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▲ North Myrtle Beach Park and Sport Complex. Photo courtesy of Ashley Wilkinson.

GRAND STRAND EXPANDS SPORTS TOURISM MARKET

or years vacationers have flocked to the Myrtle Beach area for family fun on the beach and on the golf course. Now, the Grand Strand has found a new market to attract visitors: sports tourism. While the Myrtle Beach area has seen the golf market level off, the sports tourism market has grown and city managers and business developers up and down the coast have taken notice. A marked expansion of athletic complexes along the 60+ miles of the Grand Strand has taken place over the past several years.

Among baseball enthusiasts it is no secret that Myrtle Beach is home to The Ripken Experience, a top-notch baseball facility with numerous synthetic fields. For years The Ripken Experience has attracted a large number of tourists in the travel baseball market and the facility continues to expand and improve. Another large scale investment has been undertaken by the city of Myrtle Beach. In recent years the city has added an impressive array of both natural and synthetic fields, highlighted by the outstanding baseball and multi-use facility at the Market Common, a high-end shopping and dining venue development. But perhaps the most aggressive expansion into



In April 2014, the city of North Myrtle Beach will open *a new 162-acre sports field park* to attract an even larger segment of the sports tourism market. The North Myrtle Beach Park and Sports Complex will include eight regulation size soccer fields that have been constructed for multiple field configurations. Four softball fields and two baseball fields are included in the site which is all planted in Tifway 419 bermudagrass.

John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

John Mascaro is President of Turf-Tec International

Answers from page 17

The cement pad on The Ohio State University's football practice field sideline is not actually a problem, but a solution to a problem. When these outdoor practice fields were renovated, one artificial practice field and two natural grass practice fields were constructed and two observation towers were built on each side of the artificial field. Once the team started to practice, the coach favored the natural grass surface and because the tower for filming and observation was located next to only one of the natural grass fields, that field was being over used and started to show signs of wear. To combat the wear problem, the Sports Turf Manager had four cement pads installed at the 50 yard lines and the end zones of the remaining natural grass field and covered them with artificial turf. He then purchased three movable scissor lifts and placed them on the pads to allow filming. Now with two natural grass fields and everyone, including the turf, is happy.

Thanks to Brian Gimbel, Athletic Grounds Supervisor at The Ohio State University in Columbus, for allowing me to take this photo.



If you would like to submit a photograph for John Mascaro's Photo Quiz please send it to John Mascaro, 1471 Capital Circle NW, Ste # 13, Tallahassee, FL 32303 call (850) 580-4026 or email to john@turf-tec.com. If your photograph is selected, you will receive full credit. All photos submitted will become property of SportsTurf magazine and the Sports Turf Managers Association.



the sports tourism market has come from the city of North Myrtle Beach.

In April 2014, the city of North Myrtle Beach will open a new 162-acre sports field park to attract an even larger segment of the sports tourism market. The North Myrtle Beach Park and Sports Complex will include eight regulation size soccer fields that have been constructed for multiple field configurations. Four softball fields and two baseball fields are included in the site which is all planted in Tifway 419 bermudagrass. The softball fields have 225-foot outfields while the baseball fields stretch to 330 feet at the lines and 380 feet in center field. With the use of adjustable fencing the softball and baseball fields can accommodate almost any event played on a diamond.

While the new park will highlight sporting events, the attraction won't stop there. Twenty acres of lakes are included and will have water activities. Other amenities including playgrounds, an amphitheater, two dog parks, walking trails, and a well-manicured open field area for festivals have also been included. "We tried to create a sports complex within a park setting," said Jim Grainger, Public Grounds Superintendent for the city of North Myrtle Beach. But the park goes further than that. An effort to protect the local eco-system was integral to the construction process. Besides saving important local trees and plants for native habitat the park grounds are self-supporting from an irrigation standpoint. The ability to recapture the water that will be used reinforces the parks concept that sports tourism and turfgrass management can be an environmental partner.

The biggest winner in the construction of the new park will be the local economy. John Bullard, Director of Parks and Recreation for North Myrtle Beach, envisions a bright future for the park. "The park could have a \$15-\$18 million dollar economic impact for our area," he said. This could be, pardon the pun, a home run for the Grand Strand. The city of North Myrtle Beach began planning for the park several years ago and created general obligation bonds in the amount of \$15 million to establish the creation of the park. It's easy to see how quickly this investment could pay off.

Matt Gibbons, Superintendent of Sports Tourism, has been marketing the new park and says the response has been tremendous. "We knew we had to do more than 40 events in the new park annually. We thought we would do 60, but we are already at 70 events for the first year and we don't open till April!"

It's obvious that North Myrtle Beach will see the new park fill a need in the marketplace. Matt continued, "The park will have its grand opening by hosting the World Cup of Quidditch." Quidditch, a game made popular by Harry Potter films, has evolved into a huge sport, especially at the university club sport level. Matt shared that more than 80 teams and potentially thousands of spectators are expected at the grand opening World Cup event, only adding to the multiuse agenda of the park.

All this investment up and down the coast serves to increase the sports tourism market that continues to grow. So what's next for the Grand Strand? Has the area filled the void or even saturated it? Not yet according to Steven Rabon of S and R Turf and Irrigation, the contractor who built the sports fields at the new park. "We built 17 new fields around the Grand Strand in 2013 and are scheduled to build seven more nearby in North Carolina in 2014," Steven said. Perhaps the Myrtle Beach area will have to change its marketing strategy from the golf capital of America to the "Sports Tourism Capital of America." Only time will tell.

Ashley Wilkinson is a professor of golf and sports turf management at Horry-Georgetown Technical College in Myrtle Beach, SC.





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hile horses are, naturally, the focus of Thoroughbred racing fans, it is the ground beneath them that is the focus, if not obsession, of track executives. After all, it is the quality, fairness and consistency of a racetrack's surfaces that can make the difference between popularity and scorn, profit and loss, or even life and death.

For starters, owners and trainers want to race their horses over surfaces—be they turf, dirt or synthetic, the three main types in North America—that minimize the risk of injury. If a racetrack wants to attract the top horses in training, which translates into increased betting, they need to have perfectly groomed and manicured ovals. There are typically so many tracks running on any given day that horse owners have the luxury of choosing the ones that are kindest to their pricey investments.

Meanwhile, these racing surfaces need to withstand the pounding of weather as well as the pounding of hooves. If a turf course takes 2 inches of rain overnight, will it be dry enough to run across the next day without ruining it for weeks after? If there are thousands of divots in the grass from one race, will the maintenance team be able to have them filled before the next one? Gamblers prefer betting on turf races, so every time a contest scheduled for the grass course can't be run on its intended surface it can cost a major racetrack tens of thousands of dollars.

Consistency is also key. Handicappers insist on surfaces that give every horse a fair chance of winning, regardless of whether the horse is a "pacesetter" or a "closer." Surfaces that aren't cared for diligently are more likely to develop a "bias," which is racing parlance for a consistency that favors one style over another. If the soil is more packed together on the inside of a track, horses racing along the rail will have a distinct advantage because it will take them less effort to skip across it. Similarly, a turf course with too much water in it can favor the closers, horses who do their best running in the late stages of a race, as the early leaders will use up precious energy digging into the sodden ground. Anytime gamblers notice a significant bias at a track, they will wager less money because they perceive the races as unfair.

Safety is still another reason why high quality surfaces go hand-in-hand with good track management. If any of your material is too hard it can endanger the lives of horses and riders. The 1,200-pound horse running 40 miles per hour is more likely to break a leg if it is pounding its hooves on a dry course that plays like asphalt. Meanwhile, for the jockey that falls off, the "give" in a surface can mean the difference between career-ending paralysis and minor bruising.

It is with all of this in mind that the National Thoroughbred Racing Association, the membership-based trade organization with offices in New York City and Lexington, KY, has supported the Track Superintendents' and Arena Managers' Field Day since its inception in 2001.

"We started the track superintendent meetings to learn from one another, as well as share information about new techniques and technologies being used by other tracks," said George Mc-Dermott, former track superintendent at Lone Star Park, a pre-



the races as unfair.

mier Thoroughbred and American Quarter Horse racing venue in the heart of Dallas-Fort Worth that hosted the Breeders' Cup World Thoroughbred Championships in 2004.

Twelve years later, what started as a modest gathering has turned into an essential conference for track maintenance professionals. The 2013 Field Day, hosted in August at the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club near San Diego, attracted a record 120 registrants from six countries and US territories for workshops and presentations on the latest technologies affecting track maintenance. Participants earn credit for the Safety Training and Continuing Education component of the NTRA's Safety and Integrity Alliance Code of Standards, an industry initiative that assures best practices are in place at the nation's most recognizable racetracks.

"The 'track super' meeting has had great support by tracks in North America and we're now attracting managers from Dubai, Europe and Asia," said Roy Smith, track superintendent at Parx Racing near Philadelphia and a founder of the Field Day. "All are interested in the same goal: making the surfaces safe for the horses and humans, as well as providing the betting public the assurance of a level playing field for all competitors."

The gathering is especially important because racetrack maintenance is a specialty that, despite the billions of dollars that depend on it, can't be gleaned from a text book.

"You don't learn how to manage a dirt, turf or synthetic course in school," said Javier Barajas, track superintendent for both the Dubai Racing Club in the United Arab Emirates and Canterbury Park near the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN. "It's very much a hands-on learning experience and I've been glad to assist and teach others what works for me."

The significance of Field Day was reinforced earlier this year with

the addition of the event's first title sponsor in John Deere. At what is now known as Track Superintendents' and Arena Managers' Field Day Presented by John Deere, the tractor giant benefits from increased exposure in front of decision-makers who spend millions on coddling their terra firma, while track superintendents receive NTRA member discounts on equipment that can make a direct and significant impact to their bottom line.

Additional Field Day sponsors include Stabilizer Solutions, Toro, Hunter Industries, Valvoline, MD Barnmaster, Horsemen's Track & Equipment, AGCO's Challenger and Massey, Arbico Organics, Larcom & Mitchell, Equine Savings, Global Barrier Systems, and Duralock, Ltd.

"There is no comparable gathering for people invested in building and maintaining safe and fair track surfaces," said Bryan Pettigrew, senior vice president of NTRA, who spearheads the industry association's support of the Field Day. "Participation continues to grow, which just shows you that people are waking up to the importance of good track maintenance."

For information on the 2014 Track Superintendents' and Arena Managers' Field Day Presented by John Deere, contact Heather Brown at hbrown@ntra.com or 866-678-4289.



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TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

Check-up on equipment maintenance:

interview with Erik Sides of the Equipment & Engine Training Council

Editor's note: Erik Sides is the executive director of the Equipment & Engine Training Council, York, SC, eetc@eetc.org.



SportsTurf: What are the three most important routine (daily or monthly) maintenance tasks turf managers should do with their mowers?

Sides: Really simple here; each manufacturer usually has a daily/monthly/yearly check list of maintenance items to check. If we set aside some time to check these items as indicated by the manufacturer maintenance check list we could prevent a lot of headaches in the future.

Check fluid levels as suggested by manufacturer. Example: checking fluid levels as required would help us identify if the unit is leaking/using oil early on. A lot of times a leak or issue internally starts out small and gradually gets worse with more use. If we identify the loss of fluid early on it can save headaches and budget dollars.

Check for loose/worn/damaged components/parts/hardware. Example: This really becomes important on hydraulic driven mowers, chaffed/nicked or kinked hydraulic hoses. Generally these damaged hoses will burst when mowing the ball field or prize area causing damage to the turf.

Operator awareness/training. Although this is not on the maintenance checklist, having a well trained operator that stays alert of the unit and his or her surroundings is well worth the time and investment. Operators should be trained on proper operation but also about the warning indicator lamps/alarms and gauges. An alert operator trained what to do in case of an alarm or indicator light can prevent altogether or lessen the damage that may occur. All manufacturers have an Operator Manual that details operation procedures and details what alarms and warning indicators are and what to do when is activated. If you do not have the manual search the manufacturer's website and download the manual. Develop a training program to cover each type of unit you have in your fleet. This can save not only maintenance budget but also has the liability risk to it as well.

ST: Is there something turf managers can do a few times annually that will increase life and performance of mowers?

Sides: Follow recommend fluid change intervals as per the manufacturer recommendations; if you pay close attention you may see a little statement that says (In Extreme/Dusty working conditions change fluids at XXX). Extreme working conditions could be high ambient temperatures (xx) degrees, or under a heavy load for long periods of time, etc. If the fluids operate in extreme temperatures they will need to be changed more often.

The air intake system is another one that may be overlooked. Look for loose/damaged air intake hoses/clamps/housing and change the filter at least once a year if not more. Follow manufacturers' recommended change intervals. Do not blow the air filter off with compressed air or bang up against something to clean. This will damage the filter medium and or damage the seals, replacing the filter is always best. Do not remove the filter/cover to check filter condition if equipped with a filter condition indicator. This keeps the possibility of dirt being introduced into the unit. Engines and dirt do not mix well and is expensive when it does happen.

One other item to be sure of is when washing the unit, **it should be shut off**. I have seen bent piston rods where water was sucked in while engine was running.

ST: How large of an operation, like a college or school district, do you think can support having an in-house mechanic?

Sides: That's hard to say because of so many variables but looking at the annual maintenance budget and what is out-sourced vs. what is done in house would be a good start in making that decision. If you have had to replace complete units because of poor maintenance then this may be also be a deciding factor.

Some dealers do offer a yearly maintenance service program that can be used for smaller fleets but someone still needs to have the ability to perform the daily maintenance checks and setups suggested by the manufacturer.

ST: What's your advice for keeping smaller equipment like trimmers running their best?

Sides: Keeping the filter clean and the fuel quality. Ethanol in fuel has shortened the shelf life of gasoline. When moisture develops over time issues with small equipment take place causing idling issues, weak performance or no start conditions. This then becomes quite expensive for repair if not caught early.

Keep the fuel treated with a quality fuel stabilizer like Ethanol Shield year round. This will protect the fuel system from stale fuel as well as protect it from the harmful effects of ethanol.

ST: In your experience what are the most costly mistakes people make when it comes to equipment maintenance?

Sides: 1. Not having a plan (maintenance checklist). 2. Not following through (routine, routine, routine). 3. Not keeping accurate records (tracking parts used, hours when serviced etc.) 4. Not following proper procedures (can lead to more expense or liability exposure).

TURFTIME EQUIPMENT ADDS PRO-AERATORS TO ITS PRODUCT LINE

These commercial grade aerators offer affordable pricing for schools, landscapers and estate owners. With rugged steel construction and greaseable bushings on a 1" diameter shaft, the Pro-Aerator comes in widths of 42", 63", 84" and 105" and is operated behind 18-30 HP tractors. Coring spoons reach up to 4" depth depending of soil conditions. Independently mounted spoon wheels allow easier turning and minimize turf damage.

EP MINERALS LAUNCHES GAME CHANGER BASEBALL INFIELD CONDITIONER

EP Minerals, LLC announced the launch of Game Changer, a new clay conditioner designed specifically for baseball infields. Game Changer features patent pending KT3 surface technology, formulated to keep baseball infields moist, not muddy, while controlling dust and reducing water usage. When combined with the infusion of a proprietary blend of non-ionic surface treatment, Game Changer uses the absorptive properties of calcined clay as a conditioner to allow more water penetration. The product provides increased moisture retention even in extreme heat, lower water applications, and great dust control. That means reduced water costs and less maintenance, all with better playing conditions. EP Minerals has developed four versions of Game Changer for different infield uses: Game Changer with KT3 Technology, Game Changer Regular Conditioner, Game Changer Mound Clay, and Game Changer Drying Agent. **EP Minerals**

NEW INDOOR "TERF"

ECORE International's Terf provides cushion underfoot, has sound isolating advantages, and adds a significant environmental story that does not exist with any other turf product. Terf was designed with an athlete's body in mind. Of particular importance is force reduction, which measures and evaluates a flooring system's ability to reduce impact, especially to the lower extremities. Terf is designated for indoor use only and meets specifications for competitive field hockey, lacrosse, and soccer fields. It is spike-resistant and ideal for heavy indoor sports training, including use with football pulling sleds and speed schools that promote speed, power, strength, flexibility, and endurance training. Terf is manufactured by fusion-bonding a nylon wear layer to ECORE's recycled rubber underlayment.

ECORE International

MARLINS PARK CONVERTS TO PLATINUM TE PASPALUM

When the Miami Marlins take the field this spring, the new Marlins Park stadium will feature a complete field conversion to Platinum TETM Paspalum turfgrass. Platinum TE meets specific performance needs of the team and of the retractable roof, warm season stadium, as well as addressing environmental priorities, such as predictability and reduced water and nitrogen usage. "Everything changes when you factor in a retractable roof," said Chad Mulholland, director of grounds for the Miami Marlins. "Field temperatures can reach over 100 degrees during the day and drop to as low as 72 when we close the roof on game days. But even more challenging is the shade. There are days when some areas of the field get no sun at all." **Turf Ecosystems**

MEAN GREEN CLEANER & DEGREASER

With a blend of biodegradable detergents, Mean Green Industrial Strength Cleaner & Degreaser quickly cuts through grease and grime, speeding maintenance, repair and rebuild projects. This proven product contains 40% more cleaning ingredients to dissolve grease and grime more quickly than other cleaners. With 30% more solvents and 20% more surfactants, even the most stubborn stains are quickly removed from various industrial surfaces - including metal parts and housings, painted surfaces, vehicle interiors and exteriors, shop interiors and concrete flooring. Mean Green has doubled the amount of chelating agent. It is ideal for use with pressure washers. **CR Brands**, Inc.

NEW PRO LEAGUE CHAMPION BROWN FROM TURFACE

Turface Athletics introduces Pro League Champion Brown, the fourth color to its lineup of infield conditioners. Like all Pro League products, Champion Brown features smaller, uniform particles designed to ensure the ultimate fielding and sliding surface to keep skinned infields safe and playable. Moisture management is critical in keeping skinned infields playable. All Pro League conditioners absorb their weight in water to prevent puddles on the infield and stave off rainouts. That absorbed moisture will later release to prevent a hard, cracked field when it's dry. In addition to Champion Brown, Pro League conditioners come in Natural, Red and Heritage Red colors. Turface

Turf Time Equipment











TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

GRIGG BROS INTRODUCES RHIZONIFY, SOIL SPECIALTY PRODUCT

Introducing Rhizonify, a new technologically advanced, value-added formulation from Grigg Brothers designed to facilitate the interaction of turfgrass roots with water, nutrients, and sugars in the rhizosphere to improve rooting, enhance plant energy status, and promote turfgrass vigor in challenging soil conditions or during environmental stress. Applications of Rhizonify enhance and replenish plant and soil carbohydrates in the rhizosphere to successfully overcome limitations encountered during many conditions turfgrass managers face. Placement and solubility of the carbohydrate and nutrient contained in Rhizonify determine its efficacy.

Grigg Brothers











JACOBSEN LAUNCHES CONTOUR ROTARY MOWER

Jacobsen has launched the new AR722T contour rotary mower, designed to maintain sports and recreation fields. The AR722T features a 65.2 hp Kubota turbo-charged diesel that delivers performance and blade speed in the most challenging terrain without slowing down. The new AR722T is equipped with the SureTrac parallel-cross-series traction system, which provides superior performance on hills. The AR722T's advanced weight transfer system allows for balancing of the machine's weight between the traction unit and decks for optimal traction and ground following in varying terrains. The AR722T is also equipped with Jacobsen's exclusive TrimTek decks that feature a downdraft blade for superior mulching capabilities.

Jacobsen

NEW CUSHMAN HAULER PRO UTILITY VEHICLES

Cushman introduces a fully electric Cushman Hauler PRO with a 72-volt AC drivetrain that provides the range and power once exclusive to gas-powered machines in a silent, zero-emissions vehicle. Cushman vehicles are manufactured by the E-Z-GO Division of Textron Inc. The new Hauler PRO features a 72-volt AC electric drivetrain, upgraded from more traditional 48-volt systems, that offers up to 50 fully-loaded miles of range between charges. The patented AC Drive technology also ensures that the Hauler PRO maintains consistent power and performance from the first pre-dawn chores to the last light of dusk, without the noisy drone of a gas engine.

SAPIP-IRT WIRELESS IR LEAF TEMP SYSTEM

The new SapIP-IRT wireless infrared temperature system from Dynamax, Inc. is the latest development in IR leaf temperature sensing for use in irrigation scheduling and plant stress detection. This new system allows for small IRT nodes to be distributed up to 500 meters (1600 ft) apart throughout a field, and data to be collected with a single wireless modem. Data is then displayed and graphed on a website where data files can also be downloaded to your PC. Plant stress models are used to determine if, and when, your crops need irrigation, and flags are used when irrigation is required.

Dynamax, Inc.

FMC INTRODUCES TRIPLE CROWN T&O INSECTICIDE

A multiple action insecticide providing fast-acting, long-lasting broad-spectrum control of more than 30 above- and below-ground turf and ornamental pests, Triple Crown® T&O insecticide is now available from FMC Professional Solutions. Triple Crown is a three-way combination of FMC bifenthrin, FMC zeta-cypermethrin and imidacloprid, offering multiple modes of action on key pests including ants, fire ants, grubs (masked chafer, European chafer, and Japanese beetle), chinch bugs, annual bluegrass weevils, ticks, mites, billbugs, mole crickets, and more. Research among university specialists in various parts of the country has shown that Triple Crown delivers fast results against damaging annual bluegrass weevil and billbug adults, chinch bugs, mole crickets and many other insects. **FMC Professional Solutions**

SISIS TO LAUNCH TWO NEW MACHINES

SISIS will be introducing this year the Rotorake 600HD pedestrian de-thatcher and the Rotorake TM1000 tractor mounted de-thatcher which now features a new interchangeable reel system. Along with the two new machines, which are being launched into the US market for the first time, will be the highly popular Veemo MK2 heavy duty tractor mounted de-thatcher, Auto Rotorake MK5 self-propelled heavy duty de-thatcher and Multislit 1200 tractor mounted deep slitter. The Rotorake 600HD is a heavy duty pedestrian de-thatcher and linear aerator which can be used for regular, routine use at a shallow setting or a deeper setting. The SISIS Rotorake TM1000 is a tractor mounted unit which is now available with five quick release interchangeable reels to aid the removal and control of thatch and help reduce standing surface water by improving water infiltration. **SISIS**

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