

FIELD OF THE YEAR



Cox Soccer Complex Earns STMA 1999 Field of the Year Honors In the Municipal/Parks and Recreation Division

by Bob Tracinski

Constructed in 1969 as a municipal baseball park, W. L. "Bill" Cox Memorial Park of Farmers Branch, Texas, underwent major changes in 1988. The baseball fields were eliminated and were replaced by what has become one of the premier soccer facilities in the North Texas region. So good, in fact, the Cox Soccer Complex earned STMA 1999 Field of the Year honors in the Municipal/Parks and Recreation Division.

The soccer complex offers the kind of flexibility needed to serve the active soccer programs of various age and skill levels. The premium full-size field number 5 is parallel to another full-size field, number 4. The three smaller soccer fields located in the North end of the complex are designated as fields 1, 2 and 3. For tournament play by those 12 and older, these three small fields are converted to a third full-size field, designated as number 6.



Grounds crew members stand behind the freshly painted logo for the Conference USA soccer tournament. Courtesy: City of Farmers Branch



Robin Edwards, parks maintenance supervisor for the Cox Soccer Complex, accepts the Field of the Year Award from Steve Guise, past president of the STMA
Courtesy: STMA

Robin Edwards, parks maintenance supervisor, says, "Scheduled play on the Cox Complex includes hosting eight competitive tournaments each year, including the NCAA's Conference USA Women's tournament during the first week of November in 1998 and 1999. The adjacent elementary and middle schools use the field continuously throughout the year for physical education activities. It's the home field of the local high school's girl's soccer program and the site of their daily practices beginning in December, a pre-season tournament and weekly games that start in January. Recreational league play runs Monday through Saturday during the months of February through May and August through November. Camps and clinics are held through the week during June and July."



Spectators pack the sideline to watch a game in rainy weather. Courtesy: City of Farmers Branch

The city has five softball fields, five baseball fields and the potential of 16 soccer fields of different sizes. But getting those soccer fields takes some conversion. Like a magician's mystifying sleight of hand, the crews of the City of Farmers Branch transform two baseball outfielders into four soccer fields. At each baseball field, they pull down the outfield fence and convert the space to two soccer fields for the under 6 and under 8 leagues. Often they must work this transformation in a day. There may be league practices on Thursday evening, followed by a weekend soccer tournament, followed by Monday practices, followed by more of the 30 league games in an "average" week.

Edwards says, "In 1988, a lighting system was installed in the Cox Complex capable of manual and/or computerized programming. Cox Field 5 is lighted by four 45-foot poles supporting 5 metal halide lamps each. Also in 1988 a state of the art irrigation system was installed on the Complex, including Toro 640 series rotor heads and a Rainbird ISC controller. Recent system renovations have included replacing that controller with an Irritrol MC-24 B + controller, installing a harness for a TRC remote control, and replacing some heads with Hunter I-25 rotor heads.

"The new concession and restroom facility was completed by the start of the 1998 spring season. The concession stand opens to the north at Field 5 and to the east into a gated breezeway. Also in 1998, while preparing for the NCAA's Conference USA Women's Soccer Championship, Field 5 was widened to 210 feet. In order to accomplish this, a light pole was moved approxi-

mately 30 feet to the southwest. A scoreboard was donated and installed by Coca-Cola in conjunction with the Carrollton/Farmers Branch Independent School District.

"Seating arrangements are contingent on tournament needs. We have moveable bleachers in both 21 foot, five row, and 15 foot, three row configurations and can seat up to 500 for

large tournaments."

The city population of approximately 26,900 climbs during the business day to 85,500. Edwards adds, "We are blessed with a strong tax base and supportive City Council that provide the funding necessary to maintain athletic fields to very high standards. Still, escalating requests for field use and budgetary con-



F I V E

GREAT REASONS WHY
YOU SHOULD CONSIDER
BULL'S EYE Bermuda
FOR YOUR NEXT
PROJECT.

- Virtually No Seedheads
- Good Shade Tolerance
- Deep Blue-Green Color
- Medium-Wide Blade For Texture Contrast
- Can Be Mowed With Rotary or Reel



WEST COAST
TURF
GROWERS AND INSTALLERS OF
PREMIUM QUALITY SOD AND STOLONS

www.westcoastturf.com 760/360-5464 800/447-1840 FAX: 760/360-5616

Circle 104 on Inquiry Card



An average week of play at Cox Complex includes two days of league practices, 30 league games and a weekend soccer tournament. Courtesy: City of Farmers Branch

straints call for innovative solutions.”

Schedule coordination

The soccer tournaments range from 30 teams to more than 160 teams. Anne Bauwens Coe, athletic program coordinator for the city,

says, “We’ve developed a win-win relationship with our local hotels and motels that aids our program. We work with the various soccer clubs on setting up tournaments and negotiate rates with the hotels and motels to generate room use. One soccer

tournament over Thanksgiving generates over 600 rooms with all tournaments combined generating approximately 2,200 rooms in an average year. We further stimulate the tournaments’ economic impact by supplying attendee packets that include such community promotion items as maps of local restaurants. A portion of the hotel-motel tax revenue has been budgeted to cover certain costs associated with these tournaments: tents, staff members on-site, portable restrooms, etc. In turn, we don’t charge the clubs for this, or for the field use or lighting costs but the clubs are expected to generate a certain number of room nights in our hotels.”

Coe works with each tournament director months before the event. She develops a master calendar for all on-field events. Each Friday, she provides the crews and the administration with the following week’s field use schedule so they can monitor any unauthorized use and coordinate maintenance and on-site services accordingly.

Continued on page 13

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Jaydee Drive Liner



The Jaydee Drive Liner is a self-propelled riding line marker. The 35-gallon paint tank carries enough marking material for a complete game field, or several practice fields. The 2-gallon flush tank cleans the discharge lines for work breaks, travel, or overnight. The center or side-mark spray shields are always operator-visible. A nearly zero turning radius reduces or eliminates back and turn maneuvers.

Jaydee Equipment Company

202 East Joliet Highway, Box 278
New Lenox, IL 60451-0278
TOLL FREE: 1-800-443-3268

Circle 105 on Inquiry Card

Fence Guard™ - Is Now Available in 6 Colors!



Fence Guard™ Protective Covers for chain link fencing are now available in six colors - Safety Yellow, plus Dark Green, Red, White, Blue, and Orange - plus in standard and premium grades. These heavy-duty, UV-resistant, polyethylene covers protect players from chain link fence injuries and provide a neat/distinctive look to fencing. **Fence Guard™** has a 5-year manufacturer’s limited warranty and ships by UPS.

Fence Guard™ plus windscreen, ball netting, and wall padding are among the more than 200 baseball and softball products available from “Your One-Stop Source for America’s Leading Sports Surfaces & Supplies:”

PARTAC® / BEAM CLAY®

Kelsey Park

Great Meadows, NJ 07838

800/247-BEAM • 908/637-4191 • Fax: 908/637-8421

Circle 106 on Inquiry Card

sportsTURF • <http://www.sportsturfonline.com>

Field Maintenance Schedule

Fertilization:

Every 8 weeks from November through March at a 3-1-2 ratio with 0.5 lbs. of N/1000

Every 6 weeks from April through October at a 3-1-2 ratio with 1 to 1.5 lbs. of N/1000

Supplemental iron in December and February with 10 lbs./1000

Irrigation: (All dependent upon weather conditions)

January through April: 1 to 3 times per week

May and June: 2 to 5 times per week

July through October: 3 to 5 times per week

November: 2 to 5 times per week

December: 1 to 5 times per week

Aerification:

Slicing aerifier monthly from April through September

Deep tine in August, with hollow tine if field use allows

Core aerate with walk-behind unit as needed at goal mouth, sidelines and mid-field

Topdressing:

August and late fall with #9 sand at approximately 1/4-inch

Overseeding:

September with 10 to 15 lbs./1000 of custom blend of perennial and intermediate ryegrass

Resod:

Goal mouths, sideline and center field areas as required in August

Mowing:

2 times per week at 2-inch height of cut November through March

3 times per week at 1-1/2 to 2-inch height of cut April through October

IPM Program:

Apply Manage and MSMA as needed for weed control March through August

Treat for fire ants as needed monthly

Treat for grubs as needed June and September

Inspection Program:

Fields: daily

Irrigation system: monthly

Bleachers: weekly

Lighting: weekly

Cut lines: monthly

Litter: daily

Restrooms: daily

EVERGREENTM

THE PROVEN TURF GROWTH BLANKET

MEMBER
Sports
Turf
Managers Association

- Earlier spring green-up
- Faster seed germination
- Deeper root development
- Delays dormancy in fall
- Ideal winter blanket
- Best for quick turf repairs
- Available in any size
- Choice of 3 and 7 year warranty

 CALL TOLL FREE
1-800-387-5808

COVERMASTER INC., REXDALE, ON, M9V 5C3
TEL 416-745-1811 FAX 416-74-COVER (742-6837)

WEB: www.covermaster.com
E-MAIL: info@covermaster.com

COVERMASTERTM
COVERMASTER
COVERMASTER
MASTERS IN THE ART OF SPORTS SURFACE COVERS

**Turf
Management
Made Easy!**



Proven results



Deeper root development



Any custom size cover



Anchor pegs supplied

Circle 107 on Inquiry Card



State of the art lighting and irrigation systems were installed at the complex in 1988. Field 5 is lit by four 45-foot-tall poles supporting five metal halide lamps each. Courtesy: City of Farmers Branch

Maintenance issues

Soil at the Soccer Complex is a heavy clay gumbo. A one percent grade across each of the fields achieves adequate surface drainage.

French drains, 6-inches wide and 18-inches deep, were installed on the west and south sides of Field 5 to alleviate standing water along the sidelines that approached the field

edge. The common bermudagrass turf was sprigged with Tifway 419, concentrating on Fields 4 and 5, to provide greater turf density and faster recovery.

The July-August window for renovation gets tighter every year. Edwards says, "Tryouts for select soccer ran from July 1 to 15, followed by a 65 team tournament that ended on July 22. By then, our overseeded perennial and intermediate ryegrass were transitioning out. We came in with solid tine aeration to a 6 to 8 inch depth, applied approximately 1/4-inch of #9 sand and used our ball field and mat drags to drag it in. We fertilized with a 24-8-16 fertilizer at the rate of 1-1/4 pound of Nitrogen per 1,000 square feet and increased the irrigation frequency. With practice starting on Aug. 11 and the first game Aug. 22, that gave us three weeks to bring the bermudagrass to top condition."

Compaction is attacked with an aggressive program of monthly slice aeration combined with deep tine aeration, and core aeration in

For Quality Turf

DEBRIS BLOWER

Goossen INDUSTRIES

P.O. Box 705 | Beatrice, NE 68310
 TOLL FREE: 800-228-8542
 IN NEBRASKA: 402-228-4226
 FAX: 402-223-2245
 WEBSITE: www.goossen.com

VERSAS-VAC

NEW MID VAC

COMPACT SELF-POWERED VAC SYSTEM

- Rotating Rubber Flagger Pick-Up
- 20 hp. Honda Engine
- Easy Towing

5' WIDTH AND SHORT WHEEL BASE
 ALLOW FOR TIGHT TURNS IN SMALL AREAS

Circle 108 on Inquiry Card



August when field schedules allow it, all done in two directions. Sand topdressing is applied in August and again in the fall in conjunction with their overseeding program, using approximately 140 yards of sand over the 9-acre soccer complex. This year a small walk-behind core aerifier has been purchased for use in the goal areas, along the sidelines and in mid-field.

Edwards notes, "The rye transitions out about 100 percent by the time to overseed again with our custom blend of perennial and intermediate rye grasses in late September. We slit seed 75 percent of the seed and broadcast the remaining 25 percent. Play can't be restricted at that time so good establishment can take until mid-November. It's then the dominant turf until high temperatures kick in about the start of June. Though the rye on the fields is stronger and longer than the bermudagrass, the density and cushioning of the bermuda greatly improve overall field quality."

Extreme dry weather and stringent water restrictions have complicated field maintenance the last couple years, though the spring of 2000 was relatively wet. Edwards says, "We've prioritized water use on all our properties. We allocate limited amounts to general park and green space and apply that water to the athletic fields to address safety and liability issues and to support optimum field use levels."

Coe and Edwards both commend the support the athletic field programs receive from the City Council, the citizens, city administration and the Parks and Recreation Department. They say, "They expect quality from us and they give us the responsibility and resources to achieve it. It's a team effort, requiring the cooperation and assistance of

all parks maintenance crews, the irrigation crew, the mowing operators and the chemical applicator. Ultimately, our success lies in the dedication and commitment to excellence of those on the fields daily; Jose Martinez, Ron Thompson, Dennis Sewell and Russell Coe, who handle the myriad of responsibilities that go along with maintaining top quality athletic fields."

Bob Tracinski is the business communications manager for the John Deere Worldwide Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division headquartered in Raleigh, N.C. He serves as public relations co-chair for the national Sports Turf Managers Association.

FAST... DEEP.. CLEAN



SISIS VEEMO

FAST dethatching on outfield turf. Hydraulically driven, with fully floating heads. Depth of cut infinitely variable.



SISIS MAXISLIT

DEEP, CLEAN slicing on outfield turf with 7in or 9in depth. Optional floating roller for smooth finish.



SISIS TILTH N' SEED

FAST overseeding of outfield turf. Wide range of seeding rates. Large capacity hopper, and rear roller to firm the surface.

VISIT
THE
SISIS WEBSITE
www.sisis.com

Full details of the SISIS range of turf equipment from:

SISIS Inc
PO Box 537
Sandy Springs
SC 29677
Phone: 864 261 6218
Fax: 864 261 6932
e-mail: ldc@sisis.u-net.com

sisis

Circle 109 on Inquiry Card