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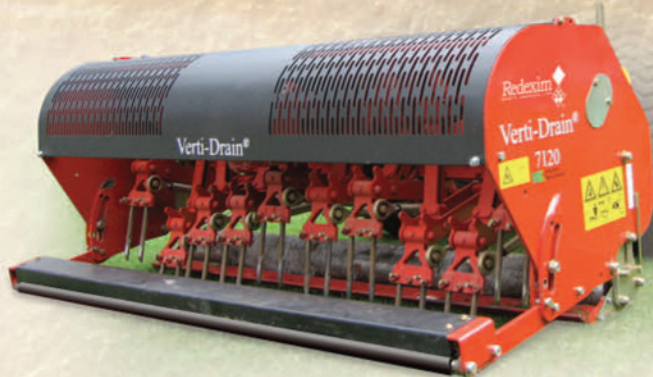
Former golf superintendent Kevin White, now Athletic Fields Supervisor at Seattle University, perfects Championship Field, home to the Seattle University Men & Women's varsity soccer programs. The field serves as both the practice and game field. Its vicinity to Century Link Field also makes it an attractive venue for hosting training sessions and special events for MLS, NWSL, national teams, and English Premier League teams.



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From the Sidelines

Eric Schroder
Editorial Director
eschroder@specialtyim.com
717-805-4197

Water conservation coming to a field near you

The July 16 headline read, "California OKs \$500 fine for wasting water." The article began, "California water regulators Tuesday approved fines for washing cars, watering lawns or hosing down sidewalks after revised figures showed that residents have increased consumption despite calls for big cutbacks amid the state's severe drought. They are the **first** emergency conservation measures passed to try to force Californians to wake up to the three-year-long dry spell, the worst in decades."

Those of us who live in regions where drought is not yet considered an issue might ignore this news but my check of the US Drought Monitor, which is produced in partnership between the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the US Department of Agriculture, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, revealed that half of the 50 states have at least one area considered to be in at least short-term drought.

As a refresher, here are some points to consider to save water, courtesy of Grass Seed USA, a coalition of grass seed farmers and academics:

- Avoid overwatering: Many overwater their turf, which not only wastes water but harms the grass in the long run. A simple trick to determine whether your turf needs watering is to stick a screwdriver into the ground. If it enters the soil easily, your lawn has plenty of water already. If you have trouble getting the screwdriver into the ground, it's time to give the grass a drink.

- Adjust Watering to Temp: Suggest 0.2 to 0.25 inch of water 2 to 4 times a week starting in the early summer as the rain ends. During peak heat and drought stress irrigate 6 times per week at 0.25 inches per event. When considering

the fact that turf is a shallow rooted plant and to prevent leaching and ruff of nutrients, pesticides and water, irrigation rates should not exceed 0.25 inches.

- Water during the cooler hours for best results: Always water your turf during the cooler hours of the day. Early morning and evening are the ideal times to water. Cooler air and less wind mean water is absorbed directly into the grass, with less moisture lost to evaporation. Watering during the heat of the day can actually scald and burn grass.

- Save water by selecting a large, low drop sprinkler setting. Air currents can easily catch a light spray and keep the water from reaching your grass. To avoid this, adjust your sprinkler setting for larger drops closer to the ground rather than misting in the air. You'll end up with a more thorough watering while saving water and money.

- Keep your grass a little taller in the summer. You can also reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation by keeping your grass slightly taller in the summer, so that the blades shade the roots and soil surface.

- Create a routine and stick to it. Whatever watering routine you choose, try to stick with it. Grass does best with a consistent watering schedule, and starting and stopping a watering pattern can stunt your turf's growth. This is especially true right after fertilization.

Clarification

In our July issue on page 36 we published an article highlighting the 100th anniversary of The Toro Company. We should have alerted readers upfront that the article was written by a public relations agency that works for Toro. We regret not doing so. ■

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SportsTurf

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Immediate Past President: James Michael Goatley, Jr., PhD
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K-12: Andrew Gossel
Commercial: Doug Schattinger
Elected-at-Large: Mike Tarantino, CSFM
Elected-at-Large: Bradley Jakubowski
Chief Executive Officer: Kim Heck

STMA OFFICE
805 New Hampshire Suite E
Lawrence, Ks 66044
Phone 800-323-3875 Fax 800-366-0391
Email STMAinfo@STMA.org
www.STMA.org

EDITORIAL
Group publisher: Jeff Patterson
Editorial Director: Eric Schroder
Technical Editor: Dr. James Brosnan
Art Director: Brian Snook
Production Manager: Karen Kalinyak

Stma Editorial Communications Committee
Chairman: Brad Jakubowski; Tyler Clay;
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President's Message

David J. Pinsonneault, CSFM, CPRP
dpinson@lexingtonma.gov



Direct Mail List Sales

MeritDirect, Jim Scova
Phone: (914) 368-1012
jscova@MeritDirect.com

Subscription Services

Phone: (847) 763-9565
Fax: (847) 763-9569

Reprints

Robin Cooper
rcooper@specialtyim.com

Group Publisher

Jeff Patterson
Phone: (763) 383-4458
jpatterson@epgmediallc.com

Account Representatives:

Chris Pelikan
Senior Account Manager - East
Phone: (954) 964-8676
cpelikan@epgmediallc.com

Peggy Tupper

Senior Account Manager - Mid-West
Phone: (763) 383-4429
ptupper@epgmediallc.com

Leslie Palmer

Senior Account Manager - West
Phone: (248) 731-7596
lpalmer@specialtyim.com

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It's hot so keep cool

The heat of summer is here and it not only affects us as people but it affects our surroundings and the turfgrass we maintain. We can try to keep cool by going to the beach, jumping in a pool, running under the sprinkler or seeking air conditioning. The turf is not as fortunate. It needs help keeping cool, and lucky for the turf we are professional sports turf managers that can lend a helping hand.

Irrigation is a key. When was the last time you audited your system to ensure it was delivering the right amount of water where you need it? (See page XX for how to conduct an irrigation audit.) STMA has resources on irrigation use as does the Irrigation Association. Check the sprinkler heads, check the pressure and check that you are not watering at the wrong times leading to disease and other issues. Make sure the water is getting to the turf and not to some parking lot.

Lexington is one of the pilot sites for the Environmental Certification program that STMA is developing. The assessment tool is a good way to review your irrigation practices to ensure you are delivering water to promote healthy turf and be environmentally responsible. Other ways we can help the turf is to make sure we have proper mowing heights and sharp blades. Keep the crowns cool by not exposing them to the extreme heat and keep the blades sharp to minimize tear and openings for disease. You can also try to limit use

but this does not always work. At the end of the day what user group or individual does not want to feel cool grass under their feet when playing a sport or activity or just sitting down to take a break? Keeping turf healthy and cool helps people keep cool.

The summer heat also means that the year is now half gone. Hard to believe. Let's give a hand to all those maintaining professional soccer stadiums and baseball stadiums as they are in the busy time of their year keeping fields safe, playable and looking good. For us municipal folks, the Year has just begun. Take advantage of your new budgets and resources to strengthen your turfgrass and get it ready to handle fall play. August is when we have a 2-week window to get the football and soccer fields ready for high school play on August 20. Keep looking to STMA for resources that will help you do your job.

Summer is also a time for people to read so check the list of books recommended for certification prep. Who wouldn't want to sit down on cool grass on a nice summer evening to read a book that Dr. Goatley helped author? Think about becoming certified and help get the number of CSFM's to 200. Certification strengthens the profession and shows your commitment to being the best sports turf manager you can be. So enjoy the summer and know that people look forward to being on cool turf to help beat the heat and know you make a difference. ■



“WORKING FOR THE WEEKEND”: managing a large soccer complex

After a weekend of play the Waukegan (IL) Park District SportsPark soccer fields are in need of some rest. Most of the 13 natural turf fields play an average of 10 games each weekend beginning May 1 through October. The 138-acre Waukegan SportsPark includes those 13 natural turf soccer fields, a championship synthetic turf soccer/football field, four softball fields, two concession facilities, nine restroom facilities, a maintenance building, picnic areas and a playground with water spray features. Maintaining a soccer complex to a high standard is a diverse and complex process, most of which goes unseen by the general public. From a turf manager’s standpoint that is just

fine. Our goal is to provide the best playable, safe, and aesthetically pleasing athletic surfaces as possible.

The maintenance operations are under the direction of Certified Sports Field Manager, Noel Brusius. The SportsPark/Athletic Field maintenance crew is responsible for all aspects of the site and not just the turf or fields itself. This can include trash control, cleaning restrooms, building maintenance and program assistance.

Outside of hosting tournaments, special events or make-ups, all soccer field use is typically scheduled on the weekends. This provides a Monday-Friday work schedule that allows both rest and regular maintenance in addition to aggressive cultural practices. The phrase “working for the weekend” is one of our mottos.

Monday’s focus is on other areas of the complex, not the fields. Primarily trash clean up and restroom cleaning. With nine restroom buildings in use over the weekends, cleaning on Monday is a staff member’s full day job. Areas outside the soccer

» The phrase “**working for the weekend**” is one of our mottos.

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Facility & Operations

fields (what we call in-betweens) are mowed at 3 inches.

On **Tuesdays** the soccer fields are mowed in an east/west direction. The 30 acres of Kentucky bluegrass/perennial ryegrass fields for regular league play are mowed 2-3 times a week at 1¾ inches. This day is also our garbage/recycle day in which all the trash and recycling containers must be placed curbside for service.

Wednesdays are the day we maintain the 15 acres of common and landscape areas. This includes mowing, edging, and landscape detail including flower beds and/or tree rings. Wednesdays are also weekly meetings with the Recreation Department staff to review scheduled league games or upcoming tournament events. In a perfect world we would be able to paint all fields on Friday after being mowed.

In our case all painting gets done on **Thursdays**. This includes our regular soccer fields in addition to youth fields or any other layouts we have for a particular weekend, such as lacrosse or 3-on-3. Because we are limited on the number of fields, the youth fields are painted in red on top of full size fields in a perpendicular fashion to spread wear.

On **Fridays** all fields are prepped for use. Fields are first mowed (north/south) followed by goal placement with "No Play" signage in goal mouths. Also staff places player benches and recycling containers at each field. One vital aspect to our operations is our weekly overseeding practices to the goal mouth areas and any other high stress spots. 100% perennial rye is hand spread and left to be cleated in during play. This practice has proven to be crucial to maintaining adequate turf in the goal mouth areas. We learned quickly that if a soccer field is not in play, "Keep Off" signage must be placed on Fridays, otherwise the field becomes the weekend team warm-up practice site.

Play begins at 8:30 am on Saturday and wraps up around 6:00 pm on Sunday, when fields are closed and goals are put away. Illinois law mandates anchoring of soccer goals when in and out of use. Staff is assigned

Saturdays and Sundays to monitor restroom building maintenance, trash cleanup and enforce field closures.

The opening of the SportsPark has greatly enhanced the district's capacity to expand adult and youth league play and attract a number of tournaments. In 2014, seven soccer, one Ultimate Frisbee, one cricket and one lacrosse tournament have been scheduled. We just completed back-to-back weekends of US Soccer Club tournaments in June. With weekend tournaments comes a myriad of additional items to add to the Monday through Friday task list.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

Cultural practices play an important role in our operations. We are constantly doing some type of aeration. The overwhelming challenge in maintaining adequate turfgrass on our fields is related to two very common issues that occur when a field is constructed using native soils: 1. the soil was aggressively compacted by the contractor in order to meet grading requirements and; 2. less than desirable native topsoil was used. Soil testing has shown our soil structure is low in organic matter and high in clay content.

The bottom line is that ongoing compaction and drainage issues have made it extremely difficult to grow grass. Also the past two winter seasons have taken their toll on turf conditions, estimating 15-20% of *Poa* and perennial ryegrass turf loss. Gypsum applications at 500 lbs/acre are used to help combat soil conditions by helping to improve soil structure, nutrient uptake, and root penetration.

Aer-way slicing is performed monthly in multiple directions; Seed-a-vating is done at a minimum of twice in the spring and fall totaling more than 5,000 lbs/seed/year; deep tine aerating is done as much as possible, on average 4 times/year; core aeration is done every fall.

Our aggressive aeration on all fields has become essential with field

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>1) SP A 2) SP B 3) SP C (60 of US) 4) SP D 5) Dugdale (60) 6) SE Valley (60) 7) SW Valley (60)</p> <p>Wednesday's Landscape Detail</p> <p>Paint Soccer (Red & White) by Trail on #s 4, 5, 6</p> <p>Paint Fuel Lines</p> <p>Mow Crew at Today</p>	<p>1) SP B 2) SP C 3) Groache 4) Bauer 5) Dugdale (70)</p> <p>Mow Softball (3rd-6th)</p> <p>Mow Softball 2015</p> <p>*Base Training @ PMF-K Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat @ 12:30 - 3:30</p> <p>Mark 200 ft on Softball Fields</p>	<p>6 AM START</p> <p>1) SP A (60 of US) (8:00) 2) SP B (8:00) 3) SP C (8:00) 4) SP D (8:00) 5) Belvidere N (10:00) 6) Belvidere S (10:00) 7) Groache 8) Bauer 9) Dugdale (60) 10) SE Valley (60) 11) SW Valley (60)</p> <p>CF: 6-8</p> <p>Friday Pickups: - Goals - Cones (Red) - Done - Benches - Containers</p> <p>*Mow All Goals -> 4000 (mow) behind</p> <p>- Mow Soccer (10/5)</p> <p>7:30 - AME mowing *FIXEL: OFF @ NOON</p>	<p>1) SP A (60 of US) (8:00) 2) SP B (8:00) 3) SP C (8:00) 4) SP D (8:00) 5) Belvidere N (8:00) 6) Belvidere S (8:00) 7) Groache (9:00) 8) SW Valley (10:00)</p> <p>*Soccer on # 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, Champ @ 9:00 AM</p> <p>Paint Clean Up 1. Norel 2. Joe</p> <p>Preps 1. Tony 2. Ted 3. Steve 4. Billy 5. Lance 6. Carter</p> <p>Regainers 1. Stan</p> <p>S.P. Grossa Victory > S.P. Belvidere Victory</p> <p>7-9:30</p>	<p>1) SP A (60 of US) 2) SP B 3) SP C 4) SP D 5) Belvidere N 6) Belvidere S 7) Groache</p> <p>*Soccer on # 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, Champ</p> <p>Paint Clean Up 1. Norel 2. Joe</p> <p>Preps 1. Tony 2. Ted 3. Steve 4. Billy 5. Lance 6. Carter</p> <p>Regainers 1. Stan</p> <p>6-2</p>	

