

some types of cool season grasses such as bluegrass. In bluegrasses there is some lateral growth, but not as much as bermudagrass. With the help of verticutting the same cutting of the "runners" will simulate growth and help form a better root mass and help to fill in thin spots.

Seed bed preparation

Verticutting is a great tool to enhance your overseeding regiment. The most important aspect of getting good seed germination is to have good seed-to-soil contact. In most cases, we are trying to seed into established turf such as over seeding into bermudagrass. With the use of verticutting, you will open up the turf to allow the seed to get in touch with the soil and increase the chance of a successful germination.

When you are trying to seed into thin areas, a light verticutting will loosen the soil to allow for good seed-to-soil contact. The sports turf manager needs to be careful when verticutting thin areas. You must remember that the turf is already weak and any aggressive verticutting could set you back further.

Early spring green-up

From my personal observations, verticutting in early spring (March in the Cincinnati area) will help with green up of cool season grasses.

When you verticut, you remove the old, dead grass that has been laying there over the winter. Verticutting breaks up the winter derogation and opens the soil up to the warm sun that promotes earlier growth.

Once the soil is opened up to that warmth, the grass starts to grow and thicken up. I have seen areas that we verticut green up and start to grow 4 weeks earlier than non-verticut areas.

Timing is very important. You have to be careful not to try this too early in the year. You have to wait until the heavy frost period is over. If you verticut too early and get a couple weeks of hard and cold weather, your plants could be in trouble and take longer to recover since you have removed their protection.

Talk with other sport turf managers around your area and ask their thoughts and techniques about verticutting. They can assist you with finding the proper timing and equipment to do the job.

Darian Daily is head groundskeeper for Paul Brown Stadium, Cincinnati, OH.



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Ducks' crew *makes blue work*

Eric Fasbender, CSFM, has a bachelor's degree in history but he didn't abide by the subject when it came time to improve Kilkenny Fields on the campus of the University of Oregon in Eugene. Despite naysayers who said Kentucky bluegrass doesn't work for athletic turf west of the Cascade Mountains, Fasbender and his cohorts risked their jobs by choosing a grass that hadn't been used in the area for more than 20 years.

Knowing that these practice fields have to stand up to summer soccer and lacrosse camps as well as the Oregon football program, Fasbender said, "We chose Kentucky bluegrass because of its ability to withstand and recover from wear, superior shear strength and stability, and its ability to compete with the large amount of *Poa annua* here in the Pacific Northwest."



Something must have gone right because Kilkenny Field was chosen the 2007 STMA College Football Field of the Year.

Fasbender said the region's mild summers and cool, wet conditions the rest of the year makes Poa thrive. "We have a 'see it, kill it' philosophy that has been successful so far. We know we are never going to 'cure' the field of Poa but we can address what is there and hold the line," he said.

"We use kill canes filled with Round-Up when we mow and have an aggressive spray program combining herbicides targeting Poa," Fasbender said. "We use growth regulators to help our bluegrass outcompete it.

"Fertility plays a large role in what we do to stay on top of disease. We've managed to avoid the horror stories of the design process and have only had to make limited curative fungicide applications in the past 3 years," he said. "We apply granular fertilizer every 2-4 weeks depending on the season and field conditions. All apps are slow release and include iron in the nutrient package."

Fasbender said other facilities in the Pacific Northwest are trying bluegrass. "Overseeding is one of the challenges we face. We overseed twice a year but because the field is in use so much, we do it in the winter and summer rather than spring and fall," he said. He uses turf blankets after football season through mid-March to keep the plants going, and overseeds after spring practice, in mid-May before summer camps begin.

SportsTurf: What's most important piece of equipment or product in your program?

Fasbender: I have to say that our aerator and topdresser are the most important pieces of equipment in our program. Anytime you have football players "dancing" around on your turf, you are going to deal with compaction issues. We aerate as much as we can to relieve the compaction and topdress lightly to protect the crowns of the plants. These two pieces are also important because they help us with our aggressive over-seeding program. We over-seed to continually introduce new and better varieties of turf and keep a mix of old and new plants in our sample. We aerate and pick up our cores before seeding to create a seedbed and then topdress after to protect the seed.

ST: What are your biggest challenges and how do you approach them?

Fasbender: Controlling the Poa annua is our biggest challenge and working around the rainy weather and the nearly continuous field use are close behind.

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FIELD OF THE YEAR

It seems that we have more "off-season" workouts than ever before. College athletics is now a 12 month commitment for our athletes and it can be a fight just to get our fields the rest they need. Open communications with our coaches and their understanding of, and cooperation with, what we're striving to accomplish is what makes it all work. They realize that we are trying to provide the best possible surface for their athletes.

ST: How do you communicate with coaches?

Fasbender: I think that face to face communication with administrators, athletic directors, coaches and staff is the most important thing a sports turf manager can do to develop a successful program. Sometimes the one to one connection is not always possible though, and you need to try any means necessary to communicate.

I am very fortunate because our Head Football Coach, Mike Bellotti, and I have developed a great working relationship over the years. I understand what he wants to accomplish on the

fields and what he expects, and he values my opinion and appreciates my input and suggestions. I attend every football practice to be available for questions, but also so I can see how the fields are being used and how the turf is performing. This practice has gone a long way in gaining our coaching staff's trust. That is something that I picked up in my time in professional baseball. If an infielder gets a bad hop, you want to see exactly where it happened, not hear about it second hand the next day. I connect with all of our



coaches regularly even if I don't have anything pressing to talk about. My favorite icebreaker topic is a favorite here in Eugene, the weather.

ST: How do you see the sports turf manager's job changing in the future?

Fasbender: I hope to see more people getting certified. I know that there are a lot of people who are eligible, but have not taken the exam yet for a variety of reasons. There are many people in this industry that are extremely talented and knowledgeable and certification is an important step in your professional career.

I also think that technology is going to change more than a few things in the industry. It is astonishing to think about all the advances in equipment, materials, and supplies in the past 10 years. Think of what is on the horizon for the next 10!

ST: What attracted you to a career in sports turf management?

Fasbender: I grew up in the Chicago area and both of my parents were baseball fans. My family

would go to White Sox and Cubs games early so that we could catch batting practice. Of course, once BP was over, the grounds crew took the field and I can remember being fascinated by all of the jobs that they were doing.

At home, I was the kid with the whiffle ball field in the backyard with the perfectly mowed grass and the chalked lines. Fortunately, my parents humored my interests as a kid. When it came time to go to college, I chose the University of Tennessee where my initial major was architecture and graphic design, but I soon learned it was not for me. One of my friends suggested that I try sports turf management. I didn't even realize that was possible. I switched majors and started working for Bobby Campbell on the university athletic fields and the rest, as they say, is history.

ST: How do you balance work and personal life?

Fasbender: My wife, Liz, is one of the greatest people on the face of the planet and a blessing in my life. She supports me during the busy times

of my year and I support her when things get hectic at school or with her coaching. She teaches chemistry and coaches JV girls soccer at one of the high schools in Eugene. I count my blessings everyday that I have her as my wife and that she supports my career in a way that most women wouldn't. I told her when I first got into this business that she could tell me to quit at anytime and that I would find another career path. She has never hinted at that and only encouraged me when times got tough.

I know it was hard for her to move across the country when we took this job at Oregon, but she never complained and again only encouraged what I was doing. Thanks, Ace!

The STMA Field of the Year Awards Program has been made possible through the generous support of its sponsors. They include Carolina Green; Covermaster; Hunter Industries; Surface Athletics/Profile Products; Scotts Turf Seed; and World Class Athletic Surfaces.

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John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

A

**Answer:
from page 19**



This area void of grass near sideline is not actually a problem but an example of a good field layout coupled with excellent maintenance practices. As most of you know, soccer fields tend to wear out first in the center of the field as well as at the goal mouths. This lighted city park in South Florida is no exception to the rule as it gets many hours of play from immediately after school until 10:00 at night as well as all day and into the night on the weekends. However the fields were constructed on a fairly flat area that was only slightly crowned for drainage purposes. This allows the fields to be shifted from side to side, spreading the wear out over several

areas. The worn areas shown were actually in the center of the fields before the fields were moved. As soon as wear gets to a point that they cannot manage to grow it back in a reasonable time, the fields are shifted. The parks staff uses this technique for football as well. Proper design coupled with the ability and willingness to move fields allows the turf to recover, even during times of increased play.

Thanks to Cliff Abrams, Parks and Natural Resources Foreman for Sable Pines Park and the City of Coconut Creek, for allowing me to take this photo. Bill Tully, Maintenance Technician, is responsible for field layouts.

If you would like to submit a photograph for John Mascaro's Photo Quiz please send it to John Mascaro, 1471 Capital Circle NW, Ste # 13, Tallahassee, FL 32303 or email to john@turf-tec.com. If your photograph is selected, you will receive full credit. All photos submitted will become property of *SportsTurf* magazine and the Sports Turf Managers Association.

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Consider STMA Board service

Each year, STMA presents a "Call for Nominations" for STMA voting members to indicate your interest in board service. Please take a moment to consider serving on the STMA Board of Directors, or urging a qualified colleague to consider service. The benefits are many. Through serving on the board, you'll:

- Contribute to your professional association.
- Be a part of a decision-making body.
- Hone your listening, collaborative and other personal development skills.
- Strengthen your leadership abilities.
- Make a difference in the strategic direction of the profession.
- Garner respect from your employer, your peers and your staff.

For 2009, STMA is seeking nominations for Directors from all voting categories of membership. As you may recall, STMA is proposing revisions to its Bylaws this fall to the membership. If the membership approves the Bylaws, this will add two At-Large Director positions for Board service from any category of voting membership. The President may appoint one of those positions to the Board; however the other will be placed on the ballot—all contingent on the approval of the Bylaws.

The Schools K-12, Professional, and Commercial Director positions are definitely up for election in 2009. These three positions will be elected to two-year terms. If the membership does not approve the proposed Bylaws, STMA will keep a list of those interested in but, ineligible for, board service in 2009 due to their category. This pool may be used for future elections.

Per the STMA Bylaws, the:

Schools K-12 Director must represent the K-12 membership segment, which is any Category I or II person who manages sports fields for institutions that provide education to students in grades Kindergarten through 12.

Professional Director must represent the Professional membership segment, which is any Category I or II person who manages sports fields used by professional athletes.

Commercial Director (includes consultants, architects, designers, contractors, management companies, distributors and manufacturers, etc.) This member's company must be engaged in a commercial enterprise providing services and/or products to the sports turf profession, and the board candidate must be the STMA Commercial Member.

To have your name considered by the Nominations Committee, please fill out the Nominations Form (page 49) in this issue, or go to www.STMA.org. Be sure to answer the two brief questions included on the form. The STMA Nominations Committee encourages you to also share this form with your peers

STMA adds new awards category

The STMA Field of the Year Awards program has added a new category to replace the now retired Complex of the Year category. In January 2009, at its 20th Annual Conference and Exhibition in San Jose, CA, STMA will award its first Sporting Grounds of the Year at the professional, college and university, and schools and parks levels. The Awards Committee simply felt that the pursuit of excellence on one field took precedence over the generalized facility management aspects of a complex. All previous Complex of the Year winners will rightfully maintain their status as elite among their peers as an STMA Complex of the Year winner but applications in that category are no longer accepted.



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STMA in Action

The Field of the Year Application has been revised to a more user friendly format. Also, the Awards Committee has expanded the number of photographs allowed to 25 maximum. This is to allow you opportunities to show your creativity and unique features of your field. You can find the STMA Field of the Year application at www.STMA.org.

In establishing the STMA Sporting Grounds of the Year, the Awards Committee has targeted athletic fields which host "unique" sports outside of STMA's "Big Four" of football, baseball, softball, soccer. Fields that host field hockey, lacrosse, rugby, cricket, tennis, and horse racing, among others, are encouraged to apply. For a field to apply under the new category, it must host the

"unique" sport for a majority of the play on a natural grass playing surface.

The new STMA Sporting Grounds of the Year applicants must follow the same guidelines and rules as STMA Field of the Year applicants, and winners will receive the same recognition. This recognition includes a plaque, free registration to the STMA Conference in San Jose, \$500 towards lodging at the conference, and STMA Field of the Year Signature merchandise.

The amazing package for each category and level winner would not be possible without the support of the STMA Awards Program sponsors: Carolina Green; Covermaster, Inc.; Hunter Industries; Scotts Turf-Seed; Turface Athletics; and World Class Athletic Surfaces. Please support

these sponsors and let them know that their contribution to the association is very much appreciated.

The deadline to submit an application is October 15, 2008. The Awards Committee suggests that you get started on your application by taking pictures of your field in the off-season to better show the transformation of the field throughout the year. Also, be sure to document unique challenges and solutions that arise during the year, so you will be able to "wow!" the committee with your expertise.

Contact STMA special projects manager Patrick Allen at pallen@stma.org or 800.323.3875 if you have questions about the new category or the STMA Field of the Year program. ■



Teamwork helped the crew from the Albuquerque Isotopes win the STMA 2007 Professional Baseball Field of the Year Award.



Steve DiNatale of the University of Oregon helped win the STMA 2007 College Football Field of the Year Award.

Cut here and fax or mail form (see below)



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For an electronic copy of this form, contact STMA at 800-323-3875 or via email at STMAinfo@STMA.org. Please e-mail, or fax the completed form to 785-843-2977, or mail it to STMA, 805 New Hampshire, Ste. E. Lawrence, KS 66044 by August 31.

OSHA who?

This photo dates back to a time when applying chemicals to turf was done with a device called a proportioner. With this method, one would mix the desired chemical with water inside a barrel to a high concentration of active ingredient. Then, with the aid of a motor driven or tractor driven compressor, it would force water into the apparatus located above and inside the barrel. Suction was created with a venturi tube and the mixture of chemical and water was then hand sprayed over a golf green or sports field surface.

The design shown in the photo is much better than the original designs, as the original proportioners used wooden barrels to hold the chemical mixture which were nearly impossible to clean out. This newer design shows a state-of-the-art steel barrel instead. At the time of this photo the golf and sports turf industry was growing, and researchers were finding better and safer ways to treat for weeds and disease. This photo illustrates how far we have come with regards to products, their safety, effectiveness, and application methods.

The STMA Historical Committee met in late November for the first time to log and develop the acquired collection of Dr. Kent Kurtz, STMA's first executive director. "Doc", as he was admirably referred to, also served



as the association's first Historian, and amassed an amazing collection of document and photographs of the sports turf profession and STMA. Doc's collection included a kind donation from the estate of turf industry pioneer Dr. Fred Grau. In appreciation of Doc's contribution and the generous donation of the Kurtz family to STMA we will be running a monthly account of the people, places, stories, equipment, and photographs that are important to the profession and association. ■

STMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona:
www.azstma.com.

Chesapeake Chapter STMA (formerly Mid-Atlantic Athletic Field Managers Organization - MAFMO Chapter STMA):
www.ccstma.org.

Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association:
www.cstma.org.

Florida #1 Chapter: 954/782-2748

Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association: www.gatewaystma.org.

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www.gstma.org.

The Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:
www.stmalabasin.com.

Illinois Chapter STMA: 847/263-7603.

Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: www.imstma.org.

Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association:
www.iowaturfgrass.org.

Keystone Athletic Field Managers Org. (KAFMO/STMA): www.kafmo.org.

Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association:
www.kystma.org.

Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MISTMA): www.mistma.org.

Minnesota Chapter STMA: www.mstma.org.

MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association:
www.mokanstma.com.

New England STMA (NESTMA):
www.nestma.org.

Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association:
402/441-4425.

NEW - North Carolina Chapter of STMA:
www.ncsportsturf.org.

North Florida STMA Chapter: 850/580-4026.

Northern California STMA:
www.norcalstma.org.

Ozarks STMA: www.ozarksstma.org.

Sports Turf Managers of New York:
www.stmony.org.

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey: www.sfmnj.org.

Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA): www.ostma.org.

Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association: www.pnwstma.org.

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