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ON THE COVER:
Reeves Field at American University, Washington, DC.
I TRIED THE PRO SPORT
AND I'M GLAD I DID!

Troy English - Jacksonville University Grounds Manager, Jacksonville, Florida

“We recently renovated all common turf areas, the football field and installed a new women’s softball field. We did a lot of research looking for the best irrigation equipment as well as innovative turf products. Our goal was evenly green, beautiful turf everywhere and, we wanted maintenance to be a breeze,” said English.

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A MIDDLE-AGED DEDICATION

REACHING YOU 25,000 readers through this column each month is a privilege that I appreciate very much. Not too many folks have the regular opportunity to say whatever they want to even a much smaller audience. Most months I try to share some interesting turf maintenance related news from industry experts or shine a spotlight on someone who deserves the recognition. (Some of you think I mention either Penn State and/or Joe Paterno every issue, too, and you're right, I just did it again.)

I turned 44 years old on the day I wrote this column. If you've already moved on to read Bob Campbell's column across the page, you may be wondering, So what? I'm not much of a navel-gazer so please forgive me for doing so here; at 44, my life is well over half lived, at least statistically, and yet there are many days I don't feel any older (or wiser) than I did at 22.

But, I enjoy my job. My extended family is healthy. I have some terrific friends whom I love. I hit the golf ball better than ever. I live on the side of a mountain (in a house, smartpants!). My life has never been so satisfying; I am fortunate.

Alas, I've got more hair in the ears and less on the scalp. I seem to spill food on myself every time I eat. I am invisible to all women under age 40. Taking my shirt off in public is unthinkable. My vertical leap is near zero. I fall asleep reading every night. I'm not as kind as I should be.

And the world is a scarier place than ever before not only because those who hate are terrifying but also because too many of us in the greatest country on earth take our freedoms for granted. Democracy depends on participation and not enough of us are doing our share, myself included. Our leaders should not be curiously scrutinized from every angle because it keeps from public life too many genuine, quality people, leaving us with only egoists who love fame. Celebrity is not leadership.

Yet I look forward to my future as an ordinary Joe with much anticipation because of my pretty little redhead of a wife and our wonderful preschool-aged redheaded son and daughter. Though I'll never invent anything or discover anything, never be considered an exceptional man, I can still be the best husband and father possible. And so I use this soapbox to pledge to those three redheads that I will try my damnedest to lead an honorable life for the rest of my days.

Comments always welcome. Call Eric at 717-805-4197, email eschroder@aip.com, or write PO Box 280, Dauphin, PA 17018.
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

LOOSELY DEFINED, an association is a group of people with common interests and common aspirations. Why do people belong to professional organizations? Why do doctors join the American Medical Association, or lawyers choose to be a part of the American Bar Association?

Closer to home, why should turf management professionals and people who support the profession want to be a part of the Sports Turf Managers Association?

Here are some possible reasons:

* There is strength in numbers. We need more active, committed members. A large number of members gives us a stronger position in business dealings and helps with the credibility of our association. Professional membership is affordable at $95 per year. It's a way to give back to a profession you believe in. If you have been a member previously, but are not one now, we'd like to have you back to be a part of the new growth and development STMA is experiencing.

* Our profession needs a national voice, a voice to communicate who we are and why what we do is important. The STMA Board is working to make the organization better. Remember that the organization is the members. If our profession is to achieve the respect and credibility we all want, we must be united and speak with one voice.

* We need to learn from the experiences of our colleagues and be able to call on them when we have a problem they may have faced before. In our profession, there's nothing that can happen to you that hasn't already happened to someone else in the organization. There's something special associating with people who share common goals and interests.

* Having a national organization enhances our professional credibility, allowing us to speak with one voice on issues concerning what we do. Having a national certification program is important in assuring the public we are who we say we are.

* If you are a member, you should feel good about what the organization is doing for you and what you contribute for the organization. Good things are happening and you will want to be a part of it. This year you will have the opportunity to vote on the revised bylaws, and the new image enhancement campaign is moving forward. Chapters now have greater input in the way chapter development money is spent. We are also working more closely with other organizations in which we share common interests.

* The STMA Annual Conference gives you the opportunity to learn from others in the profession. It's a great time to recharge your batteries, return to your job and do it better.

* REMEMBER: EVERYTHING WE DO IS FOR OUR MEMBERS. PERIOD. THIS IS YOUR ASSOCIATION.

Simply put, STMA offers each of you the chance to be involved in making your profession better. If you're not a part of STMA, please join us in our quest for a better organization, one reflective of the things we believe in. If you are already a member, let's work to continue to build a better organization.

Together we can make our dreams become reality. Let's continue to make STMA an organization where good things happen.
reaves Field of American University, Washington DC earned the STMA 2002 Soccer Field of the Year award in the College/University division. Reeves Field has been called "the emerald" of the campus and visiting teams often comment that playing there is like playing on a lush, green carpet.

American University is located in zone 7A in the Mid Atlantic region of the US, which is the transition zone for turfgrasses. The 85-acre campus is basically land-locked in the urban setting, so space is tight. Nick Gammill, CSFM, is sports turf supervisor for the university.

Gammill says, "Reeves Field was originally a native soil field, built in the spring of 1955, the year before the University fielded its first soccer team. In 1994, the field was rebuilt to the current specifications. The 2-1/2-acre playing surface was constructed with an 80 percent sand/20 percent peat root zone mix over a gravel-parched water table. In-ground drainage consists of a system of 15-foot drain lines that feed into a 10-inch collector drain that surrounds the perimeter of the field. This connects into the main drainage system. Surface drainage is achieved with a 1-1/2 percent crown. The field was sodded with Vamont Bermuda grass. It is framed with a six-lane, oblong, rubberized track.

The irrigation system is composed of nine zones, running widthwise across the field. Each zone has free Hunter 1-40 heads with precipitation rates of 25 gallons per minute. The water is supplied by a 2-inch pipe, driven by a 2-1/2-hp booster pump and uses Rain Bird 2-PEB valves. The total irrigation cycle uses 28,800 gallons of water. A Rain Bird Maxicom computerized irrigation program runs the system. The irrigation cycle is based on evapotranspiration (ET) rates and is set to irrigate at night to conserve water use."

Reeves Field is located on the edge of the campus, with one side of the field bordered by large trees that lead into the neighboring residential area. It's not like the traditional big stadium field. Gammill says, "The field conforms to the space well creating a comfortable, relaxing feeling. It's unfenced and, because of the proximity to the residential area, it's unlighted. The aluminum bleachers and retaining walls added during the reconstruction were designed to fit into and enhance the setting. We use perennial plantings to make it even more inviting."

With no fence and no locks, Reeves Field is open to the residential area as well as the students. The track gets almost constant use by the students and the neighbors. While Gammill does post signs noting that the field is for varsity use only, many give way to the temptation to walk out on it just to see what it feels like. It also becomes the site of pick up soccer and football games.

There are other alternatives for such activities. The University has a small intramural field located across campus, about a mile from Reeves Field. It's in easy walking distance from anywhere on campus and also is served by a bus for quick access.

A native soil soccer practice field is located near the game field. Gammill says, "We improved the drainage on the practice field this summer, installing a WaterWick system. A vibratory plow was used to create trenches every two feet across the field surface. These were backfilled with rice gravel and a collector drain was installed to channel the water flow away from the field. This makes the practice field more accessible during wet weather."

"A synthetic surface field is currently under construction to serve as a combination field hockey and lacrosse field. The University opted not to install one of the infill synthetic systems. Since the ball is on the ground most of the time in field hockey, they felt there would be a little drag on the ball that could be avoided by using a carrier generation synthetic surface."

Reeves Field is used 9 months of the year. Though field hockey and lacrosse will move to the synthetic-surfaced field in the spring of 2004, in previous years Reeves Field was the site of that activity. Gammill says, "Lacrosse starts in late February. This past year we had heavy snows throughout the winter and into the early spring. We had to remove about 24 inches of snow from the field during the week before the first lacrosse game. We used a small front-end loader to remove the snow in layers, skinning as much as possible off the surface with each pass and piling it on the sides of the field area. That process took nearly a week. We left a couple inches of snow on the field surface and were fortunate that the weather cooperated enough to allow it to melt."  

"Spring was cool and wet, but we were able to work in the full season of play, wrapping up in mid-May. That put 24 games and about 50 practices on Reeves Field during that period."

Once play ends, repair begins. Gammill calls on an outside contractor to strip out the old sod, level the surface, and install the new sod. They cut and remove the lacrosse creases, going back to the soccer lines at both goals to cut out the small box all the way out to where it meets the semicircle at the end of the big box. They also cut out and replace the worn area at mid-field.

Because campus space is limited, there's no room for an onsite "turf farm." The replacement sod is the same Vamont Bermuda grass as the original. It's grown on the native sandy soil of the area's coastal plains. The growing fields are a natural equivalent to the sand-based field, so there are no layering problems with sodding. Gammill says, "Generally we need no resprigging in other areas. This past year, the weather was so cool the Bermuda grass showed little activity, so we delayed the repairs until early June. Conditions remained unseasonably cool, with little opportunity for the turf to regenerate itself. We had to come in during early August and replace the original sod in the area between the previously resodded sections of the goal mouth and the center of the field."

During the late spring and summer Reeves Field becomes the site of several professional soccer exhibition games and international soccer practices as teams prepare for the World Cup games. The Blackburn Rovers, an English soccer team, used the field for nearly a week in July. The Barcelona soccer team practiced there for 2 days at the end of July just before their game with AC Milan at RFK Stadium. The US women's team also used the field to practice in September.

Other events also take the field in the summer and the University is considering

BY SUZ TRUSTY

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In 1963 President John F. Kennedy gave a Commencement address on Reeves Field.
REEVES FIELD
OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
EARNS FIELD OF THE YEAR HONORS
moving graduation from the auditorium to the field in May of 2004. There's an annual cystic fibrosis fundraiser in June where participants hit golf balls on the field. There are men and women's alumni events, many with games and some also with lunch on the field. A gazebo adjacent to the field serves as hub for the food service for these alumni events and as a post-game snack area for the women's soccer team.

Men and women's soccer activity starts in mid-August. This year, that point marked the first good growing weather for the Bermuda grass. Typical summer weather brings temperatures in the 90-degree range with humidity also in the 90s and stretches

GAMMILL IS IN CHARGE OF A ZONE THAT ENCOMPASSES THE FOUR ATHLETIC FIELDS AND 20 OTHER ACRES.