



PLAY IN THE SAFE/JACOBSEN GOLF TOURNAMENT

THE FOUNDATION FOR Safer Athletic Field Environments (SAFE) was created by the Sports Turf Managers Association to provide research, educational programs and scholarships geared to sports fields.

For the 4th year in a row, Jacobsen, A Textron Company, is sponsoring the SAFE/Jacobsen Golf Tournament. This event will be held in conjunction with the 15th Annual STMA Conference & Exhibition, January 21-25, 2004 in San Diego.

The tournament will take place on Wednesday, January 21 at the La Costa Resort & Spa in San Diego. Registration fees include greens fees, cart rental, and lunch. Proceeds from this tournament help support the SAFE scholarship, education and research fund. Last year, this Jacobsen-sponsored event brought in \$12,875 to the Foundation.

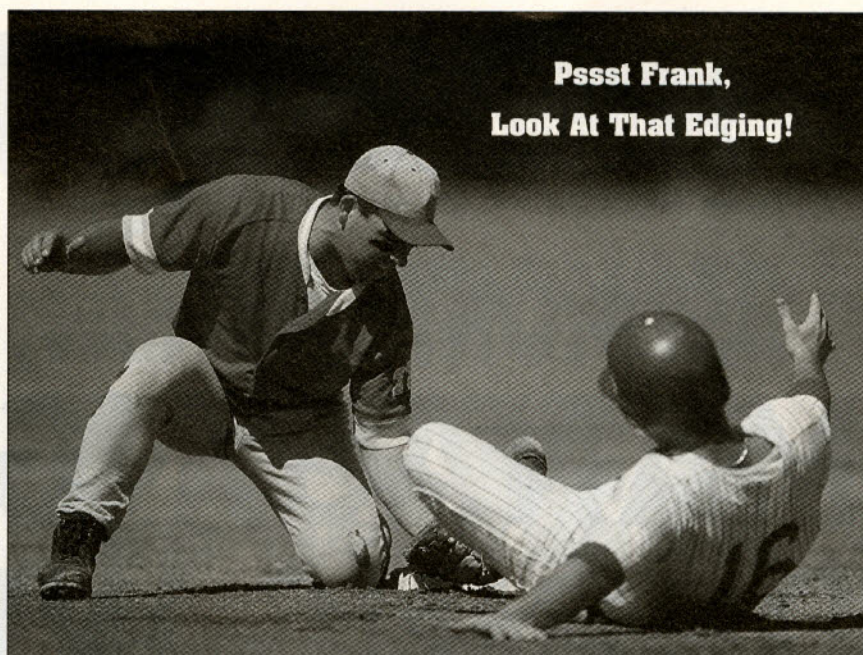
The SAFE Foundation believes in pro-active research and education. We are dedicated to fund the kind of research that sports turf managers need to improve the playing surfaces they oversee. SAFE also recognizes that research must be effectively disseminated to professional turf managers and volunteer turf practitioners. Thus, our goal is to fund sports turf research and education.

Also, as part of our mission, SAFE is dedicated to supporting students focused on the profession of sports turf management through our scholarship program. Scholarship funds are earmarked for students of 2-year programs, students in 4-year undergraduate programs, and for grad students.

The SAFE Foundation has much work to complete before it can supply the sports turf industry with the desired level of programs. And we are truly thankful to Jacobsen for their continued support of our cause. However, additional funding is needed to fulfill the scholarship, research, and education aims of our mission. Your willingness to consider the SAFE Foundation's request for funding is truly appreciated.

For more information on the SAFE/Jacobsen Golf Tournament, check out the STMA website at www.sportsturfmanager.com or contact STMA Headquarters at STMAHQ@st.omhcoxmail.com or call Stephanie Watts at 800-323-3875.

For information on the SAFE Foundation, contact Steve Trusty at SAFE Headquarters by e-mail Steve@st.omhcoxmail.com or by phone at 800/323-3875.



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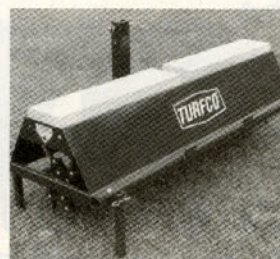
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BY MIKE REISENAUER

MANAGING PLAYABILITY DURING WEATHER EXTREME

Managing and maintaining sports turf fields for Washington State University Athletics is a challenging job. The weather in the Pacific Northwest varies so much from year to year as well as week to week. It is said around here if you do not like the weather wait an hour because it will change. That said, we typically get cold springs and warm summers. This year we started with summer in May and it was still hot in September. The work to have a playable field in extreme weather conditions begins way before anyone steps on the field. Here are a few examples of working with the climate changes we get and how they impact our fields:

Begin with establishing good, consistent cultural practices. Be willing to go the extra mile and do what it takes to make changes to benefit your fields. This can involve educating yourself and staff members on new practices and scheduling more time for fieldwork.

Develop and implement a management plan for each field for the year. Write this down and plan each and every task that is to be performed so that you know ahead of time what will be needed for the week or month. Religiously log each job down when you complete it as well as things that could have been done better for next year. I look back at my logs all of the time to compare fertility programs or just to see when we started mowing a particular field each year.

Budget properly to accommodate the goals of the coaches and administrators. Keep in close contact with everyone on what the field needs for improvement so that the money is earmarked ahead of time. Be persistent and don't take no for an answer. There is always a way to find the money or get the job done.

Keep an arsenal of supplies and equipment on hand. Be prepared. It can take years to build up enough equipment to adequately maintain fields for the playability that is desired.

Have knowledgeable staff that can help you out. You can never have enough people to help you out in a bind. Be willing to put in extra time and effort to ensure jobs get done.

At Washington State we have three Pac-10 sports turf fields. Some interesting

weather extreme conditions have affected playability on all three. Each field is a cool season established Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass field with the salt and peeping of *Poa annua*. For the most part each field has a good irrigation system and minimal subsurface drainage. The Lower Women's Soccer Field and the Bailey-Brayton Baseball Field are native soil fields and the Moobery Track Field is a sand-based field.

In November 2000 we held the NCAA first round women's soccer tournament on the Lower Soccer field. The game was on a Friday so I watched the weather forecast closely to anticipate any drastic changes. A cold front was coming in on Friday so I chose to mow, paint lines and logos, and prep the field for game conditions Thursday after practice. No kidding, I painted the lines and logos that Thursday afternoon in a short sleeve shirt and it was sunny and 55 degrees out. It started snowing at four o'clock Friday morning. By six o'clock we had 4 inches of snow and I had our equipment staged on the soccer field before the coaches and event management even got there.

All parties involved brainstormed about what we might do. How can I make this playable, how is this going to affect the field next year, and how much time do we have were questions that instantly came to my mind. We chose a rotary nylon broom to sweep as much of the snow off the grass as possible but when it became too heavy and deep we used the snow blower, on which I'd installed a rubber belting on the blade that scrapes against the ground. This works well and also keeps the edges from digging into the grass. The event management staff used more than 20 snow shovels to help remove snow in areas that the snow became too compacted or the ground became too soft to travel across.

The game started and the snow never stopped. At half time we topdressed the front of the press area, the sidelines where the officials ran and the goalmouths with sand and over seeded each area. We also broomed off all of the lines again. All within 15 minutes. The playability of the field was remarkable for the weather and the field grew back together nicely the next spring.

The Moobery track field is easier to maintain during weather extremes. For example, the javelin can stick in the wet or dry ground, the discus lands or sticks in the ground, and the hammer has a long wire handle so as long as it only goes 15 inches in

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THE WEATHER GETS;
IF THERE'S PROBLEMS
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PLAYABILITY IS
ALREADY IN JEOPARDY.**



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the ground you can still find it. Yes, they leave cannon ball-sized holes in the ground coming to a stop. This is not a problem to the person wearing snowshoes or someone wearing a size 16 shoe. Fortunately most of our throwers are big enough they probably wear that size of a shoe. It has become a big issue for the employees that need to mow the facility as well as the mowers mechanically falling apart while they are bouncing across the field.

To try to minimize this we will be rolling areas with the most damage and then aerating as needed to manage compaction. Heavy topdressing with sand and then dragging will also help.

The Bailey-Brayton Baseball field is currently undergoing a \$1.3 million renovation. The University and the athletic department have chosen to switch to a synthetic turf because we just cannot consistently maintain a safe, playable field in the spring. Our springs just do not warm up enough and are too wet for the Pac-10 season.

This spring our team tarped the infield before our first home game and it rained about 1/4 inch that night, then it froze. Our staff spent 4 hours out on the tarp breaking up the puddles that had frozen and then loaded the ice into utility vehicles. We then hauled it off the field and dumped it in a pile. It looked like a large ice truck had crashed behind the stadium. We have shoveled snow off the tarp before as well.

In the summers before we have held tournaments on the field which will start at 7 in the morning and go until midnight. This will last for a week sometimes. When it gets hot in the afternoon we will syringe the infield grass with a garden hose. There is a fine line here so do not soak the grass. This slows the transpiration rate and we get less injury. It makes all the difference in playability by day 6 and 7.

Playability is relative to just how "extreme" the weather gets. If there's problems before the weather hits, playability is already in jeopardy. **ST**

Mike Reisenauer is Sports Turf Manager for Washington State Athletics. He can be reached at miker@wsu.edu.



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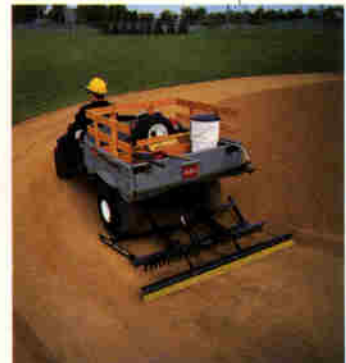
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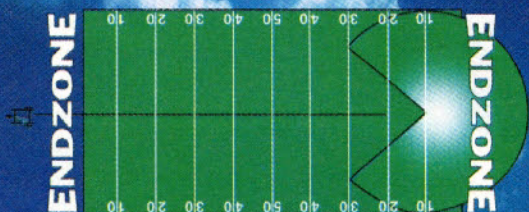
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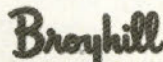
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"PLUSH" INFIELD

The turf in my ryegrass/bluegrass baseball infield was thin and patchy last year with some bare spots. I would like to know what steps to take this fall to make the field look nicer and be thicker for next season. What comes to mind is a "plush" infield, dark green, thick and soft grass. Tearing the entire field up is out of the question.

Cole Flick
Head Groundskeeper, Saints Field, Dassel, MN

After several emails and a digital picture or two it was apparent that Cole wanted to raise the performance and appearance of his baseball infield grass. He cited the Saint Paul Saints, "Dick Putz" field in St. Cloud, and Sec Taylor I-Cubs as fields that he aspires to match.

Cole realized that by the middle of the month he would be nearing the last day to seed Kentucky bluegrass and still achieve successful establishment. A week later he replied "Thank you for the information you sent me last week regarding infield re-seeding . . . I used more than 60 lbs. of seed, which is slightly more than you suggested."

I appreciated the follow-up letting me know what particular recommendations he chose. He did a great job of making the information fit his program. Cole used a local 4:1 sand/black dirt topdressing that he has had success with in the past and that should work just fine instead of the straight sand topdressing that I suggested. A sand/compost topdressing could have also been used.

I prefer heavier than normal seeding rates for many sports field uses, but I think Cole may hold the new record for the highest Kentucky bluegrass seeding rate his side of the Mississippi River. My normal seeding rate for most sport turf applications is 3 lbs. KB /1000 sq.ft. And this is already elevated above the standard seeding rates of 1.5 to 2 lbs/1000 sq. ft.

Each year my sports turf class renovates a local baseball infield with the following procedure. The picture shows the equipment that we use for the renovation and our material cost for seed, sand, and fertilizer is around \$300 per infield.

If you play spring ball before the grass greens up and needs mowing, then remember that you will be playing on the same field condition in early spring that you left off with in late fall. If it has not filled in by late fall then it will be weak in the spring, but will likely fill in nicely during the spring and summer. If you take an aggressive approach now and get the seeding in late then it may not fill and smooth out by early next spring. Use your experience to make the suggestions

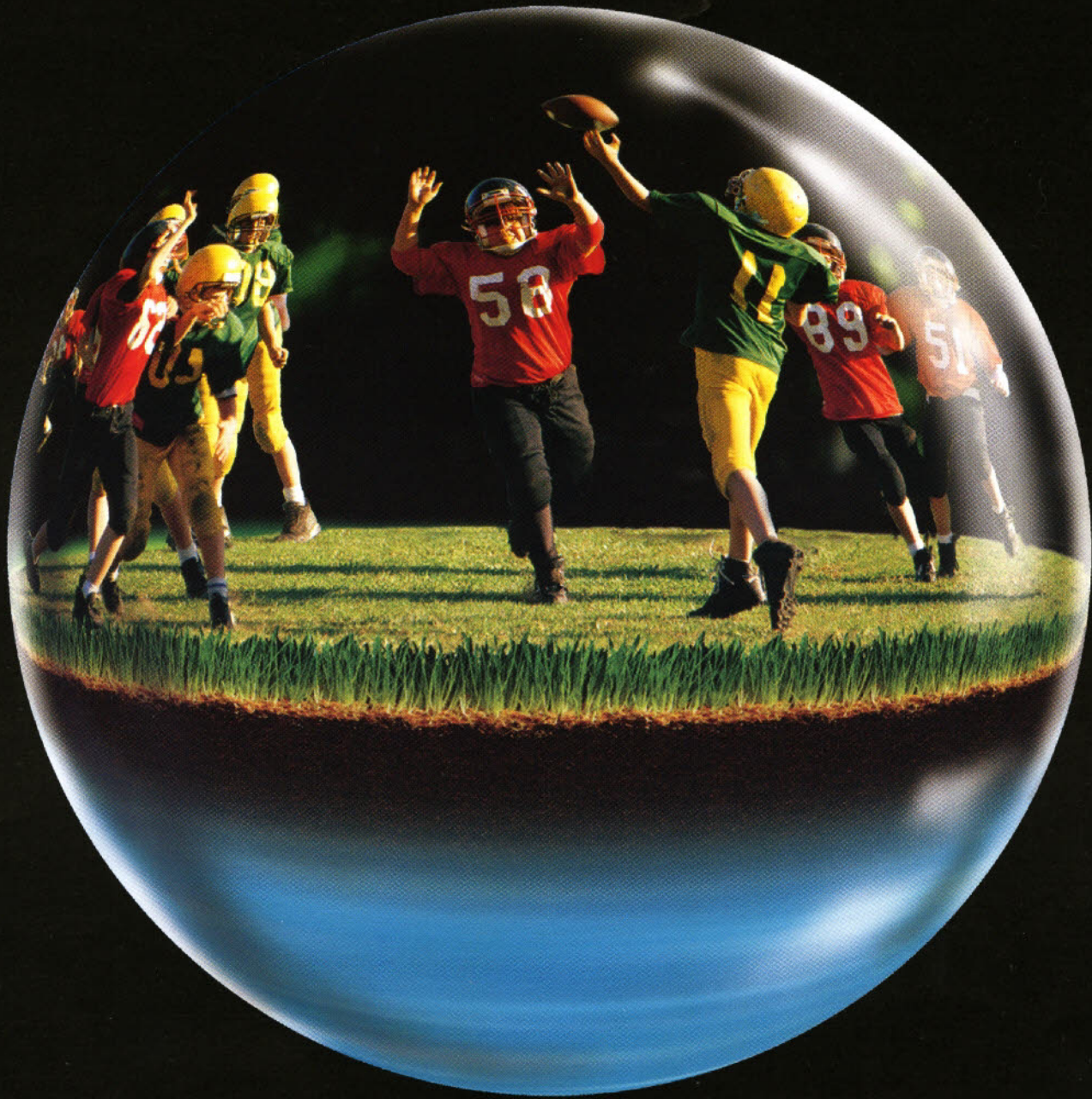
work for your situation, i.e., take the advice only if you think it will work for you, not just because an "expert" gives it.

1. Scalp mowing to 0.5 inches will allow better seed establishment and smoothing if you topdress and drag.
2. Verticut and rake or sweep loose plant debris from the surface. The verticutting is used to open up more channels for seed and topdressing to mix into the surface. At this point the infield is bald and you can easily see any surface unevenness. If the surface needs substantial smoothing then add sufficient sand topdressing (not to exceed .5 in.) and level with leveling drag or aluminum screed. If you don't have a topdresser don't let that stop you. It takes me about an hour to sling a 1/4-inch of sand on an infield grass area. Get a big scoop, turn shovel sideways and fan it across the surface like you are hitting a hockey puck. If you are doing substantial leveling by moving the topdressing around with a drag then be careful not to drag the seed into all of the low spots. Seeding in multiple layers will help you avoid this problem.
3. Core aerify with holes on 2-inch centers. Seed over open holes and cores. Break up cores and drag into surface.
4. Seed in multiple layers to guarantee good germination and coverage. Broadcast seed over open aerifier holes and drag. Broadcast seed and bury with a thin layer of topdressing or compost. Drill seed in multiple directions. I would seed 1 to 1.5 lbs. Kentucky bluegrass/1000 sq.ft. for each of the three operations. This will be a total of 3 to 4.5 # seed per/1000sq.ft total. Some may say this is excessive, but seed is inexpensive, you don't have time to wait for it to fill in, and my experience has been that these seeding rates do not cause any turf problems and it gives you the best chance at getting the density that you need by next spring/summer.
5. Fertilize any time during the operation with a starter fertilizer. Usually it is the last operation over the field. Follow local guidelines where there are restrictions on phosphorous application.
6. Roll if the surface is a little loose from all of the coring, sanding, and drilling seeding. Rolling will help germination with seed-to-soil contact. The existing grass KB and PR will grow faster than the new seed but hopefully everything will smooth out by the end of the fall. If not it may be a little uneven in the spring until growth starts again. Roll the infield grass if it is too much of a problem.
7. Consider using a winter cover for better establishment, winter protection and earlier spring green-up.
8. Since it is starting to get late in the seeding season I suggest that you pre-germinate some or all of the KB seed since it will speed your establishment up by about 2 weeks or more. Use a drying agent or sand to mix with the seed so that it will go through a cyclone spreader.

This one-day renovation has worked for me many times and it can turn a miserable infield into a very respectable playing surface in one season.

Soft and plush describes the visual appearance that we want but from an infield playability standpoint I like to think tight and stiff. Descriptives aside, I know when I have walked onto an infield that is just right because the hair on the back of my neck stands up, tight and stiff at about a 1/2 inch. The last time that happened was on Mark Razum's infield at the Colorado Rockies' Coors Field. **ST**

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