

Dealing with the ruling

Sports turf managers have slightly less than 2 years to prepare their fields for life after MSMA. Focusing on a few key principles may help make the transition easier.

Cultural practices. The best defense against any weed invasion is healthy, dense, vigorous turf stand. Implementing cultural practices (aerification, fertility, mowing, etc.) to maximize turf density will make fields less susceptible to weed encroachment. For example, goosegrass thrives in compacted, poorly drained soils. Soils of this nature are commonly found in high traffic areas on sports fields where there is minimal turfgrass cover. Improving soil conditions in these areas through aerification and topdressing will reduce the likelihood of a goosegrass infestation.

Use the product while it is still available. Field managers dealing with infestations of annual grassy weeds should use MSMA while it is still

legal to do so. Make a diligent effort to control these weeds now and then shift the focus to pre-emergence control of annual grasses after 2010.

This point especially rings true for dallisgrass, as there are no options other than MSMA for selective postemergence control of dallisgrass in turf. Herbicides such as foramsulfuron (Revolver) and trifloxysulfuron (Monument) will only provide dallisgrass suppression, not control. Research is currently exploring new chemistries, as well as combinations of existing chemistries, to provide selective dallisgrass control in both warm and cool-season turf.

Effective preemergence practices. The loss of an effective, economical postemergence herbicide like MSMA renders preemergence control of annual grassy weeds more important than ever. When applied correctly, preemergence herbicides such as prodiamine (Barricade), oxadiazon (Ronstar),

dithiopyr (Dimension), and pendimethalin (Pendulum) can provide effective control of annual grassy weeds like crabgrass and goosegrass for extended periods of time. It is imperative that these materials be applied prior to the germination of weed seed and are watered in after application. Most labels require ½ inch of irrigation or rainfall after application. Research will be conducted in 2009 at the University of Tennessee to evaluate the efficacy of the materials under simulated traffic.

The loss of MSMA will have a significant impact on the sports turf industry. Some may think that December 31, 2010 is so far in the future that they need not worry about it now; today's game or tomorrow's practice is more important than preparing for something nearly 2 years away. Those individuals are wrong. Sports turf managers who start preparing for the loss of MSMA now will reap the benefits later. ■



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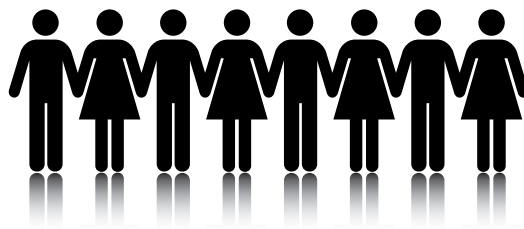
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Editor's note: This is the final in a series of six articles in the Ewing Professional Development Series. STMA and Ewing Irrigation have partnered in this series to bring sports turf industry professional development and career issues to the forefront.

I“IF YOU REALLY WANT TO DO SOMETHING, you’ll find a way. If you don’t, you’ll find an excuse.”

Anonymous

Some managers and owners don’t like to confront people who are underperforming. These are the people who are not doing their job up to standard. They are not performing, and can only be labeled as unsatisfactory. The sooner you confront this situation the faster it can be corrected. Don’t let it fester. It just upsets everyone they work with, and brings down the morale and energy of their peers. Those who do perform consistently state that they want their boss to fire the slackers they have to cover for and work with. They also feel that if the standards are not enforced for slackers, then why should they be working so hard?

Think of your employees in three categories: unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and excellent. We spend way too much time, energy, and stress trying to correct those that are not performing, when your energies need to be used for those who are performing. If they are not performing, there needs to be immediate negative consequences or they will continue not to perform. People do things based on consequences, so there must be some negative result for their lack of effort such as warnings, probation, suspension, or termination.

For those that are performing (the satisfactory and excellent employees), your job is to thank and praise them, and recognize and reward them. Positive results followed by positive consequences results in a continuance of that behavior. The

excellent people who go above and beyond must get the highest rewards. The most should always go to the best. You can beat your head against the wall trying to change those who won’t change, or you can spend your energy with the good people. The choice is yours.

Managing across cultural and ethnic barriers

I know that some readers have front line employees who are foreign-born. These employees create many challenges, but the biggest one is managing people who have different cultural norms that act as barriers to communication. We can always break down language barriers, but people do not easily give up the cultural norms they grew up with in their native country. It is a blueprint that is embedded within them for life. We have to understand these norms. If we don’t, they easily lead to misinterpretations of the behavior observed.

When a foreign born worker first comes for an interview, don’t expect the firm hand shake and the direct eye contact. It has nothing to do with self-esteem. Many other cultures have a softer handshake. It is also common for people not to maintain eye contact out of respect for the person who is considered in a higher position. They may rarely look you in the eye. They will often smile, especially if they do not understand something you say. Just be aware of these behaviors and don’t read something into them that is not true.

Another frequent misinterpreted behavior is when a foreign-born worker speaks their native language in the work-

place. Americans often think this rude, sneaky, or unprofessional. If you have ever studied a foreign language and tried to speak it in another country you know how difficult it is. Your mind cannot interpret as fast as the language is spoken back to you. It can be stressful. That is the same reason why ethnic workers fall back on their native language. It is stressful and fatiguing to always attempt English, and easier to speak to another employee from the same language background in their native tongue.

The best way to approach this is to explain to them when they should be speaking English and when they can resort to their language. Let them know that it can make others feel uncomfortable and left out. Be sure you let them know that this is not a prejudice against them or their language. Always explain your expectations and reinforce the proper behavior, but at the same time honor their culture.

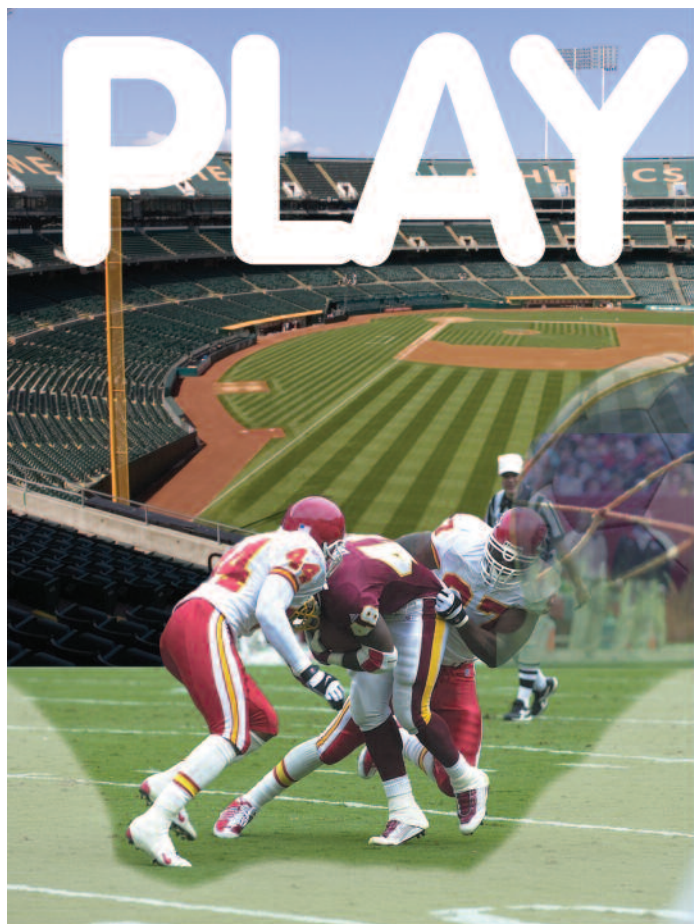
Employee handbook mistakes

A poorly written handbook can create legal problems. When was the last time you updated yours? State and federal laws change, and so must your handbooks. I am not giving legal advice, but you should examine your handbook and determine if it contains lots of procedures. Procedures should be in a pro-

cedures manual, while policies should be in a policies manual. The two are not the same and it just gets lawyers salivating as they claim “employee confusion.” Make sure your policies are clearly understood, and evenly enforced by all supervisors and managers. If the policy will not be enforced, leave it out. Be sure all policies are consistent with any other organizational documents.

Do not use the word “probation” as a period before permanent hiring. The reason is this may imply that once probation is over, it becomes a permanent, forever job. You eliminate the at-will status. Call this the introductory period. Use probation as the term before suspension or firing. Also, do not use the term “annual salary” because it implies you must keep them for at least a year. Finally, make sure your employees sign documents acknowledging that they can be fired at-will. ■

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Think you're busy? Meet Dan Klages



EVERY PROFESSION requires its share of multi-tasking challenges. But leading a perennial powerhouse football team to 40 wins in the past 4 seasons including a 5A state runner-up finish in 2006, directing an athletic program with 12 sports and 24 teams, while growing and maintaining some of the best “coach-kept” athletic turf in the state—simultaneously—can be quite a challenging undertaking to say the least! All three jobs can require full-time attention and commitment. Obviously, in order to meet the demands of all three jobs at once require time management and some very long hours.

What is a typical week like in my world? Let's pick a week from last August, the time of year when football season is underway, AD duties are numerous, and the growing season is at its peak:

Sunday, 8/24/08:

12:30pm Walk over game field, check for fire ants, mole crickets, weeds etc.

12:45pm Cut game field twice from 2 different directions.

2:00-9:00pm Football staff meeting to evaluate our pre-season game. Install game plan for first game.

9:00pm Turn off irrigation to fields due to a late afternoon shower.

Monday 8/25/08:

7:30am Arrive at EHS. Walk the field.

7:45am Plan practice schedule. Email copies of practice schedules to entire staff. Check emails and phone messages.

8:15am Drive to bus shop for diesel fuel.

8:45am Prepare the weekly football program insert and email it and opponent's roster to the printer.

10:00am Report for break duty.

10:30am Add students to the eligibility list.

11:50am Report for lunchroom duty.

1:15pm Call to check on injured players not at school today.

1:30pm Call the newspaper for article on Friday's game. Check emails and phone messages.

2:00pm Athletes report to dressing room. Show film. Lift weights.

3:30pm Practice.

6:00pm Post-practice staff meeting.

6:20pm Mow practice field.

Tuesday 8/26/08:

7:15am Walk game and practice fields. Turn manual irrigation system on for practice field.

7:45am Plan practice schedule. Email copies of practice schedules to entire staff. Check emails and phone messages.

8:15am Mow game field twice from two different directions. Turn off sprinklers on practice field.

10:00am Break duty.

10:30am Prepare for tonight's booster club meeting. Fill-out purchase orders for miscellaneous equipment and Friday's pre-game meal.

Above: Dan Klages is head coach, athletic director, and turf manager for Eufaula High School in Alabama. Photo courtesy of Andy Brown of the Eufaula Tribune.

Below: Football is important to small towns across America.





John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

>> Answer: from page 17

The circular depression on University of Phoenix's field is the dreaded "band disease." This disease typically shows up after marching bands have their way with stadium turf. This particular circular indentation was actually the result of the Ohio State University marching band. These photos were taken immediately after the pregame festivities for the 2007 Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, which was also the BCS National Championship Game on January 8, 2007 at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, AZ. The Ohio State Buckeye band is nationally known for spelling out "Ohio" in script

form. This photo is from the beginning of the "O" where the entire band also follows in the same exact path to spell out the word. The sports turf manager also reports that although they have seen many different marching bands, the Ohio State band gets the award for most destructive band over the shortest period of time. Is there an award for that?

Photo submitted by Pete Wozniak, Manager, Athletic Facilities at Arizona State University who is also a member of the NFL grounds crew and assisted in painting the logo for the Fiesta Bowl at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, AZ.

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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Call athletic trainer for advice on treatment for injured players.

11:50am Lunchroom duty.

1:15pm Meet with two teachers concerning a player's behavior/grades. Check emails and phone messages.

2:00pm Athletes report. Film. Position meetings.

3:00pm Practice

5:30pm Staff meeting.

6:00pm Booster club meeting.

7:00pm Spray game and practice fields for fire ants and mole crickets.

Wednesday 8/27/08:

7:30am Walk fields. Check for success of last evening's spraying.

7:45am Plan practice schedule. Email copies of practice schedules to entire staff. Check emails and phone messages.

8:00am Gather equipment and materials to paint the game field.

8:30am Coach Gilmore and I paint all the lines and numbers on the field in preparation for Friday night's home opener.

8:45am Paint machine will not start. Must go to town to buy a new spark plug.

9:15am Machine starts. We paint.

1:15pm Lunch break

2:00pm Athletes report. Lift weights. Team meeting.

3:00pm Practice

5:30pm Staff meeting.

6:00pm Fertilize practice field and baseball field.

7:00pm Go home for supper.

8:00pm Paint "Tiger Eyes" at midfield and "EUFULA TIGERS" in end zones.

10:45pm Go home!

Thursday 8/28/08:

7:30am Walk the fields.

8:00am Go over a game day checklist. Check emails and phone messages.

8:30am Call Coach White at Dothan High School.

8:45am Call Coach at BTW High School to arrange film swap for next week's game.

9:00am Call Kelly Seed Company for prices on perennial ryegrass seed.

9:15am Complete a grade check for all varsity football players.

10:00am Break duty.

10:30am Talk to college coaches who are recruiting our players.

11:50am Lunchroom duty.

1:15pm Complete insurance claim forms for injured players who have received medical attention. Check emails and phone messages.

2:00pm Athletes report.

2:15pm Conduct walk-through practice on game field.

3:30pm Brief staff meeting.

3:45pm Leave to attend our middle school's game in Troy.

9:30pm Arrive home.

Friday 8/29/08:

7:15am Report, along with players, to First Baptist Church for football prayer breakfast.

8:15am Arrive at school. Make morning announcements over school PA. Check emails and phone messages.

8:30am Meet with offensive and defensive coordinators for last minute game plan details. Watch film on DHS.

10:00am Break duty.

10:30am Check headsets. Call for prices on new DVD/VCR combos to use in film study, and a DVD duplicator. Complete purchase orders for these items.

11:50am Lunchroom duty.

1:15pm Prepare pre-game schedule for players.

2:00pm Players report. Team meeting. Hand out game jerseys and pants.

3:00pm Pep rally in gym.

3:30pm Pre-game meal in lunchroom.

5:00pm Team meeting in weight room.

5:15pm Dress for game.

6:00pm Warm-up.

7:00pm Kick-off.

9:45pm Report score to state office.

10:00pm Staff meeting. Make copies of game for film swap tomorrow. Call radio station for post game comments. Walk field.

1:30am Head home.

Saturday 8/30/08:

9:30am Mow game and practice fields.

12:30pm Go home and rest up for another busy week!

The above is a typical week leading up to a home game in the fall. There are obviously many other duties that were not performed during this week. Turf-related chores such as sweeping, aerating, topdressing, overseeding with ryegrass, weed spraying (for both pre and post-emergent weeds, sedges and broadleaf grasses) and fungicide spraying are performed periodically throughout the year. In addition, all turf and irrigation equipment needs periodic service and repair, which I must either schedule or perform myself.

Winning football games on Friday nights in small town south Alabama is important. At times, it seems that the collective mood of the entire town is elevated when the football team is on a roll and unfortunately vice versa! My goal is to not only provide our athletes and community with the very best possible athletic experiences, but also give them the very best in athletic turf from both an aesthetic and playability perspective. I am fortunate to have a coaching staff and school administration that share my vision and provide assistance and resources to make it all come together. ■

Dan Klages is head football coach, athletic director and field maintenance supervisor for Eufaula High School, Eufaula, AL.

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STMA volunteers renovate baseball field after Conference



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Each year, the MLB groundskeepers convene in January to discuss industry issues and best practices. The conference, sponsored by The Toro Company, Covermaster and Surface Athletics, concludes with a field day to renovate a youth field in the surrounding community. Sequoia High School in Redwood City, CA was selected as the site for

the renovation on January 19.

Groundskeepers from the U.S. and Canada rebuilt the pitcher's mound, bullpen and batter's box; mowed and edged the turf; dragged the infield; and incorporated field conditioner into the playing surfaces.

"It was great to see all the MLB groundskeepers work together to provide the community and Sequoia High School with a first-class field," said Boyd Montgomery, CSFM, CSE, and commercial district sales manager for The Toro Company. "It was

especially nice to see one of MLB's own groundskeepers giving back to his old community. Larry DiVito, now head groundskeeper for the Minnesota Twins, grew up in the area, attended Sequoia and played baseball on this very same field."

Renovation was funded by a \$40,000 grant from the Baseball Tomorrow Fund and through equipment, material and labor donations from the MLB groundskeepers, The Toro Company, Surface Athletics, Covermaster, Inc, Colony Landscaping, Barkshire Laser Leveling and West Coast Turf.

"Baseball Tomorrow Fund and its executive director, Cathy Bradley, should be commended for stepping up and supporting this event," added Montgomery. "And thanks to Luke Yoder, the San Diego Padres' head groundskeeper, who did an outstanding job coordinating." ■



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