

Honor a peer

STMA's highest honors, the four Founders Awards, recognize those members who have made significant contributions to STMA and to the profession. Think about those who have made a difference in your career and the careers of your peers and nominate one or more for a Founders Award.

- The Dick Ericson Award is presented to someone who is actively involved in sports turf management, effectively leads their team to accomplish their goals, and who positively impacts the sports turf industry.

- The William H. Daniel Award recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to the sports turf industry through his or her research, teaching or extension outreach.

- The George Toma Golden Rake Award acknowledges the superior performance of a sports turf manager in "on the job" activities and in community service.

- The Harry C. Gill Memorial Award was established to honor an individual for their hard work in the sports turf industry and to acknowledge their dedication to STMA.

To nominate an STMA member for a Founders Award, go to www.STMA.org, click on the Professionalism Tab, and then on Founders Awards. The nominations are due to STMA by October 16. The recipients of these awards are kept secret until announced at the STMA Annual Awards Banquet held at the annual conference and exhibition. This year's banquet will be on Friday, January 15, 2010 at the Coronado Springs Resort and Convention Center in Lake Buena Vista, FL. ■

Field of the Year Awards application updated, available online

Now is the perfect time to begin preparing your STMA Field of the Year Application. The deadline for materials to be received at STMA headquarters is October 15. Visit www.stma.org to download a PDF of the application. It is also available in a Word document.

STMA's prestigious Field of the Year program is in its 18th year and is getting stronger every year. With record numbers of applicants the past 2 years, competition is stiff! But with hard work and diligence, each and every STMA member has a field that could become Field of the Year. STMA presents awards in baseball, softball, football, soccer, and sporting grounds categories at the Schools and Parks, College and University, and Professional levels.

Each Field of the Year Award winner is presented with a special plaque at the STMA Awards Banquet, held each year at the STMA Conference and Exhibition. This year, the Awards Banquet will be the evening of Friday, Jan. 15, 2010 in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. In addition to the plaque, each STMA Field of the Year winner will receive free conference registration, up to \$500 towards lodging at the conference, STMA signature apparel, and a feature article in the official publication of STMA, *SportsTurf*.

Take pride in your profession and submit your application for STMA Field of the Year and get recognition for your field and respect from your peers. Remember the deadline for materials to be received is October 15.

Feel free to contact Patrick Allen at STMA Headquarters, pallen@stma.org if you have questions about the STMA Field of the Year program. ■

Introducing a New Benefit that Keeps on Working for You

STMA is introducing a new membership benefit that extends your STMA membership for up to 6 months at no cost, if you lose your job. In this economy and with the national unemployment rate at a record high, we know that organizations are cutting back, which could adversely affect your job security.

STMA stands behind its members and will assist any member in any category that loses his or her job by continuing their STMA membership, at no charge for up to 6 months. This benefit relies on the honor system; if the member becomes employed during this 6-month period, the association assumes that he/she will pay the regular membership dues. This membership extension allows for continued access to very important job search benefits on the Members Only side of the website. You will be able to view job listings, post a résumé, access career information and actively network with peers using the on-line STMA Membership Directory. Your membership continues seamlessly, with all rights and privileges of your membership category.

There are very few rules. You must have been a member of STMA for at least 1 year. If you have not found employment after 6 months, STMA will offer to you an Affiliate Membership at the \$50 member rate.

STMA's membership year is calendar based, January through December. As this year draws to a close, if you are affected by a job loss, please call STMA to activate this benefit for the first 6 months of 2010.

The Membership Committee created this program and recommended its adoption to the STMA Board of Directors, who approved it at its Summer Board meeting. The Membership Committee members include Chairman David Pinsonneault, CSFM, CPRP; Darin Budak, CSFM, Joe Collins, CSFM, Stephen Crockett, CSFM, Alan Dungey, Dale Edmonds, Tony Leonard, Bob Marcotte, Nick McKenna, Marc Moran, David Reiss, Matt Tobin, and Jack Wasserbach. ■

STMA's Online Library is Growing

STMA has added several new publications to its collection of on-line resources. New to the collection are educational bulletins and website content.

- Educational Bulletins can be found at www.STMA.org, Members Only, Technical Resources

- Understanding Soil Tests. Soil test results can sometimes be confusing. STMA has developed a basic guide to help interpret what your soil's pH, nutrient requirements, CEC and base saturation all mean on the test results.

- Strategies for Managing Heavily Used Fields. Managing a heavily used athletic field can be a daunting task. While you may do your best to limit the number of events, the reality is that many times your field will host more activities than it can handle under your normal maintenance practices.

As athletic field managers, we are faced with maintaining quality playing conditions regardless of intensity of use. STMA has developed a resource to help you successfully manage heavily used fields.

- Field Management During a Drought. Managing turf during drought conditions can be extremely frustrating for sports turf managers. It is important to prepare your field and have a management plan for drought conditions before the weather turns dry. STMA has developed a technical bulletin that provides management techniques you can use to get your turf through drought conditions.

New website content can be found at www.STMA.org, Resources Tab, Technical Information

- Professional Resources. Staying organized and maintaining accurate records for all

aspects of your facility is essential for a successful program. John Netwal, CGCS, Director of Operations at North Scott Community School District, has created extensive records to keep track of field maintenance, equipment, budget, and employees. STMA has taken these records and created worksheets you can adapt to your facility to help organize daily and annual operations.

- Irrigation and Drainage. Irrigation and drainage are key components to any athletic field management program to maintain turf-grass health. STMA has added information to the website to help you understand how your field's rootzone affects water availability and water tables. Proper irrigation amounts and frequency, and drainage solutions are also provided. ■

STMA's international efforts are formalized

STMA has always had a small, but dedicated group of international members. These members have been seeking ways to organize their peers in their countries to better share information and advance the profession of sports turf management.

A Subcommittee of the STMA Chapter Relations Committee has been working this spring on a model that will allow STMA to recognize international groups. They developed an adaptation of an STMA chapter that allows these groups to operate in the spirit of an STMA chapter, but without the legal complexities of affiliating with STMA. Their recommendation to create International Affiliate Organizations was presented to the Board at its summer meeting and it was approved for implementation. International is defined as any country outside of the U.S. and its territories. To be recognized as an STMA International Affiliate Organization, the group:

- must be recognized as a business entity in their country and provide proof to STMA annually; develop

bylaws or other governing documents; and elect a Board of Directors.

STMA will not charge fees for this recognition, will share information and resources, list the organizations on the website, provide one membership to the President of each group, and will offer to these groups conference registration and education and training resources at STMA member rates.

STMA believes that reaching out to sports turf managers in other countries will strengthen the profession and provide a shared channel for learning that will benefit sports turf managers worldwide.

As part of the implementation process, the Board has asked the Membership Committee to explore developing an International Membership Category.

Members of the Chapter Relations Subcommittee include Chair Amy Fouty, CSFM, Chris Brindley, Dick Buelter, Mike Estlinbaum, Gerald Landby, Mark Lucas, Kevin Meredith, CSFM and Ben Polimer. ■

Alley joins DiVito in Minnesota

Albuquerque Isotopes Director of Field Operations Jarad Alley has accepted a position as Assistant Groundskeeper for the Minnesota Twins. Alley, who has been with the team since its inception in 2003, will join the Twins and be an instrumental part in the installation of the club's new field at Target Park, which is scheduled to open in Minneapolis next season.

Alley, who has been with the team since its inception in 2003, will join the Twins and be an instrumental part in the installation of the club's new field at Target Park, which is scheduled to open in Minneapolis next season.

Through his seven years with the 'Topes, Alley oversaw all aspects of the field's maintenance, ensuring that the playing surface was one of the best in the Pacific Coast League. For his efforts, he was named PCL Sports Turf Manager of the Year in each of the last two seasons and last year was declared the best groundskeeper in Triple-A Baseball.

"We're extremely happy and proud that Jarad will get an opportunity to advance his career in Minnesota with the Twins," said Isotopes General Manager John Traub. "We're also extremely grateful for the hard work he put in through seven years to make sure the field at Isotopes Park was consistently pristine. His passion for his work and his attention to detail was a huge asset for our organization and we look forward to watching him excel in Minnesota." ■

Thank you, Class of 1998!

Congratulations to members celebrating 11 years of membership in STMA! It is with sincere appreciation that STMA acknowledges your support and commitment to the association.

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- Y Yes N No

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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.cestma.org.

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

Florida #1 Chapter: 954/782-2748

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

Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association: 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.com.

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

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

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

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.sfmanj.org.

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

Oregon STMA Chapter: 503/953-9406

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

Southern California Chapter: www.socalstma.com.

South Carolina Chapter of STMA: www.scstma.org.

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

Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA): www.tvstma.com.

Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association: www.vstma.org.

Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association: www.wstma.org.

Forming Chapters:

Central Florida: Contact George Lawson, 863-665-5800

Gulf Coast Chapter: 225/757-9136.

Nevada STMA Chapter: 702/884-2987.

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Don't abandon me!

Each of the last few summers we have been able to close some of our fields from mid-June until early August. Before we did this the bermudagrass fields were never in good shape come fall. Since the fields are not used, we just mow at 3 to 4 inches every couple of weeks—often enough that they don't get too overgrown and look ragged. We put on one application of fertilizer (based on soil test) in mid-spring and then again at end of summer when we open them up for play. We don't do much else to them while they are closed because this allows us to save money on labor and fertilizer. This seemed to improve the fields until this year. The worn areas have not grown over very well after a month. Can you give us some advice? Is this a good practice?

North Carolina

Previously, I have called this management style, the semi-abandonment method and I have written about it previously in "Q&A." To some degree, it has been used by schools for many years with mixed success. To understand the history of this method, consider the situation that developed it.

You have a field on school property. From mid-August when school starts until the last day of classes on the spring, the school has one activity after another on their field(s). It is often a 9-month employee that is responsible for the upkeep of the field unless the school contracts with an outside maintenance group. So, when that 9-month employee leaves work in the spring, so does the maintenance on the fields. Perhaps someone will come in and mow the field occasionally but otherwise it is left on its own. When the coach comes in to start planning fall practices they look out across the field and then get a little worried that the shorter freshman athletes may need a GPS device to find their way through the tall weeds. The semi-abandoned field now gets renewed attention.

Think this never happens? I can assure you it does. The problem is not that you give your field a break in use. The problem is taking a break with the maintenance. I think it is great if a field can be closed for use part of the year. But the summer is no time to abandon a bermudagrass field. This is prime season to improve the field.

You asked why leaving the field alone has worked in the past but not this year. The bare areas are most likely due to heavy use. Heavy use not only causes above ground turf wear, but also can result in excessive soil compaction. In some cases the compaction can be so heavy that growth of turf may be stunted and those stolons that do grow across the compacted ground may not be able to "peg down" into the hard soil. This is why you need to aerify a field and

open up the soil for air exchange allowing roots to grow down deeper into the soil.

If there are large bare areas, the downtime can be used for sodding (following proper soil prep) to speed along the field's recovery. This is also a good time to go ahead and make those field improvements that have been on the backburner all year. Things like adding drainage, upgrading the irrigation system, or grading problem areas that holds water are great summer projects. With the field not being used there is time for turf to grow over trenches or if sod is laid, for it to knit down and be ready for fall play.

So if labor will be limited in summer, what are the essential cultural practices? Number one has to be mowing. Hire someone to mow the turf at least once a week. During the summer, bermudagrass should really be mowed 2-4 times per week, but if that is not practical, at least mow it once per week at a reasonable mowing height using a rotary mower. For infrequent mowing, mow down to 2-3 inches. This will help maintain density and also aid in weed control. If you cannot afford the required labor, have a school club, team, or civic organization adopt the field for the summer. Provide them some specific instructions (on-site and written) before you turn them loose for the summer.

Fertilizing is recommended to maintain density and to promote recovery of damaged turf. Summer is when bermudagrass is most efficient at using applied fertilizer. Try to get at least one or two applications of nitrogen fertilizer down during this period of time. From one-half to one pound of nitrogen per one thousand square feet per application will be helpful in maintaining turf density and health. Use a soil test for determining the need for other nutrients or for pH adjustment and then adjust in fall when regular maintenance resumes.

Weed control requires a balance between tolerance and need. Some fields are naturally weedy and will require either a preemergence or postemergence program to sustain a good turf surface. Other fields may be sustainable over summer with little to no weed control. On-site experience will dictate the best approach for weed control.

And what if none of this is done? Well, being able to abandon a field for a couple of months and then whip it back into shape in a few weeks is a testament to the toughness and resiliency of bermudagrass. It responds very quickly to inputs such as water and fertilizer. It is also very tolerant to a wide range of pesticides, allowing a manager to aggressively control most weeds without fear of killing the bermudagrass. It can be done, but certainly do not expect to win any Field of the Year awards. ■

Q&A



BY DR. GRADY MILLER

Professor, North
Carolina State University

Questions?

Send them to
Grady Miller at
North Carolina State University,
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