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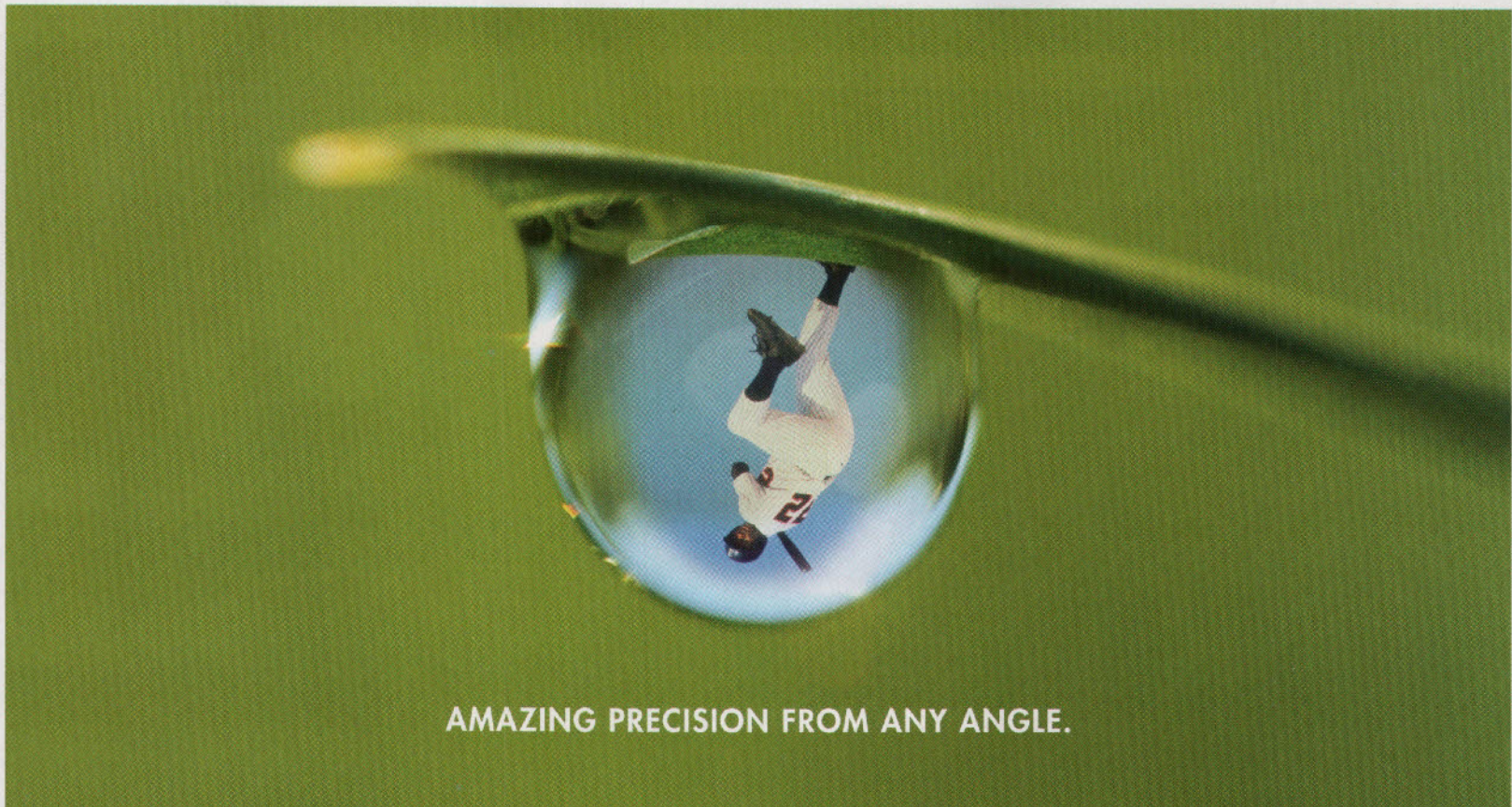
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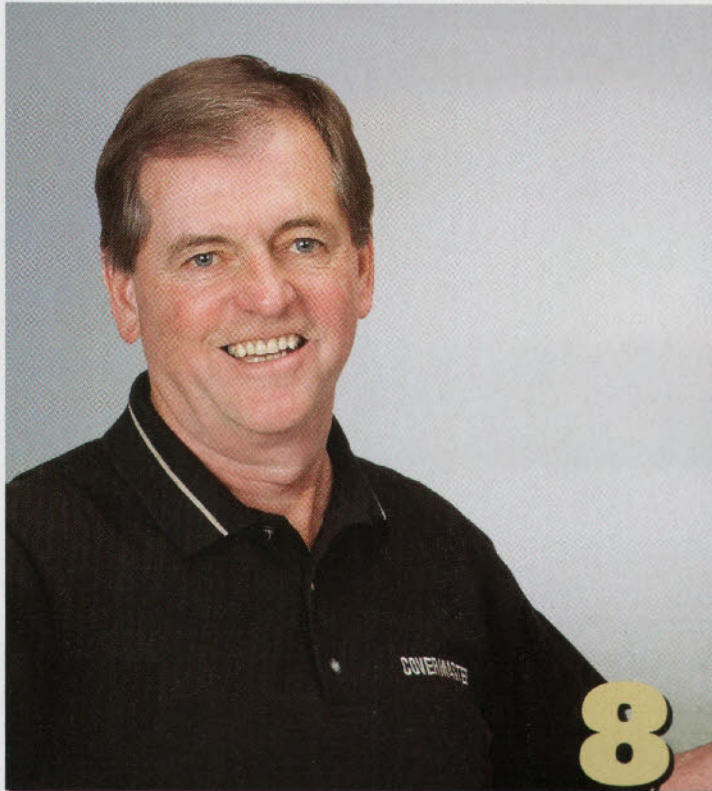
CORPORATE OFFICE

1640 Australian Avenue | Riviera Beach, Florida 33404

Phone: 561-844-1002 | 800-735-7246 | Fax: 561-842-9493 | www.krain.com



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On the cover: Bob Curry, president of Covermaster, Inc., was presented the STMA's highest honor, the Harry C. Gill Memorial Founders Award, at January's Conference Banquet.

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JOHN DEERE

Input wanted for Playing Conditions Index



ERIC SCHRODER
Editor

eschroder@m2media360.com

717-805-4197
P.O. Box 280,
Dauphin, PA 17018

Kim Heck, CEO of STMA, announced at Conference in January the organization was conducting a pilot program for its Playing Conditions Index (PCI) initiative.

Members' input is needed for this program.

The STMA PCI will be a tool for you to use to assess the current playing conditions of an athletic field at a given point in time.

In 2004, the STMA board hired Ackerman PR out of Nashville to propose ways that the association might increase its visibility and market the on-field expertise of the sports turf manager. They designed the current STMA logo and developed new image materials. Ackerman also had an idea to create a metric that could be used on athletic fields, similar to the slope rating of a golf course, to assess that field's playability. The STMA board put together a group of experts to begin evaluating such a program, and after receiving positive feedback, the board created the STMA PCI Task Force.

The PCI Task Force went through numerous draft editions of the STMA PCI before coming up with an instrument that they believed would serve the membership well. This instrument was then sent to a focus group spanning all STMA membership segments and from all regions of the country. After making some adjustments, the task group came up with the STMA PCI Worksheet Pilot.

The PCI is currently in a worksheet form that allows you to allot points for each question and then total the points, giving the STMA PCI for that field at that time. There are detailed instructions on the cover sheet of the program to help you through the process. If you have any questions while filling out the STMA PCI, please contact 800-323-3875 or PCI@STMA.org.

STMA members who have used the PCI in tests pointed out several reasons why it will be useful, ranging from "will allow me to go to my administration to justify additional resources," to "a tool for my media relations department," to "it will help me to communicate with all the constituent groups involved in my field."

Only STMA members can contribute to this program, which is in the process of being copyrighted.

You can find the STMA PCI beginning this month on the Members Only side of www.STMA.org and send your feedback to PCI@STMA.org or fax 800-366-0391 or 785-843-2977. STMA asks that every time you use the tool, you provide the results and feedback to STMA so that they may refine the tool.

STMA plans to wrap up this soft rollout phase and refine the tool by December, and then unveil it at next year's Conference in San Jose.

760 Market Street, Suite 432
San Francisco, CA 94102
Phone 415-839-5060
Fax 415-398-3511
www.greenmediaonline.com

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SportsTurf
MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

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Jody Gill, Mike Goatley, PhD, David Pinsonneault, CSFM,
Chad Price, CSFM

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Kim Heck

STMA Office
805 New Hampshire Suite E
Lawrence, KS 66044
Phone 800-323-3875 Fax 800-366-0391
Email STMAinfo@STMA.org
www.STMA.org

Editorial
GROUP PUBLISHER Douglas Hebbard
EDITOR Eric Schroder
TECHNICAL EDITOR Dr. Scott McElroy
ART DIRECTOR Carol Clark
PRODUCTION MANAGER Marjorie Williams
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Richard Brandes

STMA Editorial
Communications Committee
Dale Getz, CSFM, Scott McElroy, PhD
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Brad Park, Rick Peruzzi, CSFM
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More than a pretty place

Several years ago, we realized that to take advantage of good locations, good rates, and good timing that we needed to select our conference sites much earlier. Your board implemented a "four-year-out" schedule. In any given year, we have booked a convention center and the conference hotels for the next 3 years.

Of course, the challenge is to predict how much we will grow during those years. This growth affects the number of rooms we block and the size of the convention center we use. With the convention center, if we do not sell out, we can certainly make use of the space provided with our silent auction, food stations, etc. However, if we do not use our room block, hotels assess a very stiff penalty. That's why STMA has been using Marketing and Events (M&E) to assist us with the contract negotiations for each site. Since 2005, with their expertise, STMA has been able to accurately project its conference and exhibition numbers and has never been penalized. Thank you, M&E!

When we set the "four-year-out" plan, your board also felt that we needed a rotation pattern for our locations that would be beneficial to the attendees and the exhibitors. Thus, we have established a four-region rotation that generally moves from East to West. This rotation allows for shorter travel distances for attendees and exhibitors to two of the four locations. For 2009, we'll be in San José, 2010 Orlando, 2011 Austin, and 2012 Long Beach.

STMA also evaluates many other criteria including climate, hotel rates, food and beverage costs, convention center costs, convenience of the hotels to the convention center, meeting and banquet spaces, availability of sports venues nearby, airport/airline accessibility, freight and decorating costs to exhibitors, city safety, and more. These factors must all be favorable before your Board conducts a site visit, which is usually in conjunction with a regularly scheduled board meeting.

Your board also sets your registration fees based on the corresponding costs to STMA for the convention center, food and beverage, A/V, decorating, etc. Our registration fees have not increased since before 2004, and for 2009 we have increased our fees slightly to keep pace with our expenses.

The size of our convention is unique and allows us to economically go to mid-to-large size cities. But, for some locations, we do not fit. As much as we would love to go to San Diego, the convention center will not book us because we are too small. We must grow much larger, or wait until 2 years out. If they have not rented the space, they will try to find another group with which to pair us. Too risky.

Your board welcomes your ideas as we try to select the locations with the best value and the best experience for you.



MIKE ANDRESEN
CSFM

mandrese@iastate.edu

M2MEDIA360

PRESIDENT/CEO

Marion Minor

VP OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Gerald Winkel

VP OF CIRCULATION AND

COLLATERAL SALES

Joanne Juda-Prainito

PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Mary Jo Tomei

DIRECT MAIL LIST SALES

Cheryl Naughton 770-995-4964

cnaughton@m2media360.com

Reader Services

DIRECTOR OF READER SERVICE

Joanne Juda-Prainito

Readerservice@m2media360.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

Phone 847-763-9565 Fax 847-763-9569

REPRINTS

Cheryl Naughton 770-995-4964

cnaughton@m2media360.com

Advertising Sales Representatives

East

J.F. Purcell

135 E. 55th St., 5th floor

New York, NY 10022

917-421-9059

jpurcell@m2media360.com

Midwest

Ann Cannon

134 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1700

Chicago, IL 60602

312-236-4900, ext. 1105

acannon@m2media360.com

Detroit

Leslie Palmer

16267 W. 14 Mile Rd., Suite 202

Beverly Hills, MI 48025

248-530-0300, ext. 1402

lpalmer@m2media360.com

West

Bruce Loria

626 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 500

Los Angeles, CA 90017

213-596-7226

bloria@m2media360.com

Classified Advertising Sales

Glenn Belton

626 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 500

Los Angeles, CA 90017

213-596-7212

gbelton@m2media360.com

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CURRY RESPECTED AS "QUIET GIANT" IN SPORTS TURF INDUSTRY

By Eric Schroder



Bob Curry had an early start in the turf business. As a Toronto teenager in the late 1950's, he was one of the grounds crew who walked the turf track at Woodbine Racetrack repairing divots by hand after each race day. "We would check the Daily Racing Form each morning, hoping there wouldn't be any races on the turf that day," he laughs.

Ironically, Curry has come full circle

from those early days of safeguarding turf to where he is today; the president of Covermaster, Inc., one of the world's leading suppliers of multi-use tarps and flooring systems to protect sports turf.

In January the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) presented Curry with the organization's most prestigious honor, the Harry C. Gill Memorial Founders Award, which recognizes long-time service and commitment to the organization.

In STMA's lean early years, he paid board members' expenses to board meetings to help out the cash-strapped organization and played an integral role in the STMA headquarters transition from outside management to its own staff, devoting much of his personal time to making the transition seamless.

"I'm indeed honored to be recognized by receiving the Gill Award. I am proud to say I have personally known all the

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previous recipients of this award and it is a privilege to be ranked with them," Curry says. "Most important to me is all the friendships I've made through STMA."

"Looking back at those early years, there were challenging times for STMA. Then Steve and Suz Trusty became the management team," Curry says, "and some dedicated board members set goals and delegated responsibilities. Not long after that things started to take shape."

"I remember at my first board meeting asking Steve where to submit my expenses and he said commercial members were asked to pay their own," Curry recalls. "Those were the good days!"

Curry sat on the STMA Board for 4 years and continues to serve on committees today.

Curry began his career right out of high school when he went to work for Laidlaw Lumber as the office "go-fer." (Later he attended university at night.) He quickly climbed the company ladder with stops as a warehouse laborer, inside salesman, and outside salesman. "I'm not a natural salesman," he says, "but I enjoy meeting and talking to people. Getting feedback from customers is something I learned a long time ago."

Eventually he became a product manager in the marketing department; that's where he first involved himself in the tarpaulin and covering business. In the mid-1960's Laidlaw partnered with a Finnish company that manufactured tarps to start a "covering" business in Toronto and Curry was chosen to run this new division. At the time this Finnish concern was the only manufacturer in the world that was producing a 12-foot wide raw material



Curry tees off in windy San Antonio at a past SAFE tournament.

"Bob Curry is definitely the 'Quiet Giant' in our sports turf industry. I could not imagine a more deserving recipient of this prestigious award. He has helped this industry to no end, but never seeks publicity for his generosity and time; so few know how much he has done for us. All the while, he has developed his business to be one of the most quality-minded, service-oriented businesses that I've come across during my 24 years in this industry. If you like the STMA, Bob is one of a few select individuals that you should thank personally. He's the kind of guy who will beat you on a golf bet for a cold drink afterwards, then buy it for you anyway before you have a chance (I speak from experience here). Thanks again, Bob. You have helped more sports turf managers than you will ever know."

—ROSS KURCAB, CSFM, DENVER BRONCOS

for tarps.

"In North America at the time there was available only 5-foot wide material," he recalls. "The larger size's advantages included fewer seams and that it could be made faster and cheaper. We had a unique product that allowed us to fabricate larger tarps."

While he was filling divots, the young Curry dreamed of being his own boss, and says now this new division was a real challenge, "almost like having my own business." During this time, he travelled the world and brought concepts and ideas back to North America.

"Our first big order was for a 200,000-square foot tarp to protect the artificial turf during concerts in Montreal's Olympic Stadium, and then we sold 80,000-square footer to the Kansas City Chiefs," says Curry. "That's where I met George Toma, one of several STMA founders with whom I soon developed relationships."

"Gil Landry got me involved when he suggested in 1995 that I join the board as a commercial member," Curry says. "He said it was 'only a few meetings a year' and that I would greatly benefit from it."

"Gil greatly understated the meetings but he also really understated the benefits," says Curry. "The true benefit, and this is an important point with me, is the friendships I've made through the years. They are something I will never forget."

Curry says today STMA is on the right track for future growth. "Their purpose in the industry will be further recognized. I think the SAFE Foundation will play a major role in that growth," he says. "These efforts will enhance the association by attracting new members, the