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On the cover: We're in on the action at University of South Carolina-Upstate's Cyrill Softball Stadium, STMA College Softball Field of the Year.

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From the Sidelines

NFL players prefer natural grass



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Every 2 years the National Football League Players Association surveys its members' attitudes regarding the surfaces on which they play. In 2006 approximately 1,500 players responded; here's what they had to say:

First, the numbers most of us are interested in: 72% prefer to play on natural grass; 18% prefer artificial infill; and 9% have no preference.

Another interesting result was that 90% of respondents said NFL turf managers (referred to as "groundskeepers" in the survey) play a "very important" role in the performance of natural grass surfaces, and 9% said they play an "important" role. Thirty-seven percent said their turf managers play a "very important" role in the performance of artificial infilled surfaces, while 43% said they play an "important" role.

Ninety-four percent of players who responded feel the "top-rated" NFL grounds crew should maintain the surface of the Super Bowl. (There was no mention of how a crew might be rated but one can assume that highest-rated field would be maintained by the highest-rated crew. Somewhere, Mr. Toma is shaking his head over that one!)

Sixty-five percent said artificial infilled fields are more likely than grass to contribute to injury, and 74% said infills cause more soreness and fatigue. Sixty-seven percent thought the infill systems are more likely to shorten their careers.

Ninety-one percent said they could tell the difference between a softer or firmer infill surface; 48% said the new infill systems should be softer while 19% said they should be firmer; and 33% had no opinion.

The players were asked for "additional comments" and these were most common: 1. Make all fields grass to prevent injuries; 2. Keep all grass fields well maintained; 3. Do not allow baseball or multi-use fields; 4. Put artificial infill surfaces in inclement weather cities; and 5. Set standards for quality and texture of all fields based on safety, performance and comfort.

Top 5 Grass Fields

1. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
2. Carolina Panthers
3. Arizona Cardinals
4. Jacksonville Jaguars
5. San Diego Chargers

Bottom 5 Grass Fields

1. New England Patriots
(before FieldTurf)
2. Pittsburgh Steelers
3. Oakland Raiders
4. Miami Dolphins
5. Chicago Bears

Top 5 Artificial Fields

1. Seattle Seahawks (FieldTurf)
2. Detroit Lions (FieldTurf)
3. Baltimore Ravens (Momentum)
4. Atlanta Falcons (FieldTurf)
5. Indianapolis Colts (FieldTurf)

Bottom 5 Artificial Fields

1. New York Giants/Jets (FieldTurf)
2. Minnesota Vikings (FieldTurf)
3. Dallas Cowboys (RealGrass)
4. St. Louis Rams (FieldTurf)
5. Buffalo Bills (GameDay)

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President's Message

We make a difference



MIKE ANDRESEN
CSFM

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The sound of wooden and metal bats contacting baseballs has returned for a long summer. A tip of the STMA hat goes to baseball sports turf managers for helping create shrines out of humble diamonds. I will lump college, park and recreation and high school sports turf managers into the obvious professional group.

Lillian Davis is quoted as saying, "All we can ask in our lives is that perhaps we can make a little difference in someone else's." As we start the summer season and a return to the daily grind of non-stop events on our fields, regardless of the sport, it's important to remind ourselves why we continue to love this profession. We make a difference! Most importantly we have a direct impact on the level of play and the level of safety for athletes that compete on our fields. Poorly maintained or under-budgeted fields rarely produce memorable or difference-making games. Players and coaches love to compete on fields they trust and that exceed their level of talent. STMA members all over the world produce these types of fields, with or without adequate funding, and it's remarkable!

Besides playability, the difference we make with fans that pour through the turnstiles is equally dramatic. Administrators recognize the difference we make in providing freight-paying fans the "wow" factor. Is anything better than entering hallowed ground? Dreams and fantasies are shaped in big league ballparks and on our fields.

You and your crew are as important to your facility as the well-dressed crew you saw detailing the professional park is to theirs. Each of us makes a difference. We make a difference to every kid that ever laced up spikes or cleats or tennis shoes and threw on an ill-fitting glove or cap. We provide trust and make a difference to the parents and grandparents of that little kid whom, when he sleeps at night, dreams of playing on an MLB, an NFL, or an MLS field.

I attended the MLB/NFL/MLS Workshop on Saturday of the Annual Conference in San Antonio. Besides the very valuable information on the "nuts and bolts" of managing playing surfaces, I walked away most impressed by the level of passion on display by each presenter. I want to sincerely thank Seattle Mariner Head Groundskeeper, Bob Christofferson, and the loyal sports turf managers from all three major sports leagues that "gave back" to our members that day. Through the commitment of several very talented and passionate professional sports turf managers, Bob has turned the session into a very special offering for our conference attendees. These men and women made themselves available and gave back that day. They made a difference to every person in attendance – just like you do every day on your fields.



Mike Andresen

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Plant growth regulators' effect on bermudagrass

By F.W. Totten and L.B. McCarty

Bermudagrass is a popular turfgrass used on athletic fields due to its aggressive summer growth habit, fine leaf texture, and dark green color. However, if mowed infrequently, excessive scalping and clipping production combine to decrease its aesthetic quality. Plant growth regulators (PGRs) were introduced into the turf industry in the 1950's

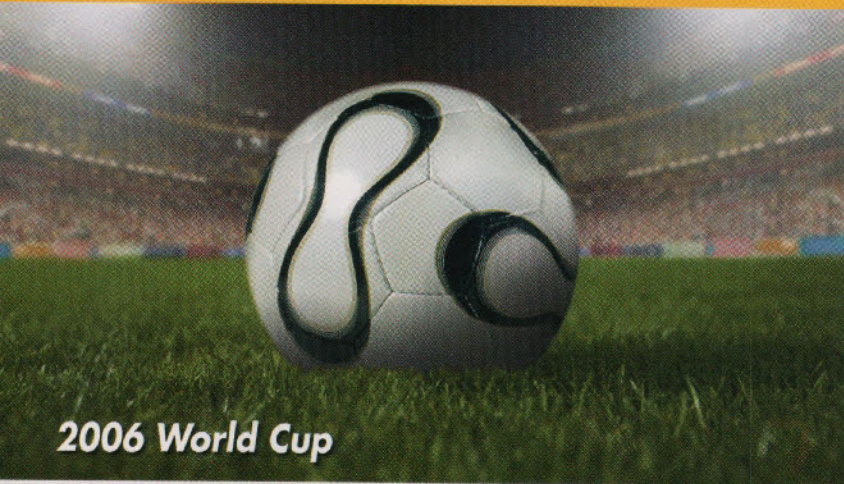
and since have been used in part to reduce mowing requirements and enhance color of bermudagrass.

PGRs are classified as Type I or Type II based on their mode of action. Type I PGRs, maleic hydrazide, mefluidide, and amidochlor, for example, inhibit cell division. Since being introduced, their use has become limited due to high potential for phytotoxicity and reductions

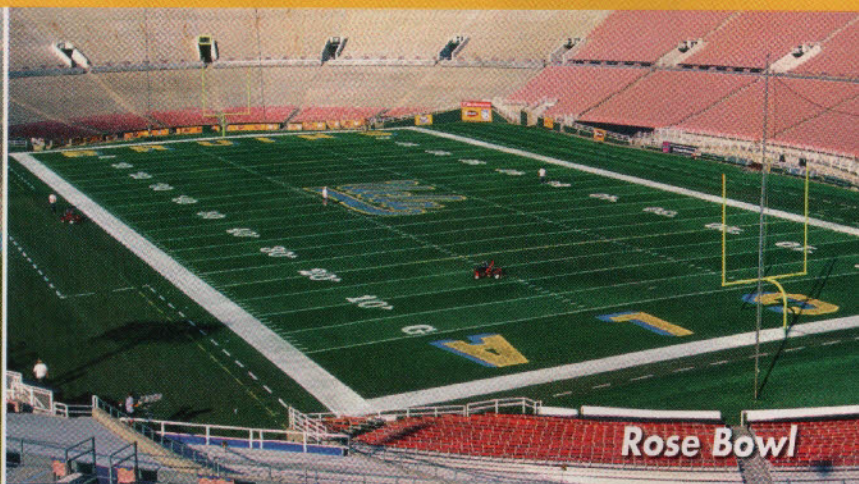


Overview of trial plots.

The Barenbrug Advantage



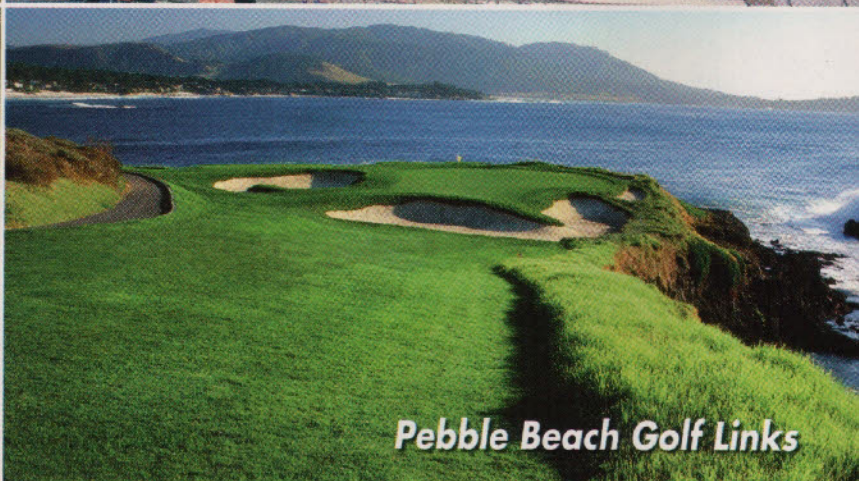
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