

Sports Field Management: More than Just Turf Management

by Bill Murphy

In the early 1990s, many major league baseball teams were looking for improved training sites both in Florida and Arizona. Local cities and county agencies were busy developing creative ways to keep their professional teams content in their respective areas. In 1992 Scottsdale Stadium was the new prize gem of the Cactus league with a busy year-round schedule featuring professional baseball and some small civic events.

The stadium is used for year-round professional baseball and hosted 140 game this past year. The stadium is the spring training home to the 2000 Western Division San Francisco Giants. High school and youth recreational leagues were used for 40 multiple game day dates last year. The stadium was built in 1991 as result of a bond election, and hosted 36 field special events and 68 meeting dates last year. Scottsdale Stadium has made a conscientious effort to become a multi-use venue that could provide a safe area of play, with year-round baseball, and a relaxing experience for a corporate business dinner.

The expectations in our sports turf profession have also been raised by the expansive coverage of TV sporting events, from the Super Bowl to the Little League World Series. Teams, coaches and players are looking at their home fields to be kept in that same condition, that can provide them the winning edge. We are constantly striving to have safe, reliable and resilient surfaces for our athletes and customers. Our staff has tried over the last few years to reach these goals through planned work schedules, solid communication, proper horticultural methods and a willingness to look for constant improvements.

Team Sports and Recreational Turf Takes a Pounding...Fight Back with FloraSport™ Turf Products

For superior sports and recreational turf, you need superior turf products. FloraSport™ Turf Products are specifically formulated to enhance **HEALTH, DENSITY, CONSISTENCY, RE-GROWTH, COLOR, STRESS TOLERANCE, and ROOTING.** Let us help you realize the full potential of your facility's sports turf. We have the know-how and products that can really make a big difference in the health and quality of your turf. Give us a call today.



FloraSPORT™

TURF PRODUCTS

144 Mid South Cove • Collierville, TN 38017 • (901) 853-2898 • FAX (901) 853-3101
www.florasport.com

Circle 119 on Inquiry Card

Help on the Web

Our division has developed an internal Web page to help plan and meet year round activities. This forward planning has helped provide a safe sport field and a well-run facility. The intranet page has detailed information on the irrigation requirements for our geographic landscape zone. We utilize daily evapo-transpiration rates and reminders to check valves and heads and visually observe the uniformity distribution of the water system. We utilize a weather station and strive to reach our annually established water allotments with the Arizona State Department of Water Resources.

With the Web page, we have developed a reference library with multiple sites from extension agents, university studies and national publications related to grounds maintenance. The information is available to all staff. We have worked with our purchasing department with procurement guidelines to develop pricing agreements for various commodities. These include both liquid and granular fertilizers, topdress materials and sod replacement.

Year-round maintenance

A standard soil test at the end of each year is an important tool to help measure the nutrient levels and deficiencies we have and begin the planning process for year round turf. The soil test can also serve as the blue print in your own maintenance program. Scottsdale Stadium is built on 18-inch USGA sand base media. The field requires an extensive nutrient program year round

The base field turf is 419 Bermuda, annually overseeded with blend of perennial rye grass for winter and spring color. The perennial rye is grown at 1 to 1 1/2 inches for special

events and playing surface for baseball at 7/8 inches.

The 419 Bermuda grass is actively growing from June to October and cut at 3/4 inches. The turf has the ability to extend itself before dormancy well into the fall, and processes good recoverability with the heavy use we experience each year.

“Developing and following preventive maintenance schedules within your facility are essential in reducing life-cycle cost.”

Year round maintenance also involves knowing your irrigation system and the water window you will have to deliver a uniform rate of water. Our stadium field has a central system develop by Motorola to monitor, track and deliver water to our Hunter heads along with flow rate sensors. The water schedule is measured in volume rather than time. We have both I-40's and I-25's throughout our field and perimeter landscape. Our staff completes a yearly water audit to perfect our overall delivery and to provide a consistent year-round water maintenance program.

Safety issues

Safety on the field and within the venue is always a high priority. Providing staff proper equipment, monthly safety meetings and professional development is a small investment in year round training. Developing a network with your local vendors and other turf professionals can help when that certain piece of equipment or protective surface is needed at your site.

Money matters

Budgets can play a vital role in our overall success as maintenance professionals. Developing and following preventive maintenance schedules within your facility are essential in reducing life-cycle cost. Budgets that are planned and prepared each year can help you gradually meet your set goals and objectives for the future. Establishing fees and charges for special events can be a very positive revenue source to your program. Securing and developing creative sponsorship and advertisement support that reaches the community can be very beneficial.

Special events can be a great challenge and very rewarding. There are lots of great events that fail due to either disregard for detail or passion for preserving precedent. Planning of our special events involves both pre- and post evaluations. Clear direction is provided to the client and communicated with staff with specific assigned areas to facilitate throughout the event day.

Field covers and guidelines must be followed; preliminary and post planning meetings are set. Finally, talk with your customer and develop surveys that can be useful tools to help you continue to improve your program. Involve your staff in all aspects so that the ownership of the facility is never lost.

Find Out How TifSport's Superior Sod Strength Provides Improved Playing Conditions & Reduced Divot Injuries On Athletic Fields

www.tifsport.com

THE NEW CERTIFIED BERMUDAGRASS STANDARD FOR ATHLETIC FIELDS, GOLF COURSES & HOME LAWNS

Circle 120 on Inquiry Card