



“Playing soccer in a baseball stadium has given us many challenges over the past 2 years,” Griggs wrote in his entry. “Baseball here is played on an all-grass skin area with sliding pits, like the old artificial turf fields looked. It’s challenging converting from baseball to soccer and back again 10 times a year.

“Our biggest concern was the wear spots at positions in the grass

infield; for the most part we held up pretty well in those areas with regular maintenance fertilizer applications. In the position areas and around the pits we aerated as needed to fight compaction and aid the laying sod process.

“Our main goal for soccer was to have a good uniform playing surface that wouldn’t affect the play of the game. We generally have

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a 2-3 day window in which the infield skin is removed from sliding pits and track material from the warning track to be sodded over to have a full grass surface for soccer events.

“There are 1,000 square feet of pit areas and 3,500 square feet of warning track that we have to sod for every event. A major concern with the sodded areas is that they are on a hard clay surface and limestone under the warning track so we are constantly fighting hot spots. These areas have to be tended to and hand-watered nearly non-stop.

“We also have a section of seating that extends from the left field wall and runs to right center field in which flooring is put down to accompany 350 field side seats. We have are compaction in those areas, and in the summer we are concerned about the flooring being set up and on the field throughout the heat of the day. We have seen tip burn and discoloration.

“Not only the Northern League T-Bones and the Wizards use the field; there are campouts, high school and college baseball, and high school and college soccer. We don’t have many extended periods of time for regular field maintenance so we’re still concerned about reaching that breaking point with the field.

“Today the more events you can have the more money you can make. Our concern is at what point are there going to be more events than time for maintenance and field quality?”

SportsTurf: What changes did you make to your maintenance plan this year, if any?

Griggs: We really did not make any changes to the budget or the field maintenance plan. We tweaked a few things here and there but over all it is the same.

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ST: Has the team and/or stadium owner publicized your winning this award from STMA?

Griggs: Our team has publicized our award in local newspapers and on our website.

ST: What's the best piece of turf management advice you have ever received?

Griggs: Never let your personal wants get in the way of your fields' needs.

ST: How do you balance your work and personal time?

Griggs: This is a very tough situation for us. We have so many events on this field that we find ourselves having to come back in to work during the night time hours to get things done, but we make a conscious effort to fit family time in as much as possible.

ST: If a community organization was starting a soccer program and had \$15,000 to spend on maintenance for an 8-field complex, on what would you suggest they buy with budget?

Griggs: I would suggest that they should invest in some type of aerification equipment. Usually these types of fields get a whole lot of play and become overly compacted, if they could open the field up in some form they could possibly help prevent puddles and rain outs. ■



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Time for field builder certification

What do they say about great minds thinking alike? Couldn't help but think so when I read that the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA) launched its new Field Builder Certification Program.

My colleagues and I at Lohmann Sports Fields have been calling for this sort of measure the last several years, and there's a specific reason why: We've seen this situation before, and we've seen how it was fixed.

I'm a golf course architect by trade. Our parent firm, The Lohmann Companies, has been designing and building golf courses since 1984. Back then, the golf business was just like the sports field business: Anyone with a dozer was "qualified" to build a golf course, and the result was a whole lot of courses that ultimately needed rebuilding. The sports field construction industry finds itself in the same exact situation today: Too often, the contractor who bids lowest is the contractor who paved the parking lot.

An industry standard for sports field contractors is the answer. If the client has confidence in the certified parties, he or she will have confidence in the bids—a confidence that "real" bids will ultimately yield a quality, finished product.

I don't want to pick on vertical contractors or paving contractors. They do the jobs they are qualified to do, very well. And when it comes to sports fields, they often have the best of intentions; heck, lots of times they are the guys who just happen to be on site when someone in a position of authority says, "Hey, you ever built a ball field? You should bid on this job."

Unfortunately, most of these contractors don't know enough about drainage, agronomy and sub-surface material specs to build things properly. Oftentimes this becomes apparent early in the bid process. In short, they don't know enough to make an educated bid. Their bids are low because they've left something out. If they build the project and come in on or below budget, you can be sure they've left

something out, something important.

We saw a supreme example of this in Grand Rapids, MI, at Fifth Third Ballpark, home to the Tiger's Single-A affiliate, the Whitecaps. The owners spent \$400,000 with our company in 2009 to completely rebuild a field that was only a year old! The culprit? Cheap pipe that was never tested. There's a standard of materials and workmanship that golf course builders use and the reality is, that standard doesn't yet exist in the sports field realm.

Hey, we were happy to do the work for the Whitecaps but it was unfortunate it even had to be done. Our attitude is, let's give the guys who manage these facilities the chance to manage them properly. That starts with proper construction. Leave aside for a moment the difficulty in maintaining a facility that hasn't been built properly. What happens when an owner spends \$400,000 in 2009 to rebuild the field? Do you think the maintenance budget suffers for 2010? You bet it does.

ALL ABOUT THE BIDDING

It's all about the bidding. Without certification, there's nothing in the bidding process that enables a qualified contractor to say, "I'm for real." On the contrary, real contractors making real bids are invariably bidding higher than inexperienced contractors. Yet inexperienced guys are getting the jobs that all too often must be redone way before their time.

I've talked about this problem with STMA President Chris Calcaterra. We agree that, somehow, we have to convince municipalities, school districts and park districts to quit looking simply for the lowest price and start pre-qualifying their contractors. The best solution, frankly, is for the industry as a whole to take the initiative in the form of ASBA certifica-

tion, because its own standards will be highest and most uniform.

"We definitely support credentialing in the industry," Kim Heck, STMA executive director, told me. "I know from speaking with our members that the lack of common specs has been a real challenge. For example, at K-12 schools there is a complex bidding process, but there have been times when the contractor who has put in the parking lot has also been engaged to build the sports fields."

And you thought I made that up! It really does happen.

I was also glad to see the ABSA has taken things another step further. There are several levels of Field Builder Certification: The Certified Field Builder (CFB) designation demonstrates core knowledge of field construction as well as expertise in both natural turf and synthetic turf. Certified Field Builder-Natural (CFB-N) designation indicates grass expertise only, while Certified Field Builder-Synthetic (CFB-S) indicates synthetic only. All certifications would be renewable every three years.

In the 20 years since the Golf Course Builders Association of America formed and issued its certification program, the credentialing of contractors has turned a bad situation completely around. It's very rare to see a golf course built today by anyone other than a certified course contractor. There exists an industry-wide understanding among course superintendents but also among their owners and club managers that building something as straightforward as a fairway actually involves specific technical expertise, agronomic understanding and quality materials. Ignoring this reality will just cost you more money down the road.

Lohmann Sports Fields was founded on the idea that building athletic surfaces shouldn't be so different from building fairways, greens and tees. We feel our 20 years of golf construction expertise more than qualifies us to build sports fields — but we plan to take that ABSA test and get certified. We applaud the ABSA initiative, and we encourage all the qualified contractors to get certified, too. ■

Bob Lohmann is founder and principal of Lohmann Sports Fields and has more than 20 years of construction and agronomic experience in the sports turf industry.

Student Challenge winners donate money, time

Little Leaguers played ball on new and improved fields last spring thanks to the efforts of Penn State turfgrass science students who won \$4,000 in the 2009 national SportsTurf Managers Association Student Challenge competition. PSU teams also won the 2010 2-year and 4-year competitions. The 2009 team was coached by Matt Naedel, research associate in the Penn State Turfgrass Project.

Penn State turf professor Dr. Andy McNitt said, "The students rated this event as an excellent learning opportunity. We plan to reach out to a different local little league organization this fall. We will do field assessments and develop a renovation plan, acquire and deliver the materials and equipment needed and then implement the plan. It really is an excellent chance for the students to use what they learn and help the community at the same time."

The students donated their winnings and worked alongside Matt Neri, groundskeeper for the State College Spikes, the Pittsburgh Pirates' Single-A affiliate, to overhaul two fields near Centre Hall, PA last fall. The crews spread a new infield mix and installed clay bricks below the pitcher's landing area and batter's and catcher's boxes. They set new pitching rubbers and bases, reshaped the infield and fertilized the outfield.



Penn State turfgrass science students put their education to work for a good cause.

The students also repainted foul lines using donated equipment from Doug Schattinger of Pioneer Athletics. Mark Dargay from E.H. Griffith of Pittsburgh and Valley Ag and Turf of Centre Hall provided equipment for the day. Other items were supplied by Steve Legros of Turf and Dirt. ■

Ask a CSFM ▶ Rick Perruzzi, CSFM, City of South Portland, ME

Benefits of certification verified

Editor's note: This is the third of six installments on how becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) can benefit turf managers professionally as well as improve their facilities.

HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR THE CSFM EXAM?

Perruzzi: I prepared for the exam by first looking over the comprehensive outline to try to determine what my strengths and weaknesses were so as to focus my attention on those weak areas. After determining my weaknesses I used three main resources to study with: the University of Georgia's Certified Turfgrass Professional course study guide to refresh up on agronomics and pest management; Sports Fields: A Manual for Design, Construction and Maintenance by Jim Puhalla, Jeff Krans and Mike Goatley; and Floyd Perry's book Turf Grows by the Inch and is Killed by the Foot. I felt that those three resources were the best that I had at my disposal so as to not overwhelm myself with too much information.

HOW DID YOU APPROACH YOUR EMPLOYER TO SUPPORT YOUR CERTIFICATION, BOTH FINANCIALLY AND IN THE TIME NEEDED TO PREPARE FOR THE EXAM?

Perruzzi: I approach my employer proactively for all things I do in my job, so in my mind this was no different than any other request I had submitted before. They were very supportive in allowing me to obtain this certification and allowed me to focus my energy on studying for the exam. Financially they viewed it as an investment into the department's future and credibility.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO PURSUE CERTIFICATION?

Perruzzi: It can be difficult to be viewed as a professional at the park and recreation level when on paper I am a laborer. I felt that I needed to try to change that stereotype not just with management but within the community. Also I felt that being certified would allow me to have more influence in the decision-making process with management.

HOW HAS CERTIFICATION HELPED YOUR CAREER?

Perruzzi: Obtaining CSFM status has probably been the best thing to happen to me professionally. It has opened up more opportunities for me to be more creative in my job as a sports turf manager. My employer now knows that when I ask for resources or to try a new product that I have done the research. The increase in credibility has made that process easier, but with credibility comes the accountability, which is part of being a professional in any line of work. ■



STMA Thanks you for 5 Years of Membership

THE FOLLOWING have been members of STMA since 2005. STMA appreciates your commitment and support of the profession!

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Chapters Highlights

This Month's Profiles: the Gateway, MO-KAN and Wisconsin Chapters

Gateway Chapter Update

The Gateway Chapter is already half way through what has been a great year for us. The year started with several members attending the STMA national convention in Orlando and bringing back a wealth of new knowledge that they were willing to share with the rest of the chapter. We have also hosted a number of successful events this year including one on mower maintenance, a field day with Billy Findley at Bush Stadium, our annual vendor day, and most recently co hosted a seminar with Beacon Athletics, Toro and Diamond Pro on baseball/softball field maintenance.

We are looking forward to other upcoming events including our annual Chapter Fundraising Golf Tournament in October, as well as the Missouri Green Industry Conference December 7 which will be a great chance for those who cannot attend the national convention to hear some great speakers and get new information locally. Our year end lunch will feature Dale Getz, CSFM from Toro as our guest speaker. Some of you may have also seen one of our members Mark Vessell, Sr. was highlighted in the June issue of *SportsTurf* discussing managing a large soccer facility. Mark does a great job and is an excellent ambassador for our chapter and sports turf managers everywhere.

MO-KAN Chapter to Play Vital Role as Kansas City Police, NFL Team Up for Field Project

On June 17, the Kansas City, Mo. Police Athletic League (PAL) was presented a check for \$100,000 from the NFL Grassroots Program's Youth Football Fund, NFL Players Association (NFLPA), and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to build a football field adjacent to the current PAL Center in a highly distressed neighborhood of downtown Kansas City. The MO-KAN Chapter of STMA, its members and their companies will partner with PAL to oversee construction and provide labor for the project this summer.

Additionally, the chapter and members have volunteered to provide key elements of field construction including and ongoing maintenance, including irrigation and

soil amendments. Several chapter members' companies stepped up in a big way as well; design services will be provided by VSR Design, a MO-KAN Chapter member, and John Deere has agreed to provide equipment for maintenance and new models yearly.

"Sustainability is the most exciting aspect of the project," according to PAL and in order to keep up with their commitment to maintain the field surrounding common areas indefinitely, PAL will team up with the MO-KAN Chapter and the Metropolitan Community Colleges - Kansas City to develop a Turf Management Training Program available to PAL police officers and members at no cost. PAL officers and STMA volunteers will oversee the instruction, curriculum and application of the program, ensuring the long-term viability of the field as a community asset and providing career building skills to the participants.

PAL currently has more than 600 youth ages 8 to 18 compete in various sports throughout the year at no cost to the athlete or family. The PAL Board and leadership feel that this new field will allow them to expand to 1,200-1,500 athletes and dramatically increase the participation of the local community in the program.

"These fields are a tangible sign of our Youth Football Fund in action," said NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell. "They help us make an impact where assistance is most needed. We are proud to support projects that bring neighborhoods together and give children a safe place to play and be active."

Join the Wisconsin STMA at the Ballpark!

Join the crowd at Miller Park on Thursday, August 12, as the Wisconsin STMA chapter hosts a day of networking, education, and fun at the ballpark. Bring your co-workers, supervisor, family, and friends for an action packed day at Miller Park. Morning activities will take place at Helfaer Field, a state of the art youth ball-field just north of the Miller Park home plate gate. We will begin with an overview of the field operations at the heavily used Helfaer Field to get conversations started. Then everyone is invited to join in a friendly game of softball.

Those who prefer the role of spectator can relax in the Helfaer Field stands, play games on the concourse, or network with other members in the air-conditioned meeting area. A tailgate style lunch will be provided in the adjacent parking area before we head into the stadium to watch the Brewers take on the Arizona Diamondbacks. The educational opportunities continue after the Brewers game when everyone is invited to take front row seats for discussions and demonstrations with the Milwaukee Brewers Grounds Crew led by Head Groundskeeper, Gary Vanden Berg. Visit www.wstma.org for details and registration forms. ■

New STMA Resources

Natural Grass Athletic Fields for High Schools
Adapt a PowerPoint presentation and accompanying technical resource to your high school or parks and recreation facility to endorse the benefits of maintaining natural grass athletic fields. It is designed to help parent groups, athletic directors, those considering building an athletic field, etc. convince the community of the benefits natural grass playing surfaces hold. See www.stma.org.

STMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

- **Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona:**
Chris Walsh cwalsh@scottsdaleaz.gov or
Johnathan Knight, CSFM
johnathan.knight@peoriaaz.gov.
- **Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association:** www.cstma.org.
- **Florida #1 Chapter (South):**
305-235-5101 (Bruce Bates)
- **Florida #2 Chapter (North):**
850/580-4026.
- **Florida #3 Chapter (Central):**
863-665-5800
- **Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association:**
www.gatewaystma.org. (See Expanded Profile included in Chapter Highlights)
- **Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association:** www.gstma.org.
- **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.
- **Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association:** www.kystma.org.
- **Keystone Athletic Field Managers Org. (KAFMO/STMA):** www.kafmo.org.
- **Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA):**
www.mistma.org.
- **Mid Atlantic Sports Turf Managers Association (MASTMA) (formerly the Chesapeake Chapter STMA)**
Ph. 410-704-2197 www.mastma.org
- **Minnesota Chapter STMA:**
www.mstma.com.
- **MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association:** www.mokanstma.com.
(See Expanded Profile included in Chapter Highlights)
- **Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association:** 402/441-4425.
- **New England STMA (NESTMA):**
www.nestma.org.
- **Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey:** www.sfmanj.org.
- **Sports Turf Managers of New York:**
www.stmony.org.
- **North Carolina Chapter of STMA:**
www.ncsportsturf.org.
- **Northern California STMA:**
www.norcalstma.org.
- **Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA):** www.ostma.org.
- **Oregon STMA Chapter:** 503/953-9406
- **Ozarks STMA:** www.ozarksstma.org.
- **Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association:**
www.pnwstma.org.
- **Southern California Chapter:**
www.socalstma.com.
- **South Carolina Chapter of STMA:**
www.scstma.org.
- **Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA):**
www.tvstma.com.
- **Texas Sports Turf Managers Association:** 866/897-8621.
- **Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association:** www.vstma.org.
- **Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association:** www.wstma.org. (See Expanded Profile included in Chapter Highlights)
- **Forming Chapters:**
• **Gulf Coast Chapter:** 225/757-9136.
- **Indiana Chapter:** Joey Stevenson,
jstevenson@indyindians.com
- **Nevada STMA Chapter:** 702/884-2987.
- **STMA International Affiliate Organizations:**
• **National Parks, Singapore:**
www.nparks.gov.sg
- **Sports Turf Association, ON, CANADA**
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Pennington Seed	37	www.penningtonseed.com
Pioneer Athletics	17	www.pioneerathletics.com
Redexim Charterhouse	15	www.redexim.com
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Smithco	22	www.smithco.com
Sod Solutions	29	www.sodsolutions.com
Sports Turf Managers Association	28	www.stma.org
Stabilizer Solutions	35	www.stabilizersolutions.com
STEC Equipment	41	www.stecequipment.com
TifSport Growers Association	31	www.tifsport.com
The Andersons, Inc.	11	www.andersonsinc.com
The Toro Company	2	www.toro.com
The Toro Company	48	www.toro.com
Turfco Manufacturing	23	www.turfco.com
TurfTime Equipment	48	www.TurfTimeEq.com
Underhill Industries	36	www.underhillindustries.com
Wiedenmann NA	34	www.terraspikeusa.com
World Class Athletic Surfaces	38	www.worldclasspaints.com



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Annual bluegrass control update

IN THE APRIL 2009 ISSUE of *SportsTurf* I wrote an article “Poa annua: double whammy in Detroit” about controlling annual bluegrass with post emergence application of Tenacity (mesotrione). At that time we were only recommending fall control by using three sequential applications of Tenacity in October (5.3 oz/A every 10 days, for a total seasonal application rate of 16 oz/A). I also stated that “post emergence control of annual bluegrass does not work in the spring and summer because the annual bluegrass seems to outgrow the herbicide affect.”

New research by Dr. Bruce Branham at the University of Illinois has shown that Tenacity can in fact control annual bluegrass post-emergent any time in the spring and summer when annual bluegrass is actively growing by making more frequent applications at a lower dose. Here are some of the key components to effective annual bluegrass control with Tenacity.

- Multiple applications are necessary. For best results Dr. Branham suggests 10 applications of Tenacity made every other day at 1.6 oz/A. It may be simpler and just as effective to make applications every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for 3 weeks to get the full rate of 16 oz/A applied. The product is less effective under cloudy low light conditions so with 10 applications your chances are better to get some sunny days for good control.

- In an attempt to reduce the number of applications several of you have been trying and having good success with 5 applications (3.2 oz/A every 3 days) during the summer. John Netwal, North Scott

Schools in Eldridge, IA started this program in mid-June just after hosting a regional STMA field day where he demonstrated his research findings with Tenacity on a 5-year old soccer and 1-year old football fields. A month later, 95% of the annual bluegrass was killed on the soccer field but only 50% of the annual bluegrass was killed on the football field. Both are sand-based fields and were treated the same.

- We had lots of rain in June and 2 of the 5 Tenacity applications on the football field got washed off the leaves before drying. Even though Tenacity is foliar and root absorbed, you should anticipate that most of the post-emergence activity on annual bluegrass will come from foliar absorption; try to get it dry on the leaf.

- Where patches of annual bluegrass are no bigger than your hand the existing Kentucky bluegrass may fill in without seeding. Larger areas of annual bluegrass should be slice or punch seeded with Kentucky bluegrass just before the first application of Tenacity. After 2 weeks and the last Tenacity application, Kentucky bluegrass will just be starting to germinate.

- Tenacity also kills crabgrass post emergence and gives about a month of pre-emergence control that helps the Kentucky bluegrass get established without being over-run by summer crabgrass.

- Tenacity fits nicely into a sports turf management program where fields are frequently over seeded to repair worn turf.

- Tenacity can weaken perennial ryegrass and we are in the process of determining how this may impact a mixed stand of Kentucky bluegrass/perennial ryegrass. I have not experienced extensive kill of perennial ryegrass, but you may want to consider interseeding with Kentucky bluegrass if perennial ryegrass makes up more than 25% of the existing turf. ■

John Netwal, North Scott Schools conducts his own onsite research trial to control annual bluegrass on a Kentucky bluegrass soccer field maintained at a 1-inch cutting height. Notice the white appearance of the annual bluegrass approximately 10 days after the first application of Tenacity. Plywood can be used to make a no-herbicide control plot for comparison.

