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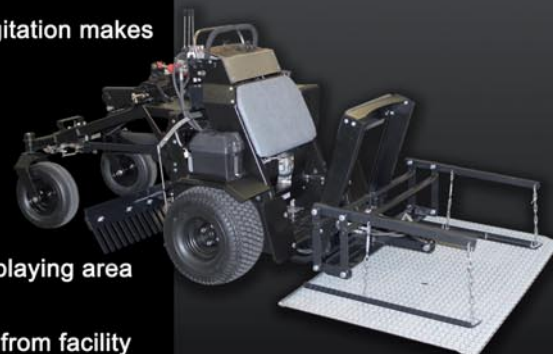


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Unit shown with a 120 lb Hydraulic Granular Hopper and 36" Aerator Head Attachment



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>> **Above: THIS PHOTO** was taken 1 month after initial sprigging and shows a close-up of some bermudagrass patches growing within the Kentucky bluegrass.



>> **Above: TWO MONTHS** after sprigging, at the beginning of the fall playing season. Notice that the drainage lines are completely covered with bermudagrass and are still distinguishable. Other than looking a little odd aesthetically, the field functioned very well as a two grass system during the first year. The field was successfully converted to 100% bermudagrass the following summer.

in between were of little consequence to them. When asked by the coaches and administrators what might happen in a worst-case scenario for the bermudagrass conversion (i.e. a cool Blacksburg summer where bermudagrass would not thrive), Dr. Goatley told the group that field safety and playability would not be compromised by the introduction of the bermudagrass sprigs into the bluegrass sod, but that the playing surface might look a little strange as cooler

temperatures arrive and the bermudagrass entered dormancy.

As mentioned, this renovation was undertaken with the intention of it hopefully being a 1-year conversion, but realizing that it likely would be a 2-year process in our climate. Following the conclusion of the women's lacrosse season in late April, we began making preparations for the conversion from Kentucky bluegrass to bermudagrass, which would begin in late May/early June which is the most appropriate time to sprig bermudagrass in the Blacksburg climate.

The mowing height of the bluegrass was lowered to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch and a one and a half times label rate of Primo (Trinexapac ethyl) was applied 1 week before sprigging to slow the growth of the Kentucky bluegrass.

Contractor Carolina Green arrived during the first week of June and installed new 1-inch drainage lines on 10-foot centers across the entire field, backfilled with gravel and sand to the surface, and then sprigged Patriot bermudagrass directly into the existing bluegrass stand at the approximate rate of 800 bushels per acre. Patriot was selected for its cold hardiness and because of previous success on the Virginia Tech football field.

Following the inter-sprigging, the entire field was topdressed with $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the same sand used to fill the drainage trenches. Additional bermudagrass sprigs were placed over the drainage trenches by hand in an effort to improve the establishment and fill-in rate of the bermudagrass. Finally, to complete the installation process, we set an irrigation schedule to ensure that the sprigs remained moist for the first 7-10 days; watering frequency and amounts were then scaled back to a more typical maintenance irrigation schedule.

Mowing was reconvened at $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch on the field approximately 2-3 weeks after the sprigs were installed and continued throughout the rest of the year in order to provide the bermudagrass a competitive growing advantage but still allow the bluegrass to survive for playability. The fertility program was adjusted to resemble a typical warm-season nutrient program except for the fall when it was treated very similar to an overseeded situation.

Summer 2009 turned out to be one of the coolest, wettest summers on record in the Blacksburg area and the bermudagrass didn't spread as aggressively as had previously been shown in research trials at the Virginia Tech campus, and the Kentucky bluegrass continued to thrive even at the $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch mowing height. At the conclusion of 2009, the field was between 30-40% bermudagrass and had a

Not only did we deliver a cost effective renovation process that has reduced our annual maintenance costs (seed, herbicide, and fungicide), but we improved the speed and quality of our playing surface without removing the field for use for weeks/months at a time.

unique two grass appearance to it. While the field maintenance crew and administration did receive a fair amount of questioning regarding the appearance of the field, the first year was considered a relative success given the weather.

During the winter months, we covered the field with protective growth tarps and managed in the same fashion in the spring as it was in the fall. Following the women's lacrosse season in April 2010, we fully committed to the bermudagrass establishment and sprayed the entire field with Monument (Trifloxysulfuron-sodium) in an effort to kill off the Kentucky bluegrass and provide the bermudagrass with a competitive advantage. Due to the lower than expected bermudagrass stand, we sprigged an additional 300-400 bushels per acre of Patriot into the field in order to speed up the conversion process.

The mowing height was adjusted to 1/2-inch and we focused the fertility and irrigation programs solely on growing and developing the bermudagrass. Revolver herbicide (Foramsulfuron) was applied a month after sprigging to control any rogue bluegrass plants. Fortunately, Summer 2010 was one of the warmest on record in the Blacksburg area and the bermudagrass thrived. At the start of the fall soccer season in August 2010, we had 100% bermudagrass coverage and our coaches, players, and administrators were thrilled with the results.

This renovation process was a very challenging and educational experience. While it might not fit the needs of all facilities, it does provide an affordable alternative to completely resurfacing a field and the strategy has been used successfully in what turned out to be essentially "single season" conversions for fields at Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, VA) and the University of Louisville. Not only did we deliver a cost effective renovation process that has reduced our annual maintenance costs (seed, herbicide, and fungicide), but we improved the speed and quality of our playing surface without removing the field for use for weeks/months at a time. ■

Nick McKenna, CSFM is sports turf manager for the Virginia Tech Athletics Department.

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STMA's Playing Conditions Index revisited



Mike Tarantino, director of maintenance and operations, Poway (CA) School District.

IT'S BEEN SEVERAL YEARS now since the Sports Turf Managers Association unveiled the Playing Conditions Index (PCI). I still believe this is one of the most valuable tools that the organization has given to us.

How many of you reading this article know what the PCI is? How many of you that do know are using it? Hopefully, all of you know what it is and are using it.

I was fortunate to be on the committee that developed the PCI. The PCI's original intent was to be used as a way to evaluate your sports field and provide a ready reference as to its current condition. It has, for me, become more than that.

I use the PCI for field evaluation; however, I take it a few steps further. I use the PCI four times yearly on my "show case" sports fields; four should be a minimum. I not only answer the questions honestly but my PCI is a road map for the maintenance and renovations I perform on my sports fields. My PCI is full of notes. The notes include weather conditions, type of products used, pest identification, weed identification, percentage of field that was renovated, exact area of the field that was renovation and results of the renovation. Why? What I have found by using the PCI is it isn't just a simple tool to evaluate the current playing condition of the field. Using the PCI evaluation along with the notes I write down on the PCI gives me the overall picture and history of that particular sports field.

Whatever you do, do not toss your old PCI's in the trash! I use my old PCI's and compare them to the new; weather conditions jotted

down now provide me with an historical look at the weather conditions. Weather plays a major role in what we do, soil temps, air temps, rain or drought all contribute to the safety, playability and aesthetic quality of our sports fields. Weather may affect the pesticides or herbicide we select to control a fungus or weed infestation problem. By comparing past PCI's with the present I can now determine what products worked, what renovation practiced worked and I can now make educated management practices and budget decisions based on the information I obtained from the PCI.

What's on the horizon? At STMA's National Conference in Orlando 2 years ago, I had the pleasure of meeting Ian Lacy, who is with the Institute of Groundsmanship in the United Kingdom. We became friends while discussing the PCI and the United Kingdom's Performance Quality Standards (PQS). Ian and I picked up our friendship again in Austin this past January and soon began talking about the PCI and the PQS and where both of these valuable tools are headed.

We agreed to beginning looking at both documents to see if they could be merged to become one. Imagine having a document that meets the needs of Sports Turf Managers around the world! I have begun to look at developing a database for the information collected on my PCI's so that it would be readily available for applying management practices, budget and board meetings and for media releases. I am also hopeful that the database can then be merged with the use of a specific sports field. Merging these two data bases may provide valuable information into the management practices used vs. the sport or sports that is played on them. There is work to be done in the future to hone this tool into what it really can be, maybe the most valuable one we have in our tool box.

There are three things I don't leave my office without when evaluating my sports fields: the PCI, my maintenance standards and a passion for what I do. ■

Mike Tarantino is director of maintenance and operations for Poway (CA) School District, and an STMA board member representing Schools K-12.

About the STMA PCI®

SOME OF THE COMMENTS that were made by PCI Task Group members and those who "piloted" the PCI are:

- "It is a great start to something that can be used as a tool for managers to tune their programs, and help as fire-power when asking for a better budget."

— Peter Lockwood, Head Groundskeeper, Nashville Sounds, Tenn.

- "The worksheet is a good tool for assessing your fields. It forces you to take the blinders off and really look more specifically at your field instead of generally, as I tend to do when conducting a daily inspection."

— Scott Phippen, Superintendent of Streets and Parks, Village of Lincolnshire, Ill.

STMA members who have already used the STMA PCI in its formative stages, either those in the Task Group or those in

the Focus Group, state several reasons that the STMA PCI is a useful tool to them in their current situation. There are primarily three reasons cited:

- "will allow me to go to my administration to justify additional resources"

- "a tool for my media relations department"

- "it will help me to communicate with all the constituent groups involved: parents, coaches, players, administrators, etc."

STMA is dedicated to making the STMA PCI a useful tool for the Sports Turf Manager. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please note them in the Comments section on Page 4 of the STMA PCI Worksheet and fax or email them to STMA at 785.843.2977 or PCI@STMA.org. If you need more immediate assistance, please call STMA Headquarters at 800.323.3875. ■

To download and print the STMA PCI in its usable format, please log on to www.stma.org.



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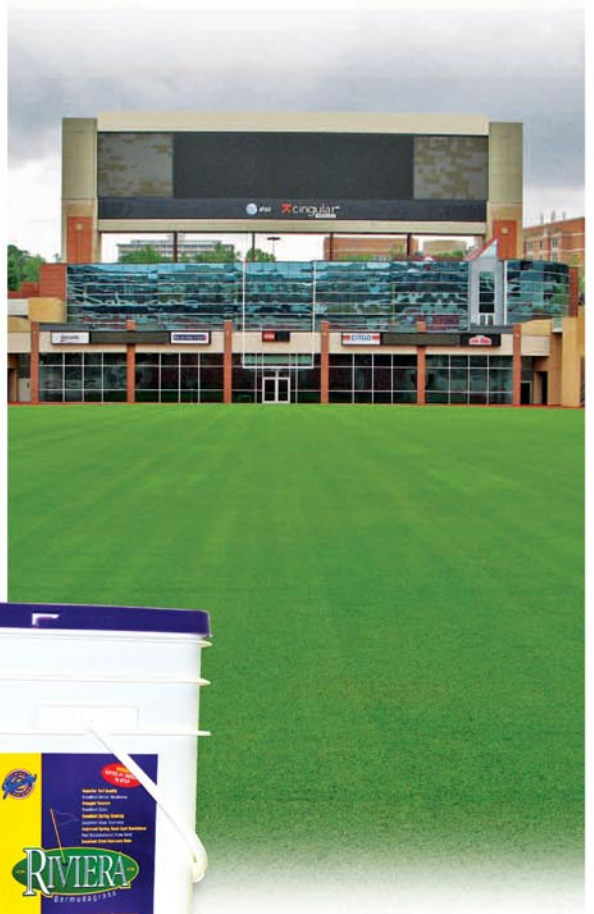


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✓ 2010 NFLPA Playing Surfaces Opinion Survey

NO MATTER WHICH SIDE YOU TAKE on the current labor situation in the National Football League, or if like most people you just shake your head over egos that can't divide up \$9 billion, we can all agree on one thing—results of the annual playing surface opinion survey the players' union conducts sure are interesting! The survey was conducted by the NFLPA at team meetings during September through November 2010. A total of 1619 active NFL Players from all 32 teams voluntarily participated. Here are selected results from the latest version:

Which surface do you think is more likely to contribute to injury?

- Ⓐ Grass 15.9%
- Ⓑ Artificial Infilled 82.4%

Which surface do you think causes more soreness and fatigue to play on?

- Ⓐ Grass 9.2%
- Ⓑ Artificial Infilled 89.1%

Which surface do you think is more likely to shorten your career?

- Ⓐ Grass 7.6%
- Ⓑ Artificial Infilled 89.7%

What type of field do you prefer to play on?

- Ⓐ Grass 69.4%
- Ⓑ Artificial Infilled 14.3%
- Ⓒ No preference 9%

How significant a role do you believe NFL grounds keepers play in the performance of NFL grass playing surfaces?

- Ⓐ 75% say "very significant"

How significant a role do you believe NFL grounds keepers play in the performance of NFL artificial infilled playing surfaces?

- Ⓐ 23.7% say "very significant"

How much do you value your grounds crew's work on your practice fields?

- Ⓐ 73.3% say "strongly value"

MOST RE-OCCURRING COMMENTS

Artificial turf is much harder on the

body with joint soreness and makes for tougher work.

Southern grass fields are the best.

Fields that are used for baseball and football leave hard infield that is difficult to play on. When you have one foot on grass and one in hard dirt, injuries are bound to happen.

If it's grass, enough of the high schools, colleges and concerts playing on it the day before.

If it's a cold weather grass field, these fields are battered to heck. The grounds crew can only do so much.

We need a league wide standard/regulation policy for every field if the NFL really cares about the safety of all players.

SUGGESTED CHANGES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Artificial surfaces should be required in cold weather cities.

We need better practice fields. Level and eliminate holes, divots and uneven ground.

Cold weather grass teams should have road trips late in the season to avoid playing on frozen surfaces. There should be no games played on grass fields the same weekend as another event.

Even [placement] of rubber material is needed, specifically comfortable give in twists and turns and level in height with no bumps.

Every stadium should be evaluated properly every week prior to game day.

If it's a multi-purpose stadium, mandate that it's artificial. If only one team [uses] then it can be grass. Force Chicago and Pittsburgh to go turf.

More time and money need to be spent on the fields. College surfaces are better.

Use softer bermuda grass with sand.

No more non updated artificial turf that is hard and over filled with ground up rubber and cheap top layer grass that you can pull off like a cheap toupee like Kansas City. ■

Best Grass Playing Field

- 1 ARIZONA CARDINALS: University of Phoenix Stadium
- 2 TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS: Raymond James Stadium
- 3 SAN DIEGO CHARGERS: Qualcomm Stadium
- 4 CAROLINA PANTHERS: Bank of America Stadium
- 5 GREEN BAY PACKERS: Lambeau Field
- 6 MIAMI DOLPHINS: Sun Life Stadium
- 7 HOUSTON TEXANS: Reliant Stadium
- 8 JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS: Everbank Field
- 9 DENVER BRONCOS: Invesco Field at Mile High
- 10 TENNESSEE TITANS: LP Field
- 11 WASHINGTON REDSKINS: FEDEX Field
- 12 SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS: Candlestick Park
- 13 KANSAS CITY CHIEFS: Arrowhead Stadium
- 14 PHILADELPHIA EAGLES: Lincoln Financial Field
- 15 PITTSBURGH STEELERS: Heinz Field
- 16 CLEVELAND BROWNS: Cleveland Browns Stadium
- 17 CHICAGO BEARS: Soldier Field
- 18 OAKLAND RAIDERS: Oakland Coliseum

Worst Grass Playing Field

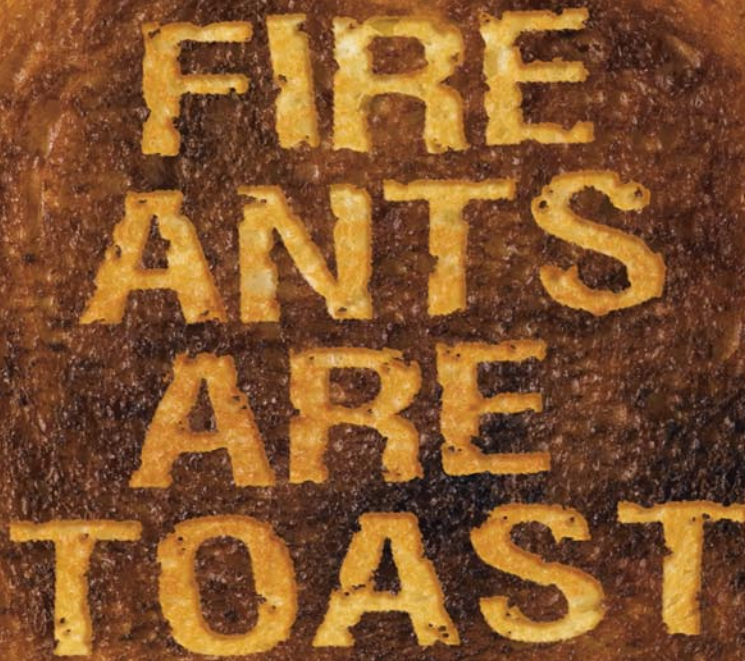
- 1 PITTSBURGH STEELERS: Heinz Field
- 2 OAKLAND RAIDERS: Oakland Coliseum
- 3 CHICAGO BEARS: Soldier Field
- 4 MIAMI DOLPHINS: Sun Life Stadium
- 5 CLEVELAND BROWNS: Cleveland Browns Stadium
- 6 PHILADELPHIA EAGLES: Lincoln Financial Field
- 7 GREEN BAY PACKERS: Lambeau Field
- 8 KANSAS CITY CHIEFS: Arrowhead Stadium
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- 15 SAN DIEGO CHARGERS: Qualcomm Stadium
- 16 WASHINGTON REDSKINS: FEDEX Field
- 17 DENVER BRONCOS: Invesco Field at Mile High
- 18 ARIZONA CARDINALS: University of Phoenix Stadium

Best Artificial Infilled Playing Field

- 1 INDIANAPOLIS COLTS: Lucas Oil Stadium
- 2 NEW YORK JETS/GIANTS: New Meadowlands Stadium
- 3 NEW ORLEANS SAINTS: Louisiana Superdome
- 4 SEATTLE SEAHAWKS: Qwest Field
- 5 DALLAS COWBOYS: Cowboys Stadium
- 6 ATLANTA FALCONS: Georgia Dome
- 7 NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS: Gillette Stadium
- 8 DETROIT LIONS: Ford Field
- 8 BALTIMORE RAVENS: M&T Bank Stadium
- 9 ST. LOUIS RAMS: Edward Jones Dome
- 10 CINCINNATI BENGALS: Paul Brown Stadium
- 11 MINNESOTA VIKINGS: Metrodome
- 12 BUFFALO BILLS: Ralph Wilson Stadium

Worst Artificial Infilled Playing Field

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Build the ground work properly when choosing your field surface

IN THE WORLD OF RECREATION and sport design and facility management, few topics can be as hotly debated and contested as the decision of what type of playing surface to provide the user groups. The primary question commonly revolves around whether the newly renovated or constructed field will remain natural grass or be synthetic turf. This decision is clearly one that will be set in place likely for several years, and in the case of synthetic turf, likely for a decade or more due to the difficulty in reverting back to natural grass due to funding limitations most owners have.

When discussion initially begins in scoping out a project for improving the existing field or



The important tools needed by every owner and design professional are the knowledge and ability to facilitate project discussions and, ultimately, build consensus among stakeholders.

building a new facility, there are several factors that need to be weighed and discussed at all levels. These factors will typically include:

- Available capital (i.e. initial construction/project) funding
- Foreseeable anticipated annual M&O funding for field/facility upkeep
- Required hours of field use for various end users
- Expectations of a successful sports field
- Alignment of design field type with all parties, including:
 - ▶ Governing Board/Owner's final decision makers
 - ▶ Owner's Project Team
 - ▶ Maintenance Team
 - ▶ Design Team
 - ▶ User Groups
 - ▶ Community at-large/Constituents
- An educated understanding of project issues that may arise during the surface selection process before beginning the actual process

While all of the above factors are key influences in making a successful decision, the last two typically are ones where missteps can have profound effects. This is where advanced pre-planning is essential, and that the owner undertake the necessary time to understand where these issues may lay, and how to effectively address in the decision making process.

The important tools needed by every owner and design professional are the knowledge and ability to facilitate project discussions and, ultimately, build consensus among stakeholders. Creating a forum where a clear message about the project can be disseminated to those outside the decision-making circle, while, at the same time, providing an opportunity for stakeholder comments, desires, and concerns be heard, is a time-honored method used by design professionals to bring all involved parties together. However, if steps haven't been taken to align the desires of all of the interested parties in the design field types and if the issues that can arise during the selection process are not clearly understood, the facilitation process may face a significantly reduced chance for success. This is especially true when the community-at-large is included in the facilitation process.