

Bluegrass in Oregon

During my visit to Eugene before my internship, I noticed that some fields were covered with tarps. I later discovered they were growth blankets, which are needed to grow Kentucky bluegrass in the Willamette Valley of Oregon.

Kentucky bluegrass does not generally grow well here. It stays dormant a long time and is more prone to diseases due to the low light levels in the fall winter and spring. These factors cause headaches for most grounds managers in the region. To keep the turf healthy and ready for play, it needs help from the blankets to keep the soil temperatures warm enough in the early spring to bring it out of dormancy. The benefits of using Kentucky bluegrass is that it forms a mat layer which assists in structuring a sturdy playing surface, even in areas of heavy wear. The traditional grass grown on most fields in the area is perennial rye, which does not form that thick mat layer, resulting in areas with large divots and no plant material.

As I learned all this, I realized the reason for Tom's concern towards my working with Kentucky bluegrass. As the weather got warmer, there did not seem to be any problems with the fields related to dormancy as a result of the growth blankets. The fields ended up looking great and playing even better.

— Jonathan Garrett



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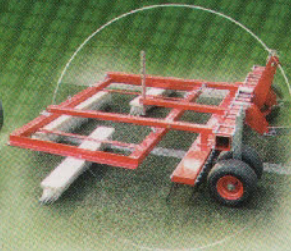
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FACILITY & OPERATIONS

internship began to change. I learned that it's the quality of the work, not necessarily quantity of the work that is important in an internship. Interns should want to learn the "why" of what they are doing, not just that it needs to be done.

On my first turf internship I was advised to, "learn more what not to do, than what to do." Luckily for me, my job at Oregon did not provide me with an overwhelming amount of opportunities to learn from mistakes. Rather, I learned largely from the responsibilities given me. I am glad that Eric was able to assess my abilities and give me tasks that I could handle, setting me up to succeed.

One of my favorite times was when Eric would take me out to lunch. It was a great time for me to talk to him about things going on at work and how he would handle certain situations. Another great opportunity for these conversations was toward the end of the day when the crew had a few minutes to spare.

As far as the maintenance aspects went, it could be pretty routine. Working on the athletic fields with assistant groundskeeper Steve "Dino" DiNatale, I was doing a lot of mowing, edging, raking, and painting of lines and logos. I enjoyed each time I got practice on the painter, and savored every moment in the seat of the mower.

The other great part of the internship was working on the landscaping with the other assistant groundskeeper, Kenny Hoffman. Interesting stories follow Kenny around, whether it's cutting down

trees, digging 2-foot deep trenches with a mattock and shovel, or dealing with 25-foot quick coupler geysers, along with other irrigation troubles.

Lessons learned

One important thing I was exposed to was the administrative side of grounds management. If Eric was doing something in his office he was more than willing to let me step in and see what he was doing. Scheduling staff, double-checking invoices, and e-mailing coaches the weather forecasts for their up-coming games were some of the things I had not thought about before. Learning this side of the job was very interesting to me, and helped me get a better understanding of what all it entails to be a manager.

I was exposed to a large range of athletic field management. Eric and his crew maintain multiple kinds of turf, such as the grass football practice fields, the synthetic game field, the grass soccer field that is shared with the lacrosse team, the softball field, putting green, and track infield that was being renovated. And I was also exposed to what it's like to be a lone Beaver in a flock of Ducks. ■

Jonathan Garrett is back in Beaverland at Oregon State and is a student member of the Sports Turf Managers Association.

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5 tips to readying your résumé



Photo courtesy of Ross Kurcab, CSFM, Denver Broncos

Your résumé is your calling card. It should provide enough information about you to persuade the prospective employer to invite you for an interview. That's it—the total purpose of your résumé is to get your foot in the door for an interview, where you can sell yourself to the interviewer. To make your résumé a most effective tool for your job search, consider these Top 5 Tips:

1. Customize your résumé for the position to which you are applying. The easiest way to do this is in the "Objective," which should be at the top of your first page. For example, let's say your objective is "To be employed by a sports facility that is committed to providing the highest quality fields for its athletes." You find out through the STMA Career Center that a position becomes available at a soccer complex. Then you would change your objective to "... be employed at a **soccer** complex that is committed ..."
2. Use white space. It is okay to have your résumé go to two pages. Two pages is standard, especially if you have any experience. Do not use small type and all available space to present your résumé on one page. You want the prospective employer to read it, so make it easy to read. Be sure to also use an easy-to-read type style, too. There are hundreds of fun fonts available, but don't use them on your résumé. Again, you want the prospective employer to spend time reading about you, not trying to figure out the words.
3. When describing your previous job responsibilities write in an active voice, showing how your work provided value, and use bullets. For example, don't say, "I was responsible for mowing the football field prior to weekend games." Instead, say, "Improved football field condi-

tions by implementing a consistent mowing program."

4. Do include your community and professional organizational involvement, but do not include personal information, such as marital status, number of children, religious affiliation, or other information that is not relevant to the job.
5. Think about what qualifies you for the job and include it in your résumé, typically under a heading called "Summary of Qualifications." This section can change to meet the requirements that the employer is seeking. It can also be more global and highlight the overall qualities that make you a top sports turf manager and a desirable employee. For example, you might list:

- Certified Sports Field Manager, the credential that validates experience and knowledge, and the commitment to continuing education
- Highly experienced in field renovation
Strong team management skills
- Bilingual in English and Spanish

Don't confuse your "Qualifications" with your "Accomplishments," which should be another section that highlights the noteworthy activities that you successfully completed. ■

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Make a plan for lightning

Lightning safety has been little studied and less practiced. In ancient times thunder and lightning were audible and visible signs of the gods' displeasure: there was no defense whatsoever. Today more than 45 different USA lightning protection codes exist that promulgate ambiguity and confusion concerning reduction of the hazard. There is no Utopia in lightning safety. The dearth of objective data about lightning safety contributes to accidents and injuries. Common misconceptions include: "Lightning never strikes twice in the same place" and "Lightning rods prevent lightning strikes." The ignorance and misinformation about lightning safety increase lightning's social cost in deaths and injuries and economic cost. A disciplined and systematic approach to lightning safety may result in better management of the hazard and reduced costs.

Editor's note: The following information first appeared in the Sports Turf Managers Association's October 2007 electronic newsletter and was provided to them courtesy of the Middletown (PA) Area School District's athletic department.

Lightning strikes to people are rare but often fatal when they do occur. Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard affecting athletic participation. In an effort to protect the student athletes, coaching staff, fans and officials from the possibility of a lightning strike, this policy has been designed for the safety of all those involved with Middletown Athletics.

The National Severe Storms Laboratory recommends that athletic participation cease when lightning is detected within 6 miles. For our purposes, this will be indicated by the flash to bang method as assessed by the game official, ATC or Athletic Director.

Designated chain of command

During an athletic competition, it will be the responsibility of the game event administrator in conjunction with the athletic director and athletic trainer to decide if the event needs to be delayed or cancelled due to the possibility of a lightning strike occurring. Prior to the start of an athletic competition the decision rests with the Athletic Director.

During practices the athletic trainer and athletic director will determine if the team needs to be removed from outdoor facilities. If the trainer is not present, the head coaches or their designated assistant in charge will be responsible for removing a team from an outdoor athletic site. It is recommended that coaches check the weather report before going outside every day, as storms often move very quickly.

Methods for detecting lightning

1. Flash-to-Bang: This is the easiest way to estimate how far away lightning is. Count the seconds from the time the lightning is sighted to the time that thunder is heard. Divide this number by five to figure out how

far away the lightning is in miles. Example: If there is 30 seconds between the flash of lightning and hearing the thunder, the lightning is approximately 6 miles away.

It is the policy of Middletown Area High School that if the lightning is 6 miles away or less, athletes must be taken indoors and practice suspended.

2. Strike Alert: This is an electronic portable device used to detect lightning in the area; it detects an approximate distance of lightning. The athletic director and athletic trainer have strike alert devices. If the strike alert detects lightning within a 6-mile range, all athletes must seek shelter indoors immediately.

It is considered safe to return to play 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder, or as determined by game official, athletic director, and athletic trainer.

If a game or practice has been delayed or cancelled, athletes must report to a designated safe shelter. A safe shelter is defined as "any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure." Athletes should remain in their assigned shelter until told it is safe to move.

Facts regarding lightning safety

- Blue sky and no rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from rain. It does not have to be raining for

a lightning strike.

- Avoid using a land line telephone except in emergency situations. A cell phone is a safe alternative.

- Avoid using showers in a safe facility, the water and plumbing can be conductors of electricity.

- Minimize your body's surface area and minimize contact with the ground if caught far from a safe shelter. **DO NOT LAY FLAT.** Lightning current often enters through the ground.

- If unable to reach a safe shelter stay away from tall trees or objects (light poles, flag poles, etc), standing pools of water, open fields, or individual trees. Do not be the tallest object in a field. Crouch down with only the balls of your feet touching the ground. Try to minimize your body's surface area and minimize contact with the ground.

- People who have been struck by lightning don't carry an electrical charge, administering first aid and/or CPR is safe for the responder. ■

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Alternative fuels power next wave of equipment

By Chris Harrison

Nobody has a bigger, looser budget than they did a few years ago. Turf managers need to cut costs everywhere they can. One of the best places to start might be at the fuel pump out behind the barn. Forget about diesel or gas. Look at equipment that uses other fuels.

This is not blue sky. Some of the technology is already in use at places like Niagara Falls State Park (NFSP) and on sports fields around the nation. Other technology is a few years out, but test units already are operational.

"There is a big industry demand for more electrification to eliminate hydraulics in both sports turf and golf turf," says Brad Aldridge, product manager for John Deere Golf and Turf. This has to do both with saving fuel and keeping hydraulic fluid leaks from blemishing turf.

"The industry is calling for more in that

area," Aldridge continues. "Colleges and major league fields are looking for perfect turf. Nobody wants to see a fluid leak mar the field."

While products like Bio-HyGard, a biodegradable hydraulic fluid, have been around for years, hybrid technology can greatly reduce the number of places leaks can occur.

When it comes to fuel savings and lower operating cost, Brian Melka, director of product management at Jacobsen says electrically powered or hybrid technology is the way to go. Although most electrics and hybrids are smaller units today, he sees the technology moving up to larger equipment.

"Fuel savings with hybrids are huge," he says. "We typically see a 50% to 70% reduction in fuel consumption."

"In the world of grounds maintenance equipment, electrically powered or hybrid technology will give huge fuel savings," Melka says.

Since the variable cost of operating a machine throughout its productive lifetime will typically exceed the capital cost of purchasing the equipment, it will pay to push a pencil on new equipment.

Fuel cells

The Toro Company is working a partnership with the State of New York to provide the next generation of turf maintenance equipment powered by hydrogen fuel cells. The project, kicked off this winter, supports New York's Executive Order 111 to adopt "Green and Clean" State buildings and vehicles.

"Toro is excited to partner with the State of New York on its initiative to adopt clean-energy technologies," says Dana Lonn, director of Toro's Center for Advanced Turf Technology. "This project is a logical extension of our strategy and ongoing innovation, and provides us with an opportunity to gain greater operational