



Installation of the sand-conduit drainage system, July 1994.

(Top) Ted Mercer of Evergreen Lawn Care stands in front of the new scoreboard, which like the field, came from donations.

(Left) Troy Memorial Stadium serves as the center of a 20,000-population community in southern Ohio.

Troy Memorial Stadium Gets a Lot of Help From Its Friends

By Bob Tracinski

Troy, OH, is a town of just under 20,000 people, nestled 20 miles from Dayton and 70 miles from Cincinnati and Columbus. It has 189 acres of parkland and an 18-hole public golf course. Jogging and biking trails are just a few of the perks that attest to the community's interest in sports. The town's centerpiece is 10,000-seat Troy Memorial Stadium, a combination football/soccer facility that shows what Small-Town America can accomplish when the whole community pulls together.

Troy's original, 10,000-seat stadium was built in 1949. The old cinder track circling the football field was replaced with an all-weather track in 1976. The manual irrigation system was updated in 1985 to an 11-head, automatic irrigation system. Troy Memorial Stadium is city owned, but used by the school system, which is in charge of maintenance. And the native-soil field, reserved for varsity-level competition and selected special events, looked good and held up well.

But soccer had come to Troy. Junior high and high school boy's and girl's teams deserved the opportunity to play their key games in the town's showplace

arena. Troy Field had a maximum playable width of 160 feet and a 26-inch crown, far from ideal for soccer. The track had deteriorated. Changes in competition standards made its existing 440-yard length and eight 36-inch-wide lanes outdated. Lighting was inadequate for both the participants and the spectators. Space was insufficient to increase field and track size within existing dimensions.

For Troy Memorial Stadium, it was time for a lot of help from its friends.

Athletic Director Tom Mercer, Supervisor of Facilities Jim Kaster and School Treasurer Don Pence formed the core of the Troy Memorial Stadium Renovation Project planning committee.

They asked for input from coaches, other field users and the maintenance team. They dug deeply for details. For example, Kevin Jacobs, a member of the maintenance staff specializing in grounds maintenance, said, "They asked me and my crews how we were currently handling the field-stripping and lining procedures. With the renovation, a designated paint-refilling area is set aside, hidden from public view, with EPA-approved drainage and trapping systems. The same level of investigation

and planning went into every aspect of the project."

They called on the expertise of two of the town's leading engineers, the retired Henry Iglesias and Richard Klockner of Klockner & Associates. Klockner worked on the surveying crew of the original field and, with grandchildren in the school system, had a more than passing interest in the field. These two men generously volunteered their services — and sparked an innovative idea.

Community Spirit and Private Donations

By the time the three-phase, \$1.3 million renovation plan was completed, so was the resolve to raise the funds from donations within the community — with no help from city funds or tax dollars.

Don Pence and Tom Mercer teamed up to coordinate the project and fund-raising, launching efforts in April 1993. Sept. 2, 1994, was the targeted completion date for Phases I and II — requiring \$1.1 million in funds. Phase III, calling for \$200,000 in improvements to Ferguson Field, located near Troy Junior High, is scheduled for 1995.

Phase I, which was the installation of new poles, lights and an upgrade of elec-

trical service, was completed in time for the 1993 homecoming football game. The cost for this phase was \$190,000.

Phase II was more complex, with \$910,000 needed to move the south stands back 40 feet to allow for a regulation-size running track, install the new running track, install a new storm- and sanitary sewer system, enlarge and upgrade the restrooms and concession areas, construct a press box on the south stands, remodel the press box on the north stands, replace the scoreboard, recap stadium seating, repaint the decking, spruce up the ticket and entrance areas, install additional paving and rebuild the field to accommodate both football and soccer.

Field renovation alone called for regrading and widening the playing surface to meet standards for soccer, increasing out-of-bounds areas to provide better safety for participants, improving soil composition, planting new athletic turf, and installing new irrigation and drainage systems.

With one year and three months to raise more than \$1 million from a population base just under 20,000, the odds were darn good.

This is Troy, where community spirit soars. The original stadium was part of a 1947 bond issue, proposed by Edward A. Hobart, president of Hobart Bros. Co., which called for a comprehensive sports expansion program — a new golf course, bridge and the stadium — at a cost of \$450,000. The stadium was to serve as a memorial to those who fought and died for their country. If the town passed the bond issue, the plan called for the C. C. Hobart Foundation to donate a winter sports building, Hobart Arena, to the city. A special election was held March 4, 1947. The issue passed with a whopping 88.3 percent "yes" vote.

None of that community spirit was lost in the '90s. Ted Mercer (Tom's brother) is general manager of Ever-Green Sports Turf, a division of Troy's Evergreen Lawn Care Inc., the general contractor for the playing field reconstruction. According to Mercer, "Although the fundraising project was intensive, it wasn't really a hard sell. The stadium is a landmark of this community and with the private-donor setup, if you didn't like the idea, you didn't need to give anything. There were few negative comments and little criticism. The city of Troy, Troy City Council, the park board and Troy Chamber of Commerce were behind the effort 100 percent. All of the local media — *Troy Daily News*, *Troy Advocate*, WTRJ radio, WPTW/WCLR radio and WHIO-TV —

gave their support with continuing coverage, public service announcements and other assistance."

As Mercer and Pence, along with a dedicated group of volunteers, put out a mail blitz to local residents and alumni of Troy High School, and hit the luncheon-meeting circuit to raise funds, they were prepared with a full layout of the proposed renovations and a far-reaching commemorative gift and incentive program with perks for each plateau. Because this was truly a grassroots effort, donation requests started at a dollar.

For a \$1-\$49 donation, the donor received acknowledgment and a deed of the gift; at \$50-\$499, along with the acknowledgment and deed, the donor's name would be listed on a stadium entrance plaque; a \$500-\$999 donation was recognized with a name listing on the Letterman's Club Plaque under the home stands; and for \$1,000-\$2,499, the donor's second listing moved "up" to the Varsity Club Plaque under the home stands. Donors also received a signed and numbered print depicting Troy Memorial

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Stadium; at \$2,500-\$4,999, the second listing moved to the Scarlet and Gray Club Plaque under the home stands and the stadium print would be matted and ready for framing; and at the level of \$5,000 and more, the second listing was on the Trojan Club Plaque under the home stands and the print would be professionally matted and framed for the donor.

Small rewards? Perhaps, but highly significant within the community.

Who chipped in? Hundreds of Troy citizens, Troy High School alumni from across the country, business and industry, service clubs, fraternal orders, booster organizations, parent-teacher organizations, student groups and local foundations.

Several donors were singled out for special thanks, including Boyer Trust, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bravo, the C.C. Hobart Foundation, the city of Troy, Dayton Power and Light, the Paul G. Duke Foundation, Earhart Petroleum, Richard W. Klockner & Associates, Robert B. Meeker, Dr. and Mrs. Walter Meeker, PMI Food Equipment Group, Peoples Savings Bank of Troy, Thom and Pat Robinson, Star Bank, Stillwater Technologies, Trojan All-Sports Booster Club, the Troy Foundation and one anonymous donor. The single largest contribution was \$250,000.

In addition, in-kind donations of time, labor and materials were received from local professionals and contractors. In fact, with actual costs for Phases I and II running at \$1.22 million, only \$19,000 — less than 2 percent — was spent for “professional fees.”

Just how extensive was that renovation? In a crowd-pleasing show, with one 200-ton crane at the front and one 250-ton crane at the back, three sections of the iron and steel stadium south wall and stands were moved 40 feet to the south. This opened space for installation of the new 400-meter, all-weather track with eight 42-inch-wide lanes. Always looking to the future, renovation planners made sure this track also will accommodate an AAU-sanctioned steeplechase.

Then field renovation began. Ever-Green Sports Turf was selected as the general contractor because of its athletic-field-building and renovation experience and its familiarity with the field. All of the fields used by Troy schools are under a maintenance contract with the firm. For the Memorial Stadium field, the company handles all maintenance procedures and mowing. The other fields are mowed by school personnel. The firm's mainte-

nance services are contracted at various levels by many area school districts to provide the expertise of sports-turf professionals — and Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) members — on a regular basis.

Mercer said, “Drs. John Street and Bill Pound, both of Ohio State University, assisted with the development of field specifications and layout. The existing media was 36-percent sand, 42-percent silt and 22-percent clay, a mixture we call ‘black wax’ because of its poor drainage characteristics. We stripped away the top 12 inches. Crews from Hydroscares Inc. of Dayton then updated the irrigation system. It was placed 20 inches below the original soil surface. They also installed a bank of 49 heads. This provides a shorter “throw” than the previous system and more effective irrigation.

“It took 65 tandem loads to deliver the 1,000 tons of sand necessary to work into the remaining media to bring the field to the 62-percent sand, 18-percent silt and 20-percent clay-soil profile that we wanted. CLC Labs of Westerville, OH, did the media testing for us. The reworked field is 360 feet long, 180 feet wide, and has a 15-inch crown.

“On May 13, we seeded with Medalist America’s Athletic ProR blend of 50-percent Kentucky bluegrass and 50-percent perennial ryegrass at a rate of 225 pounds per acre. Because of the high sand content of the soil, we spread the seed with a Brillion spreader, rather than drill seeding.

“Initially, we applied an 8-32-16 fertilizer weekly. Once we reached the phosphorus levels we wanted, we switched to a 30-3-5 formula with 25-percent slow-release nitrogen. We mowed for the first time on June 7. Weed problems were, and have been, minimal. We’ve spot-treated where necessary, with no need for a blanket weed control.

“By July 5, we had a full stand of turf. We held a field day, inviting those from the university and business firms who had assisted with the project, selected seed and sod company personnel and the local media. Then we shocked them by cutting up the field.”

Joe Motz and his crews from Motz Sports Turf in Cincinnati started installation of a sand-conduit drainage system. Slits, 2 inches wide and 14 inches deep, were cut from sideline to sideline, spaced every 6 feet. Tubing, with a 2-inch outside diameter, was placed at the base of these slits and covered with a 4-inch layer of pea gravel. The tubing leads to 6-inch corrugated piping placed at a 14-inch depth around the perimeter of the field. The pea-gravel layer is covered

with an 8-inch layer of sand. Next, slits, 1 inch wide and 8 inches deep, were cut across the length of the field on 3-foot centers. These slits were filled with sand. The field was then topdressed with an additional 80 tons of sand. Installation was completed July 15, leaving the field with a temporarily apparent grid pattern.”

Renovations continued on the rest of the stadium as well. The new restrooms and concession area were constructed. The sewer system was installed. The press box on the home-team side of the stands was renovated. (The press box on the visiting team side is still “in the works.”)

A \$150,000 scoreboard, with four-color graphics, was put in place.

On Aug. 26, the girl’s varsity soccer team played the first game at the renovated facility. The football team was next to take the field. By mid-September, 40 “contests” had been played. The stadium, lighting, track and field are in great shape. The planners, fund-raisers, project coordinators, contributors, participating companies and individuals, school personnel, city officials, coaches, athletes and all the citizens of Troy feel pretty darn good about Memorial Stadium ... and themselves.

Postscript: When Troy Memorial Stadium was dedicated Sept. 7, 1949, the Hobart Bros. Co. included a special tribute in its ad in the *Troy Daily News*. The rededication was held Sept. 2, 1994. Recognized among the crowd attending were local dignitaries, veterans organizations and members of the 1949 Troy High School football team. The *Troy Daily News* reprinted Hobart’s copy in their coverage of the event:

“The grand opening of the Troy Memorial Stadium was the dream and is now the realization of every citizen of Troy.

“We take this opportunity to extend our compliments and gratitude to every individual, organization, club and industry whose collective efforts have made this memorial possible.

“It most certainly is a living memorial to those who have fought and died for their country ... for those who wanted to further a democratic way of life.

“It is this democracy, through these facilities, that will be advanced in the years to come.

“May every event which will be held on these grounds, whether sport or civic, stand for the high principles of this memorial.” □

Bob Tracinski is the manager of public relations for the John Deere Co. in Raleigh, NC, and public relations chair for the Sports Turf Managers Association.