

BRETT TANNER, director of stadium grounds at Columbus Crew Stadium, Columbus, OH led his own crew to the Sports Turf Managers Association's 2010 Professional Soccer Field of the Year Award. That crew includes full-timers Ray White, Ben Jackson and Chris Fox (who recently left to go to Red Bull Arena); and part-timers Gary Rasor, Mitch Litz, Lucas Easterbrook, David Vuchenich, Ryan Martin and intern Brandon Thrower.

The facility was built in 1999, one of the country's first soccer-specific stadiums. It also sees clinics, rugby, lacrosse, football, disc golf, concerts and festivals each year. Turf varieties include Midnight Star and Brilliant Kentucky bluegrasses, and Barllineum, Pinnacle 2 and BarBeta perennial ryegrasses. The drainage system has 4-inch perforated pipe on 15-foot centers, running to two 8-inch collectors.

From Tanner's entry package:

"During the 2010 season we encountered many challenges. The summer was one of the most difficult in recent years for this region, with high temperatures and very little rainfall. Upon completing the season, we will have hosted five different sports on our field: soccer, football, lacrosse, disc golf, and rugby. On top of that we've hosted numerous concerts and festivals.

"Wear areas on our field include goal mouths, bench areas and the referee runs; to help combat this we typically spot overseed before events and this has helped us maintain turf coverage in these areas.

"A main concern during this busy schedule was trying to shift wear patterns during non-Crew (the professional soccer team and stadium owner) events. During the season we hosted a number of high school soccer matches by using temporary white paint and shifting our soccer field out of its standard field size. By doing this we stopped wear in the goal mouths, which of course get heavy use during Crew training and matches. We would place two pieces of TerraFlor over the goal mouth to help stimulate growth. We were heading toward no re-sodding of the goal mouths as this application was written in mid-October.

"We hosted a rugby tournament for the first time ever, which meant we had to install goal posts. We asked advice of our peers for adapting our field, and borrowed some collars custom made for rugby goal posts from fellow MLS groundskeeper Bret Baird in Colorado. By reaching out and asking for advice from those who had done it before, we were able to reduce our field damage and install the posts in reasonable time.

"Wear areas on our field include goal mouths, bench areas and the referee runs; to help combat this we typically spot overseed before events and this has helped us maintain turf coverage in these areas. We also broadcast seed throughout the 'diamond' wear pattern typical of most soccer fields. The players and officials cleat in this seed and we avoid having to put heavier machinery on the field.

"Monday following weekend events we will rotary mow the en-

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>> For Major League Lacrosse, the field is shifted northeast to move wear out of the middle.

tire surface to help remove dead plant tissue and normal debris from the events, and follow up by going back and filling any divots by hand using a sand/seed mix.”

SportsTurf: What changes have you made to your maintenance plan for 2011, if any?

Tanner: We were fairly pleased with the plan we utilized in 2010, with such a large number of events and high temperatures it was a kind of a back to basics year.

Early this year we had a problem with our turf beginning to “grain” or grow more laterally than vertical. We brought in a verticutter to help thin the pitch out a little and stand the turf up. It did a great job and we plan on trying to incorporate that practice more as the summer winds down, as needed in the fall, and early next season.

I also can not say enough about the opportunities available for members of STMA, local and national. I’ve have met many people who I have been fortunate enough to gain valuable knowledge and people I can always contact for advice or opinions when in need.

We also contract out our deep-tine service and we are going to begin deep tine coring more often. We want to try and open up deeper channels to help elevate the heavy compaction after concerts and multiple events.

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

Tanner: I’ve been extremely fortunate to work for some great people in this industry, both on the sports and the golf side. I always made it a point to listen and learn by watching how those people got the results they did, good and bad. For the most part, I felt that I learned more during the challenging times than when everything was going smooth and as planned. I really focused on how they handled the challenges, whether it was flooding and downed trees on a course, disease outbreak right before an event, or players and coaches concerned with the field conditions. So I guess it’s tough for me to narrow it down to just one thing, I am just extremely grateful for those who took the time to pull me aside and show me something and or explain a practice or problem. It was those little things that I remember and grew from the most.

I also can not say enough about the opportunities available for members of STMA, local and national. I’ve have met many people who I have been fortunate enough to gain valuable knowledge and people I can always contact for advice or opinions when in need.



Above Left: Only the two squares of sod were removed for rugby; here is first set of posts in south end. **Above right:** Halfway done with rugby stencil. Due to the high temperatures, we had to work through the night into early morning to prevent stencil burn.

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

Tanner: I am very lucky to have two understanding assistants. We all communicate well together and are able to distribute off days between the three of us when we get breaks throughout the season. So far it's worked out well and we have been able to take days off when needed. It doesn't do anyone any good to come into work for multiple weeks straight, I put a high priority on getting them "away" when we can. Our season starts in March and runs through mid-November so we need to have a little time on our own. At the same time, I know that I can count on them to be here if need be. My fiancé is also a major factor in what I am able to accomplish here at work. She is extremely understanding and helpful when it comes to the long hours during the season. I know that it's extremely difficult to manage a relationship with the hours the industry requires, but I've found that constant communication helps relieve unexpected schedule conflicts. All it takes is a quick call.

ST: What's your most valued piece of equipment and why?

Tanner: It is not equipment; I would have to say it is my staff. For the most part, there are always back ups for equipment if it breaks down or is unavailable. It's the guys that are out there doing the work that are the greatest value to what we do here. Between the stadium pitch, the two training fields 20 minutes outside of town, and the vast landscape we are responsible for, I put a lot of trust in the grounds staff to keep me up to date with what's going on at the multiple sites. Everyone invests a large amount of time to insure we are able to provide the best results we can in every aspect we manage or are involved with.

ST: Are you yet involved in "sustainable" management practices? If so, what are you doing?

Tanner: At the stadium, we have made a conscience effort to reduced use of herbicides and insecticides in the grounds. As far as the management of the pitch itself, we do not use herbicides or insecticides, and carefully monitor our fungicide program. It's a preventative program but on an as needed basis, no pressure, no

applications. Daily monitoring and adjustment of our irrigation programs is implemented at both the stadium and practice facility, we try not to do the set it and forget it programs. All of our equipment service is done in house and the used motor oil is recycled, there is also a stadium wide recycling program. ■

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Southeast Regional Conference draws good crowd

NEARLY 200 PEOPLE attended the 2011 STMA Southeast Regional Conference in Knoxville, TN June 15-16. The event kicked off with tours of the softball and soccer complex at the University of Tennessee, followed by a 3-hour outdoor trade show on site at the University's new Center for Athletic Field Safety (CAFS), where attendees got up close and personal with products of 31 exhibitors, including some equipment test drives.

After lunch the skies darkened and STMA staffers Patrick Allen and Kristen Althouse hustled the crowd inside a building at the Center for that day's educational workshops. The Tennessee Valley, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia Chapters sent members and attendees came from as far away as Delaware and south Florida.

Dr. John Sorochan, associate professor of turfgrass science at Tennessee and Director

of the CAFS, and doctoral student Adam Thoms introduced attendees to the Center, which includes 60 30 x 15-foot "mini-football" plots that include every type of synthetic field in use today as well as natural turf species on native soil, sand build-up and sand-cap bases. Sorochan said they will be testing in field conditions, looking not only at traffic issues but also injuries, specifically studying the interactions between turf and cleats (and other shoe types), and also will be monitoring environmental conditions under the surfaces. The Center officially opened July 13.

Dr. Sorochan was joined by Drs. Tom Samples, Mike Goatley, Jim Brosnan, Grady Miller, and Brandon Horvath of the University turf program, and Eric Fasbender, CSFM and Jesse

Driver, CSFM, to discuss topics ranging from field painting, athletic covers, new bermudagrasses and pest management, to the new Center for Athletic Field Safety (CAFS) at the

University of Tennessee. A group outing to watch the Tennessee Smokies take on the Chattanooga Lookouts was rained out that night, so attendees spent a night on their own in Knoxville.

Thursday attendees chose either a baseball and football track; each hosted at the University's respective facility for the sport. These 2-hour sessions were followed up by "walk-the-field" tours of 102,455-seat Neyland Stadium and Lindsey Nelson Stadium, where the Volunteer baseball team takes the diamond in SEC play. The locker rooms, workout facilities and recruiting centers' for both facilities were included in the tours.

According to the STMA post-conference survey, attendees came for the networking, education topics and speakers, and the exhibition. One hundred percent of the respondents reported that they benefited professionally from attending, and 89% rated the event above-average or excellent. One attendee commented, "This was an excellent conference! I have spoken highly about it to many people since returning home. Thanks to the University of Tennessee for hosting this event, and especially for opening up their facilities to us so we could view them and learn from them."

Next year's summer regional event will be hosted by the Ohio Chapter. Keep an eye on the STMA website and future eNews for more information on what is sure to be another great educational opportunity in 2012. ■



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STMA program deadlines approaching

SEVERAL STMA PROGRAMS, including Innovative Awards, Field of the Year Awards, SAFE Scholarship and Founders Awards, have application deadlines this fall.

The deadline for STMA Commercial Members to apply for the STMA Innovative Awards is October 1. To submit for this award, the product, service, or equipment being submitted must have been introduced for sale after the close of the 2011 STMA Conference & Exhibition but before the close of next year's STMA show in Long Beach. Submissions should "Substantially enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Sports Turf Manager and/or make the playing surfaces safer and/or more playable for athletes."

The STMA Field of the Year program deadline is October 15. All materials must be submitted electronically by this date. Be sure

to read the application carefully, as the entire process is now done electronically. The process requires that applicants fill out no less than four STMA Playing Conditions Index (PCI) worksheets to apply for Field of the Year. The STMA PCI is available online.

SAFE Scholarship applications are due October 15. All materials must be submitted in one packet and faxed applications will not be accepted.

STMA Founders Award nominations are due October 15. These are STMA's most prestigious awards and are presented in honor of the founders of STMA: Dr. William Daniel, Dick Ericson, George Toma and Harry Gill. More information is available online.

For applications, nomination forms, to get the STMA PCI or for more information, please log on to www.STMA.org. ■

Electronic version of STMA PCI now available

STMA HAS RECENTLY completed an electronic version of the STMA Playing Conditions Index (PCI). The PCI is a very useful tool for you to evaluate the current conditions of your athletic fields at a given point in time. Keeping a log of your scores can provide you with the documentation you need to justify new resources or reallocate current resources to new areas. Log on to www.STMA.org for more information on the STMA PCI and how it can help you in your daily job. ■

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?

Andresen: My main preparation was to thoroughly review various books on Sports Turf Management, most notably "Sports Fields" by Puhalla, Krans, Goatley. I also reviewed notes of presentations and workshops (administrative content) that I'd attended in the past. The best preparation was having been in the profession for a period of years!



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

Andresen: I work for a university athletics department and we live in a culture that recognizes certifications in many different disciplines. It was an easy sell to get administration to understand the need for this level of professionalism in our department. I studied outside of work but they supported paying for the testing. The tide has turned a bit as I am now responsible for renewal fees. I, philosophically, think this is fair as the certification remains with me and is my responsibility.

Why did you decide to pursue certification?

Andresen: I felt responsible to achieve the highest level possible in our profession. I managed a student-based crew at the time and felt it important to continue my growth and education in every way possible (role model).

How has certification helped your career?

Andresen: In many different ways! The need for ISP's has helped push me to be active within our STMA chapter and nationally. It has pushed me to participate within the chapter by writing articles, serving on committees and boards, helping with community service projects and to host events at our facility—all in the name of securing Industry Service Points. Needing Continuing Education Units to remain certified has become a great reason (excuse?) to attend workshops, conferences and seminars. I personally received a pay increase when I became certified but that might be rare. ■

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,
Scott Grace, scott@sundome.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

Minnesota Park and Sports Turf Managers Association: www.mpstma.org

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

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:
www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org
oregonstma@gmail.com

Ozarks STMA: www.ozarksstma.org.

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

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

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

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The STMA Conference and Exhibition will bring together more than 1,500 people from around the world to learn, live and love all things sports turf. Sixty-three educational sessions given by 55 speakers, presented over three full days include classroom, hands-on, panel and demonstration platforms. More than 150 companies will populate the trade show floor, making for the largest international event dedicated specifically to sports turf.



We hope you can join us in Long Beach for the *must attend* educational, networking and tradeshow in the industry. See you at the beach... surfs up!

Register to attend online at www.STMA.org beginning in September
Interested in exhibiting or sponsoring events in Long Beach?
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2012 Conference offers pre-Conference workshops

THE 2012 STMA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION in Long Beach, CA will feature eight pre-conference workshops Wednesday, January 11. These workshops are included in your conference registration, so be sure to take advantage of a valuable educational opportunity!

Two separate workshops will take place in the morning from 8:00 am–12:15 pm. The first is a synthetic turf workshop, “Synthetic Turf: Concept, Design, Construction, Completion, Maintenance, and Lifecycle Planning” presented by Mark Nichols. The presentation focuses on an in-depth analysis of synthetic turf. Discussion will center on design elements, specification considerations, vendor selection, project management, care and maintenance requirements, and lifecycle planning. Attendees will learn how to professionally identify, select, and procure a synthetic turf system to meet specific facility needs. Attendees will also learn best practices for the professional care and maintenance of a synthetic turf surface to extend the useful life and enhance return on investment.

The second workshop taking place from 8:00 am–12:15 pm. features three separate presentations on environmental issues. “Perceived and Real Environmental Impacts of Phosphorus” will be presented by Dr. Gwen Stahnke, Dr. Elizabeth Guertal, and Dr. Brian Horgan. This presentation will focus on recent research conducted at Washington State University – Puyallup that indicates danger in having excess phosphorus present in soil in late fall. Data on release rates of organic and synthetic forms of fertilizer, as well as total phosphorus and ortho phosphorus present in test plots will be discussed. Attendees will learn proper timing and use of organic fertilizers and differences between phosphorus amounts in synthetic and organic fertilizers.

The second presentation in the morning environmental track is “A New Era in Sports Turf Management” presented by Kevin Mercer and Jim Sluiter. This presentation will demonstrate steps that can be taken to have a sustainable grounds maintenance program at sports facilities. Sustainable practices that will be discussed include recycling programs, rain gardens, buffers, reducing your carbon footprint, maintenance of both turf and non-turf areas, incorporating wildlife habitat, etc. Attendees will learn basic steps to become Audubon-certified, sustainable techniques that can be applied to various facility levels, and cost and labor savings due to adding sustainable practices.

The third presentation in the morning en-

vironmental track is “Weed Control without Synthetic Herbicides” presented by Dr. Douglas Linde. Due to the increase in public pressure to further restrict or ban synthetic pesticides on turfgrass, research on alternatives to synthetic pesticides has increased. This presentation will investigate the effectiveness of 12 alternatives to synthetic herbicides for weed control in turfgrass. Field managers educated in this area will be better prepared to reduce reliance on synthetic herbicides either voluntarily or if forced by legislation. Attendees will learn about the various alternatives to synthetic herbicides for turfgrass, advantages and disadvantages, and how to incorporate alternatives into a sports field weed control program.

Attendees will have the choice of attending 4 afternoon workshops on Wednesday that take place concurrently from 2:00–4:00 pm. “Turfgrass Physiology for the Sports Turf Manager” will be presented by Dr. Tony Koski. This presentation will focus on providing sports turf managers a basic understanding of turfgrass growth and development, as well as the effects of management practices on turfgrass plants. Attendees will understand cool and warm season turf species response to cultural practices, turf performance under stress, and how to analyze and respond to turf problems based off of physiological responses.

“Sports Field Drainage – What Are Your Options?” will be presented by Ian Lacy. Sports field drainage is essential for a successful sports field. This presentation will explore in detail the importance of drainage, types of drainage options, advantages, disadvantages, and costs of each drainage option, function of drainage options, installation processes, and effect of maintenance programs on drainage. Attendees will learn about the importance of drainage, how to identify the right drainage option dependent on facility, and how a maintenance program could be affecting sports field drainage.

“The Science of Skin Infields” will be presented by Clayton Hubbs, Barney Lopas, and Grant Trenbeath. This presentation will focus on understanding regional, use, and parent material issues that must be considered when constructing, amending, or maintaining a baseball infield. Attendees will learn how to identify a poorly performing infield skin and understand its performance through particle size analysis and parent material of the infield mix. Attendees will also understand how to effectively select a proper infield mix and the daily and long term maintenance practices

needed to properly maintain an infield.

“Back to Basics: Maintaining Natural Grass on Native Soil” will be presented by Brad Jakubowski. This presentation will address the challenges of managing natural grass on native soil. Emphasis will be placed on water management, compaction, wear, drainage, fundamental agronomy, and differences between sand based and native soil fields. Attendees will obtain a better understanding of native soils, the importance of water management on native soils, and how to provide a safe, playable native soil field.

The conference brochure will be available in August with a complete list of the educational program. Check the STMA website and conference brochure for additional information on times, speakers, and session information. The STMA website will also have speaker presentations and handouts available as a resource for all presentations. Don't miss this opportunity to jump start your conference experience and increase your professional knowledge! ■

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Q&A



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Unwanted mowing pattern

We get a lot of nice comments on our mowing pattern but this happened to us last week when it was really hot. What's up with the wheel tracks and how do I prevent it from happening again?

Iowa City

The problem is Ascochyta Leaf Blight that is almost always triggered by high temperature and rapid drying conditions. The most difficult part of this disease is pronouncing the name Ascochyta when you are trying to talk about it to your boss, so it goes like this: "ass-co-kite-a." Just Google "as-cochyta turfgrass" and you will get lots of good general information that I will pick apart for you in this column.

The fungal spores called conidia grow and are splashed around during periods of frequent rain or irrigation. The organism may be present from late spring through the summer, but it usually begins the leaf blight phase only after a period of suddenly hot weather. Predicting an Ascochyta outbreak is difficult because the exact conditions for blighting are not clearly understood and the disease symptoms appear haphazardly throughout the summer.

When the conditions are right the bleached and blighted leaves will suddenly appear. One day the grass looks fine and then suddenly you have lots of tan grass and clearly defined mowing streaks in just a day or two. The mowing streaks probably abrade the grass allowing easy entry of the infectious spores into the plant.

Look for bleached leaf tips that are collapsed. It looks devastating because the top part of the plant is severely damaged but the crowns and lower stems are seldom killed. The good news is that you can anticipate 80-100% recovery within 3 weeks, but in severe cases some

turf loss may require reseeding.

Taller and less frequent mowing is recommended but most of you are locked into mowing schedules based on field use and performance. It is interesting to note that Ascochyta blight in home lawns will only occur in full sun areas and it stops where the shaded lawn has less heat stress.

In my 40 years of messing with grass I have never seen it as bad as it has been in the past 2 years in Iowa. Normally we don't recommend a preventative fungicide because it occurs to haphazardly and a curative fungicide doesn't help after the leaf tissue is blighted. However, after 2 years of seeing this occur in late June and early

July on the same fields I will be applying a preventative fungicide trial next year in mid-June to see if controlling the fungus will reduce the wheel tracking injury.

I have mowed plenty of grass that is wilted during hot conditions without seeing any wheel tracking so I guess it is the combination of fungal presence, hot weather following frequent rain or irrigation, and mowing at the wrong time that all lines up to give a mowing pattern that you really don't like to see. Even if you don't have a nice striping mower try to mow nice straight lines... at least you can brag on your mowing talent if Ascochyta comes to town. ■

