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PROGRAM

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 5

MAY 2000

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M.S. Deal Stadium at Granite Falls Middle School, Granite Falls, N.C.

Courtesy of: G.C. Trivett

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Residential Equipment Adds Professional Touch

Tonight, after reading this issue of *sportsTURF* from cover to cover, spend a few minutes in front of the television (I probably don't have to twist your arm to get you to do that) and find a baseball game. Unless the game is being played in one of those outdated stadiums that still features artificial turf, you're bound to see at least some basic striping patterns on the infield and outfield grass. In some instances, when groundskeepers create elaborate designs or patterns in their fields, the playing surface can be more interesting to watch than the game being played on it.

As the editor of *sportsTURF*, I've seen hundreds of photos come across my desk from fields all across the country, and from all different levels: From Major to Little League. I've been surprised to see the amount of Minor League and college fields that feature striping designs as elaborate if not more so than the highest profile fields of Major League Baseball. For a good example, look back to the March issue of *sportsTURF*: on page 8 you'll see a wonderful shot of a design created by Head Groundskeepers Peter Webb and Brad Keith for Jetform Park, the Triple A affiliate of the Montreal Expos. The April issue shows some eye-catching designs from Shivey field, the baseball field for the University of Kentucky Wildcats.

While obtaining a high-grade commercial mower with rollers is realistic for professional and some collegiate fields, most groundskeepers probably don't have the resources to get this type of equipment. However, the popularity of field striping has created a demand in the residential sector, and manufacturers are listening. Simplicity Mfg. has recently introduced a lawn striping mower with full-width rollers to create striping patterns for residential groundskeepers with big-league aspirations for their lawns. These mowers are much cheaper than the large commercial equipment and should fit into many groundskeepers' budgets. Think of how excited players and fans would be to see their home field—whether it's a little league, high school or small college team—cut with stripes and patterns, just like they've seen on television.

For more information on Simplicity's lawn strippers, contact Troy Blewett, corporate communications manager, at (262) 284-8706.

A Message from the Executive Director

This May, the STMA has added a members only section to our Web site—www.sportsturfmanager.com. On that site, you post or review the latest research in the industry, share information and tips through our discussion board or place a classified advertisement. Perhaps the best news is that you can be guaranteed that you will only be sharing information with people like yourselves, national STMA members. To enter the section, you will need only your last name (user ID) and your STMA member number (password), which is listed on your membership card. This is one more benefit of your STMA membership.

I am sure that you will find the site useful.

Steve Trusty
Executive Director
Sports Turf Manager Association

Michael SanFilippo
(847) 427-2083

Tip of the Month

Eye Protection

by Kerry L. Beebe, O.D.

The American Optometric Association (AOA) offers this advice to help prevent eye injuries in the grounds maintenance environment:

- Wear wrap-around safety goggles, made of polycarbonate—the strongest lens material available. You can find these at most hardware and department stores. Look for the label that says the goggles meet the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z87.1 standard.
- Don't rely on ordinary prescription glasses for eye safety. Although they are impact-resistant, they are not safety eyewear. In addition, chemical or spray dust can get around the sides easily and into the eyes.
- Wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of the sun's UV-A and UV-B ultraviolet radiation and screen out 75 to 90 percent of light. Prolonged exposure to ultraviolet light over time can cause cataracts and may contribute to age-related macular degeneration, which are potentially blinding. Wide-brimmed caps and hats can only eliminate about 50 percent of UV radiation from reaching the eyes, but that's not enough.
- Additional tips for picking out sunglasses: If you can see your eyes through the lenses, the glasses are not dark enough. Look for a gray tint lens, as to not distort color perception.
- Cover the sharp tips of bamboo or metal stakes with plastic wire nuts to prevent an accidental puncture wound.

Continued on page 39

Calendar of Events 2000

June 12-13

Fourth annual Integrated Pest Management Conference, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA. Contact Dr. Bob Rice: (805) 756-2830, fax (805) 756-2869, rrice@calpoly.edu.

July 12

Sixth annual Ohio Lawn Care Association Diagnostic Seminar, Ohio Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. Contact Kareena Gibson: (800) 510-5296, ext. 3180, or kgibson@offinger.com.

July 19-21

Turfgrass Producers International's (TPI) 33rd annual Summer Convention and Field Day, Spokane, WA. Contact TPI: (800) 405-8873/(847) 705-9898 or Turf-Grass@msn.com.

July 22-24

Outdoor Power Equipment Institute's 17th annual International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo (EXPO 2000), Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, KY. Contact Sellers Expositions: (800) 558-8767 or (502) 562-1962.

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.

STMA MESSAGE

Sports
Turf
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www.sportsturfmanager.com



STMA Is Networking at Its Best

I just saw it again. On April 1, at Kauffman Stadium, home of the Kansas City Royals, STMA once more demonstrated networking at its best at the first meeting of the newly forming MO-KAN STMA Chapter.

A huge THANK YOU goes out to Royals Head Groundskeeper Trevor Vance, his staff and the entire Kansas City Royals operation for not only opening their facilities, but also for their welcoming attitude and warm hospitality during this day of information sharing and the camaraderie of networking.

With less than a week to go until the season's opening game, the field was in top-notch condition. Nearly 100 attendees came from Kansas City and the surrounding areas to take part in this event. That's in addition to the Royals personnel, the supplier volunteers handling the registration table and all those crew members and other volunteers involved in the nine different demonstration stations spread around the warning track, in the dugouts and on the field. Among the presenters were vendor personnel, Trevor, Assistant Groundskeeper Jon Reed, Royals crew members, Head Groundskeeper for the Kansas City Chiefs Andre Bruce and Jody Gill of the Kansas Blue Valley School District.

Name tags were numbered and attendees were asked to start at the station that matched their badge number and then rotate through all the stations by moving to the next consecutive numbered station every 20 minutes.

Talk about information sharing! During each session, with each group, networking was part of the demonstration as the groups interacted with questions and answers, with problems experienced and suggestions to resolve them, with ideas to improve efficiency, effectiveness, field quality and usability and with ideas to improve communications within organizations and with field users. Participants exchanged contact information with such comments as, "Catch me by phone first thing in the morning," and "Does e-mail work best for you?" and with specific procedures that were discussed, "Give me a call when you're ready to tackle it and we can walk through it on the phone," or "I'll call you a couple days before we're scheduled to start so you can bring some of your crew along to see how it works for us." And conversations continued to buzz as all joined together for a great lunch, the raffle drawing, an information session and an invitation to sign up for membership.

Thanks go to all those individuals, facilities and vendors who provide support for these activities at the chapter level and to our national chapter sponsors: Gold Level—John Deere, Pro's Choice and Novartis; and Silver Level—Alpine Services and Hunter Industries.

Having just gained some up close and personal experience in chapter formation with the Gateway Chapter, I've seen the dedication, commitment and perseverance it takes from a core group of organizers to bring a chapter to life. The MO-KAN group is a prime example of this. And is it ever worth it!

Taking part in a meeting with all that background, all those years of experience, openly shared, is an education in itself.

Rich Moffitt
STMA President
(314) 977-2956

Middle School Doesn't Mean Middle Class

M. S. Deal Stadium Earns Top Honors in Its Division

by Bob Tracinski

When asked to describe his groundskeeping philosophy, G. C. (George) Trivett, physical education teacher (with six classes), head football coach and athletic director for Granite Falls Middle School, Granite Falls, N.C., says, "We want the best conditions for everyone using our field. It all goes back to the total program, getting the best equipment we possibly can, working in all the maintenance we possibly can. If you have the dream and the commitment, you'll find the necessary knowledge and support out there waiting for you."

Those aren't empty words; he's proven it with actions. M. S. Deal Stadium captured the title of 1999 STMA/Beam Clay/*sportsTURF* Baseball Diamond of the Year in the School, Municipal or Park Division.

Tucked in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, the stadium is in the transition zone with only cool-season turfgrasses growing just 30 miles to the northwest. Winter brings some snow and below zero temperatures but, generally, these conditions only last a few days. Average winter temperatures are near 50 degrees Fahrenheit, so field use may be year-round.

And use is an understatement for this multipurpose field. There are baseball practices and games, softball practices and games, soccer practices and games, football practices and games, all the outdoor physical education classes and the community sports programs.

The middle school baseball season begins on Feb. 15. Then come the American Legion program baseball games and the high school's tournament and playoffs, which could continue into mid-August, ending just in time for football practice to begin. Add soccer and sports play runs well into October.

In addition, the field has hosted a North Carolina state high school baseball championship, two North Carolina

state American Legion championships, two Region 10 National Junior College championships, numerous Division One college baseball games, several high school tournaments and many other high school, recreation and AAL baseball games.

And there's more. The stadium has just been awarded the first ever N.C. American Legion Championship Series which will involve nine teams in a double elimination tournament. With four games a day during the last part of July and first part of August, the series should be the biggest sporting event in the county, bringing between 2,000 and 3,000 attendees per day.

Background

That's a lot of action for a field originally constructed of 2 to 3 feet of native soil, mostly hard-packed clay containing large amounts of old granite rock. M. S. Deal Stadium was part of the early 1940s high school facilities' development project. The facility became a middle school, serving grades six through eight, when a new high school was built in 1977.

Trivett joined the staff that year, having just earned his degree in Health and Physical Education at Appalachian State University. Groundskeeping wasn't part of his job description. The entire infield surface was skinned and the school's custodial staff mowed the remainder of the field with a Bushhog. Still, the field was superior to other area school fields and good enough to host the 1982 state baseball championship.

Trivett became interested in turf management in 1986 and he took over field care. He says, "I joined the Sports Turf Managers Association and began attending seminars, reading magazines and using the STMA membership roster to contact other field managers by phone and in person. I became a Certified Grounds Manager through the Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS). I've attended many of Floyd Perry's seminars and also have spoken at some of them and at other seminars. As I learned more, I was able to accomplish more with the field." Trivett also is a certified pesticide applicator and a member of the N.C. Turfgrass Council and the Southern Turfgrass Association.

Field progress initially came in small steps. Adapting the fertilization program to soil testing results improved growing conditions. Marshaling P.E. classes to periodically clear away the ever-appearing granite rocks helped smooth the playing surface. Mowing moved to a flail mower, a rotary mower and now a triplex reel mower.

It took the negative influence of an inspection that condemned the field's old lighting system for Trivett to experience the power of volunteer support. When it was announced the lights wouldn't be replaced because the middle school didn't need a lighted field, the community consensus was yes, it did. Through donations and fund raising activities, \$43,000 was raised in just two months. The new Musco lighting system was installed in 1993.

Soon the booster club was in full gear, joined by other community supporters in raising funds for both team



Covered dugouts and press box keep players, team personnel and members of the media dry and comfortable.

Courtesy of G.C. Trivett

sports needs and field maintenance. The booster club runs the concession stands for all activities, with all proceeds channeled into the athletic department. Other volunteers provide game day on-field support. Trivett also credits progress to the support of the middle school administration and of the school system administration and the understanding of his personal support system, wife Karen and son Cory.

Maintenance Program

Though he's had a part-time retiree or student assistant during some of his 23 years at the school, many years are like this one, and he tackles daily maintenance on his own. He's developed an aggressive maintenance program to keep the field in top shape. He core aerates once a month from May to September, using a double pass on the entire field, and a second double pass in high-use areas. The cores are dragged back in for topdressing.

For one aeration each year, the cores are collected and he topdresses using a local washed sand. In 1999, sand was used for the outfield while the infield was topdressed with calcined clay. This modification process has greatly improved water infiltration and percolation.

He says, "Generally we can take a 2-inch rain and still play within two hours. But when this heavy soil becomes saturated, infiltration is very slow. We'll apply calcined clay as needed for surface drying to keep from missing a game."

He mows the outfield at least three times a week; the infield daily and twice a day on game days. "The 13/16-inch mowing height helps phase out the perennial ryegrass in the spring and suits the bermudagrass during the summer. After overseeding in the fall, I gradually raise the height to 1-1/4 inches. I change our mowing patterns periodically," notes Trivett. "This spring it's an interlocking circular pattern. Next, I'll go to a diamond on the infield and the outfield. For football, I alternate directions every five yards to create a striping pattern."

Excessive wear is avoided by rotating all on-field practice sessions and drills and P.E. class workouts. Because the distance from home plate to the right outfield is 390 feet, Trivett has space to turn the football-soccer field at an angle to the

baseball field, further limiting wear. The thicker turf has virtually eliminated any weed or insect problems.

A field rake cuts infield grooming time. Trivett says, "During a tournament I can drag the field in four minutes. I'll drag between every game and after the teams take infield practice. We also change the bases between games, reline the infield, and rechalk the boxes. Our volunteer crew is great. We can be on and off the field in 12 minutes flat."

Good enough isn't the goal for Trivett, even with an award-winning field. Improvement is never-ending. The



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Courtesy of G.C. Trivett



In addition to hosting baseball, softball, football, and soccer games, the field is used for the school's physical education classes.

Courtesy of G.C. Trivett



Distinctive mowing patterns help give the field a professional appearance.

field had a 12-zone automatic sprinkler system. In October of 1999 a zone of seven automatic sprinkler heads was installed to irrigate the infield clay. This was tied into the old system along with a new computerized control. Previously, a hose was attached to a quick coupler for hand watering the infield. Trivett anticipates this will bring substantial time savings and allow for even better fine-tuning of infield moisture levels.

New infield soil and two tons of calcined clay were added to eliminate some low spots and level the basepaths. Though he liked the results, Trivett's already planning

ahead. He says, "We used a good natural clay soil. Next time we'll pay the extra costs for a screened, mixed soil to get an even better finish."

Fertilizing

For the 2000 season, Trivett changed to ammonium sulphate fertilizer, attempting to eliminate the spring dead spot in the infield, which probably was caused in part by use of ammonium nitrate (34-0-0). He says, "The sulphate is producing a darker green color and also should help suppress the poa annua over a period of

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