

Regional Conference in Knoxville, TN—details

THE 2011 REGIONAL CONFERENCE, June 15-16 in Knoxville, TN hosted by STMA with the support of several chapters, including the Tennessee Valley (host), Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia Chapters, is a must attend educational event for anyone who deals with athletic turf regularly. While focusing on Sports Turf Managers, STMA encourages attendance by members, crew, coaches, parks and recreation professionals, athletic directors, school business officials, and others, and will be providing education for all levels of sports turf experience.

The more than 10 hours of education is highlighted by nationally recognized sports turf authorities. Dr.'s John Sorochnan, Jim Brosnan, Tom Samples, Grady Miller and Mike Goatley will be lending their expertise to presentations and/or panel discussions on natural turfgrass, pest control, turf covers, field painting, and managing bermudagrass. There will also be behind the scenes tours of the University of Tennessee's football, baseball, softball and soccer facilities, as well as a tour of the University's new Center for Athletic Field Safety. There will be an exhibition held at the Center for Athletic Field Safety as well. Other education will be provided by local professional sports turf managers, builders, and architects with significant sports field experience.

Registration will include all education, entrance to the exhibition, most meals, and as a special treat, attendees will get a night at the ballpark, watching the Tennessee Smokies take on the Chattanooga Lookouts in exciting minor league baseball action. Registration costs for the event are \$95 for a member of STMA National or one of the participating chapters and \$125 for a non-member.

Online registration will be available for STMA National members, and STMA will also be negotiating reduced rates at Knoxville area hotels, so keep checking www.STMA.org and your email inbox for the most up to date information regarding the event.

Put June 15-16 on your schedule and start talking to your employer about making sure that you are able to attend this incredible educational opportunity. If you have any questions, please contact STMA at 800.323.3875 or STMAInfo@STMA.org.

Is your company interested in sponsoring or exhibiting at this event? Please contact Patrick Allen, STMA Manager of Sales and Marketing at 800.323.3875 or pallen@stma.org.



➤ **SCOTT MACVICAR** of the University of Washington demonstrated how to paint a logo at last year's STMA Regional Conference in Seattle.

Ask a CSFM

Michael DiDonato, CSFM,
grounds coordinator, Windham
High School, Gorham, ME

Benefits of certification verified

***Editor's note:** This is another installment 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?

DiDonato: I took the University of Georgia course exam a couple of years ago and reviewed that book to prepare myself for the exam. I found it to be a very useful tool in preparing myself for the test. I also talked to a few people who have taken care of sand based athletic fields to learn more about what goes into preparing a field from the construction of the field to maintaining the field throughout the growing season. I also took the practice tests on the STMA website and tried to base some of my studying off the questions asked in the practice exams.

How did you approach your employer to support your certification, both financially and in the time needed to prepare for the exam?

DiDonato: I was fortunate that my employer is very supportive continuing education courses. The time needed to prepare for the exam was during the winter months. I had a lot more time to study when the fields were not in use and snow covered.

Why did you decide to pursue certification?

DiDonato: I decided to pursue certification as a new challenge for myself. Not only was the certification exam a new challenge, but it was also a way to possibly further my career in the future.

How has certification helped your career?

DiDonato: Right now, certification has not yet helped my career, but I am hoping it will in the future when I have the opportunity to move onto a higher level of sports. I will say that having this certification has shown to others and me that I am willing to do what it takes to keep on educating myself in this field to in turn provide the safest, most playable and esthetically pleasing athletic fields I can. ■



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STMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona:

Chris Walsh cwalsh@scottsdaleaz.gov

Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association:

www.cstma.org

Florida #1 Chapter (South): 305-235-5101 (Bruce Bates)
or Tom Curran CTomSell@aol.com

Florida #2 Chapter (North): 850/580-4026,
John Mascaro, john@turf-tec.com

Florida #3 Chapter (Central): 407-518-2347,
Randy Fisher, rfisher@kissimmee.org

Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association:

www.gatewaystma.org

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: www.ILSTMA.org

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

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www.mokanstma.com

Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association:
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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

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Q&A



BY DR. DAVID MINNER

Professor, Iowa State University

Questions?

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question to
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The All Iowa Lawn Tennis Club

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AMAZED at the lure that grass has on one's soul. I don't know if you will really learn anything from this story but it is worth telling before we lose our soul in a generation without grass stains.

The anticipation of walking onto the playing surface in a famous stadium simply raises the hair on the back of my neck every time. The first step causes a slight gasp pulling in that unforgettable sense of something real and alive in my soul; a distinctly undeniable smell of earth and dew and grass. It's just grass, but also just impossible to replicate; Febreze has tried as have many combinations of rubber and plastic.

I've walked into the same stadium after it was converted to a synthetic field; it's shiny and new but the feeling has gone. It makes me sad that a generation may grow up playing on fields that make you think you are at the drag races, and that has nothing to do with the speed of the surface.

Now don't get me wrong; I know the advantages of synthetic fields and I have recommended their use for many sports facilities, but it still makes me sad that we may be turning out a generation of athletes that never play on grass surfaces. In another column I'll take you back to my dreams that involve my yesteryear sandlot posse where I should have realized that grass mowing was in my future. But this story is about lawn tennis. Perhaps tennis is the last sport, outside of golf, that will be played only on grass for the most important event of the year.

I want to introduce you to a few groundsman that certainly share a passion for grass. Eddie Seaward is the Head Groundsman at the All England Lawn Tennis Club. You

will find him at centre court Wimbledon during the most prestigious tennis event in the world. I met Mr. Seaward at a STMA conference in the 1990's where he spoke to us on managing this hallowed ground and it has been exciting to follow all the changes that have transpired during his 20-year career at Wimbledon.

He will retire in a couple of years, but not before he and his successor, Neil Stubley, host the Olympic Games in 2012 that follow only 20 days after the July 8 Wimbledon Championship. It will be exciting to see how they pull that off and once again I'm sure the press will bring grass into the limelight. It is comforting to know that that little patch of grass will always remain real. I had the good fortune to briefly visit Mr. Seaward at Wimbledon in 2001 and while we obviously talked a bit about grass, it was this observation that stayed with me about a famous man in a famous place on a famous patch of grass. It has nothing to do with grass but everything to do with leading. As we walked around the maintenance area, under the stands, and on the grounds, he acknowledged every person we walked past. A hello or nod or slight gesture, but Mr. Seaward did not miss a single person regardless of their station in life. It may have

been a simple thing but it is often overlooked in our "hurry up and give me this" business of today. It has served me well as I interact with my colleges and employees daily over the years. Thanks for the lesson, Eddie.

Jump back across the pond and you will see how grass weaves together a dream for Mark Kuhn, club founder, chairman, and groundskeeper of the All Iowa Lawn Tennis Club (www.alliowa-tennisclub.com). The only grass court in Iowa is centered among 770 acres of rolling corn fields outside of Charles City on the family farmstead, just 2 hours from that mythical baseball diamond from the movie "Field of Dreams." Growing up a world away he listened to matches on his father's ham radio and began to dream of creating his own little Wimbledon. And that he did. Visit the website; it's charming with all the details of manicured grass, picket fences, and strawberries and cream. Kudos goes out to the United States Tennis Association for recognizing it as a Tennis Welcome Center. Not to think that these two facilities and two groundsman are even in the same league, but it has been a pleasure to learn from them both and to see a shared dream woven together by a real grass surface. ■





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