

Turf Max introduces Pigment Remover

To help remove pigment stains and build up quickly and easily from spray equipment and keep equipment clean, Turf Screen introduces new Turf Max Pigment Remover. Using Turf Max Pigment Remover is as simple as applying it to the pigment stained equipment, waiting five minutes and pressure washing the mess away. The Pigment Remover is safe on almost all turf equipment surfaces, and will help return the equipment to like-new condition, even after the first application.

Turf Max



Versatile hose reel for grounds maintenance

The compact, lightweight design of the Hannay Reels 1500 Series is specifically engineered for long lengths of hose used for a variety of applications including turf care, power washing, spraying, and wash down. This versatile reel features materials and finish that can stand up to corrosive fertilizers and pesticides to protect the reel and user. Keeps hoses organized and out of the way to prevent accidents; available in both manual and power rewind; can be truck-, trailer-, or garage-mounted on wheels, or carried by hand; equipped to handle 1/4-inch to 5/8-inch ID hose; chain and sprocket drive powered by electric, hydraulic or compressed air motor; standard inlet: 90 degree ball bearing swivel joint, 1/2-inch female NPT threads

Hannay Reels



Nufarm's Anuew turf growth regulator

Nufarm launched Anuew turf growth regulator, a proprietary tool for cool- and warm-season turf management. The active ingredient in Anuew is prohexadione calcium, a new active ingredient with a novel mode of action. Anuew can be applied to all managed turf areas including sports fields and similar areas. Key reasons for use of a turf growth regulator like Anuew are to suppress vegetative growth and improve density and quality of desired turfgrasses.

According to a joint study by the University of Georgia, Clemson University and North Carolina State University, turf growth regulators may be used to manage annual bluegrass growth and development.

Nufarm Americas



Exmark 20-inch slicer seeder

The Exmark 20-inch Slicer Seeder performs verticutting, dethatching and overseeding with each pass. Durable high-carbon steel blades remove thatch and provide maximum seed-to-soil contact to enable superior germination. Productivity is maximized by the large-capacity 40-pound seed hopper, which allows the 20-inch Slicer Seeder to handle big jobs with fewer stops. The large-diameter mixer regulates seed flow based on ground speed to ensure even seed delivery. A Subaru EX270 engine delivers reliable, quiet and fuel-efficient power, and emissions compliance, with EPA and CARB certifications. Infinitely variable hydrostatic drive and powered reverse make the Exmark 20-inch Slicer Seeder as easy to maneuver and operate as a self-propelled mower.

Exmark

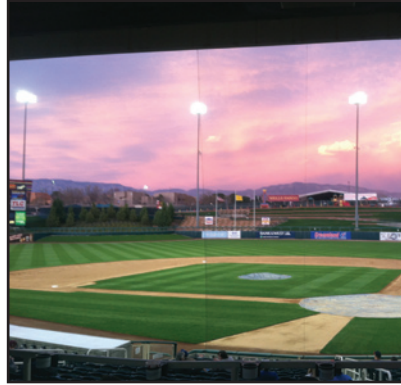
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ISOTOPES PARK, Albuquerque, New Mexico



- ▶ **Category of Submission:** Professional Baseball
- ▶ **Sports Turf Manager:** Casey Griffin
- ▶ **Title:** Director of Field Operations
- ▶ **Education:** Oregon State University Bachelors of Science degree in Horticulture with emphasis in Turf Management
- ▶ **Experience:** My knowledge of the turf industry continues to expand. With a great enjoyment for the outdoors, my interest in turf began in 2003. I have built upon my experience by continually working in all aspects of turf maintenance. I worked a 3-month internship for the Eugene Emeralds and later wrote my thesis based on that experience. While attending OSU, I worked on their athletic grounds, primarily focusing on their baseball, softball and soccer facilities. Immediately after graduating in 2008, I came to Albuquerque and have worked my way from graduate intern to management to now director. Through these experiences, I have learned new maintenance practices and observed different management styles that have helped shape me into the professional leader I am today.
- ▶ **Full-time staff:** Gil South
- ▶ **Other staff:** Davin Sandia (intern), C.J Gershon (intern), Guy Feltman, Jeremy Lachman, Michael Gonzales, Robert Gonzales, Thomas Nelson, Travis Stanhope, Jeremy Sandia, Quinn Padilla, Kirk Allen, Bradley Valle, Cody Hathaway & volunteer James Keefner.
- ▶ **Original construction:** 2003
- ▶ **Turfgrass variety:** Four Variety Kentucky Bluegrass Blend- 25% Bewtiched 25% Prosperity 25% P-105 25% Moonlight SLT
- ▶ **Drainage:** Herringbone
- ▶ **Renovation in 2012:** A complete re-sod of the field was preformed, as well as changing the existing grade of a ½% crown on the infield to a flat grade. The outfield was not “re-graded” although it was herigated and worked many directions. In addition, portions of the irrigation

system were redesigned. Along with the removal of the game mound, approximately 2” (140 ton) of infield mix material was removed from the existing dirt playing surface.

Since being built in 2003, the bluegrass varieties began to colonize and *Poa annua* had taken over approximately 50-60% of the grass surface, which resulted in a weakening root system and undesirable aesthetics. This rectified poor playability and player safety that could no longer be overlooked. Due to heavily ramped grass edge to clay surface transitions, it became necessary to remove/drop our infield mix playing surface 2” in order to tie in our new short cut bluegrass sod to a seamless infield skin playing surface. The ½% crown on the infield was eliminated and laser graded to a flat surface to remediate the feeling of the pitchers throwing uphill. Although the rubber sat at 10” above home plate, the crown of the infield and numerous re-sods in front of the mound gave the perception that the rubber was in fact lower than regulation standards.

The sideline irrigation zone was split to allow for flexibility in watering times considering shade and sun issues that varied through the year. For example, in late fall and winter our first base sideline was often frozen over, or overwatered, in order for the 3rd base sideline to receive adequate moisture. An additional zone was also added to the infield irrigation system. Previously, there were four Hunter I 40 heads, one on each side of the infield, which resulted in poor distribution uniformity, excess overlap, and frequent puddling on skinned areas due to high spray volume. To remediate this issue, I replaced the four I-40's with four I-20's and added three I-20's to the new zone. This allowed for excellent distribution of water, while eliminating all overlap and puddling issues on skinned areas. Although the I-20's were more susceptible to drift, the amount of time spent hand watering the infield on windy days was minimal in comparison to time spent constantly repairing puddled up skin areas.



WHY STMA SHOULD CONSIDER YOUR FIELD A WINNER?

There were a multitude of challenges we faced, and a series of triumphs we achieved this year. One of the many challenges was that of the field renovation. Renovations are clearly difficult regardless, but having the responsibility of overseeing a \$250,000 project within the first month as Director was an extremely intense and rewarding opportunity. Additional projects we took on were the re-structuring of the bullpen mounds and home plate area, foul line re-surfacing, and instituting a knowledgeable approach for Poa management.

Paramount to the success of a nearly flawless field during the extreme spring and summer in New Mexico is the attentive care and hard work that was put in over the fall and winter. Example of this was our 9-11" root depth coming into the season. Weather posed un-predictable challenges as well. After enduring a college season that began in February in 25 degree weather, suffering through one of the worst droughts in history (3.37" total precipitation, April-August) we were dealt a monsoon season which at one point, delivered 89 mph winds and 41 % of our seasons rainfall in a 45-minute period, during a game. Through a schedule of roughly 100 game/on field events, we maintained a level of excellence that resulted in a Pacific Coast League Presidential Commendation award.

As sports turf managers, we all deal with constant challenges; however in this particular year with this particular set of circum-

Field of the Year

stances I feel that our crew and our field performed at an extraordinary level. My staff went above and beyond the requirement for success as a sports turf management crew and our relentless dedication was exemplified by consistent playability, predictable performance of our playing surface, player safety and an aesthetically beautiful ballpark.

Moisture management is the key to the success of our field. In Albuquerque, this has to do with the combination of wind, heat, and lack of precipitation. To maximize the effectiveness of our watering program, the use of wetting agents/pellets is vital. When hand watering turf areas, Aqua-Aid, a wetting agent pellet is attached to our 1" hose. We also use bagged clay and occasionally clay bricks as a backfill to high traffic area edges in order to help maintain the integrity of that edge.

SportsTurf: What channels of communication do you use to reach coaches, administrators, and users of your facility? Any tips for communicating well?

Griffin: Our preferred channel of communication is direct conversation; occasionally I will speak with our coaching staff via phone to keep one another informed as to mutual needs and wants. Generally speaking, we are talking with them (coaches/manager) daily. We have weekly meetings with our entire front office staff to ensure the lines of communications always remain open. Whenever we schedule outside events to take place on the field or at the stadium, we discuss specific guidelines pertaining to facility use in person and always present any restrictions up front to avoid confusion. It also allows us to prioritize field care as well as be flexible with what is required of us if necessary.

Tips on communicating well: early and often. Regular communication is mandatory to avoid potential surprises that could set you back. Pick and choose your battles, you have to remain flexible and keep the bigger picture in mind. Having a discussion about why you are reluctant to have something happen on your field might help you understand why it's necessary and allow you to adjust accordingly. It also helps the other party understand where you are coming from and how their event might adversely affect your field.

ST: What are your specific responsibilities?

Griffin: As Director of Field Operations I effectively oversee the playing surface at Isotopes Park. Included in that, are managing a staff of roughly 20 people during approximately 100 on field events (games, concerts, weddings, fundraisers, campouts, clinics, high school & college games and any other special events). The development and execution of a specified nutritional program for the grass based on annual soil and tissue testing that ensures a safe, consistent and aesthetically pleasing look, while taking into consideration an efficient and conservative moisture management program. Additionally, managing the care of our landscape, equipment maintenance and detailed recordkeeping of field maintenance, equipment, budget, and employees.

ST: How did you get your start in turf management? What was your first job?

Griffin: As a native of Oregon, I grew up around farms that ranged from blueberries to corn to Christmas trees. But what first drew my interest were all the grass seed farms. After competing in baseball, and working on golf courses, turf management became a keen interest. Once

deciding to attend Oregon State and study the science behind turf grass, the writing was on the wall and there was no looking back, sports turf was it! While at school, I attained my first sport turf "job" and completed an internship with the Eugene Emeralds (short season San Diego Padres). This opportunity gave me great insight on how get a lot done with very little. It was a kick start to where I am now.

ST: What practices do you use to keep your infield skin in peak condition?

Griffin: I rely heavily on consistent cultural practices and developing the right combination of conditioners pertaining to the different type of seasons we have here in Albuquerque. Being that this is a high altitude desert, moisture management is extremely challenging. We have very low humidity index, little cloud cover, high temperatures and extreme winds. Spring time (March-May) brings on any given day, winds that gust from 20-50 mph, July-September is our monsoon season where we can get ½" -2" of rain in the matter of a minutes. Regardless of season, we want our infield skin to play consistent and to do that we must be consistent. During home stands, every morning we work our skin with a nail drag for a couple of hours, allowing our infield mix to tighten up. We strive for about 80-20 ratio with vitrified to calcined clay in the spring. The vitrified really hugs to our clay and allows us to retain our moisture through the winds, while the calcined clay helps reduce our compaction and gives us good protection by not penetrating our infield mix. In the summer (July-September) our rain season has arrived and we use more of a 50-50 ratio. A lot of this is preventative but by increasing our calcined clay content, we are helping absorb any potential rain that may come through. Both products work well together.

ST: What changes if any are you considering or implementing for the winning field in 2014?

Griffin: As far as changing anything for 2014, our goal is to continually strive to be the best we can be as a crew. You can never pay too much attention to the little things. No one has ever said that edge is too crisp or that line is too straight. Nutritionally speaking, we are in a constant state of research, growing and learning from knowledge shared through colleagues, reps and industry publications. Each year brings unique challenges and we just have to be prepared to adapt. That's the fun part of being in the turf industry.

ST: How do you see the Sports Turf Manager's job changing in the future?

Griffin: As the industry continues to grow and develop I would like to see corresponding employment opportunities become readily available for those who are qualified. I see the standard set for sports turf applicants being raised considerably. There are always the newest and greatest products being developed, but by no means do we need to reinvent the wheel. As much as new techniques are always being implemented, the turf manager position will always rely on the ability to get out on your grass and understand what it needs. ■

STMA would like to thank Carolina Green, Ewing, Hunter Industries and World Class Athletic Surfaces for their continued support of the Field of the Year Awards Program.

For more on the latest news, please visit www.sportsturf.com and www.stma.org.

SAFE

The Foundation for Safer Athletic Fields

SAFE hires intern and expands educational outreach

The Foundation for Safer Athletic Fields for Everyone (The SAFE Foundation) has hired a summer intern. Kenzie Jay, who will be a senior in the fall in Strategic Communications at the University of Kansas, is focused on develop-

ing content for SAFE's website, SafeFields.org. She is interviewing previous scholarship and grant recipients to find out where they are today, promoting and soliciting for SAFE's annual fundraising events, and expanding its social media presence.

In addition, she will be working on SAFE's new educational videos that target volunteers, parents, coaches and youth athletes on how to maintain a field. SAFE's videos will be available at SafeFields.org in late summer

FIELD OF THE YEAR



Awards Programs: Field of the Year & Innovative applications are ready

Two of STMA's important awards programs have updated applications online. Go to STMA.org and click on the Professionalism tab, then on each awards program.

Field of the Year recognizes those members who have managed their fields using ingenuity, solid maintenance and cultural programs, and environmental stewardship, while maximizing budget dollars and resources. Awards are given to fields for baseball, softball, soccer, football and sporting grounds at the schools/parks level, collegiate level and professional level. Winners are recognized with a plaque presented at the STMA Awards Banquet, signature clothing, and in an issue of *SportsTurf* magazine. Three complimentary hotel nights at the STMA conference are also provided to winners.

The Innovative Award program has been adjusted to provide more value to STMA's commercial members. For the 2015 awards program, which will be judged this year, commercial members have a 2-year time period in which to introduce a new product,

service, or piece of equipment and apply for an Innovative Award. Previously, it was one year; it had to be introduced sometime following the current exhibition and shown at the next exhibition. The new, 2-year time period will allow those submitting the opportunity to apply two times for an innovative award with that same innovation. This will provide more time for the innovation to garner visibility, testimonials and real-world use.

President David Pinsonneault appointed a new task group, the Innovative Awards Task Group, to review previous procedures because no Innovative Awards were given this year. In addition to the expanded time period for introduction, the Task Group recommends that a separate committee of non-commercial members judge the program, rather than the Awards Committee, which is heavily involved in judging the Field of the Year and Minor League Baseball Sports Turf Manager of the Year. More media promotion of the winning innovation is also being planned in addition to its current recognition. STMA presents

its winner(s) with an award during the trade show, signage at the trade show, recognition during the annual awards banquet, and authorizes the use of a special logo for the winning innovation.

The Task Group encourages commercial companies to submit for this program. It is very important to the judging process to include why the company believes their product, service or equipment is innovative, and explain how it is being used in the marketplace to substantially enhance the effectiveness of the sports turf manager and/or make the playing surface safer and more playable. The Task group gives a broad definition to the meaning of innovation: products, services or equipment that are cutting edge and have never been seen.

The Task Group is chaired by Rene Asprion, and its members include Steve Bush, CSFM, Ben Polimer, Chad Price, CSFM, CFB and Matt Tobin.

The applications for both the Field of the Year and the Innovative programs are due October 15.

Standout students receive special one-time Watson Scholarship from Toro

To celebrate its centennial (100 years in business) year, the Toro Company recently requested and received applications for a special one-time scholarship. Several standout students were awarded the scholarship. They are Andrew Wilhelm, Purdue University; Kevin Hansen, Iowa State University; and Chrissie Segars, Oklahoma State University.

The new Dr. James R. Watson Legacy

Scholarship Program, funded by The Toro Giving Program, is a special one-time scholarship being given in celebration of The Toro Company's Centennial, which is in July. The scholarship honors long-time Toro agronomist Dr. James Watson who passed away Oct. 1, 2013.

Three \$2,000 scholarships were awarded through the SAFE Foundation, STMA's charitable foundation, to deserving collegiate

students who have at least one semester of education to complete before graduating. The scholarships were awarded to students who will attain a degree in sports turf management or comparable field of study from a two-year, four-year or graduate program.

In addition to the cash award, the students will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the Toro Sports Fields and Grounds Forum, being held July 28-31, 2014 in Minneapolis.

STMA recognizes its 5 & 10 year members

Thank you to STMA members who have reached the 5-year and 10-year milestones of membership. We salute you for your commitment to the profession! Through your support, you strengthen the industry, and you

make possible STMA's continued development of resources and educational programs that are the foundation of the value of membership.

These members received their service pins in May.

5-YEAR

Adamski	Julie	Fleming	Tim
Altamuro	Ian	Gerth	Joshua
Atkins	Jeremy	Gianoli	John
Baldino	Ron	Gilbert	Jeff
Bardell	Tracy	Gonzalez	Frankie Jr.
Barnes	Joshua	Goyne	Thomas
Beggs	Andrew	Grefrath	Phillip
Bell	Kevin	Hardy	Kevin CSFM
Bland	Justin	Hooten	Mitchell
Bonneau	Mark	Hopkins	Michael
Breeden	Gregory	Horne	Logan
Brown	Thomas	Huelster	Gene
Bryant	Aaron	Huffman	Rick
Buckner	Tab	Hunt	Joel
Burks	Brannon	Jacobson	Jerry
Byron	Bill	Jennings	Dan
Compau	James	Johnson	Andrew
Cook	Daniel	Johnson	Rob
CroB	Dale	Johnson	ScoO
CröseC	Ken	Kirsch	Thomas
Dan	Vlad	Kline	Blaine
Dickson	Kyley	Koester	Jason CGCS
Eberhart	Shaun	Kolander	Kelly
Eddington	Jock	Lansdowne	Jeff
Emanuel	Jeff	Lauer	Christopher
		LeBlanc	Robert
		Lock	Ryan

Mardesich	John
Mast	William
McCaskill	David
Merrell	Kenneth
Mitchusson	MaOheW
Moffat	Mark
Morvay	Michael
Mueller	Jason
Mueller	Jason
Nagelhout	Garald Jr.
Peters	George
Peters	James
Peterson	Nephi
Picha	Donald
Pifer	Tom
Powers	Bryant
Reams	Chris
Rolli	JoLynda
Schader	Troy
Schiller	MaOheW
Schools	Brian
Schoonmaker	Brink
Shaw	Sean
Simons	Zach
Snide	Connor
Soper	Michael
Spacone	David

Spier	Donald
Steinman	Alexander
Stokes	Brian
Stokka	Dave
SuOon	Ken
Taylor	Kevin CSFM
Thompson	David
Tucker	Wayne
Umeda	Kai
Vandyne	Jim
Watson	Stephen
Wolsfeld	Bill

10-YEAR

Allgood	Dave
Alterio	Chad
Appelfeller	Weston CSFM
Ashworth	Scott
Avellino	Arthur
Balough	Matt
Bergdoll	James CSFM
Betulius	Joe
Boettcher	Michael
Borgen	Cory
Bossard	Andrew
Boswell	Jack

Brazil	Joey	CSFM	Hanson	Carl	Patterson	Paul	Trusty	Suz
Brosnan	James	Ph.D.	Harrison	J.K.	Patton	Mark	Turnour	John
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Connors	Mike		Hopkins	Rodney	Sallee	Mike	Wear	Glenl CSFM
Conway	Devin		Hrivnak	Michael CSFM	Salmore	Nathan	Weaver	Christopher
Crider	Stephen		Hurlburt	Derek	Sample	Robert	Wharton	Steve
Crowe	Jeffrey		Jeffreys	Brad	Schneweis	Tracy	White	Bryan
Daily	Darian		Johnson	Evan	Schroder	Eric	Wiggins	Jim
Dufault	Randy		Johnson	Allen CSFM	Selsor	Kevin	Winter	Jim
Dunivan	Don		Jones	Alpha	Shemesh	Daniel	Wolfe	Lloyd S
England	Pete		Krebs	Ray	Sievers	Arthur	Wynn	Jeffery
Fesler	Chris		Kubacki	Mark	Slaton	Kyle CSFM	Young	Matt
Finnerty	Mark		Kubly	Bill	Smith	Michael	Zimmerman	Steve
Floyd	Weston		Lamle	John	Sommers	John		
Frew	Jason		Lovell	David	Spoor	Robert		
Gerhardt	Matt		Mackey	Brad	Strickler	Robert APRP		
Giacalone	John		Mahaney	Thomas	Sulak	Robert		
Goatley	Michael Ph.D.		Marseglia	Dan	Takas	Nick		
Godin	Bruce		McGinty	Chris	Taylor	Alan		
Gorra	Carl		McKnight	Grant	Thorson	Wayne		
Graves	Jon		Mitchell	Dennis	Thurn	Mary		

STMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona: www.azstma.org

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:
<http://imstma.blogspot.com/>

Indiana - Contact Clayton Dame, Claytondame@hotmail.com or Brian Bornino, bornino@purdue.edu or Contact Joey Stevenson, jstevenson@indyindians.com

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

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

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

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

Oklahoma Chapter STMA: 405-744-5729;
Contact: Dr. Justin Moss okstma@gmail.com

Oregon STMA Chapter: www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org
oregonstma@gmail.com

Ozarks STMA: www.ozarksstma.org

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

Southern California Chapter: www.socalstma.com

South Carolina Chapter of STMA: www.scstma.org

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

Texas Sports Turf Managers Association: www.txstma.org

Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association: www.vstma.org

Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association: www.wstma.org

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1 What is your company's primary business? (check **ONLY ONE**)

F Sports Complex G Athletic Field and/or Park Architect/Designer
T School, College or University P Park
H Other (please specify) _____

2 Which of the following best describes your title? (check **ONLY ONE**)

A EXECUTIVE/ADMINISTRATOR — President, Owner, Partner, Director, General Manager, Chairman of the Board, Purchasing Agent, Athletic Director
B MANAGER/SUPERINTENDENT — Superintendent, Landscape/Ground Maintenance Manager, Foreman, Supervisor
C GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL — Government Commissioner, Agent, Other Government Official
D SPECIALIST — Architect, Designer, Consultant, Agronomist, Horticulturist, Certified Specialist
F COACH
E Other (please specify) _____

3 Do you have the authority to buy, specify or recommend products and/or services for your business or organization?

Y Yes N No

4 Yearly operating expenditures (excluding salaries)

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Q&A with Dr. David Minner

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speed establishment. The strongest recommendation I can give you and the factor that will likely impact your success the most will be the seeding date. Construction projects are notorious for being delayed if you don't stay on top of the progress. Get the irrigation in as soon as possible even if it means seeding and watering some fields before others are completed. Set a seeding date of August 20

and hope for September 1. There is a huge difference between seeding the first of September compared to the end of September. Your target should be 100% turf cover by mid-October; more specifically no soil showing, two or more tillers on plants, and grass at a height that would require mowing. In my opinion you've got a fun project and a good plan; now make it happen. ■



Q&A with Dr. David Minner

Professor, Iowa State University

Questions? Send them to David Minner at Iowa State University, 106 Horticulture Hall, Ames, IA 50011 or email dminner@iastate.edu. Or, send your question to Grady Miller at North Carolina State University, Box 7620, Raleigh, NC 27695-7620, or emailgrady_miller@ncsu.edu.

Advice on September seeding project

I've been gathering information to renovate our 20-acre baseball, softball, and soccer complex in Wisconsin and I was looking for a second opinion on some of my thoughts and concerns. Work starts in mid-June with removal of trees, fences and installation of water, sewer, and power. We have an expected seeding date around 20 September, but I'm pushing to seed by Labor Day.

Ron Novinska, Oregon School District (WI)

A second opinion is a great idea with the plethora of turfgrass information out there these days. It certainly can be confusing when you get two completely different answers to the same question. Many times an "expert" will have to generalize because the situation is not fully understood. Ron has done his homework and is now faced with making the best choice for his specific situation. Getting a second, third, and fourth opinion is a good idea because it brings out specific experiences that others have had, and the voice of experience is always a good thing.

What is your thought on using a Kentucky bluegrass blend vs. a mixture of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass on a bare ground seeding in September?

Ron used the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) to evaluate the performance of local seed suppliers. He chose a Kentucky bluegrass blend containing Shannon, Midnight, Sombrero, Fullback, and Gaelic because three of the varieties were in the top 10 according to NTEP overall quality ranking; nice work, Ron. His specific question was, should these Kentucky bluegrass varieties be used alone or should they be mixed with 15% perennial ryegrass? It is a standard practice to mix perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass for many turf applications. The ryegrass germinates faster and that helps with grow-in, especially if the seeding date gets toward the end of September.

However, for higher end baseball fields I have stopped using ryegrass in the mixture because coaches are complaining about the ryegrass forming clumps and seed heads that are unattractive, difficult to mow, and make

the ball bounce erratically. The ryegrass may never become a nuisance when fields are actively growing and adequately maintained with water, fertilizer, and mowing. But, I too have experienced unfavorable appearance and playing conditions when ryegrass clumps green up faster in the spring, or remain green and clumpy when fields dry. Then in May and June the ryegrass seed heads can completely evade reel mowing and often look stemy and objectionable even with rotary mowing.

We have overseeded ryegrass into compacted areas near dugouts, on deck circles, and outfielder areas, only to have the coach chastise us after the forbidden ryegrass turns ugly. So I have said goodbye to rye on my baseball fields because of coach's preference, and I agree with them on this one. Most of you don't like it when I make this comment but remember to a certain extent we are here to serve the coach and players, so openly listen to their opinion. If they don't mind the playing quality of ryegrass then it ain't broke and don't need fixing. The same case can be made for Ron's competition and practice soccer fields even though ball roll is not quite as important as it is in baseball. The density, low mowing, and playing quality of today's improved Kentucky bluegrass varieties do not need any assistance from perennial ryegrass. Overseed any worn or thin areas with more Kentucky bluegrass if needed during the first playing season. In a year or two if worn areas continue you can always turn to perennial ryegrass to help maintain 100% turf cover. Once you start adding perennial ryegrass to a field it will never leave or revert back to a monoculture of Kentucky bluegrass without killing

everything and starting over. Don't get me wrong; perennial ryegrass is a very important grass for many sports turf situations, just realize what you are getting into; and for me, I am starting to consider ryegrass a weed in my bluegrass baseball fields.

Ron had more questions on how to ensure better establishment since Kentucky bluegrass establishes so slow and his practice soccer and softball outfields will be watered with a large, commercial traveling gun. *"The person overseeing the grow-in wants to use compost as a mulch for the seed. I was thinking of using a mulch like Encap and incorporating the compost into the topsoil instead. I don't know if the compost will hold moisture like mulch."*

Compost will increase water holding both within and on the surface of the soil, so it's a good choice to use well decomposed compost for your project. Even better is your decision to incorporate the compost into the surface 2 inches and then add the pelletized mulch over the surface to further speed establishment. The pelletized mulch is better than compost at sealing the surface and reducing evaporation. It also helps protect seedlings from being dislodged when the large water droplets from the rain train impact the surface. Your skills will be tested to devise a method of keeping the surface adequately moist and at the same time driving or walking on the surface to pull out the traveling gun. Keep the surface inch wet during the first 2 weeks to avoid delayed germination.

Regardless, the pelletized mulch should help you with both tasks. They also make fertilizer impregnated mulch that will help

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