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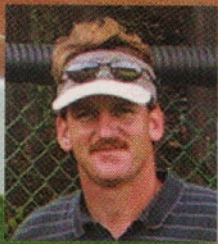
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"The field looks awesome and plays great all the time!"
Jeff Franquet, Jacksonville University Head Softball Coach (left)

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from the sidelines

SRI customers SOL

Following up on last February's Chapter 11 filing by SRI Sports, manufacturers of AstroTurf, AstroPlay, and NeXturf artificial surfaces, I exchanged emails with Matthew Levin, SRI's bankruptcy attorney, in mid-May:

Q.: Can you briefly explain what happened to the company?

A.: It is difficult to pin this on any one specific issue. In general, the company was taking in less money than it was spending. Ultimately, the banks refused to fund any further losses, and the company had no choice but to file for bankruptcy.

Q.: Who can an existing SRI customer contact to ask questions about his or her field, e.g., maintenance or problems with it, etc.?

A.: There are no longer any employees at the company with knowledge sufficient to respond to questions about field maintenance or problems with fields. Moreover, the company no longer has any capability to do anything about such issues, even if knowledgeable employees remained.

Q.: What is happening in regards to who might be selling and/or servicing these products in the future? Any timetable available on that?

A.: The company sold substantially all of its assets related to its turf manufacturing and installation operations in April to Textile Management Associates of Dalton, GA. The buyer did not, however, take any contracts associated with that business. Accordingly, former customers of the company will have to make their own arrangements for servicing issues.

Q.: What, if any, legal recourse may a school district, for example, have if they had purchased an SRI product but it had not yet been delivered?

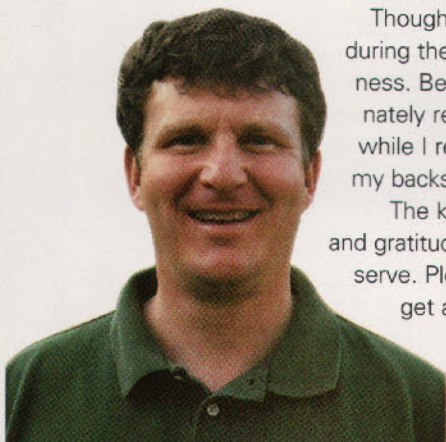
A.: Any entity in such position will have to contact their own legal counsel for advice.

The sudden demise of a company that seemed to be doing a booming business from my perspective (they sent press releases every time they sold a system to a collegiate or professional customer) surprised sports turf managers from Minneapolis' Metrodome to the Red Rock (TX) school district. We'll keep following the story; it's hard to believe someone can't make money selling these products.

On a personal note: Boarding a morning flight early in May, I took a seat next to a young man who looked about 16 years old. We both were headed to Charlotte, NC, but for vastly different purposes. I was playing golf that afternoon before attending a press event; he was heading for Parris Island, SC, to begin Marine Corps basic training.

Though I wanted to ask him why he had enlisted with the Marines during these dangerous times, I didn't because it's none of my business. Besides, I felt a bit guilty as he sat quietly next to me, alternately reading his worn Bible and thumbing through his orders, while I read a newspaper and thought about where my hands are in my backswing.

The kid and his soon-to-be military brethren deserve our respect and gratitude for their courage and sacrifice, as do all those who serve. Please make sure they know you appreciate them when you get an opportunity.



ERIC SCHRODER, EDITOR

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president's message

TGIF is a Big Deal

If two sports field managers are together you can bet the topic of conversation is turf. Get a group of turf professionals together and it is amazing the amount of information shared.

One of the amazing things about the people in the turf profession is their thirst for knowledge. Learning new and better ways to do their jobs better, providing the best playing surfaces possible. It is apparent by the attendance at the annual conference and regional workshops across the country.

We are always looking for research so we have a scientific basis on which to make our decisions. There has already been an amazing amount of research accomplished that can help support us in our decision-making process. Sometimes it is so overwhelming that we are uncertain where to find the answers.

By now, I am sure you have heard me extolling the virtues of becoming a member of STMA. The main reason is that you believe in the profession and realize the need for the existence of a national professional association. There are those, however, who want more concrete reasons to become members.

With that in mind, the STMA Board approved a major member benefit that is as close as your computer.

Through an agreement with Michigan State University and the Turfgrass Information Center, we're happy to announce that all professional members of STMA now have free on-line access to the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF).

What exactly is the TGIF and what is the big deal?

You now have access to almost anything you want to know about turfgrass while sitting in front of your computer. The TGIF is the most comprehensive collection of turfgrass educational materials publicly available in the world.

With more than 92,000 records in TGIF, the information ranges from research reports, conference proceedings, trade publications, scientific journals, field day programs, and newsletters not generally available to many of us.

The TGIF is something special you can identify as part of your membership. If you paid as an individual to have access to the file, the cost would be \$100 per year. With your \$95 STMA membership dues, you now have free access. Any way you look at it, it looks like a bargain to me, what with all the other benefits you receive as a STMA member.

We constantly hear about the need for turfgrass research. It is amazing what has already been done. They tell us that not everything written about turf is in TGIF yet, but they're getting there. I am sure it will help you do your job better.

You can go to the STMA home page and follow the instructions to log into the TGIF and get an idea about how this valuable this new tool can be.

Please note it is the responsibility of the sports turf manager to make his own decisions after obtaining all the information he can. The TGIF cannot make the decisions for you. That is a matter for you, based on your experience and the unique problems you face.

But, if information is power, you have a great deal of it right at your fingertips.

That's good news for us all.



BOB CAMPBELL, CSFM

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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY EARNNS SOFTBALL FIELD OF THE YEAR HONORS

BY SUZ TRUSTY

Alberta B. Farrington Softball Stadium of Arizona State University earned the Sports Turf Managers Association 2003 Softball Field of the Year honors in the College/University division.

Arizona State University unveiled the state-of-the-art Alberta B. Farrington Softball Stadium April 8, 2000. It is the latest of the sports facilities of ASU Athletics. It features chair-back bleachers and individual seats with a capacity for 1,535 fans. A grass berm to accommodate additional fans is located just beyond the first base line.

Farrington Stadium has several amenities that make it one of the premier softball stadiums in the country. Sunken dugouts are lighted for night games. Each dugout has recessed, individual bat slots and locker room access. In addition, there are coaches' offices, a fully equipped training room, built-in concession stands, team shop, restrooms, and locker rooms for the home team, visiting team, and officials.

Before the 2003 season, one batting cage was relocated from the home side to

the visitor's side of the field. The visitor's bullpen also was relocated just past the berm. Six hitting stations were added on the home side where the batting cage once stood.

Facility Manager Pete Wozniak says, "The original softball field was started in the 1980s. Farrington Stadium was built around the existing field. We've amended the original native soil field through aeration and topdressing with sand. The outfield turf is Santa Anna common Bermudagrass overseeded with Chaparral perennial ryegrass in November. The winter and spring seasons are played on the perennial ryegrass. The ryegrass burns out naturally over the summer, leaving the Bermudagrass base for the fall workouts and practices.

"The skinned area consists of native caliche clay soil amended over time with Stabilizer red infield mix, sand, and calcined clay. It's now about 30 percent clay. The infield is topped with vitrified clay and infield mix. Since the team usually plays in shorts, using infield mix creates a good, safe sliding surface. The mound and plate areas consist of Hilltopper Compound. The 10-foot warning track is topped with a 2 to 3-inch layer of Stabilizer 1/4 inch minus mix, also the red. We've amended the lead off areas at all three bases, adding stability. This past

March, we mixed in 200 pounds of Stabilizer and added Hilltopper clay where the position players play.

"The field is irrigated with oscillating sprinklers. There are five in the center turf areas and the rest line the perimeter. To help manage irrigation, a full-circle, oscillating sprinkler is mounted on a quick coupler 7 feet behind the pitching rubber. Six additional quick couplers surround the grass area."

Events

The facility is used primarily for ASU's Softball team practices and games from January through May. Conditioning begins on September first. The team members do the conditioning workouts on their own. Though these workouts are not required, they are expected of any serious players, so essentially the workouts mark the beginning of fall field use. Conditioning is followed by 4-5 weeks of team practices, running through December. The fall season usually includes five games.

The spring season consists of approximately 50 games, including two national tournaments. Wozniak says, "From January to March of 2004 the team played 41 games, before they even traveled. In 2003, with the



Fiesta Bowl Tournament and the Louisville Slugger Tournament in February, 53 games were held between January 22 and May 9. These are mostly night games, beginning at 7:00 PM. Sunday games begin at 1:00 PM. Tournaments, such as those during the Pac-10 season in March and April, might start at 10 in the morning and play five games. For the Louisville Slugger Tournament, we had games scheduled at 9, 11, 2, 4, and 6 on Friday and Saturday and at 8, 10 and 12 on Sunday. At least one crewmember is on hand through all the games and more are there if we expect rain.

"In addition, Farrington Stadium hosted the Greek National team for practices in January and June of 2003. In July, the Women's Professional Fast Pitch League had a clinic and game at the stadium. In June, the ASU Football team hosted two weekends of passing league games for high school juniors, complete with a 40-yard field layout and an endzone on the softball field. Triple Crown Sports had softball games involving the 8-9 year old level through the teens played five games a day for two days in June. We installed pitching rubbers at 43 and 40 and 35 feet for that event. This event includes an opening ceremony similar to the Olympics parade of participants, but that is limited to the warning track on the infield. The State High School Championships also took place at Farrington Stadium. This involves both the 4A and 5A schools each year, and can put an additional 2 to 4 games on the field. The site is selected depending on the location of the competing teams. In the summer of 2004, the field may potentially host the Arizona Senior Olympics as well as the Arizona Special Olympics."

Crew responsibilities

As well as Farrington Softball Stadium, Wozniak's crew is responsible for Sun Devil Stadium, Packard Baseball Stadium, Sun Angel Track Stadium, two football practice fields, and an Astroturf soccer field. All are used for practices and games. There are extra events on the other facilities as well. For example, the Turf Challenge Fund Raiser in late April, which turns the football practice fields into 24 grass volleyball courts, creates a lot of excitement and makes some money for the team.

The staff consists of five full-time employees, including Wozniak, and up to four part time students. On the full-time staff, Brian Johnson is Grounds Manager, and Greg Godinez and Jerry Campbell are Groundskeepers. Wozniak is in the

process of filling the Facility Supervisor position, formerly held by Mike Reno and vacated when Reno went back to college. On the student side, the three regulars are Ryan Leavit, Kevin Denney, and Josh Ladd, with Shaun Scott filling in as needed.

Wozniak says, "There are usually no more than four people on site at one time, unless we are pulling the rain tarp. Once practice begins, if there are games

An impressive ballpark needs an impressive field, and I got that with Bull's-Eye. Here we are in April, and the grass is growing like it's July. I'm very happy with what I have seen so far.

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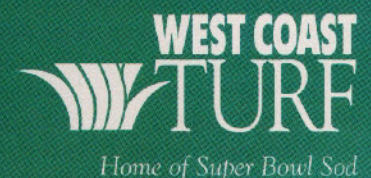


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field of the year

on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the teams are off on Monday and so are our students. We will pull everyone in if the teams are on the road and we're using that window for maintenance. The students generally start at 9:00 AM because of class schedules, with three working Wednesday and Friday and two on Tuesday and Thursday. The fields are usually ready for practice by the time they head for class around noon.

"We're also responsible for the stadiums themselves and coordinate all of the stadium maintenance. If it's minor, we do it: changing light bulbs inside and outside, cleaning the pads around the fields, fixing seats. For major electrical or plumbing issues we use the campus facility management. We have a contractor for cleaning. A landscaping service trims all the palm trees on campus once a year."

Wozniak started working at ASU in the summer of 1986 when he transferred there as a student in the marketing program. After he earned his degree in marketing in 1989, he moved to a full-time field position. He says, "Around 1990 or 91, Alan Sigwardt, formerly in the head position here and now with Pro Player Stadium, put in a mentoring session with me on the softball and baseball fields. That really sharpened my focus on field quality. The past 9 years, I've been fortunate to work on the Super Bowl with Ed Mangan and George Toma and the great crew they assemble for that event. It's a super networking and learning session and I've come back with something new to implement on our fields each year.

"My crew here is one of the best around. They have the dedication and com-



mitment to produce the best possible field conditions and will step in and do whatever is needed to get the job done." There's no exaggeration in that statement. This is the crew that pulled off the nearly instant Monday Night Football game at Sun Devil Stadium last season when California fires forced the game to be moved from Qualcomm Stadium.

Arizona weather

The extreme hot weather in Arizona creates many challenges. Wozniak says, "Even with all the calcined clay tilled into the skinned area to help hold moisture in, on a typical game day, the skin may be watered 3-4 hours to keep everything playable. Using the infield sprinklers to facilitate this saves greatly on labor power. On a still day, we can cover the majority of the surface with the sprinklers. On a windy day, we may water the whole field with the hose. Either way we'll put on a half inch of water or more. Even in April, early morning temperatures could be in the low 70s, with humidity levels around 26 percent and the dew point at 36. By noon, temperatures could hit the mid 80s, with the same humidity levels, and the winds could pick up. So it's critical to soak the infield early in the day, and keep soaking it to hit the right moisture for play.

"One day during the first week of April we had an inch of rain and didn't have the field tarped. Temperatures were in the low 70s, there was no sun, and by 7:00 PM we could have played on the infield.

"Temperatures are over 100 degree F for much of the summer, with many days

