ground marker on the back side of each endzone, and we run a string from endzone to endzone to prepare the line for the hashmarks. We use an aluminum stencil and paint with an airless sprayer placed on the back of a small golf cart. 100 feet of hose allows the cart to run off the field, along the sideline. The angle of the slack in the hose keeps it from dragging through the paint.

Once the hashmarks are painted, we move the two string lines to the top point of the newly painted lines to position the numbers. An in-ground marker nine yards off the sidelines verifies the placement. We use NFL style number stencils made of heavy vinyl. They're mounted on an aluminum frame to keep them stretched out and in good condition. The crew

starts at one end of the field and works to the opposite endzone.

Once the numbers are painted, the field-painting crew brings the hashmark stencil back out and paints the sideline hashmarks. They proceed to paint the kickoff "X" on the 35-yard line and on the three-yard PAT hashmark line. This completes the white paint on the field.

The sideline strings remain down until the paint is dry. They are then moved out to paint the white three-foot border on each side of the field. There are in-ground markers at each end of the field on both sides to set these strings three feet out from the sideline.

While those two strings are down, we take the shorter sideline string and measure to make the coaches boxes and team areas. We don't have in-ground markers in those areas,

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because wear is extensive and we don't want any exposed PVC pipe.

Now the field-painting crew switches to an airless sprayer with an 18-inch-wide nozzle. They fill in the white paint in the three-foot border, and in the six-foot-wide team area and coaches box.

Our logo crew's motto is: "measure twice and spray once." Rules require a four-foot space between the sidelines and painted areas. Because the endzone is 30 feet deep, we've designed all of our logos 22 feet high. The center endzone logo is 71 feet long.

We draw a tape measure across the back of the endzone from sideline to sideline and run a string line. We measure and



In-ground markers eliminate the need to establish base measuring points each time you paint.
Courtesy: Mike Andresen

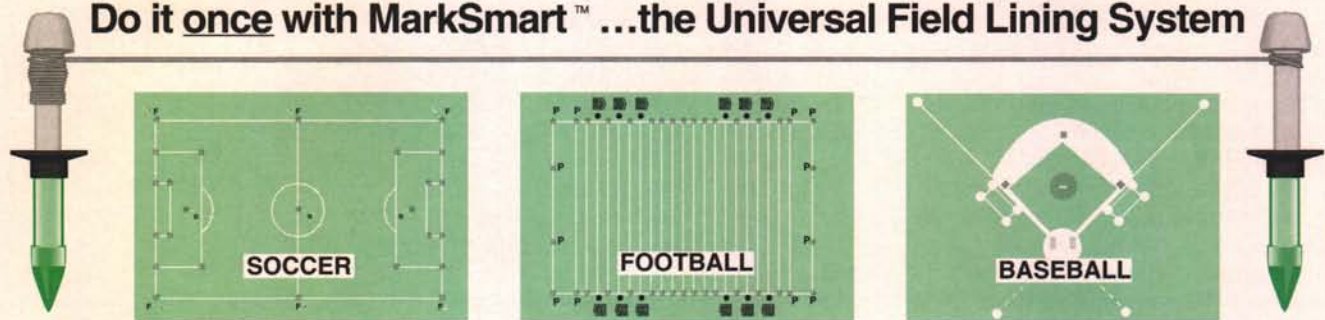
put a string line on the center of the endzone lengthwise. To get the exact center of the logo's dimensions, we measure and run a string line perpendicular to these lines, from the front of the endzone to the back of the endzone. This method is more accurate than measuring from the goal post.

Our logo stencils are made of vinyl and have small holes punched in them. The appropriate color paint is sprayed through the hole to create a dot of paint on the field. With the vinyl removed, outlining the logo becomes a connect the dots exercise.

We start at the center of the logo and work out. In the heat, the vinyl will stretch. We don't want the stencil to be on the field any

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