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AUGUST 2000

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Two opponents battle it out on Boston College's soccer field, the STMA College Soccer Field of the Year.

Photo Courtesy: Boston College

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Roots on Parade

Happy summer! This month's *sportsTURF* is our third theme issue of the year, dedicated to roots. As with our two previous theme issues, concerning the STMA Conference and baseball, this issue is completely dedicated to its subject, offering a broad range of articles on one common theme.

I received a terrific batch of features from a wide variety of writers from such locations as Colorado, Michigan, Massachusetts and the UK. No matter what type of turf you manage, no matter whether you are a novice or an expert, I guarantee you will find plenty of useful and relevant information in this issue.

Interested in the science behind healthy roots? Read Mary Owen's insightful piece on the physiology of plant growth. Looking for data backed up by research trials? Then Steven Baker's feature on rootzone material will be of interest to you. Think deep, healthy roots are essential to quality turf? Tony Koski will tell you otherwise in his article.

I hope this issue is as instructional, entertaining and informative to you as it has been for me. Thanks to all the writers for doing such a fantastic job.

New location

Speaking of roots, we here at Adams Business Media have lifted ours and planted them in a new location. We have left our suburban-Chicago office in favor of an office downtown. Here is our new contact information:

250 S. Wacker, Suite #1150
Chicago, IL 60606
Tel: 847-882-1942
Fax: 847-882-6842

I actually remain in the suburbs, working from my home office. My desk is near the window overlooking my backyard, so I can spend plenty of time doing the job I do best—watching the grass grow. My wife calls it day dreaming, I call it research.

Calendar update

We have made a slight change to our editorial calendar for the end of the year. Our November issue, which was originally slated to be a theme issue geared toward winter readiness, will now be dedicated to the 2001 STMA National Conference in Tampa, Fla. This should be a great help for all the conference's guests, as it will highlight vendors, speakers, workshop schedules and everything else attendees will need to successfully navigate and get the most out of the show.

Certification update

As of August 1, there are two new additions to the Certified Sports Field Manager group: Boyd Montgomery, facilities and maintenance director of Sylvania Recreation, and Mike Andresen, athletic turf manager for Iowa State University, passed all the requirements and exams necessary to earn CSFM status, joining the five others who have already done so. Andresen is having quite a year, having also been elected in January as the Category II Board Member for the STMA.

Congratulations, Rob and Mike, and good luck to all the others who are going through the certification process.

Michael SanFilippo
(847) 882-1942

Tip of the Month

Your Athletic Field and Your Child

Part II

by Floyd Perry

This column is presented in two parts. Part One was published in the July issue of sportsTurf.

Question: What can be frozen, baked, trampled, starved, dehydrated, saturated, compacted, cut too short, not cut at all, overfed, underfed, sliced, probed, smothered, painted and kicked, and still survive?

Answer: Quality athletic turf grass

For the lawn maintenance company that crosses over and handles quality athletic turf on a contract basis, remember to treat your new baby (sports turf) just like your family lawn with time tested methods.

Mowing and grooming

For best results according to the turf you're working with, the type of mower you're using, the mowing schedule you're trying to keep and the playing schedule you're trying to work around, it's best to not remove more than 1/3 of the leaf stem at any one time. It's also desirable not to have excess clippings or waste remaining on the turf surface. The most important segment of the mowing program is working with sharp blades to create a clean finished appearance.

Attempt during the playing times of the year to stripe or pattern the turf for the professional

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Calendar of Events 2000

August 15

Cornell Field Day, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. Contact Joann Gruttadaurio: (607) 255-1792.

August 23

Michigan Turfgrass Field Day, Hancock Turfgrass Research Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. Contact Kay Patrick: (517) 321-1660.

August 30-September 2

WorldScape 2000, a special millennium edition of CalScape Expo, Fairmont Hotel, San Jose, CA. Contact California Interior Plantscape Association: (707) 462-2276; fax (707) 463-6699; cipa@cipaweb.org. Web site: www.cipaweb.org.

September 15

Troubleshooting in the Landscape: Identifying and Solving Tree and Landscape Problems, Doubletree Hotel, Ontario, CA. Contact Ted Stamen: (909) 787-5804; sciences@ucx.ucr.edu. Web site: www.ucr-extension.net/ns/ns.html.

October 2-3

Mississippi Turfgrass Association's (MTA) annual Conference and Trade Show, Hilton Hotel, Jackson, MS. Contact MTA: (662) 325-0517. Web site: <http://msgrassnursery.com/mta>.

October 4-5

Southern California Turfgrass Council's (SCTC) Turfgrass Landscape and Equipment Expo, Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa, CA. Contact SCTC: (800) 500-SCTC (7282)/(818) 764-5016; fax (818) 764-3363; expo@turfCouncil.org. Web site: www.turfcouncil.org.

STMA Message

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Strengthen and Enhance

August is a major transition month. Summer is drawing to a close; fall has not yet begun. Some summer sports have wrapped their season while others are in full swing. At the high school, college and professional level, many athletes in traditional fall sports have already been hard at practice or participating in pre-season activities prior to the official season openers. Turf managers may have their fields in a state of change, perhaps setting up a baseball outfield as a soccer practice field, or maybe putting the finishing touches on the football game field.

STMA has been making some transitions too, as the STMA board and the Strategic Planning Committee have begun the task of preparing the association to move forward and reach new heights in the new millennium.

A major item that took shape during the strategic planning meeting was the development of an updated mission statement. Now, a mission statement is much more than a lofty sounding sentence to put on association literature; it is a clear statement not just of what we are, but also of what we are becoming and what we will achieve. It's a powerful tool to give a united sense of direction and focus to an organization.

Here is the new STMA Mission Statement: *"To be the recognized leader in strengthening the sports turf industry and enhancing members' competence and the acknowledgment of their professionalism."*

This mission statement was discussed, debated and totally worked over at the Strategic Planning meeting, then ratified by the STMA board at the June board meeting.

The words were carefully chosen for the messages they represent. For example, consider the word "strengthening" in the phrase, "strengthening the sports turf industry." Strengthening is the process of making stronger. Key areas associated with being strong are performing well, being morally powerful, being intellectually powerful and leading with authority.

Consider the word "enhancing" in the phrase, "enhancing members' competence." Enhancing is the process of improving the quality, of making better. And competence in that same phrase is the condition of being competent, well qualified, capable, fit to accomplish the requirements of the position.

Also consider the word "acknowledgment" in the phrase, "the acknowledgment of their professionalism." Acknowledgment is the recognition of something and the affirmation that something is true. In this case, that sports turf managers are professionals whose professionalism is to be recognized and affirmed.

And speaking of professionalism, now is the time to mark your calendar and start making your plans to attend STMA's 12 Annual Conference & Exhibition, Jan. 17-21, 2001, in Tampa, Fla. The conference theme is "Upward and Onward." Upward, because we're reaching new heights as individual professionals, as the profession and as an association; onward, because we're moving forward at this higher level, looking ahead and tackling the challenges.

The Tampa conference is the place to be to key into the educational and networking opportunities to strengthen and enhance your own level of professionalism as you move upward and onward.

Rich Moffitt
STMA President
(314) 977-2956

FIELD OF THE YEAR



Perserverance Earns College Soccer Field of the Year Honors for Boston College

by Bob Tracinski

Boston College's Championship Soccer Facility is perhaps the most stunning setting for college soccer in the Northeast, according to the feedback from visiting coaches. "Nestled in the lower corner of Boston College's Law School Campus between a residential neighborhood and Edmund's Park in Newton Centre, Mass., the field is surrounded by a cathedral of mature oaks, maples and locusts," reports Patrick Maguire, director of Geller Sport, Boston.

The company spearheaded the development of the soccer game and practice facility, including the permitting, design and construction administration.

Maguire notes the soccer field development was first conceived by the Boston College administration in 1997 and project development began then. The intent was to provide premium facilities for the program, alleviate overuse of existing facilities and eliminate the need for the men's and women's soccer teams to travel up to 35 miles to various off campus sites for its "home" games when the existing facilities were scheduled for other use.

Alumni Stadium, an artificial turf field, was the original playing field for the Boston College soccer programs. Play was later moved to the native soil Shea Field, which serves the school's baseball and softball programs in the spring and doubles as the practice field for football in the spring and fall. It's also the site of Saturday tailgating by prior to football games in the fall. At times, one of these Saturday

afternoon tailgating sessions would be followed by a Sunday soccer game on the same site.

Boston College's last undeveloped property was at the Law School Campus. Maguire says, "The site was near wetlands and a stream encompassed by the city-owned Edmund's Park. It was necessary for the field to be permitted under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Wetland and River Protection Acts. There also were issues expressed by the neighborhood, city and a local advocacy group that needed to be addressed. In June of 1999, the college reached an agreement with the City of Newton and the advocacy group to allow construction to begin.

"With the soccer season starting in early September, just 12 weeks were left for demolition, construction, sodding and grow in. The facility's first game was played on Sept. 12, just 5-1/2 weeks after the installation of the sod. Remarkably, the field was playable despite enduring one of Boston's worst rainstorms in almost a decade the night prior to the game. Remnants of Hurricane Floyd dumped over 5 inches of rain on the field less than 24 hours before kickoff. At game time, the field surface was dry, the footing was stable and the game proceeded without any problems."

Construction details

The 360-by-225-foot game field was developed within the wooded area next to the park. The smaller practice field is within 200 feet of the game field and directly adjacent to it, but is separated from it by the wooded area.

Preliminary work had taken place prior to June with the clearing and stockpiling of trees in areas outside the site where construction agreements and protection permits had been needed. Following some additional tree clearing, approximately 1,000 yards of the existing sandy loam were stripped from the game field site and moved to the practice field area to be mixed with the existing native soil.

Maguire says, "On the game field, a 6-inch gravel base was installed. Embedded in it are three subdrain pipes running across the field and draining away from the park into a dry well on college property. This was topped with an 8-inch layer of 70 percent sand, 15 percent native soil and 15 percent All Gro compost mix tested to meet the particle size and physical performance criteria of the USGA root-zone mix. Each load was tested at the pit and again on site to insure specifications were met. The field is crowned from the center to .085 percent. Around the top of the penalty areas it becomes converse to drain toward the goal area. The field was sodded with big roll washed bluegrass sod.

"The field is fully irrigated with a low flow, low pressure



Patrick Maguire (left) accepts the STMA College Field of the Year award from former STMA President Steve Guise.

Photo courtesy: STMA

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system consisting of a Weathermatic LMC Series controller, Weathermatic valves and Hunter I-25 full and part circle heads with rubber covers. Four quick couplers are located half way down each half of the field and off the field surface."

Maintenance details

The soccer game field is the first, and the only, sand-based field in Boston College's athletic program. As part of the construction contract, Maguire developed the initial maintenance program for the field working in conjunction with Bob LeBlanc, superintendent of grounds at Boston College (now retired). Shortly after construction was completed, Scott McCoy was hired by Boston College as assistant supervisor of athletic facilities to focus on the development and maintenance of the new facilities and the maintenance programs of the other facilities.

McCoy was prepared for the monitoring and program flexibility necessary for the establishment and maintenance of sand-based fields. He spoon feeds a soluble fertilizer package every two weeks, supplemented by monthly applications of a granular fertilizer. He switched to an organic granular fertilizer following the mid-July aeration. He's also using a growth regulator to improve overall thickening and turf quality.

He says, "Being able to keep the

Maintenance Program

Fertilization:

Based on soil test results
pH monitored to 5.8 to 7.5 range
Slow release polyon-constructed fertilizer with N:P:K ratio of approximately 4:1:4 (21-5-20)

First application when field tarp removed and growth initiated
Additional applications at four-week intervals (or more frequently if indicated) along with micronutrient needs as indicated by soil tests
Final granular application made in late September or early October
Liquid fertilizer package applied every two weeks according to test results

Irrigation:

As needed based on evapotranspiration

Mowing:

Mowed two to three times per week as growth dictates with ride-on triplex reel mower
Off season height-of-cut 1-1/2-inches
In season height-of-cut 1-1/4-inches to 1-inch

Aeration:

Spring aeration—two passes in different

directions with 3/8-inch hollow tine cores penetrating 3 to 5 inches

Fall aeration—three passes in different directions with 3/8-inch hollow tine cores penetrating 3 to 5 inches

Aeration of goalmouths, sidelines and other high traffic areas as needed
All cores shattered in place and dragged back into field

Overseeding:

Early May and mid-September with slice seeder at the rate of 2 to 3 pounds per thousand square feet followed by a broadcast application at the same rate and a light topdressing with a sand based medium matched to the soil profile
Goalmouths, sidelines and other high traffic areas overseeded as necessary
A blend of dwarf bluegrass varieties used for all overseeding

Pest Control:

Weed, disease and insect control as needed following integrated pest management practices with manual and cultural solutions preferred
Chemical controls used only as necessary

Painting:

Twice per week during playing season, depending on game schedules

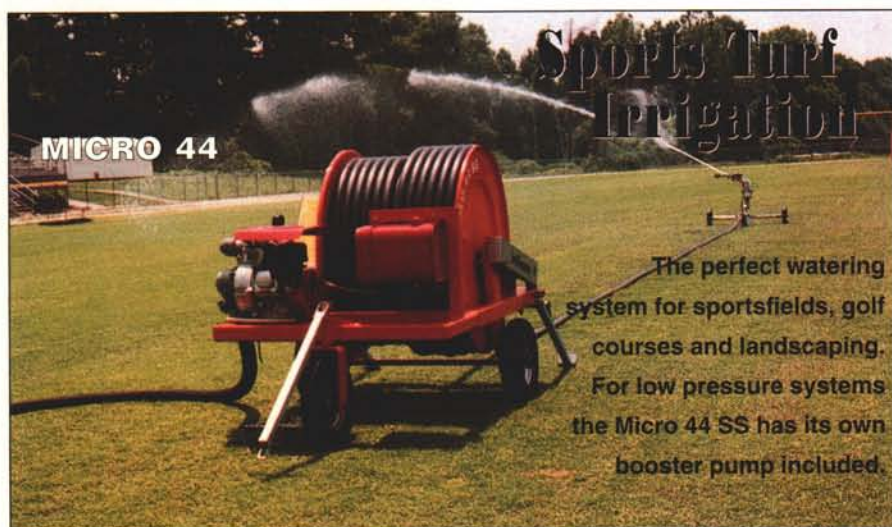
field out of play from the end of the fall 1999 soccer season to the start of the fall 2000 season has proven very beneficial. Rooting depth has reached 6 to 8 inches with good root mass. We're using the combination of

biostimulents and organics to increase the root mass even more. With the deeper rooting, the field stability also has improved as anticipated. Drainage remains excellent. If we get a pouring rain in the morning, the field will be ready for play by the afternoon. We've been mowing at 1-1/2 inches and may drop that to 1-1/4 inches or even 1 inch for play.

"Temperatures in the sand-based field have been consistently 10 to 15 degrees higher than the native soil fields, so we've been running an 8- or 9-minute irrigation cycle on the extremely hot days to cool it. That's in addition to the regular irrigation program.

"Where the sand profile ends, the modified native soil base around the field was sodded with non-washed sod. Our maintenance program is increasing the percolation rates in that area."

Spring did bring one surprise. According to state regulations, a sod producer can only cut and wash a limited amount of sod each day, approximately enough for one-third of the field area. Thus the field's sod was installed over a three-day period. McCoy says, "The field was tarped



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