"WE HAD FANS THAT WOULD STILL COME TO THE GAMES ASKING IF THEY COULD USE THE DUGOUTS FOR BLINDS WHEN HUNTING SEASON OPENED."

was shining. We had fans that would still come to the games asking if they could use the dugouts for blinds when hunting season opened. This did not suit our owners too well and after an extended court battle, the jury agreed with us and not only requested the property owners to pay restitution but also ordered them to rebuild the field with an outside engineering firm and contractor.

The main reasons for this field's subsurface drainage system failure, as determined by engineers and consultants that were brought to the witness stand, was the sock on the pipe and the soils used for the root zone. The fabric had done its job by filtering the water to such an extent that the pores of the fabric had bridged over. How can this happen? The soil that was supposed to be the sand for this "sand based" field had over 30% silt and clay and over 20% organics that means over 50% of the soil was not sand. In addition there was no way to change this filtering system without digging up the field.

Water management is one of the most essential requirements of any sports field. Without it we lose turf areas, games, maintenance time, and cultural practice time. To help insure the integrity of your sports field get involved with the project in the design phase, make sure the products specified have the field's performance in mind and have been thoroughly and adequately tested or analyzed for compatibility.

If we as field mangers would get with those who are engineering and designing our fields before the plans are released and try to figure out the best scenario for our specific sites then we will be able to do the best possible job for the money we can. This is something any sports field professional should be aware of as our field of dreams is being built. Always ask questions, know your products and contractors, and let's keep the filters of our world where we can economically change them.

Tony L. Strickland, CSFM, is president of Athletic Construction, Inc., which builds athletic fields. He is the Vice-President and Board member of Northeast Georgia Landscape and Turf Association. He can be reached at tstrickland@charter.net.
K-RAIN PRODUCT GUIDE

K-Rain Manufacturing has released its 2005 Product Guide. The 44-page, color catalog includes descriptions, specifications, features and benefits for K-Rain’s entire line of gear driven rotors, sprays, controllers and valves.

The catalog features several new products, including Narrow Profile Sprays/KVF Adjustable Nozzles and PRO COM Rotor with Flow Shut-Off.

K-Rain Manufacturing/561-844-1002
For information, circle 055 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-055

IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT

HydroPoint Data Systems has introduced WeatherTRAKR ET pro irrigation controller and WeatherTRAK.netT Internet management service. The latter enables central online management of WeatherTRAK ET pro controllers. From any location with Internet access, you log in to the secure site to gain a central view of all ET pro controllers under your management. Via two-way wireless communication, WeatherTRAK customers receive real-time controller status readings and adjust the irrigation programs of single controllers or groups of controllers.

HydroPoint Data Systems/800-362-8774
For information, circle 057 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-057

ON-LINE IRRIGATION TRAINING

The Toro Co.’s National Support Network technical support service has expanded its irrigation-training curriculum to include live, interactive sessions via the Web. The short, instructor-led sessions allow learners to master skills using a local internet-connected PC without incurring the expense associated with time and travel away from work.

The company says Web-based training offers a way to affordably accelerate the learning of new hires; expand the skills of existing workers; cross-train work groups; and retain good employees.

For information, circle 054 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-054

Got Thatch?

GET A THATCH MASTER VERTI-CUT
Either 60” or 72” working width

Turf Specialties, Inc.
800-201-1031
call for price, info or demo
RAIN BIRD MID-RANGE ROTOR
Rain Bird's new 5004-UPG rotor allows you to retrofit competitors' mid-range rotors without the time-consuming cost of digging up the entire rotor. This rotor features exclusive Rain Curtain technology for better water distribution and overall performance. When put through the Grit Cycle Test to measure its robustness when operating with gritty water, Rain Bird's 5000 Series lasted 1.7 times longer than the competition, the company says.
Rain Bird/800-984-2255
For information, circle 056 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-056

"WEATHERSENTRY"
Meteorlogix has released the latest version of MxVision WeatherSentry Turf Edition that introduces new technology designed to assist with chemical applications, crew scheduling, course maintenance, and employee safety. The exclusive Future Radar capability enhances existing real-time radar information by offering a look into the future, detailing where dangerous storms will go and what the anticipated arrival time is and when they are likely to impact spraying or mowing.
DTN/Meteorlogix/952-882-4337
For information, circle 059 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-059

GN-1™
Patented
Hybrid Bermuda
a product of Greg Norman Turf Company

Is your turf as tough as your team?
GN-1 patented hybrid bermuda is the ideal choice for your athletic field, golf course or residential play yard needs.

- Exceptional dark green color
- Excellent wear recovery
- Good cold tolerance
- Tolerant of high salinity soils
- Lower maintenance costs

Pacific Sod
The Professional's Choice
800 942-5296
www.PacificSod.com

http://www.sportsturfmanager.com • STMA

Circle 163 on card or www.oners.ims.ca/4572-163
SPORTSTURF 43
At the STMA Spring Board of Directors meeting the committee structure was refined and discussion focused on effectiveness and desired outcomes for each committee. In addition to the 11 standing committees, 10 subcommittees were established to help facilitate and manage specific committee projects. An addition to the committee framework, the board created a Synthetic / Natural Turf Task Force, which will gather and distribute information on how to evaluate the potential use of synthetic turf versus natural turf. President Mike Trigg, CSFM also appointed a Past Presidents Council to utilize the expertise of prior association presidents.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Awards Committee
Purpose: To evaluate and select Field of the Year award winners and Minor League Baseball Sports Turf Managers of the Year
Chair: Steve LeGros
Board Liaison: George Trivett, CSFM

Scholarship Subcommittee
Purpose: To judge and select the winners of the SAFE scholarships
Chair: George Trivett, CSFM

Certification Committee
Purpose: To continue to improve the certification process, to promote the benefits of certification to potential CSFMs and their employers and to promote the CSFM as the ultimate in sports turf knowledge.
Co-Chairs: Lance Tibbetts, CSFM and Dale Getz, CSFM

Chapter Relations Committee
Purpose: To facilitate communications and networking opportunities among chapters and the exchange of information between chapters and STMA.
Chair: Dan Douglas, Chair and (Board Liaison to be appointed)

Communications Committee
Purpose: To guide the messaging and the communication channels for the association.
Chair: Boyd Montgomery, CSFM
Website Subcommittee
Purpose: To oversee the STMA website, coordinate the website content, and to investigate new technologies.
Chair: John Mascaro

Editorial Subcommittee
Purpose: To assist with the editorial focus of SPORTSTURF Magazine
Chair: Jeff Fowler

Publications Subcommittee
Purpose: To improve STMA's publications
Chair: Pam Sherratt

Conference Committee
Purpose: To insure a successful annual conference and exhibition
Chair: Mike Andresen, CSFM, and Vice Chairman Craig Potts

Conference Education Subcommittee
Purpose: Develop the Educational Program for the 2006 Conference
Chair: David Minner, Ph.D.

Conference Exhibition Subcommittee
Purpose: Grow the show, maximize revenue and enhance the image of the trade show.
Co-Chairs: Vickie Wallace and Tra DuBois

Conference Tours Subcommittee
Purpose: Set up the Tour on Wheels 2006 Conference Program.
Chair: Darian Daily

Conference MLB/NFL Seminar Subcommittee
Purpose: Organize the off-site seminar securing the location, speakers and products/service partners
Co-Chairs: Darian Daily and Bob Christofferson

Conference Student Challenge Subcommittee
STMA Board Member Rodgers Resigns; President Trigg Appoints Warnick

On March 1, STMA Board Member Jimmy Rodgers, CSFM, officially resigned his Board position representing Category II - four-year Colleges and Universities. Rodgers’ selection as the Sports Turf Manager for the Washington Nationals in D.C., shifted his representation from the colleges and university category to the professional category. According to the STMA Bylaws the Board of Directors must have representation from each segment of its membership, and the professional category is currently filled.

On March 8, President Mike Trigg, CSFM, appointed Jay Warnick, CSFM, Grounds Supervisor from BYU Idaho to complete Rodgers remaining term, which is through 2005. The STMA Nominating Committee presented a slate of candidates for consideration to Trigg, and in compliance with the STMA Bylaws Trigg made the appointment.

Warnick is responsible for 35 acres of athletic fields and 86 acres of grounds and hardscape for the University and manages a full-time crew of 10 and up to 75 student employees. The university also has off-campus learning sites along the Snake River that Warnick and his team maintain. Before BYU Idaho, Warnick was the Director of Fields for the Seattle Seahawks for four years, the Athletic Field Manager for the University of Utah, and the Assistant Field Manager for the Baltimore Ravens. Warnick holds a B.S. in Horticulture from Utah State University. He was instrumental in starting the STMA Pacific Northwest Chapter and is exploring establishing a Utah/Idaho/Montana chapter. Warnick is excited to serve on the STMA Board of Directors. “I am honored to be asked to serve our membership, and I look forward to volunteering my time and energy for the association,” says Warnick. His appointment is effective immediately. He has also been selected to serve as Board Liaison to the Chapter Relations Committee. Rodgers is the first Certified Sports Field Manager in major league baseball. He will continue to be involved with STMA and currently serves on the Certification Committee.
April 2005

Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona: For information on the Chapter, or upcoming events, contact Chris Calcaterra at e-mail: chris@peoriaaz.com or call 623/412-4231 or Bill Murphy, at e-mail: bmurphy@ci.scottsdale.az.us or 480/312-7956.

Chesapeake Chapter STMA (formerly called Mid-Atlantic Athletic Field Managers Organization - MAFMO Chapter STMA): For more information contact Graham Davis at gdavis@american.edu or call 301/495-5522.

Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association: Please join us on Thursday, April 21, for a baseball seminar in the city of Loveland. Michael Robinson will be our host as we discuss baseball field maintenance techniques and build a regulation pitcher’s mound. To register call 303/346-8954 or go online to www.cstma.org. For information on the Chapter or upcoming activities, visit the Chapter’s website at www.CSTMA.org or call the CSTMA Chapter Hotline at 303/346-8954, or contact Chapter President Richard Buelter at 303/233-2922 or dbuelter@jeffco.k12.co.us.

Florida #1 Chapter: The next Chapter meeting is May 12 at the University of Miami in Miami. For information on the Florida #1 Chapter, contact John Mascaro at 954/341-3115 or STMA@turf-tec.com.

Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Gateway Chapter or upcoming events, call Mike Krone, Missouri Baptist College at 314/392-2328 or e-mail krone@mobap.edu.

Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter or upcoming events, contact Skip Kirby at 770/928-1580 or e-mail skip@sportsturfmanagement.com.

The Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on upcoming Chapter events call Emilio Avalos at 949/824-2643 or e-mail eavalos@uci.edu.

Illinois Chapter (formerly Midwest Chapter) STMA: The ILSLMA is hosting a spring workshop on April 5 at Northwestern University. The seminar will address both natural and synthetic field management. Speakers include: Ken Mrock - Head Groundskeeper - Chicago Bears, Charles Meeks - Owner and President of Turbo Link International, Amy Fouty, CSFM - Michigan State University and Jeff Salmond, CSFM - Agronomist Northwestern University. Also, Northwestern’s Head Football Coach, Randy Walker will address attendees at the lunch. For information on the Illinois Chapter visit the Chapter’s website at http://mcstma.org/ or call chapter secretary Libby Baker at 847/263-7603 or e-mail Bake60ft6in@aol.com.

Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter or upcoming activities, contact Jeff Wendel of The Turf Office at ph. 515/232-8222 or fax 515/232-8228 or e-mail Jeff@owaturfgrass.org.

Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO/STMA): For information on the Chapter or upcoming events, contact Dan Douglas, Reading Phillies Baseball Club at 610/375-8469, ext. 212 or by e-mail to: kafmo@aol.com.

Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association: For more information, check out the website at www.kystma.org or contact Tom Nielsen at TNielsen@batsbaseball.com or Donnie Melford at dbmelf00@email.uky.edu or call him at 859/257-1451.

Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MISTMA): For information on the Chapter or pending events, contact MISTMA Headquarters at 517/712-3407 or go to www.mistma.org to visit the Chapter’s website.

Minnesota Chapter STMA: For information on the Minnesota Chapter, or upcoming events, visit the Chapter website at www.mistma.org or contact President Greg Hoag at 651/486-8296 or by email at greg.hoag@metro-inet.us.

MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter or upcoming events, contact Paul Hecker at 913/971-9717 or email check-er@olathexks.org.

New England STMA: For information on the New England Chapter or upcoming events, contact David Pinsonneault at 781/861-2757 or dpinson@ci.lexington.ma.us.

Northern California Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the NorCal Chapter, or pending events, call Janet Gift at 530/758-4200 or email Emory Hunter at emhunter@usa.net.

Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter or upcoming events, call Loren Humphrey at: 402/461-2356 or e-mail to lhumphrey@cityofhastings.org.

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey: For information on the New Jersey Chapter or upcoming events contact SFMANJ at 908/730-7770, e-mail HΟ@sfmanj.org or visit the Chapter website at www.sfmanj.org.

Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA): For information on the Ohio Chapter, call OSTMA Headquarters at 888/824-9805 or 419/824-9805 or Boyd Montgomery, CSFM, at 419/885-1982 or visit the Chapter’s website at www.ostma.org.

Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter or upcoming events, contact Bob Christofferson at 206/346-4218 or bchristo@mariners.org.

Southern California Chapter: For information on the Southern California Chapter or pending activities, call the Chapter Hotline at 888/578-STMA (578-7862) toll free in Southern California or 760/226-8873 or Michael Tarantino at 858/679-2526 or by e-mail: M TARANTINO@powayusd.com.

South Carolina Chapter of STMA: For information on the Chapter or upcoming events, contact Dr. Trent Hale at 843/662-3526 ext. 206, or by e-mail at tchale@clemson.edu or visit our website at www.scstma.org.

Texas Sports Turf Managers Association: For more information contact the TXSTMA office at 866-897-8621 or e-mail T.J. Thompson, Treasurer, at: TXTurfManager@prodigy.net.

Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA): For information on the Chapter or upcoming events, call Chapter President, Chris Pearl at 615/429-9673 or visit the Chapter’s website at www.tvstma.org.

Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter or other upcoming events, contact Bob Studholme, Fairfax County Park Authority, via e-mail at Robert.Studholme@FairfaxCounty.gov or at 703/324-6690.

Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Wisconsin Chapter or other pending events, contact Chris Brindley at 715/346-3622 or cbrindle@uwsp.edu.

Forming Chapters:

North Florida STMA Chapter: For information on the newly forming North Florida Chapter, contact Mark Clay at 904/633-6116 or Jay McCord at 904/448-2583.

New York Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Wisconsin Chapter or other pending events, contact Mike Albino, ph. 315-468-6225; (c) 315-427-1214; mikealbino@earthlink.net
Canada's #1 sport netting supplier

ROPE BORDERED NETTING SPECIALISTS
NYLON BASEBALL BARRIER NETTING
BASEBALL CASES
FREE STANDING STEEL POLES
DESIGN AND STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING
WIND SCREEN AND TOURNAMENT FENCING
BASEBALL FIELD GOAL NETS
GOLF FIELD HOCKEY SOCCER

Toll Free 800-936-6388 Fax 604-946-8690

www.masa.com

Secure Shopping 24/7!

CALL TOLL FREE
1-800-624-6706
1700 Jasper St., #F • Aurora, CO 80011
www.newstripe.com

The newest elite turf-type featuring finer leaf texture, improved turf density, and significantly improved turf quality. With excellent tolerance to winter survival and reduced scalping, Sunbird is second only to Riviera in performance.

Developed by Pure Seed Testing in North Carolina, Savannah forms a dark green, low-growing turf with excellent turf quality and early spring green-up. Ideal for new turf installations.

Transcontinental represents a new generation of improved turf quality, color, and performance. With improved cold tolerance for winter survival, Transcontinental allows for quality bermudagrass performance in both hot, humid conditions and cooler, temperate climates.

To Sprig or To Seed?
That is the question.

Only VersaGrader has an exclusive Balance Equalizer System (patent pending) that maintains the desired leveling angle at all times. The front blade of the unique Double-V Leveling System cuts through high spots as adjustable rear blades level and redistribute the material, leaving a finish grade.

...AND KEEPS IT LEVEL FOREVER
- CUTS SOD • GROOMS • RAKES • CULTIVATES

330-337-3439 VersaGrader.com

398 on card or www.oners ims.ca/4572-398

http://www.sportsturfmanager.com • STMA

TURFSEED, INC.
800-247-6910 • www.turf-seed.com
email: info@turf-seed.com • fax: 503-651-2351

1309 Mainsail Drive
Columbia, TN 38401
1.800.837.8062

email: saf@mulemix.com
website: www.mulemix.com
Fax: 931.380.0145

180 on card or www.oners ims.ca/4572-180

SPORTSTURF 47
The Most Comprehensive Turf and Tree Spray Rigs just got better!

Turf, Tree & Shrubs
Completely Enclosed
Auto-Fill System
Spill-Proof
Great Advertising Space
Soil Food Web & Root Excavation
Unit Options

Green Pro Services
Hempstead, New York
1-800-645-6464

Minuteman Parker’s APV, All Purpose Litter Vacuum, is outstanding on both turf and hard surface applications. Lightweight construction and maneuverability combine with optimum power and performance. The APV provides the power, durability and confidence of the Minuteman Parker name.

For more information on the APV Litter Vacuum or any piece of Minuteman Parker’s fine line of outdoor maintenance equipment, call 1-800-323-9420 or visit our website at www.parkersweeper.com.

Pennington
Seed supplier for Super Bowls 37-41
1-800-286-6100 ext 280
www.penningtonseed.com
sportturf@penningtonseed.com

Hydro-Sprigging for Sod Quality Results

TurfMaker®
TurfMaker® introduces the 430 Hydro-Sprigger. Affordable, practical, and easy to use. Hydro-sprigging of vegetative varieties can provide total grow-in in less than 30 days. This miniature hydro-mulching machine is ideal for planting small areas, or for serious hydro-sprigging projects of up to 4,000 square feet per hour. It is also capable of producing premium hydro-mulching applications of 8,000 square feet per hour.

http://turfmaker.com 800-551-2304

www.greenmediaonline.com

You too can have Super Bowl Turf
PRINCESS-77
Hybrid Bermudagrass
and
1G2
Elite Perennial Ryegrass

From the University of California
Establishing and Maintaining the Natural Turf Athletic Field
A thorough and practical guide to sports turf culture
- Choosing a site for a new field
- Construction & Planting
- Maintenance for optimum performance
- 8 color photos, 23 b/w photos, 8 tables
- Handy 6” x 9” format
56 pp. $18.00
http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu 1-800-994-8849

Sportsturf 48  April 2005
**Turf Diagnostics & Design**

"managing the elements through science"

Artificial Turf Testing
Independent Testing & Consulting
A2LA Accredited Lab
Over 12 Years Experience
Field Hardness Testing
GMAX by ASTM F355
Subgrade Evaluations
Construction Quality Control
Laboratory & On-Site Evaluations
Soil Testing and Consulting
Renovation Advice
Quick Turnaround Time
Accurate Results
Informative Reports

Turf Diagnostics & Design, Inc.
Phone: 913-723-3700
Fax: 913-723-3701
Web: www.turfdiag.com

---

**The Blecavator**

ONE PASS PERFECTION
From 52"-160" working widths

RESHAPING THE FACE OF NATURE

BLEC
864.225.3666 • www.blecusa.com

---

**New Products!**

Manufactured By:
MOLTAN COMPANY

RED DIAMOND TURF TECHNOLOGIES

- 100% Natural Product
- Dark Red with No Dye added!
- Higher Absorption = Improved Moisture Management

---

**New!**

EarthsTurf

A topdresser designed for sports turf managers!

MultiSpread™
There's nothing else like it for Spreading Infield Mix and Topdressing Turf Areas

- Save time and money by reducing hand labor
- Unique design allows spread width from 24" to 60"
- Affordable; one-person operation; no-tools adjustment

---

**Contour Sand Injection**

CALL FOR YOUR FREE DEMO TODAY!

Circle 190 on card or www.oners.ims.ca/4572-190

http://www.sportsturfmanager.com • STMA

Circle 191 on card or www.oners.ims.ca/2000-191

SPORTSTURF 49
Forget being PC, we've got a big game!

By Dr. Grady Miller, Environmental Horticulture Dept., University of Florida

I am a high school student that has questions about grass selection for new athletic fields. I would like our school to have environmentally friendly fields and use native grasses. I figure the native grasses would not use as much water or pesticides. Can you suggest the best native grass to use on our field?

Florida Native

This question was received via a recent phone call from a Florida Gulf Coast resident. This is a difficult question for me to address without some bias since my thinking is contrary to that of most ecologists. In fact, I have been guilty of making comments that ruffled the feathers of a couple of ecologists. I was at first hesitant to use this question in “Q&A,” but since it was not the first time I was asked about native grasses, I figured I might as well bring it out in the open.

Let's start with the definition of “native plant.” This is a term used to categorize a plant by its origin. It is like saying, “My ancestors are from England.” Then the question becomes how far back we go when we say “ancestors”? The Florida Native Plant Society has adopted the following phrase: “Florida native plant refers to those species occurring within the state boundaries prior to European contact, according to the best scientific and historical documentation. More specifically, it includes those species understood as indigenous, occurring in natural associations in habitats that existed prior to significant human impacts and alterations of the landscape.” So even with this exact definition it is often difficult to know what is and isn't a native. From my understanding, how could a named cultivar be considered a native plant?

Why the big issue with native plants? Well, many people say that these plants do the best job of providing food and shelter for native wild animals. Maximum diversity in animal populations requires maximum diversity of plants. Secondly, there is this notion that if the plant is native then it must be more efficient at the use of natural resources, since it adapted to the environmental conditions without human intervention. Non-native plants are sometimes invasive and out-compete native plants. They can do this because the natural pests, diseases or weather conditions that kept the plants in check in their homeland are missing. Of course this categorizes Bermudagrass, our most common athletic field grass in Florida, as an invasive non-native.

Now let's think about the general purpose of athletic fields. Athletic fields are designed as a surface for sports. Many of these sports require running, jumping, and falling; therefore the field should have a relatively smooth and cushioned surface that allows these activities without the expectation of injury. This surface is most often achieved with a dense turfgrass. I am sure there was a time and a place when low-density turf on athletic fields was more acceptable. But today's expectations for surface quality are typically high for our athletic fields. Not only do we demand our fields to have a uniform covering of dense turf, but we also desire the fields to maintain a high level of quality through a season of play or longer. The high expectation has encouraged the many years of research that have developed new grasses cultivars and refined the way we manage these cultivars.

Our fields are generally not designed to provide food and shelter for wild animals. We do not seek a great deal of diversity in our fields growing warm-season grasses, since plant diversity reduces the uniform appearance generally expected on athletic fields. I think it is safe to say that athletic fields are generally designed and built for the enjoyment of people. In today's modern culture, we build lots of facilities for this sole purpose. So, I see nothing wrong with selecting a grass species and cultivar that optimizes the playing and management characteristics of the field.

Many of the native warm-season grasses do not have the density or hold up to the rigors of athletic events. There are a few that have been identified that can provide a turf in the Deep South. These include seashore dropseed (Sporobolus virginicus), saltgrass (Distichlis spicata), and knotgrass (Paspalum distichum). The problem with these grasses is their poor density compared to our commonly used turfgrasses and/or their ability to sustain density with foot traffic. Some ecologists also list seashore paspalum (Paspalum vaginatum) on list of native grasses, but I think that has proven to be incorrect. It can provide a nice turfgrass and its use for athletic field surfaces is growing. Some people suggest buffalograss, which is native to the North American plains. This grass has not performed very well in Florida's humid environment and high pest pressure. There may be other native grasses that perform better in other regions of the country.

The assumption that native grasses require lower inputs of water, fertilizer, and pesticides is really not true, especially when the quality expectations are high. While it might be true in a natural setting, an athletic field is not designed to be a natural environment. So my advice is to pick a grass that can withstand the rigors of an athletic field in the local environment and manage it with as few inputs as reasonable possible. As a potential reference, you may want to look at Paul Sachs' new book “Managing Healthy Sports Fields: A guide to using organic materials for low-maintenance and chemical-free playing fields” (John Wiley & Sons, 2005). I have not had an opportunity to review the book, but if the title is any indication, it may be useful in designing maintenance schedules that fit your objectives.

Q&A?

Send them to Grady Miller at the University of Florida, PO Box 110670, Gainesville, FL 32611, or email gmiller@ifas.ufl.edu. Or, send them to Dave Minner at Iowa State University, 106 Horticulture Hall, Ames, IA 50011, or email dminner@iastate.edu.