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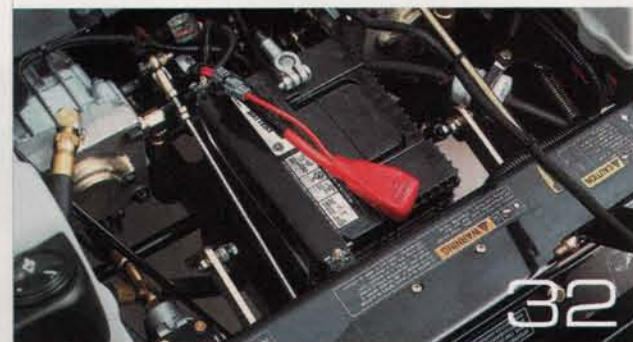
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from the sidelines

Another year gone already?

I'm still eating the kids' Halloween candy as preparations for the holiday season get underway at the Schroder house. It's difficult to believe as I write this that Thanksgiving is only two weeks away. How old do you have to be for time to again pass as slowly as it seemed when you were a child?

As we begin to call 2004 a wrap, I would like to acknowledge some people who have made significant contributions to SPORTSTURF over the past 3 1/2 years and continue to do so. For example, Art Director Maggie Civik has done an outstanding job in making this magazine easy and fun to read. Beyond her creative talents, Maggie's efficiency is legendary.

The "Q&A" column inside our back cover each issue continues to offer new, relevant information. It's a privilege to feature two of the most successful turfgrass scientists in the country, Dr. Dave Minner and Dr. Grady Miller, in this space.

Other turfgrass professionals make up our Editorial Advisory Board: Mike Andresen, CSFM, Iowa State; Chris Calcaterra, CSFM, Peoria, AZ; Jeff Fowler, Penn State; Boyd Montgomery, CSFM, Sylvania, OH; and Pam Sherratt, Ohio State. Another member, Suz Trusty, the former STMA communications director, deserves special thanks from this corner for her tireless assistance in helping me find my way in "TurfLand." Good luck to Suz and Steve, their hard work for STMA will long be remembered.

I'd also like to thank the many readers who have called or emailed me with their comments. As in most businesses, the unhappy callers outnumber the happy callers but that's okay. My job is to get good information to you and if I'm messing up, let me know.

Last but certainly not least are our advertisers. As Bob Campbell writes in his column across the page, the valuable commercial entities involved in the sports turf business do a lot more for this industry than sell equipment, services, etc. Their advertising supports this magazine, and their other sponsorships, whether national, regional, or local, help turf managers do better work. Thanks.

My best holiday wishes to all. I look forward to working with you in 2005.

Anyone who has seen either of the two videos by Grass Stains Productions, either at STMA Conferences or elsewhere, can appreciate the opportunity to contribute directly to the next installment.

Grass Stains co-founders, Jeff Fowler and Steve LeGros, are looking right now for photos that will be used in this year's show. Send your best and worst moments, crew shots, beauty shots, work shots, and more to Jeff at jtf2@psu.edu.

Finally, a correction from our STMA show Exhibitor Listing last month: Novozymes Biologicals products are sold in the US and Canada through Verdicon and independent distributors, not Cleary Chemical. We regret the error.



ERIC SCHRODER, EDITOR

Comments always welcome.
Call Eric at **717-805-4197**,
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A Simple and Sincere 'Thank You'

It is with much appreciation that I write this column recognizing all the companies and organizations that support the STMA. With their support, our organization has been able to grow in size and importance in the world of sports and turf.

Many of these companies provide us with advertising revenue to offset the cost of producing this magazine. As you read through this issue of SPORTSTURF, you'll see more than 40 companies that provide our members with product information through their ads. Some companies help us to enhance our membership programs and services through sponsorship.

These sponsorships help to bring more visibility to the STMA. Most companies supplying this industry purchase booth space at the STMA Annual Conference and Exhibition where they showcase their products and services. Some of them sponsor specific events during the Conference, which helps us to offset our food, beverage, and convention site costs. Others are helping to build the Foundation for Safer Athletic Fields Environments (SAFE), STMA's charitable arm that funds research, scholarship, and education.

The association sincerely appreciates our sponsors, advertisers, and exhibitors for the value they add to STMA and to the industry. Yet, these companies do even more at the chapter level. Many of our 26 chapters would struggle without the leadership and financial support of industry. Those chapters that have strong industry involvement are thriving. Chapter events, field days, and educational sessions are all enriched by industry involvement.

Value from industry is also visible in the volunteerism of our commercial members. In addition to the commercial board member category on the STMA board of directors, some commercial members serve on committees to help guide the association's program development and services.

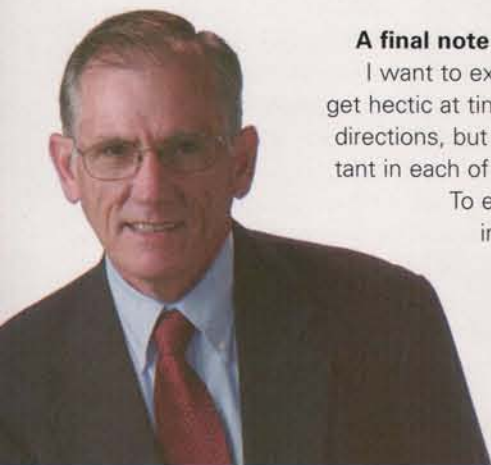
Most importantly, we rely on industry to advance the technology we need every day in our jobs. With our input and their research and development, much advancement has been made during the past 10 years in the products, equipment, and services so vital to the profession. Let's also not forget the times we have relied on the rapid service we have needed at one time or another for an equipment part replacement or a special product.

When you get right down to it, our relationship with industry is simply people doing business with people for the mutual benefit of each of us. We rely on them for great products and great service at cost effective prices. They, in turn, provide support to us personally and professionally, and our relationship often builds to friendship. Be sure to stop by our friends' booths in Phoenix and thank them for their support of STMA.

A final note

I want to extend each of you our best wishes for the holiday season. Things get hectic at times in our business, with all of us seemingly going in different directions, but the holidays are a time to sit back and reflect on what's important in each of our lives.

To each of you, all of us at STMA extend our warmest wishes during the holiday season.



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Central Winds Park Complex of the Year

BY SUZ TRUSTY

Commitment to excellence, every day, no matter what the circumstances, is the driving force that earned Central Winds Park of the City of Winter Springs, FL, STMA's 2003 Sports Field Complex of the Year honors. Holding strong to that commitment despite the incredible onslaught of three major hurricanes demonstrates the dedication of the entire Parks and Recreation Department team to the welfare of their city.

Chuck Pula, Director of Parks and Recreation, describes Central Winds Park as "a jewel of a sports complex" and "a centerpiece of the city." Already twice selected as the recipient of the "Award of Excellence" by the Fields of Excellence Program, Central Winds Park has been pleasing the 30,000 residents of Winter Springs for 12 years.

Pula says, "The complex was built by the city with a \$3 million bond issue in 1992. It has grown right along with the city, becoming a gathering point for families throughout the area. Nearly every resident of Winter Springs has been impacted by the complex, either through the sports programs, the Fourth of July Celebration, or the numerous other special events hosted there. In addition to providing community activities, Central Winds Park is positioned adjacent to Winter Springs High School, which often uses the complex for games and team sports.

"The 72-acre complex is situated about 20 minutes north of downtown Orlando. It contains two baseball fields, two softball fields, four soccer fields, and

the parks and recreation offices. Other features include two playgrounds, a nature trail, two sand volleyball courts, two horseshoe pits, two large pavilions, two concessions stands and a 10-acre amphitheater where you can spread out a blanket and watch the bald eagles fly over or perch on a light pole. Construction, begun before the hurricanes, is now underway again on two more baseball, softball and soccer fields, as well as two new football/lacrosse fields. This will expand the complex to 100 acres," says Pula.

Excellence makes Central Winds Park a standout. The complex reflects beauty throughout the modern design and construction of the buildings and hardscape features to the immaculate appearance of the facilities, landscape and lush green fields.

The complex site was originally a combination of orange groves and a few private homes. The fields were constructed using the native sandy loam soil over a subsurface hardpan. This has been augmented over time through topdressing with a fine sand. That, in combination with annual laser leveling for precise surface drainage, has eliminated the need for a subsurface drainage system for the baseball and softball fields. Underground drainage has been added to one of the soccer fields. The fields were all sprigged with Tifway 419 Bermudagrass.

Each set of fields has their own unique characteristics.

Pula says, "The age 12 and under baseball field features an original infield cut similar to that of the Arizona Diamondbacks. Both baseball fields boast Crimson Stone warning tracks and bullpen areas. They are completely fenced and equipped with six 80-foot concrete poles mounted with a total of 32 Musco SVC-

Z, 1500-watt lamps. There are two sets of aluminum bleachers with a 180-person seating capacity. These are covered with protective shade cloth. Score is kept on new remote electronic scoreboards from modern Plexiglas score booths. Each field is equipped with two ground level concrete dugouts, each with drinking fountains.

"The softball fields have a skinned clay infield and a 300-foot outfield fence with a clay warning track. Six 80-foot concrete poles illuminate games, each with a total of 40 Musco SVC-Z 1500-watt lamps. Seating capacity is also 180 on aluminum bleachers with protective shade cloth. Each softball field is equipped with the same remote electronic scoreboards and dugouts as the baseball fields. The skinned areas of both the baseball and softball fields consist of a 70:30 clay:sand mix amended with calcined clay," says Pula.

"Three of the soccer fields are full-sized, each measuring 330 feet by 195 feet. The fourth field is 240 feet by 120 feet. Each field is lighted and equipped with portable goals, portable team and spectator benches, and with drinking fountains."

Maintenance is fine-tuned to meet the conditions and use schedules of each field. Sports Field Crew Chief Tina Kimball says, "The skinned areas are watered down daily and spike dragged with a field rake, then allowed to dry and mat dragged. Mounds, pitching circles, home plates, and base areas are hand worked



inch drill bit (concrete core drill bit). We used this to drill holes 12 inches apart in a 12-foot by 20-foot area on the soccer fields that held water. We filled the holes with a sand and Turface Pro mix and this solved the water retention problem. The transition from clay to Crimson Stone on the baseball field warning tracks not only added to the aesthetics of the fields, but also increases percolation and eliminated standing water on the tracks."

k Fields earn ar Honors

daily. The warning tracks are dragged with the field rake and the area near the fences is hand raked. Batters boxes, circles and sidelines are dry line marked for games as needed. The grass bordering the skinned areas is edged monthly. We string level the clay areas as needed during the playing season to ensure proper drainage, which helps eliminate rainouts.

"We're always looking for innovative and cost-effective solutions to field problems. For example, we modified our gas-powered auger with an 18-inch long, two-

FROM JUST BEFORE THANKSGIVING TO
JUST AFTER NEW YEARS DAY IS PRIME
TIME FOR REPAIR AND RENOVATION. WE
START AERATING AS PLAY WINDS DOWN
SO IT'S NOT TOO CLOSE TO WHEN WE
OVERSEED ALL THE FIELDS

In 2003, the year the STMA award was earned, 2600 games were played at Central Winds Park, bringing in nearly 130,000 participants and spectators. The complex hosts a variety of baseball, softball and soccer programs, including Babe Ruth baseball and softball, AAU Baseball and Youth Softball Tournaments. In 2003, as in most years, Central Winds hosted several post-season youth baseball and softball tournaments. Play on the soccer fields has increased each year with half of the total field use taking place on those fields. More and more organizations are lining up to use the Central Winds Park complex because of its quality.

Alan Greene, Superintendent of Parks and Grounds, says, "The clearing, grub-

bing and grading on the 27 plus acres of fields under construction had all been completed before the hurricanes. Because of the winds and heavy rains, these fields all needed to be regraded and that will be taking place soon. We're now looking at a March completion date. There will be a four-field baseball/softball complex, two fields for each with 200-foot fences. We're also adding two soccer fields and two combination football/lacrosse fields," says Greene.

"All of the new fields will have a higher sand soil profile than the original fields, and all will have underground drainage. They will be sprigged with Seashore Paspalum. These fields will be used as practice fields initially as there is a shortage of practice facilities in our area, so we're anticipating extremely packed use schedules."

The demand for field time escalates each year. Kimball says, "Weather generally would allow year round field use, but we schedule downtime between seasons to preserve field quality. Even that is adjusted to accommodate as much play as possible. The Babe Ruth play starts in early February and runs into June. We take advantage of that transition period, as participants reregister for the extended season league play, for field renovation. It's about 18 days and, depending on scheduling, the starting and ending dates may vary for each field.

"The period from just before Thanksgiving to just after New Years Day is our prime time for repair and renovation. We oversee all the fields. The process starts with aeration as play winds down so it's not too close to overseeding. We'll make a pre-overseeding application of Transit to hold down the poa annua, and then mow shorter in two directions. We apply approximately 300 pounds of a perennial ryegrass blend per acre along with a starter fertilizer. Irrigation is critical. Our irrigation system is controlled by an Irritrol computerized control system that allows for adjusted water pressure per zone. Two-inch Rain Bird scrubber valves operate each zone.

"The recent addition of a new pump system allows us to fine tune water placement and timing more precisely. We run frequent light cycles to encourage germination and give the young seedlings a good start, then switch to longer, less frequent cycles. Because we have so much late season play, we've been hitting the Thanksgiving weekend for the actual overseeding, which is pushing the zone for germination temperatures. But so far it's been successful. We'll keep nitrogen levels lower, and add iron to light up the green of the rye," says Kimball.

"For the transition back to Bermudagrass, we'll cut back on the water, maybe stopping irrigation for a short period once we hit temperatures into the 80s. Then we'll boost the nitrogen and adjust the irrigation program to wake up the Bermuda."

The commitment to quality at the complex has brought praise from around the country. John Deere selected Central Winds Park as the featured complex in an issue of its JD Sidelines magazine. Floyd Perry of GMS Sports Field Maintenance

"MY STAFF AND I AREN'T MAGICIANS; WE NEED . . . THE COMBINATION OF FINANCIAL BACKING AND GENUINE RESPECT FOR EXCELLENCE." TINA KIMBALL, SPORTS FIELD CREW CHIEF

Services was very impressed during his tour of the facility noting, "There aren't too many parks and recreational fields like yours." Perry brought a group of athletic facility managers from throughout the United States to see the park late last year.

Michael Hurd, from City of Winter Haven, home of the Cleveland Indians spring training complex, was also extremely impressed: "In my years in the sports turf industry, having been to complexes all over the United States and Canada, your complex stands out as one of the best, if not THE best."

All of this praise is not easily earned. An incredible amount of work goes into the upkeep and maintenance of these fields.

Greene says, "We're all on the same page here, focused on excellence. We know that we have one of the finest complexes in the nation and are always trying

to make it better. The staff, headed up by Tina Kimball, has the knowledge and the dedication it takes to make it all work. They go over every inch of this ground every day and take pride in making constant improvements. The City is committed to providing the equipment and resources necessary to support this level program and the community respects and appreciates it."

Kimball says, "We have tremendous support from the entire City administration, backing us financially and by their actions. They understand that you get what you pay for in a turf program. My staff and I aren't magicians; we need the resources to accomplish our goals. The combination of financial backing and genuine respect for excellence in the maintenance of the facilities makes this a total team effort."

Then there's the weather factor. While Florida may be the ideal vacation spot for many, the subtropical climate is filled with challenges. Pula says, "Winter brings sudden freezes and months of very dry weather.

Central Winds Park Maintenance Programs

Mowing: Fields are mowed every Monday, Wednesday and Friday weather permitting at a 1-inch height of cut using a five-gang reel mower. Baseball infields are mowed with a walk-behind reel mower. Mowing direction is changed at each mowing.

Fertilization: Soil testing is conducted on all fields in June and October. Testing results are analyzed to establish fertilization programs adjusted to the climatic variables of the region, turf growth rate, and the field use schedules. Applications are scheduled every 4 to 6 weeks at 200 to 300 pounds per acre with the rate and timing adjusted according to the fertilizer product used.

Aeration: Full field aeration in two directions at a depth of 4 to 6-inches takes place a minimum of four times per year (March, June, September, November). Highly compacted areas receive additional aeration as needed.

Insect, Weed and Disease Control: Conditions are monitored daily. Applications of control products are made as needed for turf and park user protection following established IPM procedures.

Overseeding: Overseeding is conducted in mid to late November with a three-way blend of perennial ryegrasses at the rate of 300 pounds per acre. A 5-15-20 fertilization at the rate of 300 pounds per acre accom-

panies overseeding. As early summer temperatures warm consistently, irrigation is reduced and may be stopped completely to facilitate the transition back to Bermudagrass.

Resodding: Resodding of high traffic wear areas takes place as needed during the June and November downtimes.

Topdressing: Fine sand topdressing is applied following aeration in late June during the fields' summer downtime. The rate varies from 1/4 to 1/2 inch depending on field conditions.

Field Marking: Soccer fields are painted weekly. Baseball and softball fields are dry lined for games as needed. The 20-foot by 40-foot "Fields of Excellence" logo is painted with aerosol marking in three colors (blue, white and yellow) for the opening of the fall and spring seasons and for special tournaments.

Laser Leveling: The fields are laser leveled annually to insure proper drainage and help eliminate rainouts.

Infield Clay: The softball field skinned infields, the skinned areas of the baseball fields, the mounds, pitching circles, home plates and base areas and the warning tracks are worked daily during the playing season.