

are compensated at a higher rate than non-certified, especially at the higher salary levels. Eighteen percent of STMA members make more than \$75,000. Twenty-seven percent of certified members make more than \$75,000.

In addition to higher pay, Koski says, "As employers begin to recognize the benefits of employing a CSFM, competition for the best jobs will give an edge to those who are certified." ■

## Are You Ready to Test?

Those pursuing certification first have to accumulate 40 points to be eligible to test. Points are earned from formal education and experience or from experience only. Once 40 points are attained, applicants take a four-part exam covering agronomics, sports specific, pest management, and administration. Those successfully completing each section at an 80% pass rate achieve the CSFM designation. Recertification is required every 3 years, and it requires continuing education and industry service.

Use these charts to determine if you have the 40 points to qualify to take the exam.

Education	Education Points
Advanced Degree	24
Bachelor's - Turf Related	16
Bachelor's - Other Non-Turf	8
Associate's - Turf Related	8
Associate's - Other Non-Turf	2
No Degree	0

Experience	Experience Points
Head Sports Turf Manager	6 pts./year
Asst. Sports Turf Manager	3 pts./year
Sports Turf Crew	1 pt./year
**Golf Course Supt.	3 pts./year
**Asst Golf Course Supt.	1.5 pts./year

If you have any questions on your readiness, please contact STMA Headquarters, 1-800-323-3875. STMA also has a practice exam on [www.stma.org](http://www.stma.org); click on "Certification" to take that exam.

## STMA awards its most prestigious honors

The STMA presented its highest honors, the Founders Awards, during the January Conference's concluding banquet. The awards are named after the four founders of STMA: Dick Ericson, Dr. William H. Daniel, George Toma, and Harry Gill, and each award has separate and distinct judging criteria. Those nominated are evaluated confidentially and independently by the STMA Board of Directors, and winners are not notified until their name is announced during the banquet.

Mike Tarantino from Poway Unified School District in Poway, CA received the Dick Ericson award, which is given to a sports turf manager who positively impacts the sports turf industry and exhibits effective team leadership. His nomination referenced his professionalism, team leadership, a commitment to improving the industry, and his contributions to STMA committee service.

Founder Dr. William Daniel set the standard for educator and researcher involvement in the STMA, and created a partnership between sports turf managers and educators and researchers. This award recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to the sports turf industry through his or her research, teaching or extension outreach. Dr. Grady Miller, North Carolina State University was presented this honor in recognition for his substantial research on sports field management techniques during drought conditions, his accessibility to sports turf managers and his authorship of numerous books and scientific manuscripts dedicated to the profession.

The George Toma Golden Rake Award, which acknowledges an individual's strong work ethic and job performance, was presented to David Reiss from Wasatch County School District in Heber City, UT. He is described as an outstanding turf man, an advocate of excellence and accountability in his profession, and his nomination acclaimed his enthusiasm and dedication to providing high quality sports and practice fields.

The Harry C. Gill Memorial Award was presented to former STMA board president Bob Campbell, CSFM, from the University of Tennessee. The Gill Award recognizes an individual for their hard work in the sports turf industry and acknowledges their dedication and service to the STMA. Campbell was honored for his extraordinary commitment to the profession. His sports field management practices have raised the bar for all sports turf managers, and he is lauded as a mentor to many in the industry. His leadership helped to navigate STMA through turbulent times, and it is through his leadership that the association is strong and vibrant today. ■

## Playing Conditions Index ready for use

STMA rolled out the Playing Conditions Index (PCI) package at its annual conference in January. In development for 2 years and piloted during 2008, the instrument is ready for broad use by the STMA membership.

Developed to assess the playability of your fields, the PCI is used to provide a snapshot of your fields' playability at a specific point in time. The continued use of the assessment tool provides invaluable information to the sports turf manager and can help guide field management practices, assist with communication to user groups, can help to substantiate the need for more resources, and as needed provides a way to provide information to the media relations department. The package contains a Media Advisory Bulletin with instructions to help convey information on field conditions and its effect on athlete performance to sports information professionals on game days.



# STMA in action

This benefit is available to members only online at [www.STMA.org](http://www.STMA.org). Log in to members only, and under the members-only drop down box, click on the PCI. It is also available in booklet format. Please call STMA, 1-800-323-3875 for your free copy, or email your request to [PCI@STMA.org](mailto:PCI@STMA.org). ■

## Penn State, Mt. San Antonio win Student Challenge

Students were able to take advantage of many activities specifically geared to them including a student forum, student lunch, and the Fifth Annual STMA Student Challenge presented in partnership with the SAFE Foundation and Platinum Sponsor Hunter Industries. Through the generosity of SAFE, the Student Challenge provides the winning 2-year team and the winning 4-year team each with a \$4,000 grant to fund a practical learning lab at their college or university. An event record 108 students, representing 22 colleges, universities, and technical schools, entered a total of 31 teams. Teams of up to four students participated in a multiple choice exam on athletic turf and sports field management topics and identified plants, insects, diseases and weeds, as well as performing a written case study. Ninety-nine students and 30 teams com-

peted in the event in 2008. Hunter Industries' continued sponsorship picks up the tab for all Student Challenge competitors' STMA Conference registration.

The winning team from the Four Year Competition was Pennsylvania State University Blue Team 009, whose members were Tanner Del Valle, Matt Elmore, Nicholas Gialloretto, and Nicholas Leviere. Del Valle and Elmore are the first two students to successfully defend their Student Challenge title. Penn State's White Team 008 finished third. The University of Tennessee made a very strong showing with Team 014 finishing second out of 21 total teams in the 4-Year competition.

Ten teams competed in the 2-Year competition, with Mt. San Antonio College Team 102 taking top honors, making them the first school to win the 2-Year competition twice. Teammates Patrick Escalera, Geoff Miller, Chaz Perea, and Hector Ramirez studied intensely leading up to the exam. Second place went to Penn State's 103 and third place was taken home by Mt. San Antonio College Team 101.

In addition to their \$4,000 grant, the two first place teams' will also have their team name etched in the traveling Student Challenge Cup; receive replicas of the Cup and individual medals; and provide an article to be presented in an official STMA publication. Second and Third place winners received plaques and medals. ■

## “Marquis de Sod” turns 80



STMA President Abby McNeal, CSFM and George Toma, one of the association's founding members.

George Toma, one of the Sports Turf Managers Association's founders and arguably the most famous groundskeeper in history, turned 80 last month, just 2 days after working his 43rd (that's all of them) Super Bowl in Tampa.

According to a story in the *Kansas City Star*, the National Football League threw a party for Toma about midnight on the 50-yard line of Raymond James Stadium, a few hours after the most entertaining Super Bowl of all time. “We didn't get home until 3 in the morning,” Toma said in the story.

Anyone who has met Toma knows of his boundless energy that shows no sign of dissipating at an age that finds many men happy to play a round of golf, with a cart no less. His famous “And then some” spirit has spurred countless turf managers to go beyond what is expected of them professionally.

Toma told the *Star* that when Pittsburgh's James Harrison was rumbling

100 yards with the game-turning interception at the end of the first half, his proximity almost got him flattened. “I saw him intercept the pass and I was watching up on the JumboTron. All of a sudden, one of the Steelers' executives grabbed me and pulled me back and the pylon comes flying towards me. (Harrison) was lying on the ground, so I picked up the pylon and put it back.”

His hometown paper's tribute continued: “Hard work is really all Toma has ever known. His early biography reads like David Copperfield. It almost sounds made up to say that Toma was born poor in a Depression-era, coal-mining town in Pennsylvania. He got his first job, on a vegetable farm, at the age of 10. He became a groundskeeper at 13, giving him almost seven decades in the field in which he still occupies the summit.”

Happy Birthday, George, many happy returns! ■

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## STMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona: [www.azstma.com](http://www.azstma.com).

Chesapeake Chapter STMA (formerly Mid-Atlantic Athletic Field Managers Organization – MAFMO Chapter STMA): [www.cstma.org](http://www.cstma.org).

Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.cstma.org](http://www.cstma.org).

Florida #1 Chapter: 954/782-2748

Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.gatewaystma.org](http://www.gatewaystma.org).

Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.gstma.org](http://www.gstma.org).

The Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.stmalabasin.com](http://www.stmalabasin.com).

Illinois Chapter STMA: 847/263-7603.

Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.imstma.org](http://www.imstma.org).

Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.iowaturfgrass.org](http://www.iowaturfgrass.org).

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

• Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.kystma.org](http://www.kystma.org).

• Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA): [www.mistma.org](http://www.mistma.org).

• Minnesota Chapter STMA: [www.mstma.com](http://www.mstma.com).

• MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.mokanstma.com](http://www.mokanstma.com).

• New England STMA (NESTMA): [www.nestma.org](http://www.nestma.org).

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

• North Carolina Chapter of STMA: [www.ncsportsturf.org](http://www.ncsportsturf.org).

• North Florida STMA Chapter: 850/580-4026.

• Northern California STMA: [www.norcalstma.org](http://www.norcalstma.org).

• Ozarks STMA: [www.ozarksstma.org](http://www.ozarksstma.org).

• Sports Turf Managers of New York: [www.stmony.org](http://www.stmony.org).

• Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey: [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org).

• Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA): [www.ostma.org](http://www.ostma.org).

• Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.pnwstma.org](http://www.pnwstma.org).

• Southern California Chapter: [www.socialstma.com](http://www.socialstma.com).

• South Carolina Chapter of STMA: [www.scstma.org](http://www.scstma.org).

• Texas Sports Turf Managers Association: 866/897-8621.

• Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA): [www.tvstma.com](http://www.tvstma.com).

• Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.vstma.org](http://www.vstma.org).

• Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association: [www.wstma.org](http://www.wstma.org).

### Forming Chapters:

• Gulf Coast Chapter: 225/757-9136.

• Nevada STMA Chapter: 702/433-3113.

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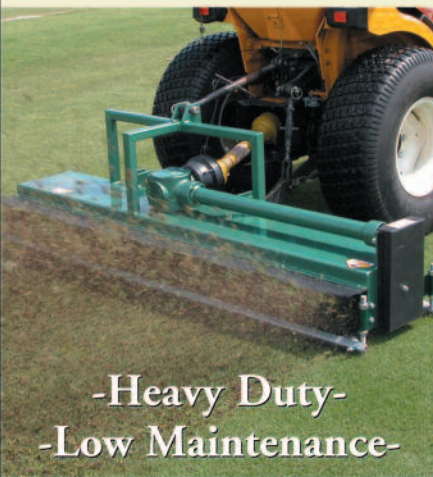
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Y  Yes      N  No

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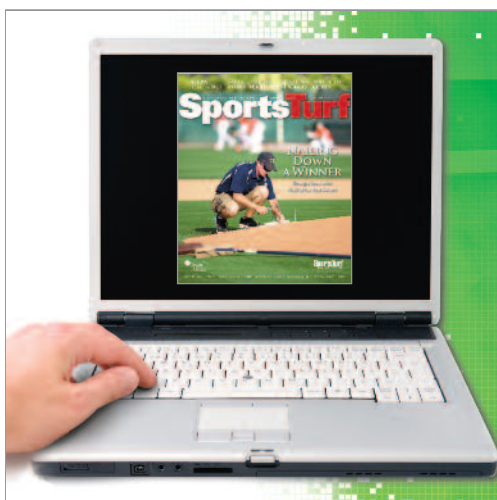
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# Shopping for a new grass?

*We are beginning to plan for field renovations, what grass should we use on this field?*

*From the audience during a Warm-Season Forum at the STMA meeting in San Jose.*

The panel members for this session, Ron Hostick, Chris Calcaterra, Beth Guertal, and I, provided the audience comments related to selecting a grass. Our responses were largely a reflection of our research and practical experiences with various grasses. What follows here is a reflection of my thoughts on the decision-making process of “shopping for a new grass.”

As I considered the answer to this question, I was struck by how the process of making this decision has similarities to other big purchase decisions we make in our lives. Recently, my wife and I considered replacing our family car. The car was almost 10 years old and the wear and tear that goes with high mileage was leading to increased maintenance costs. We had planned on replacing it in a year or two, but with dealers struggling to sell their inventories, we figured we may get a better deal if we replaced it sooner rather than later. So being a savvy consumer, I began my research. I visited car dealerships, picked up car specifications on various models, and started making comparisons. Metaphorically, this is the same as a field manager evaluating research data from state universities and the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program ([www.NTEP.org](http://www.NTEP.org)).

I quickly found that some cars have clear advantages over others—greater horsepower, more trunk capacity, better sound systems, longer warranties, more color choices, etc. Comparisons of specifications one at a time were simple, but once they were all considered together it became very confusing as to what was “the best.”

Likewise, research data indicates that some grasses have greater cold tolerance, more shade tolerance, faster recovery from injury, more resistant to disease, darker color, etc when compared to others. Like selecting a car, these traits all sound great. And if they were all attributed to one grass, then the selection process would be quick and easy. Research data is very helpful to isolate grasses with necessary traits, but may not always result in one grass being the clear favorite.

I narrowed down the choice to three or four models and then thought I make a final selection by reading some online reviews. I found about a dozen websites that review cars; each with opinions from consumers and a few with comments from “experts.” I read about other people’s experiences as I reviewed pages of testimonials and road tests. This is similar to your asking other field

managers about their experiences managing specific grasses. You want to hear the good and not so good comments about the grasses from people that you consider peers. It is also helpful to get as much information as possible from your region. Local experience is helpful because you get an idea how the grass may respond under similar environmental conditions.

Now my list for potential cars was down to just a few, so it was time to visit showrooms and kick some tires. Since I wanted a good deal, I only looked at 2008 models. One model of interest was already sold out, narrowing my selection further. Some dealers offered to ship a car into the area, but they were less willing to cut the price of the car. Grass selection and availability may also work the same way. One has to check what is available at nearby sod farms; otherwise the grass may have to be shipped in from a more distant location. Some sod farms may give you a break with shipping, but with higher fuel cost, that expense may be passed on to the consumer.

Well, in the end I purchased a new car. Driving home from the dealership, I could not help but to chuckle at the decision. I was driving a car that was 9 years younger than the old car, but it was the exact same model and color as the previous one I owned. The brand familiarity, previous positive experiences, and personal preferences led us (someone else always shares in making the big decisions) back to the same model and color.

Should you purchase the same grass? Many people have done so. Tifway (419) bermudagrass was released in 1960. Almost 50 years later it is still an often-selected grass for use on athletic fields. Sure there are grasses on the market with better cold tolerance, salt tolerance, wear tolerance, darker green color, etc. Your specific situation may lead you to select a grass with a significant single characteristic advantage over Tifway. In addition, your past experiences with your current grass may suggest that you need a change. Certainly if my experience with my older car was bad, I would not even have considered replacing it with the same model. You will have to weigh the options when deciding on your next grass purchase.

I apologize for not giving you a specific answer, but I think this issue is important for you to research. The selection process is very important. Ask the extension specialist in your state for data, speak with other sports turf managers, and reflect on your own experiences. Visit fields and sod farms to look at old and new grass bermudagrass cultivars. And you may want to consider grasses other than bermudagrass. Cultivars of seashore paspalum and zoysiagrass have also been successfully used for athletic fields. Make your selection carefully because grass is not for a lifetime, but it is awfully hard to trade in. ■

## Q&A




**BY DR. GRADY MILLER**

Professor, North Carolina State University

### Questions?

Send them to  
Grady Miller at  
North Carolina State University,  
Box 7620, Raleigh, NC 27695-  
7620, or email  
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