

THE INTERVIEW: Chris Powell, Cleveland Browns

SPORTSFIELD AND FACILITIES

MANAGEMENT

October 2015

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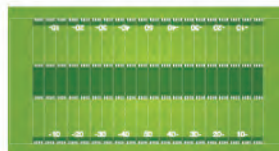
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A soil core shows varying degrees of water repellency throughout the soil profile. Photo courtesy of Aquatrols.



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Most of the time my conversations at cookouts with friends revolve around kids, sports, and the state of everyone's golf games. But this past Labor Day weekend one discussion veered into normally avoided territory: politics, specifically climate change. I know this topic can get folks a bit heated (pun intended), and that reasonable people disagree on the causes and what might be done about it, but during the exchange one fella kept insisting there is no evidence of climate change. I beg to differ.

A lot of readers work with scientific facts all the time, e.g., soil content and its affect turfgrass health, or if you don't wear sunscreen or cover up your chances of developing melanoma greatly increase. Since major scientific agencies of the US like NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) agree that climate change is occurring and that humans are contributing to it, why deny it? Saying "I'm not a scientist so how could I know?" is like saying "I'm not a nutritionist so how could I know that eating three bacon cheeseburgers a day might not be healthy?"

Scientists are still researching a number of important questions, including exactly how much Earth will warm, how quickly it will warm, and what the consequences of the warming will be in specific regions of the world. Scientists continue to research these questions so we can be better informed about how to plan for a changing climate.

Multiple temperature records from all over the world have all shown a warming trend. Earth has broken monthly heat records 25 times since the year 2000 but

hasn't broken a monthly cold record since 1916, according to climate scientists with NOAA. Other observations that point to higher global temperature include warmer oceans, melting arctic sea ice and glaciers, sea level rise, increasing precipitation, and changing wind patterns. Could all this just be the natural order of Mother Nature? Perhaps. But what if it's not? Take a look at your children and grandchildren and tell me you're convinced it's all a hoax perpetuated by politicians who want to put coal miners out of work!

Now, whether there's a snowball's chance in hell that we Earthlings can or will actually do anything to reverse the trends of climate change is another question. I appreciate those who say as long as China's opening a new, dirty power plant every week, etc., that whatever we might do won't make any difference. But it seems to me it's un-American to recognize a huge problem and not TRY and do anything about it or, worse, pretend it's not an issue at all. Together, we can and should do better. **ST**

Correction

In last month's column I incorrectly associated Technical Editor Joey Young with Texas A&M; in fact, Dr. Young is Assistant Professor of Turfgrass in the Department of Plant and Soil Science at Texas Tech University. My apologies to Dr. Young and Red Raiders everywhere.

***The views expressed here are the author's and don't necessarily represent the views of STMA or Green Media.**

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PRESS "NONE" IF YOU WANT A POOR FIELD

Allen Johnson, CSFM.
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This spring while traveling through LaGuardia Airport in New York, I set out with a peer of mine to get something to eat. A maze of technology stood between us and our ultimate goal. It was probably implemented to make things easier for us, more efficient, but more probable it was because of employee reduction. I swear it took an hour before we figured out what we were supposed to do, where to do it, and for a working, germ-filled touch screen to become available, before we got our food. We probably would've completed the entire process in 15 minutes or less if we could have actually ordered from a human.

I thought to myself, this is progress? I see the same thing over and over in our society. Anytime you call your insurance company, health care provider, or any other type of business, you'll have to learn the art of patience and skill to navigate the computer voice of options. Why does it speak so slowly?

Every time I go to the grocery store there are fewer employees at the checkout aisles. There are self-check-out aisles and options to bag your own groceries. I don't know who wants to bag their own groceries, but I don't. I have to clean my house, do the cooking, mow the grass, and the laundry. The last thing I want to do is bag my own groceries. I will actually wait in the only line that has a cashier and grocery bagger because I refuse to give in to the lack of investment in people.

I don't see this as progress. I view it as a cost-cutting measure. I don't enjoy interacting with gadgets as much as I do people, and society is losing that ever-so-important feeling of human connection as we travel further down this road.

This phenomenon also exists in our industry when administrators make their choices on how they will provide athletic surfaces for their communities. Those who choose to invest in a professional sports turf manager and value and respect their knowledge will include the turf managers in conversations during the planning and construction phases. Those who use sports field architects and qualified sports field builders will reap the reward of having the best facilities to recruit their coveted athletes. Those who provide their sports turf manager with adequate resources for ongoing maintenance and listen to their ideas on how to maximize the fields' use without overdoing it, will be able to have those beautiful fields for years to come, and not just that first year after construction.

Most of the substandard sports fields in this country are a direct result of the decision to devalue or cut out the expertise that a sports field manager, architect, and field builder possesses. There are so many examples in our society of what this approach gets us, and the results are clear. If you want the safest athletic fields you can possibly have, invest in a person first. Invest in a professional sports turf manager. **ST**

PLANT GROWTH REGULATORS 101

Editor's note: This article was written by Syngenta technical manager Dean Mosdell.

Plant growth regulators (PGRs) have been available to turf managers for many years, yet they continue to discover new benefits from a PGR program on sports turf. To offer a brief history, the second generation, or Class A and B PGRs, were discovered more than 30 years ago when manufacturers were screening large chemical libraries for the next herbicide and fungicide product (Table 1). Active ingredients such as trinexapac-ethyl, paclobutrazol and flurprimidol failed to control a weed or pathogen, but significantly reduced the height of plants in the screening process. It was discovered that these compounds inhibited gibberellic acid (GA), the plant hormone responsible for cell elongation. This mechanism represented a critical advancement over the first generation, or Class C PGRs, which inhibited cell division and led to a decrease in plant quality. Class C products like maleic-hydrazide and mefluidide were mainly targeted for roadsides and other low-maintenance turf areas because of the loss of turf quality.

There is further differentiation among GA inhibitors based on the site of inhibition. Class A products like Primo Maxx plant growth regulator (trinexapac-ethyl) inhibit GA formation late in the synthesis process while Class B products like Trimmit 2SC plant growth regulator (paclobutrazol) inhibit compounds that are the building blocks to the GA synthesis cycle. There are two practical differences between these PGRs, which are grass species sensitivity and site of absorption. Class B products are primarily root-absorbed, while Class A products are absorbed through the foliar parts of the plant. Class B products also tend to have greater differences in grass species sensitivity. For example, *Poa annua* is much more sensitive to Trimmit than hybrid bermudagrass. Both of these factors influence how the products are used and applied.

BENEFITS OF CLASS A AND B PGRS

Plant growth regulators (Classes A and B) reduce the vertical growth, or leaf elongation, and internode length of turfgrasses (Chart 1). The obvious benefits are the reduction in clippings, green waste and mowing time, as well as the labor, fuel and equipment wear involved in the mowing process. In addition, PGRs increase the longevity of painted field lines and logos, cause turf density to increase, and allow leaves to become a darker shade of green.

Class A PGRs. With the increasing popularity of products like Primo Maxx, more research has been conducted and additional benefits have been uncovered. The suppression of GA and diversion of energy from top growth to other parts of the plant leads to the stimulation of three elements: tillers, rhizome, and root growth.

A plant with more tillers, rhizomes and roots is better able to withstand the rigors of a playing field, which led to the “pre-stress conditioning” benefits of PGRs. Turf treated before the onset of stressful conditions maintains color and quality for a much longer period than untreated turf. Research has shown that wear tolerance, tensile strength (how the turf holds together) and divot recovery are improved with these applications before stress.

PGRs have also been shown to improve turf quality under reduced light levels, elevated temperatures and deficit irrigation practices for water conservation. A unique way to apply Primo Maxx is before covering a field in preparation for events like concerts. Applications 7 to 14 days before covering a field have been shown to lead to faster turf recovery and better turf quality after an event. This means less repair and maintenance to restore the field to an acceptable playing surface.

Additionally, applications before overseeding a bermudagrass field with perennial ryegrass can reduce the competition for the new seedlings. Since Primo Maxx, for example, has no soil activity, growth of the overseeded ryegrass is not affected.

Class B PGRs. The Class B inhibitors, like Trimmit 2SC, are used primarily to suppress growth of one turf species in a mixed stand, such as *Poa annua* in cool-season turf. Continued use of Trimmit helps allow the desirable turf species to outcompete annual bluegrass, and even has limited pre-emergence activity on *Poa annua* seeds. Class B inhibitors can be used successfully for growth suppression as well, but have not shown all the benefits of PGR applications. Since Trimmit is primarily active in the soil, plants take longer to respond after an application and residual can build in the soil, meaning more precise applications are needed. Also, roots respond to GA differently than above ground tissue, so we have not observed the rooting enhancement with Trimmit.

RECOMMENDED USE

PGR programs on sports fields have unique timing needs compared to golf course programs. Turf response to growth regulators has been described as a sigmoidal curve (S-shaped). Turf growth is suppressed for a period of time after application, and then as the product dissipates, plants begin a growth phase. If PGRs are not reapplied, turf growth can be excessive, often called the “rebound effect.” However, sports turf managers can use this to their advantage. Primo Maxx should be applied before the main use season to build density and rooting, then as the heavy use period begins, stop applications to allow the rebound phase to improve recovery. This is another type of pre-stress conditioning with Primo Maxx that is unique to sports fields.

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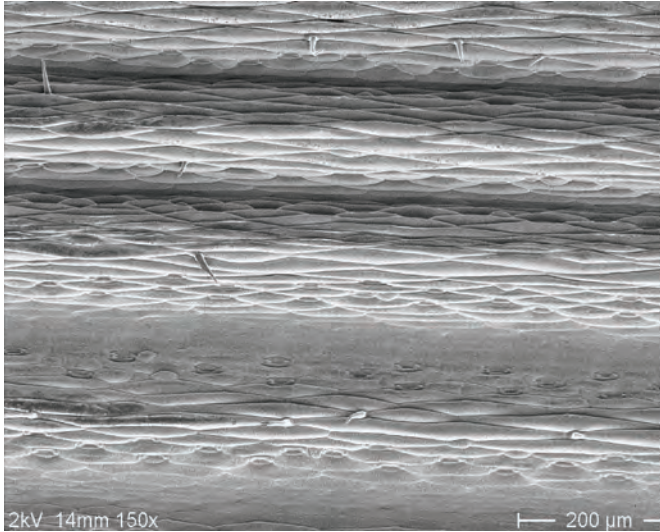
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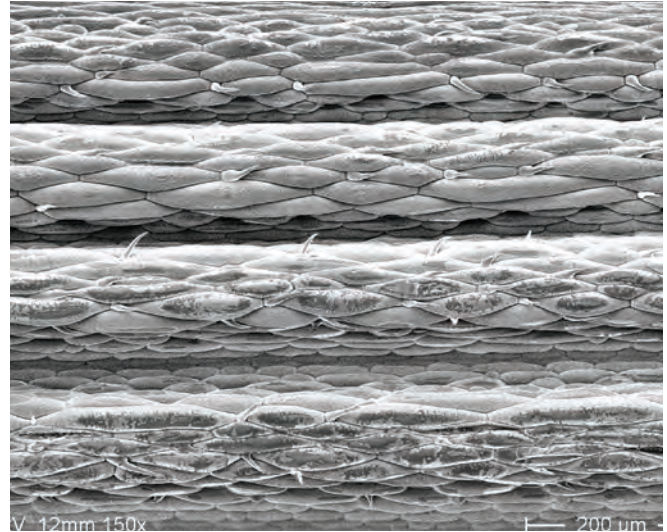
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General application overview. Product application rates are listed on the labels for specific grasses and use sites. Many factors, such as temperature, moisture, light and fertility, control turfgrass growth rates, so product labels contain a range of application rates. Lower labeled rates applied on a more frequent basis, such as every 2-3 weeks, generally provide the best results in terms of consistent growth suppression. Because Primo Maxx is foliar absorbed, be sure to apply it with enough water for uniform coverage (a minimum of 44 gallons per acre) and let the foliage dry for at least 1 hour before any irrigation

is applied. Rates for overseeding applications are higher since maximum suppression is needed and temporary reduction in turf quality can be tolerated. Conversely, Trimmit should be watered in after application (or at least within several hours). Trimmit is primarily absorbed through the roots, but some foliar and stem absorption does occur. Because movement in the plant is upward, foliar-absorbed Trimmit moves to the leaf tips, which are not areas of high GA production, especially in older leaves. [ST](#)

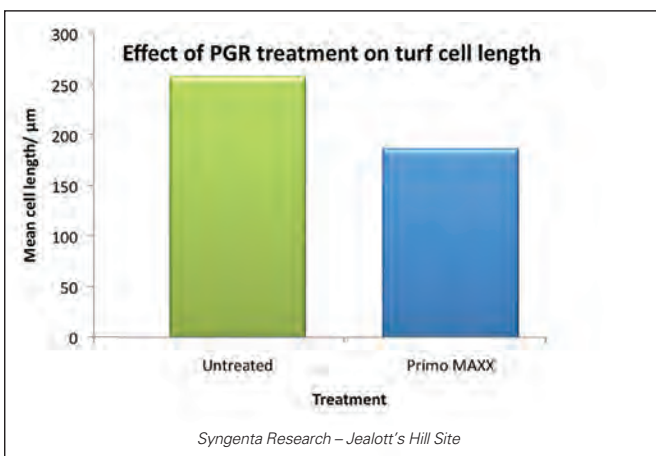


Table 1. Growth Regulation Modes of Action

- Class A: Late GA Synthesis Blockers
Primo Maxx® (trinexapac-ethyl), Anuew™ (prohexadione-CA)
 - Class B: Early GA Synthesis Blockers
Trimmit® (paclobutrazol), Cutless® (flurprimidol)
 - Class C: Mitotic Inhibitors
Slo-Gro® (maleic hydrazide), Embark® (mefluidide), Atrimmec® (dikegulac-sodium)
 - Class D: Herbicidal Mode
Glyphosate, ACCase, ALS inhibitors
 - Class E: Ethylene Production Enhancement
Proxy® (ethephon)
- Chart 1. Scanning Electron Microscopy Cell Length (adaxial surface)

SUMMARY OF PGR USES ON SPORTS FIELDS:	
Reduction in Clippings	Less green waste, mowing time reduced, labor savings
Primo Maxx is labeled for mixing with turf paint	Painted lines and logos will last longer
Density increase, increased root growth, better turf quality	Better wear tolerance and recover
Pre-stress conditioning	Primo Maxx applications prior to heavy use periods or special events enhances recovery
Increase resistance to abiotic stresses	Maintain better turf quality with reduced water, increased shade and under abnormal weather patterns
Poa annua control	Trimmit can reduce Poa populations in cool-season turfgrasses
Overseeding enhancement	Establish overseeding faster with Primo Maxx

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HOW TO KEEP FANS SAFE AND INFORMED AT SPORTING EVENTS

■ BY VIVIAN MARINELLI, PSYD

Millions of people attend sporting events each year. The last thought on their minds is how to react to a crisis or disaster while at the event. Implementing an in-depth disaster plan with the inclusion of social media is one of the best ways to ensure the fans are kept safe and informed.

More than 17 million fans attended NFL games in the 2014 season. With each team averaging 68,321 fans per game, what can they do to ensure their safety in the event of a crisis or disaster, either manmade or natural?

DRAFT A PLAN

The first step to creating a safe environment is to develop an in-depth disaster plan. The purpose of the plan is to protect your fans. Keeping them safe and informed is priority number one. Remembering this while developing your plan will help you target and understand areas of need.

Every plan should focus on:

Crisis Planning Team. The team will consist of individuals from all departments at the venue. Obvious choices include your security team, but also employees from administration, food service, merchandising, and IT. This will allow you to have the entire spectrum of the venue covered, and you will gain a better understanding of important issues you might face during a crisis.

Risk Assessment. This is where you will identify and assess specific potential threats or crises to your particular sporting event or venue. The goal of the assessment is to lessen the risk of the crisis by adding precautions. The exercise also ranks the crises in order of likelihood.

Disaster Plan. Once the potential risks are identified, you can now develop a plan. While each plan will be similar in some areas, they will be different as they pertain to each crisis, eg, tornado versus active shooter. All staff should understand their





individual roles and responsibilities within the plan.

Communication Plan. With hundreds to thousands of fans attending sporting events and venues, your communication is imperative in getting each and every one of them to safety. You should articulate in your plan how and what you are going to communicate during a crisis event.

Employee Training. Every single employee needs to understand his or her role in the disaster plan, whether it is to help evacuate or just get to the predesignated meeting area. Their direct knowledge of the plan could save lives. During a crisis, a fan may ask a food service vendor where to go, for example. It's imperative that they know the answer to this question.

Test the Plan. An untested plan is a plan built to fail. Test your plan with real-life mock scenario drills and exercises. The testing will show what areas of the plan work and which don't. It also shows which areas of your venue are the most or least secure. Do this testing annually to certify the effectiveness of the plan. Working with local emergency management agencies is pivotal during drills and exercises too. Their input can be extremely helpful in developing an effective evacuation or response plan. It also is helpful because you are building relationships in case of an actual situation.

Update the Plan. Disaster plans are never done. They are living documents and need to be updated regularly. The Crisis Planning Team should meet every three to six months to evaluate and update the plan based on risk and trends.

The speed by which pictures and videos can be uploaded and shared is almost instantaneous. Messaging about the incident moves at breakneck speed as well.

COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

So, you have the key elements to focus on for an effective disaster plan. Now, it's time to look at one of the most difficult aspects of your plan: crisis communications.

Consider:

- Accurate, timely information. Informing fans, media and the general public of the crisis is crucial during the event. Millions of people now use social media as a way of not only conveying information, but gathering it as well. One problem your venue will face is a tweet from a major news outlet looks exactly the same as a tweet from your organization. In normal situations this is not an issue, but in the midst of a crisis, information received is often taken as fact regardless of the source. This can create confusion. You most likely already have an online presence in social media, but to make it easier for people to gather information quickly in the event of a crisis, it is a good idea to implement a hashtag to go along with your social media posts.

- Consistency in your message across all channels. A crisis can be very hectic. The last thing you want to do is to confuse

people further by sending out inconsistent messaging or saturating social media with message after message. Prescript a few messages for each crisis or disaster scenario identified in your risk assessment. This makes it easier to use small tweaks in the midst of a crisis while keeping your focus on the bigger picture.

- Transparency. Share as much information as you can without putting the lives of fans, employees or first responders in danger. You do not want to put your head in the sand and hope the situation resolves itself. Use social media to let people know there is a situation, what you're doing to resolve it, and where people should go for safety. This will not only help during the crisis, but will also build trust with your organization.

In all of the most recent crises, we have seen the digital environment of social media as the immediate outlet for information. The speed by which pictures and videos can be uploaded and shared is almost instantaneous. Messaging about the incident moves at breakneck speed as well. How will your organization best use this resource?

- As a listening resource, acquiring information on what is being said about the incident.

- For organizational messaging, providing information about the response.

- For crowdsourcing, asking for information from the general public.

- For post-incident monitoring public sentiment of the organizational response.

As you integrate this resource into your emergency response planning, pay specific attention to these details:

- Create an owner within the organization for the social media plan.

- Establish listening posts, eg, Google Alerts, Social Mention, or Twitter Search.


- Identify communication vulnerabilities.

- Develop or maintain internal and external social media communication policies

OTHER OUTLETS

Social media is not the only way you can inform employees and fans of the situation. Use every resource available to your venue to spread information as quickly as possible.

Most sporting venues have a speaker system, Jumbotron, video screens, and evacuation lighting. All of these are excellent resources to convey what's going on and what people should do during a crisis. Other methods available are warning sirens, public service announcements and SMS/text messaging.

No matter the resource, the goal is to get information to your fans in attendance and employees. Using these alternate forms of communication, coupled with an in-depth disaster plan will only help you spread the information quickly and accurately. 

Vivian Marinelli is the senior director of crisis management services for FEI Behavioral Health. She holds a Doctorate Degree in Clinical Psychology and is a Licensed Psychologist in Wisconsin. www.feinet.com



WHAT DOES “LEADERSHIP” MEAN?

Editor’s note: We hear the word “leadership” and “leader” all the time. Many of us have urged our children to “be a leader.” And many of us have at one time or another decried the “lack of leadership” at our jobs. Many readers are supervisors, crew leaders and so on; in another word, leaders in their organizations. Here we present some ideas about the concept

LEADERSHIP BEGINS WITH PEOPLE, NOT POSITIONS

Before you can lead others, you must first manage yourself. Leadership is not so much a position you hold as it is a set of disciplines and behaviors you practice, the first and most fundamental of which is self-discipline. A leader without self-discipline is a disaster waiting to happen.

Leaders are the ones who take responsibility for making decisions and bringing change. Leaders are the ones who empower people to discover and use their greatest potential. If you want to be a leader, then act like a leader and shape a better reality.

IT’S ABOUT INFLUENCE, NOT AUTHORITY

Leaders want to get the best out of their teams. Here is the simple truth. Instead of telling your team members what to do, show it to them by your own example. Practice what you preach, and the results may astonish you. Especially during hard times, when chances to give up are very big, you should be the one who faces obstacles with confidence and determination toward success.

People follow the leader first and the vision second. If people aren’t committed to you, they will not be committed to the

vision you communicate. Always seek to have your level of influence exceed your level of authority. Indeed, your influence is your authority. You establish your personal credibility and authority by consistently living your core values and demonstrating that you are a person others can trust. Become a person other people want to follow.

LEADING MEANS MAKING AN IMPACT

Think about the greatest leaders in history. What was the one thing they had in common? Yes, they all made an impact. Leadership is not just setting goals and effectively achieving them with your team. You should make a positive change. A commitment to continuous improvement derives from the leader’s recognition that success requires constant adjustment; today’s world deals ruthlessly with people and organizations who fail to adapt and change.

LEADERSHIP IS CHASING A VISION

Without a vision, your activities are meaningless. Each person can be very busy implementing various tasks, but the key is devoting your efforts and time to the realization of your vision. Vision is what inspires people to take action and go forward.

Discover your unique vision and coordinate all your activities towards it. Inspire each and every member of your team with that vision.

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

It's not a secret that much talking and less acting has nothing to do with effectiveness. What people see affects them many times greater than what they hear. So, choose actions. Don't waste your and other people's time on endless conversations about your plans. Just realize those plans and be sure that everyone will see it.

FLEXIBILITY REFERS TO BEHAVIOR, NOT VALUES

Depending on circumstances you may choose a different style of leadership or communication. Flexibility is a truly effective trait, if it doesn't affect your values. Each and every decision of yours, no matter the situation, must be based on your value system. As long as your actions are value-driven, you will have the trust and respect of people around you.

LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT PEOPLE & LISTENING TO THEM

People want their leaders to listen. Leaders don't have to agree, but they do need to listen and seek to understand. People want to be understood at two levels: intellectual and emotional. At the intellectual level people want the leader to understand what they are saying. At the emotional level people want the leader to understand what they are feeling. Again, listening is not about agreeing with people. It is about respecting them and paying attention to them. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Could you be a leader in an empty room by having profound goals and skills? Of course not. Leading means communicating, influencing and engaging. Communication skills are the foundation of effective leadership. Constantly improve your relationships with people.

IT IS FINE TO ADMIT MISTAKES

If everything has always been done perfectly, we would have somehow lost the ability to analyze and improve. Mistakes are proof that you are doing something. You won't become a worse leader if you admit your mistakes. By doing that, you will show that you are wise enough to learn from your each and every experience.

There are plenty of smart people in positions of leadership. What we need are wise leaders. Our world has an over-abundance of information, but we have a scarcity of real wisdom. Wise leaders have insight, that is, they see beyond the obvious. Why? Because they are looking!

BEFORE YOU CAN LEAD, YOU MUST FIRST LEARN TO FOLLOW

Great leaders are great followers. They are humble. They do not always need to be in charge. They understand the impact of great followership. If you don't understand the dynamics of following, then you don't understand the dynamics of leading.

Many people in positions of authority are ineffective leaders precisely because they are not good followers.

USE YOUR "POWER" BY GIVING IT TO OTHERS

Effective leaders are a source of power and energy for people, teams, and the organization. They encourage the heart. They understand that power is not a zero-sum game. The more a leader empowers others, the stronger and more effective the leader and the team become.

UNITY IS STRENGTH

Team is somehow the most important resource for each leader. Embrace your team and devote your energy to care about its unity each and every day. As long as your team is splendid, nothing can stay on your way to success. Make sure that all people in your team consider themselves as members of a strong, unified family.

THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR GROWTH

Remember, satisfaction should be a short-term feeling. Life would become useless without ongoing improvement. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't appreciate what you have. This means that you should be thankful for everything you have achieved, but still try to do a little more for this world.



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◀ Jerad Minnick performs field test. Photo courtesy of Growing Innovations, LLC

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR TURFGRASS PROVIDER

■ BY JIM NOVAK

The challenge for sports turf managers and other professionals responsible for maintaining sports field surfaces can be daunting. Providing a safe and well maintained sports field has its share of daily challenges including scheduling and overseeing numerous activities such as mowing, fertilization, irrigation, checking soil fertility, watching for pests, searching for diseases or weeds, etc. And these are but a few of a long list of things required to ensure a field's playing surface is safe for the athletes. But before any of these standard maintenance chores come into play, of which there are many, there's another critical component: the turfgrass that is going on the field. What 10 questions should a sports turf manager or groundskeeper ask of their turfgrass provider?

When we asked a sports field professional and a handful of turfgrass producers to list those 10 most important questions, we got a wide variety of responses. The fact that the responses varied wasn't a surprise; what was surprising was just how diverse the questions were.

“By communicating effectively, the turfgrass producer will know exactly what's needed and the timeframe that's required.”
— Julie Adamski

It became obvious that coming up with a 10 “basic questions” was a challenging proposition, somewhat like limiting the ingredients of a good recipe.

One of those we asked was Julie Adamski, director of retail & professional development for Sod Solutions in Mount

Pleasant, SC. Adamski suggested that sports turf managers need to think back to the basics; communication, mowing and fertility when talking to a turfgrass producer. She said that communication plays a huge role in the end product. “By communicating effectively, the turfgrass producer will know exactly what's needed and the timeframe that's required. They can talk about the height of cut of the grass. That way when the grass is installed it is uniform with existing turf, and doesn't need to be trimmed to get the height down. The turfgrass producer can gradually take the cut down on the farm to meet the sports turf managers request. Having a conversation about fertility is also beneficial. This way both parties will be on the same page with what nutrients the grass is receiving prior to installation. The sports turf manager should also be aware of his/her timeline. They need to ask what type of soil the farm has, and whether thick or thin cut sod will be the answer,” said Adamski.

Jerad R. Minnick is a long-time sports field manager and founder of Growing Innovations, parent company to the new Natural Grass Advisory Group. NGAG is an independent education and support firm dedicated to high-use natural grass fields.

When presented with the challenge of suggesting what 10 questions he felt sports turf managers should ask he suggested that turfgrass variety should be on the list. “New varieties are coming into the market with amazing results. If you are using the same old grass and it is needing to be replaced time and time again, why not start trying a different variety?”

He also echoed the comments of Adamski regarding mowing height. “We see unlimited issues with sod coming in at a height above the field's maintained height, leading to scalping and setbacks,” he said.

A third issue he deemed important had to do with thatch. “Historically, older sod with more thatch was thought to be better for fields. Our collected data now supports that younger grass with less



thatch is much more durable. Asking about the amount of thatch might prove worthwhile," he said.

Minnick also suggested that inquiring about the sod's shear strength, (the stability of the turfgrass root system to provide athletes with footing and a more true and consistent playing surface) is important. "With a shear vane, a sports field manager can measure and record the shear strength of the sod. Research at Penn State on sod is taking into consideration the shear strength in reference to nitrogen inputs," he said.

He further suggested that weeds need to be addressed. "Time and time again, we see weed issues brought in with a sod layer. If there are weeds there when herbicides aren't being used, the sports field manager will want to know because they will need to be more aggressive on a pre-emergent program. Just because the sod appears to be weed-free, we have to take into account the weed seed bed," says Minnick.

"The soil type from which the sod was harvested is important too. Yes, I have soil low on my list and I would expect many people will have soil inquiries near the top, but our data and the results we've seen from our clients would suggest that any sod is going to have layering issues without aggressive aeration. Having a matching soil type, especially focusing on sand, does not help as much as we originally thought. Sandy soils with more fines end up having more stability issues than native soil sod on top of sand. No matter what, all soil types require aeration."

Minnick concludes, "I honestly can't immediately think of more than these six issues. With the standard of sod quality we are attempting to create, new turfgrass varieties, mowing height, thatch, shear strength and soil are our primary focus. Nitrogen inputs verse potassium and micronutrient inputs are questions, but if the growth is weak from excess nitrogen or needed micronutrients, we will see that in shear strength testing. Infiltration rate changes with aeration and soil type. Mowing height, thatch, weeds, shear strength and soil type are really the biggest problems we see over and over again! And then the lack of aeration after the sod is laid. That is the single biggest issue over all: after care."

Joe Traficano, sales manager for West Coast Turf's Arizona operation in Scottsdale, had a difficult time limiting his suggested questions to just ten. After some editing he proposed the following:

1. What is the current mowing height?
2. How many pounds per acre of ryegrass seed did you overseed the Bermuda with?
3. How much sand, silt, and clay content is in the growing medium?
4. Can you provide washed sod?
5. Can we contract grow and have our own nursery on the farm?
6. When was the last time you fertilized it and are you using any turf growth regulators?
7. What are doing you to control poa?
8. Can you apply a fungicide prior to installation?
9. Can I come out to see them harvest my grass?
10. What depth or thickness will the grass be?

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▲ **Maureen Hendricks Field** at Maryland SoccerPlex. Photo courtesy of Growing Innovations, LLC

Allen Carter, the farm manager for Tuckahoe Turf Farms in Hammonton, NJ provided these ten questions that he deemed important.

1. How much should I water in the first few weeks?
2. How long should I wait to mow?
3. Do I need to lime/fertilize prior to installing?
4. How long can the sod sit on the pallet?
5. How long does it take for the sod to root?
6. When is the best time to water in the summer? (to avoid fungi)
7. How old/mature is the sod?
8. What should my fertilizer/water schedule be after sod is installed, when should I start?
9. What type of sod do you recommend for my field conditions?
10. Should I water the sod while it is on the pallet?

We were somewhat surprised at Carter's question regarding watering sod on a pallet and asked him to comment. "It has happened, even though we tell them to install the sod ASAP, they have been known to leave it on a pallet. If the temperature is really hot, we have had inexperienced field support staff think it's a good idea to soak the pallet with water. That may not be the best thing to do. The water will heat up and heat the rolled up grass even faster."

David Millar, owner of Red Hen Turf Farm, Inc., New Carlisle, IN provides harvested turfgrass for landscaped areas, lawns, and athletic fields. Over the years they have served numerous high

schools throughout the Midwest. Millar's questions focus on those sports field managers who deal with problems and or issues related to high school stadiums and playing fields. His unique perspective brings to light issues and/or concerns that some sports field managers may have experienced earlier in their career or are facing now in their current position. Millar provided a Q & A of numerous questions he has addressed over the years.

Q. Where and when, do you suggest I fertilize the sod I am putting on my soccer field?

A. "A study funded many years ago by the Sod Growers of Mid America showed maximum rooting of sod was achieved by placing the fertilizer under the sod before laying and lightly raking it into the soil.

Q. A sewer line under my football field was repaired and the first game is in 3 months. Should I use a young sod or older sod that has a bit more thatch?

A. Use the youngest, fastest growing sod you can find! 3 months is plenty of time for sod to grow new roots, and young sod is growing so fast it will never know it was moved.

Q. Which is the best time to re-sod my football field between the hash marks, fall or spring?

A. Fall is preferred, but not at the expense of removal, re-shaping and installing sod when the soil is too wet. A field in need of renovation surely is compacted, so don't add to it by rushing the job when it is wet.

Q. The school administrator is hot after me to re-sod some minor wear spots in the football field before the last 2 games of the season with 2 inch thick cut sod. What should I do?

A. Does he know how heavy the sod is and that it requires a specialized installation company? Does he know that only professional teams can afford the cost? But does he really know that the sod will not root into the field below and that it will have to be removed and replaced before the next season? Better he should buy you a new core aerifier than have thick cut sod installed.

Q. I would like to buy sod for our new football field from a local supplier, but his big roll is only 24 inches wide. The architect insists I use 48-inch sod from a faraway company. First game is in 4 months. Does width matter?

A. Technically he is right, but practically, it does not matter. Corners and edges of sod are where there can be gaps and laps, but a good sod installer will make sure there are none. For many years, little rolls of sod have worked just as well, so buy local!

Q. My school principal is pressuring me to approve the guy that fertilizes our sports fields to install our new combination football soccer field that is cheaper than the specialized sports field company I prefer. First game is in 4 weeks.

A. First, see if there are any openings in the witness protection program because you don't want to be anywhere near this. Second, call your friends and invite them to see the disaster that will be happening. Good, experienced sports field installers make laying 100,000 plus square feet of sod in 2 days look simple, but it is not. These guys know how to deal with sod scheduling, labor needs, soil prep, irrigation and scheduling in order to make the inauguration of the new field a success. I am



not saying the fertilizer guy can't learn these things, but this is not the place to start.

Q. My school is starting a stadium renovation process and I am worried that sod installation will be delayed. Any advice?

A. Get ugly and stay ugly. You know you will get blamed if the field is not playable, so tell them you must have 4 weeks to grow in the new sod. Paint a picture to your bosses of what the un-playable field will look like and make sure they see their picture beside it. Then, when delays begin, stay on them to use their power to bring on more people or invite other contractors to get the job done on time. Seldom do you find stadium architects or contractors that really get it that a field is not done because the sod has just been laid.

Given such varied responses we've reached the conclusion that turfgrass producers are much like economists, financial advisors, attorneys, and perhaps even sports turf managers, if you present a number of them with the same question you're likely to get numerous points of view. Having said that, we compiled the following list of the Top Ten Questions (in no particular order) that we feel a sports turf manager should be asking their turfgrass supplier.

1. What is the current height of the grass being harvested?
2. What are the soil conditions where the turf is being harvested and is it compatible with my field?

3. What should I know about the fertility and nutrient requirements (prior to and after delivery)?
4. Are there any new turfgrass varieties that you would recommend?
5. What is the thatch depth?
6. How thick is the grass cut?
7. What is the anticipated delivery, installation and turn-around schedule and, more importantly, can you meet my time line?
8. How soon will the field be playable?
9. Are there any special care recommendations we should consider?
10. What irrigation schedule would you propose after installation?

A final thought: When talking to your turfgrass provider it's not just the questions you ask, it's also important that both parties do one other thing . . . LISTEN. **ST**

Jim Novak is the public relations manager for the Turfgrass Producers International, www.turfgrassod.org.

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HOW, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, has social media affected your daily job activities?

Editor's note: The question above is what we asked some STMA members; here are the responses we received:

I originally tried Facebook but found it too time consuming and too public. I was looking for some way to communicate with fellow professionals and not former classmates or shirttail relatives. Twitter has been a great way to follow industry folks and I've come to appreciate the many active posters. Twitter is not overwhelming but the platform still kind of intimidates me, so mostly I lurk. It's a great way to hear from and see photos from, in real time, colleagues fighting the same fights we are.

Mike Andresen, CSFM, Director of Facilities and Grounds, Iowa State athletics department

I have embraced Twitter for my social media use. I joined Twitter about a year and half ago, and have loved it. It's a great way to connect to other sports turf managers, see what they are doing, and exchange ideas. I have gained vendors by the use of Twitter. My external communications director at Worcester Academy retweets my posts for use on the Academy's Twitter feed. It's a great way to show off my skills, and also to show some of the issues that we have. I have connected to turf professors, professional venue sports turf managers, golf course superintendents, and vendors.

Ben Polimer, Sports Turf Manager, Worcester (MA) Academy

Your question mentions "daily activities"; I wouldn't say any of them are daily for me. I have thought about prioritizing daily interaction but have not since most is "social." My hope for daily interface would be more with intent to inform, educate, etc. I do like to observe when I can to keep myself informed and educated to current events/issues.

Mostly I use them to connect and stay connected to the industry and other professionals. I try to be prepared to help or be helped.

The job change I just made was because of an STMA contact I met 18 years ago that reached out to me on LinkedIn.

Facebook and Twitter can be used the same way to network the "fraternity" of like passionate professionals and friends. Many times homeowners or coaches look for help this way.

UT Extension in Nashville has a helpful Facebook page. You know how it is. Daily is a commitment but having social media as another tool in the toolbag is most accurate. I use these tools to promote STMA resources/events/people. I also use them to support cultural practices.

Martin Kaufman, CSFM, GCA Services Grounds Manager

Using social media should be part of your daily job activities. Social media has allowed me to share sportsturf stories and ask questions about ideas to people around the world. I say world because what and how we manage our fields in the USA is the same thing they are doing in Australia, UK, Singapore etc. We are all trying to make our fields

better and safer for our communities. If you're not using some type of social media platform, you are missing out on some great opportunities to exchange information with your peers. It's also a great way to share what our industry does to the general public. Sharing news via Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, about pulling the tarp to mowing new patterns creates positive energy that allows people to comment and see how we deal with adversity and celebrate our successes. Communicating via social media is another tool for the

sportsturf manager that will open professional and personal growth opportunities.

Murray Cook, President, Sportsturf Services, Brickman Group

I think social media is great for the industry. I enjoy the sharing of ideas and maintenance practices from across the country and the world. I find it interesting to see how others manage their fields and seeing how it may or may not relate to my situation. Being able to make connections and start conversations with other managers only helps me become a better manager myself

Brian Winka, CSFM, Supervisor at City of Chesterfield

The simplest reason that I use social media is to promote and advertise our turf program at Texas Tech. We have a very small program, and many people in this region don't know that we have a turf





program or that you can get a degree in turf management, so I try to promote a lot of events, my student, our alumni and the positive aspects of their current jobs.

I went to Mississippi State for my undergraduate and master's degree and our athletic teams were generally around the bottom of the SEC year in and year out. We never came close to selling out a football game any of the years I was at MSU. We got a new athletic director who completely changed a lot of aspects about how the athletic department was run. There was a big push for a fun "fan experience," and one of the items they started to engage in was social media. Mississippi State was one of the first big athletic groups to use social media to promote the brand they were building. Social media alone did not change anything drastically, but a combination of different coaches, good players, and social media to create some buzz around the program has completely changed athletics at Mississippi State. They sold out football games the past 3-4 years to where they added more seats to the stadium. Seeing the benefit of social media and how it completely changed the atmosphere around our athletic program was pretty amazing.

Dr. Joey Young, Assistant Professor of Turfgrass, Texas Tech

For me social media has set a precedent that I struggle to keep up with; while completing jobs my first priority is the customers' needs and I don't think about social media until it is late. Too often I get asked for before and after pictures, the after are easy, the before is not something I am good at getting, as I am there to do a task. During my busy season it is hard enough to keep up with all the paperwork let alone staying up with social media. I applaud those who can wrangle all of it.

Jim Cornelius, CSFM, Services Manager, FSC Pro Services

At Elon University, our Physical Plant and Athletic Department both have Facebook and Twitter accounts. They are used to post the latest news surrounding activities on-campus. News is posted as the events are approaching and happening to share information with followers. Instant feedback on how fields are looking, staff accomplishments, as well as up-to-the-minute goings on, are shared. Although I do not use social media much personally, I do recognize the importance of staying involved with these outlets professionally in order to keep my department engaged in a way that is relevant to many of our partners and users.

Scott Stevens, CSFM, Sports Turf Manager, Elon University

We have started official Instagram and Twitter accounts for the University of Arizona Facilities Management Grounds Services Department. We use them as an avenue to showcase the work our staff does around campus, project updates and anything we think looks beautiful or interesting. The response has been very positive and it has been an effective way to showcase the positive impact we have on the appearance of campus. It gives us a channel to interact with people in the campus community we wouldn't normally cross paths with, and gives an opportunity to show people all the things Grounds Services does that people may not realize or take for granted. I have also found social media to be a beneficial learning tool to see what other people are doing to their fields, how they deal with events and the challenges of weather. I am able to post from my iPad, so the time commitment is minimal and I know our staff gets excited when a post gets a strong response from the public. It's been good for morale.

Matt Anderson, CSFM, Grounds Superintendent, University of Arizona

Those who use social media correctly are a great benefit to me. Sharing information that is helpful and useful in making me more informed will always get my attention. Posts showing new or proven methods of turf maintenance or other industry-related clips help keep me up-to-date on what is happening in this dynamic industry within which we work. If it has value, I'll instantaneously share with my colleagues and customers. Another benefit with social media!

What better way to learn about new methods or new products than viewing short video clips or photos found on social media sites. What doesn't work for me is shameless promotions of a vendors' goods or services. That, simply put, is junk mail. In this day and age, sharing information has become so easy and far-reaching. Advancements in information technology and the proper use of social media have played a significant role in that. Remember the '90s!?

Joe Churchill, Sports Turf Manager, Reinders, Inc.

Albion College has a Communications Department, with a specialist who monitors social media for anything posted about the college. He monitors Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Yik Yak, and about 15 others. The college does support individual, college-related, social media accounts. We have to agree to a standard of conduct. Faculty and staff that participate in social media have a Twitter and/or Facebook account. I am the administrator for the Twitter account for the Facilities Department.

Twitter has allowed the Facilities Department a quick way to share campus information with the student body. It has not been a burden on me because of the limit of 140 characters breaks down any anxiety or writer's block. Also, multiple divisions within Facilities send what they would like posted, by email. I do not post any opinions, just the facts.


I experimented with blogging and Facebook. The challenge I faced with blogging was the pressure I inflicted on myself to author flawless, non-controversial articles. I just didn't have the time. The Facebook account became a contact administrative challenge because the "Friend Requests" exploded. Plus, the platform does not have a character limit, so I was fighting writer's block again.

Warning: Yik Yak can be interesting but be prepared for anonymous criticism that is not friendly. Especially, near a college campus.

Mark Frever, Director of Grounds, Albion College

Social media is a powerful tool in today's world. I focus on two main platforms. The first is my SmartTurf Blog (www.janddturf.blogspot.com). The blog serves as an interactive educational platform for coaches, educators, parents and grounds managers. The blog creates a "library" of information that can be shared when necessary. The second is Twitter. I manage two accounts, both accounts are business focused. @J_DTurf is geared toward quick hitting educational tweets. @JamieMehringer is geared toward my sportsturf travels, education and my best friend, Gilroy.

Finally, social media has also allowed me to keep in touch with friends and clients in the sports turf industry. It is a great give and take to stay aware of industry trends and news.

Jamie Mehringer, President, J&D Turf 

HOW TO HANDLE INHERITED PROBLEM EMPLOYEES

■ BY CAROLE DAILY

Congratulations! Your extensive training and knowledge in turf maintenance has paid off and you have been hired as the new supervisor at your facility. Let's take a moment to get to know your staff:

One employee, the one looking at you with open hostility, will be your assistant; despite the fact that he has worked here for the past 17 years, he was once again passed over for the position as the "head guy" because of his negative attitude and his rather volatile personality. He has a few write-ups in his folder already, but is in a protected age group so HR/management has been a bit afraid of taking any "drastic" final steps with him.

Another employee is your "go to" for all landscaping needs. She is a hard worker, has a very specific way she likes things done, and is not much on hearing new ideas or open to change. And why should she? She's managed this area just fine without help for the past few years; she didn't have much need for input from your predecessor and she certainly is not looking for your ideas either.

You have three part-timers; each has potential but all struggle a bit with "illnesses" the day after a happy hour outing and intermittently throughout hunting and softball season. They also can be a bit hard to find throughout the facility during the workday. They seem very loyal to your assistant manager, and as he's told them many times, "I am the only one who really knows what's going on around this place and everything would be a lot better if I would just be in charge." In their eyes you took the job right out from under him.

So that's your staff, and your ability to be successful in this position is contingent on your ability to effectively manage and lead these people, and for them to help assist in completing the long list of tasks for which your department is responsible. Yikes! Scenarios like this can be enough to make you want to just wipe out the entire staff and start over brand new. After all, you weren't the one who made this mess; that guy is probably on the 9th hole somewhere now. But the reality is, these are the people you have and the truest testament to your leadership skills is to take on this challenge and make it into a workable situation. It is stressful but not impossible.

As you start this venture, here are a few things to keep in mind: the challenges in this department didn't appear overnight, so they won't disappear overnight either; transitioning, building a cohesive workforce, and dealing with problematic



Your goal is to have each employee become a positive, productive employee that helps your department not only meet organizational expectations, but to exceed them.

issues and attitudes takes a great deal of communication, coaching, documentation, consistently applied goals and consequences, and above all, PATIENCE. It may take a bit of time, but we have the ability to create an effective plan of action and take the necessary steps to create an efficient and productive department. Remember, failure to plan is a plan to failure.

Your goal is to have each employee become a positive, productive employee that helps your department not only meet organizational expectations, but to exceed them. Having the assistance and support of your staff will definitely help you hit the ground running and make your transition to a new job much faster, and it's certainly a lot easier than the paperwork and/or potential legal action if you end up having to clean house. So let's start by focusing on positive steps you can take immediately to help you get going in the right direction.

START WITH A CLEAN SLATE

In your very first departmental meeting, it's important to convey that this is the opportunity for everyone to redefine themselves, their jobs and even the department in whatever terms they choose. Through their actions, they can define themselves as the positive team player, the invested co-worker, their position as expanding/taking on new roles, and the department known for going above and beyond. The slate with you is clean and whatever they want to show you is up to them. You would hope they would extend the same "clean slate" concept to you as well. Give them the, "Get to know me before you decide to hate me," speech. But let them know upfront what you desire for the departmental reputation to be, and how you would like them to be a positive reflection of this area.

DEFINE SUCCESS

It's important to define not only your own management philosophy, but also the general expectations you have for your department and what you consider to be "successful." This could include

your thoughts on the importance of working together and being respectful of each other, expectations of time management, how you want staff to notify you directly when will be absent, etc. Whatever items are important to you need to be clearly stated; it is too ambiguous to assume everyone knows professional behavior. If your staff isn't informed on your definition of success, how can they possibly succeed?

ASK FOR INPUT

Unless an employee feels management is invested in them it's hard for the employee to feel invested in their jobs. This is where it's important to get to know and to individually establish rapport with them that cannot happen in a group setting, cannot happen in one meeting, and cannot happen without taking the time and effort necessary to let the employee know you truly want them to succeed in their jobs.

Approach employees individually to ask what is the best time of day for them to meet with you. Also, arrange to meet with them somewhere besides your office (where you sit in your chair on one side and them on the other). Ask if there's an area they worked on that they are proud of (a garden/landscape area, a specific field), or an area for which they have some positive ideas for change. Give them a chance to prepare for the meeting; let them know some of the basic questions you will be asking to help eliminate some of that initial apprehension, and certainly any meeting when both parties come prepared results in a more effective meeting. Example questions can include:

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- Why did you join this company?
- What are some of the things this department does well?
- Where does it need to improve?

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- What are the big priorities for our team for the next 6 months?
- What are any major roadblocks that could we may face/ overcome?
- What did your previous supervisor do that made you feel appreciated and effective in your job?
- What do you think is a TRUE description (not what was written by someone else for you) of your job currently?
- What would you like your job description to be if you could make changes to it?

At the conclusion of the meeting let them know you would like to talk with them again next week or maybe the week after, just to keep in touch and see how things are going. Maybe even assign them a “thinking” task, e.g., “I’ve read a lot lately about water conservation. Maybe by our next meeting you can provide me with some of your thoughts on how we can improve water conservation in our department.” This lets them know you value their insight and starts off by letting them take ownership of a possible upcoming task or solution. Often “buy-in” comes just from getting employees involved in a solution-oriented task. When they become part of the solution they feel more invested in what they are doing.

It would be great if the story ended here with continued positive, productive departmental meetings and individual

staff discussions. Sometimes personalities, histories, or even attitudes just get in the way and a negative scenario is where we may be with one or more employees. As a supervisor, you want to expect the best from employees but be prepared to address negative issues quickly, consistently and decisively if necessary. Let’s look at our potential issues individually:

The disgruntled department assistant may never be your biggest fan, and in fact may go about openly or behind the scenes trying to sabotage your authority or success in your job. He is in a protected group so we must tread carefully, but with proper documentation we can address issues as necessary. It may involve informal discussions in the beginning, where we address the display of disrespectful or negative attitudes. But it is important that we start documenting even “verbal” reprimands or discussions as part of a documented, progressive discipline program. If issues continue or deteriorate, we may need to involve human resources (HR) and let them know of the recurring problems. If possible, have HR help in writing formal reprimands to address the employee’s unacceptable behavior.

Remember, you can’t stop someone from being a jerk but you can require that they treat you and others with respect, and you can define what successful behavior in their job is and your expectations for change. Schedule follow-up meetings to let the employee know where they are meeting and not meeting



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the needs of their job, and these meetings should continue until the employee changes their negative behavior or until they decide to pursue “greener pastures.”

Any employment decisions you feel necessary to take such as suspension, demotion, or termination should be with advisement from someone familiar with employment legalities to stay out of any potential age discrimination issues. Progressive discipline is almost always the way to address this.

THE “INDEPENDENT” WORKER

For the independent worker, fight that battle only if you have to. If they prefer to work by themselves and they get the job done, they literally might be better off left alone. If they openly show resentment/resistance to change or don’t comply with your direction, that’s a problem that has to be addressed. Let them know what you feel is going well in their area, but also let them know where there are some areas that need improved. Try to involve their opinion first on how to improve those areas, and then expand upon their ideas with some of yours.

It might take a while for you to establish mutual trust, but with some “give and take” it may help both parties to come to a mutual solution. If the employee will not take direction, then progressive discipline may be necessary. This again involves multiple step discussions with documentation. Our goal is that the employee will know we take this seriously and will get on board, or will see the writing on the wall (or in their file) and resign. Resignations are always preferable to terminations simply due to liability issues, but sometimes terminations are only recourse. The goal is that the termination should never come as a “surprise,” through progressive discipline steps.

As for our part-timers, again we want them to know we want them to succeed and be part of the team, but there are clear expectations of attendance and accountability in their work. If there is a pattern of attendance issues, make sure these are properly documented and address them with progressive discipline

and within guidelines of the employee handbook. As far as making sure people are at their assigned work stations when they are suppose to be verses some “hide-out” under the bleachers may require frequent unannounced visits from you at various times. The more they see and hear of you in their work environment has a way of keeping people on task and where they are supposed to be. If problems continue it is better to address them quickly than to let it go unchecked, as it sets a precedence and negative standard of work for others to possibly replicate.

We don’t make friends by making hard decisions, but if we establish consistently applied rules, share our expectations, and communicate effectively by recognizing positives and addressing the negatives, our staff knows where we stand. It is important to convey to our staff we want them to take pride in their work and enjoy their jobs, but much of that depends on cooperation, work ethic, and positive atti-

tude. We all spend way too much time at work to not enjoy what we do.

You worked very hard to get to this new position, so truly, congratulations. And know that even though things may start a bit rocky, this does not have to define how your experience will continue in this new position as manager. They call it a “transition” for a reason. You are starting at point “a” with your current staff, but you are always aiming and working towards a point “b”; to have each employee become a positive, productive employee that helps your department not only meet organizational expectations, but to exceed them. **SI**

Carole Daily has a degree in human resource management and more than 15 years of experience in the HR industry. She consults through Daily HR Solutions, and also works at the University of Kentucky.



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John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

John Mascaro is President of Turf-Tec International

Can you identify this sports turf problem?

Problem: Yellow turf by lip
Turfgrass area: Baseball stadium
Location: El Paso, Texas
Grass Variety: 419 bermudagrass

Answer to John Mascaro's Photo Quiz on Page 33



Background illustration courtesy of istockphoto.com



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WETTING AGENTS AND SPORTS TURF

Editor's note: This article was supplied by Aquatrols.



Water is central to everything that happens in turf management. However, water is an inherently finite resource and its use in the turf industry is coming under increased scrutiny in parts of the western United States. In California, for example, sports turf managers are being mandated to reduce water use by as much as 25% in the face of continuing severe drought conditions.

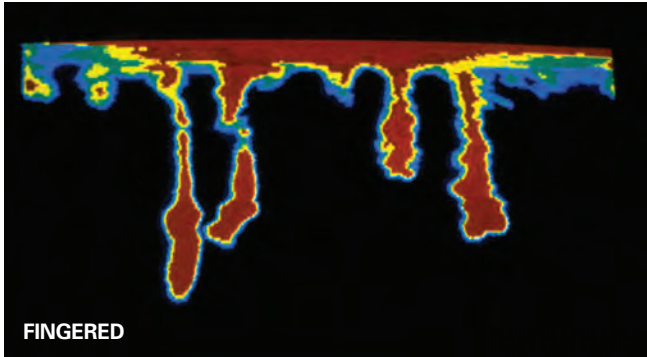
As you know, too much or too little can water can significantly alter playing surfaces, complicating a turf manager's already tough job and putting athletes at increased risk for injury. So how do turf managers balance the need for a uniform, safe playing surface against a mandate to use less water? Wetting agents (or soil surfactants) can help.

IMPROVE IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY

To understand how wetting agents work, we first have to understand what happens when water is applied to a playing surface. It is our natural inclination to think that water applied on the surface will penetrate uniformly and without issue. However, the study of soil science has shown that this is not always the case. Over time, all soils develop water repellency to some degree. Water repellent coatings form on soil particles from root exudates, fungal hyphae, and decomposing organic matter—all byproducts of growing healthy plants. These water repellent coatings on soil particles act as a barrier, making it harder for water to penetrate and move through soil evenly.

In highly managed turfgrass environments such as sports fields, water repellency tends to be more severe at the surface and declines farther along the soil profile. Typically, the top 3 centimeters of a coarse textured soil are the most hydrophobic. This top 3 cm is enough to significantly disrupt water movement. Water repellency at the sur-

◀ **A soil core** shows varying degrees of water repellency throughout the soil profile.



▲ **Thermal imaging** shows water moving in a fingered flow through water repellent soil (top) and the desired matrix flow in a non-repellent soil (bottom).

face is evident when runoff, puddling, and/or slow infiltration occur.

Water repellency significantly reduces irrigation distribution uniformity. Although not visually evident, the delay in water movement into the soil in an arid environment also causes water loss to evaporation. This water repellency and loss prevents turf from getting the water it needs to survive. It also contributes to wasted water and run-off of soil directed chemicals such as fertilizer and pesticides.

Water repellency is at work below the surface as well. Untreated water repellency disrupts uniform downward water movement, causing it to channel unevenly through the profile, sometimes referred to as “fingered flow.” Again, this leaves some areas of the soil too wet and others too dry, which prevents uniform root establishment and turf growth.

A proven wetting agent program will improve the relationship between water and soil, resulting in more uniform soil moisture, improved turf quality, and safer playing conditions no matter how much (or how little) water is applied.

If you have ever had difficulty getting certain areas of a field to absorb water, or if specific areas are always quick to wilt, then you likely have issues with water repellency. Using a wetting agent will help to maintain soils at a consistent volumetric water content and improve distribution uniformity. Wetting agents encourage a “matrix flow” of water, distributing water and the important inputs it carries more evenly throughout the soil profile.

From both an environmental and economic standpoint,

water is one of the most important components of turf maintenance plans and budgets. Wetting agents help water penetrate the soil surface and retain moisture in the soil profile. By doing so, less water is needed to maintain high quality turf, thus reducing both the environmental and financial costs associated with irrigating.

Even in areas where rainfall is abundant or where high efficiency irrigation systems are in place; wetting agents help to maximize water use efficiency by improving distribution uniformity and enhancing water movement through the soil profile. This reduces the amount of water needed during each irrigation cycle and can extend the amount of time between each irrigation event.

WHICH WETTING AGENT IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

It is important to note that not all wetting agents are the same. Non-ionics are the most common surfactants used in turfgrass management. Numerous surfactant chemistries exist and performance characteristics vary depending on chemical structure and the makeup of your soil.

So how do you know which wetting agent is right for you? Rely on data from universities in your geographical area. Local distributors should also be able to tell you the key components in each wetting agent product and how those ingredients work in the soil and at what rate phytotoxicity may occur.

As a turfgrass manager your job is to maintain quality turf while being as efficient and cost-effective as possible. Water repellency can make your job more difficult, especially when drought conditions or water use restrictions come into play. Incorporating a wetting agent into your turf management program will decrease the amount of water lost to runoff and evaporation and improve turf quality. If you need assistance determining which wetting agent chemistry is right for you, discuss it with your local distributor or a wetting agent manufacturer. Most will be able to determine your specific issue and find a wetting agent solution that fits for local growing conditions.

FIND A PROGRAM THAT WORKS AND STICK TO IT

The key to any successful wetting agent program is to start early and remain on a consistent application schedule. Although wetting agents can help turf recover from existing water repellency issues, instituting a proven program *before* the development of water repellency can provide a number of benefits.

By increasing soil moisture uniformity, wetting agents help to create a healthier and more consistent growing environment. If the growing environment is managed to its peak potential early in the season, turf will be healthier and better able to defend itself when stress and disease pressures kick in. In addition, water and monetary savings produced early in the season can be banked for the late summer months when the need for frequent irrigation becomes greater. [SI](#)



HOW TO TACKLE A COMPLETE INFIELD DIRT RENOVATION

Editor's note: This article was written by Bill Marbet and Glenn Lucas of Southern Athletic Fields, Inc.

Infield skinned area renovations are some of the most overlooked, often-neglected areas on a baseball or softball field. Coaches, parents and maintenance staffs are more concerned about the grass, or the press box, or where we will sit for the game to get the best views of our children. With it being overlooked, when it does come time to renovate the infield-skinned area, the price tag to renovate is much more than had it been properly maintained over the years.

DETERMINE THE PROBLEM

Before you can tackle this renovation, you first need to determine the problem or the issue at hand. Does the field not drain properly? Birdbaths located throughout the infield? Is it loose and not providing a firm solid footing for players? Does the infield appear to be in a cattle farm after a game or chicken scratching? Once you determine the problem, then you can begin to renovate the skinned infield.

CONTRACT OR DIY?

With the job at hand of renovating the infield skinned area, you can ask yourself do we contract it out or do we DIY (do it yourself)?

The advantages of a paying someone else to do the work, is that it should be done correctly (be sure to get and check references if contractor if he is well known or not), laser graded for proper water removal, edged, base anchors installed at proper distances and game ready once the contractor is finished.

If you DIY, most of the labor force are volunteers. As with volunteers, they



may or may not have the time and/or expertise to accomplish the desired results.

WHAT MATERIALS?

When selecting infield materials, it can be found regionally or nationally depending on your scope of work or your level of play. A few things to ask about the material to use are:

- Is the product tested regularly by an approved testing facility? (Sand/Silt/Clay)
- Is the material screened? If so, what size are the screens? Some companies might “screen” the material, but, if it is bigger than a ½-inch screen, then you might have debris found throughout the product.
- What is the SCR (Silt to Clay Ratio) of the latest report?
- What are the sand particle sizes? This will help determine if the infield mix will “chip” out or you will get good “cleat in, cleat out” fields.
- How readily available is the product to be added to the field?

It is best to ask these questions, even if the company has been in business for years, to make sure that the money invested in material is money well spent. Be wary of just the local dirt pit that can provide material for free. If you are investing money into your infield, then free might not be the best option. You pay for what you get and if it is free, you might not a quality product.

THE PROCESS

As with any renovation, there has to be a process. Recommended are the following steps necessary to establishing a complete renovation on the infield.

1. Edge the entire skinned area, pulling up the base anchors and using strings to measure for the correct edge distance. If using the bases for measurements is not correct, that can lead to more work in the future to get your field edged properly.

Be wary of just the local dirt pit that can provide material for free. If you are investing money into your infield, then free might not be the best option.



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2. Remove any excessive loose material from the infield area. If you cannot deep till the material and “bury it” under the new infield mix, then it might be best to remove some of it so you get a good consistent surface.

3. Water the existing surface before deep tilling. If this can be done at night before you do the renovation that will be ideal. The water can soak into the infield mix and allow for an easier tilling process the next day.

4. Deep till 3-4 inches of the existing surface to remove any layering that could have occurred in past infield renovations. This will allow the existing material and new material to blend together creating a constant profile of the infield mix, “no layers.” This will help minimize the sheeting off of the new material once installed.

5. Begin importing the new material onto the field. As you add a layer, it is important to till the two materials again, existing infield and new material to eliminate the layering affect that could occur. As you bring on new material, till the field, but don’t go as deep on the tilling process. The last thing you want to do is purchase quality material, only to bury it so deep you cannot find it.

6. Laser grade the infield (if possible) to create positive drainage off the infield skinned area. If a field cannot be laser

graded due to the grade of the field, do the best you can to remove water to the grassed areas so that the infield-skinned portion can dry quicker after a rain. After laser grading, nail and float the infield to create the smooth, pool table surface you desire. Roll with a smooth double drum roller once completed.

7. Install base anchors, add field conditioner or topdressing, nail and float smooth again and roll again if needed.

GAME READY

As with any renovation, there is always something to do once it is completed to getting your field the way you want it and need it for your players. Continue to add conditioner, nail drag, float smooth, mat drag in different directions, broom the edges, don’t drag closer than 1-3 feet of the edge, pull your bases before dragging, manage your moisture level for good cleat in and cleat out fields, etc. There is always something to do to your skinned infield area to make it playable and the best it can be.

If you ever stop learning, then it might be time to look for something else to start. Strive to make your infields safe and playable for your team and players and always, if you have a question, be sure to ask. **SI**

John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

Answers from page 27

John Mascaro is President of Turf-Tec International

This 2-inch area of yellow turf located along the stadium's 95-foot infield arc caused the Sports Turf Manager at this field to be concerned. After further investigation he found that the bermudagrass rhizomes had crept slightly into the infield mix and caused poor water movement into the clay. He also noticed there were several low spots in this area that hold water. In addition the irrigation water used at this ballpark tested at 658.56 PPM total soluble salts. Since the water was pooling in these low areas, the salinity readings in the soil where the turf was yellow were 202 PPM of sodium as opposed to 65 PPM for the rest of the outfield. So the combination of turf encroachment, low spots and below average water quality resulted in some toxic conditions on the turf edges. The Sports Turf Manager also realized that this condition only occurs when the team is in town so he attributed it to the saline water creeping into the turf keeping it wet and heating up the turf crowns, causing additional stress. After the season is over he plans on removing some turf, fixing the grade issues and then installing a big roll of bermudagrass along the arc edge. He is also looking into soaker hoses along the arc to leach the salt if needed.

Photo submitted by Andy Beggs, Head Groundskeeper for the El Paso Chihuahuas in El Paso, TX, the AAA affiliate for the San Diego Padres.



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.

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THE SPORTSTURF INTERVIEW:

CHRIS POWELL, CLEVELAND BROWNS

Editor's note: This month in "The SportsTurf Interview," we feature Chris Powell, head groundskeeper for the Cleveland Browns.

SPORTSTURF: You know a lot of sports turf managers. What are they saying are the biggest obstacles to overcome for them to be successful today?

Powell: It always seems to be the addition of minor events and the lack of communication that always seems to come hand in hand with each other. It's that they always assume that it's no big deal from their perspective and that everything will work out.

It needs to be expressed that in order for field managers to do their jobs, we must recognize as many variables as possible and become proactive with a plan that can negate any shortcomings or, just as important, take advantage of the situation.

We spend countless hours interpreting weather conditions, we evaluate the health of the grass plants, we forecast the effects of wear and how the field will play, we formulate nutrient requirements and prescribe possible grass-saving applications, and perform cultivating activities to condition the field so that we have the greatest odds for success. That's why we become somewhat irritated when something as easy as a quick conversation about an event on the field can alert us to take another variable under advisement. The communication not only allows both parties a better chance for success, but demonstrates an

understanding and respect for what we do.

SPORTSTURF: What are your biggest challenges working in the National Football League?

Powell: Well I'm pretty fortunate that I don't have to go at it alone. I've got who I believe are two of the best groundskeepers in all the profession in Neal Pate as the stadium field manager, and Scott Springer, the supervisor at the practice facility. Our facilities are 27 miles apart and any success at either place is dependent on these gentlemen and how they handle day-to-day operations. I rest assured knowing decisions are being made by maximizing every possible advantage for the fields' sake and for the goal of always being at our best for our fields, each other, and to the Browns.

With this kind of dedication and the time needed to attain the expected results, striking up the right balance on and off the fields with work and family can be tough. There's nothing I love more than family so having my youngest remark some years ago that she could just watch football on TV to see her daddy, really opened my eyes. It's not just good enough to take the time when it's available, but rather you have to learn to make the time to spend with your family. It will make you not only a better husband or



▲ Chris Powell, head groundskeeper, Cleveland Browns

It needs to be expressed that in order for field managers to do their jobs, we must recognize as many variables as possible and become proactive with a plan that can negate any shortcomings or, just as important, take advantage of the situation.

father, but a better person and that will always make you a better groundskeeper.

SPORTSTURF: How has social media impacted your work?

Powell: The community-based sharing perspective is pretty neat because I'm able to hone in on the things that interest my work and me. Whether it's a person, group, or subject, I can follow current trends and activities in our profession that, more times than not, can be a catalyst for further research and information gathering. I'm trying to jump in myself on Twitter nation at @BrownsGrounds.

SPORTSTURF: What's your favorite on-field maintenance task that you still enjoy performing?

Powell: If you don't mow it, you don't know it!

SPORTSTURF: How do you think the profession and industry will change in the next 10 years?

Powell: I think in some form or fashion, field certification will eventually be required at most competitive levels. Here in the NFL, we are going into our fourth year complying with league set standards for field conditions while also following the recommended practices in order to achieve some sort

of consistency across the league. I believe that this proactive approach is a collaboration with results that not only provides justification and merit for our responsibilities, but to all parties involved, a measurable way of ensuring a safe and playable field.

SPORTSTURF: How has your career benefitted from being a member of STMA?

Powell: Being a member of STMA, I am able to network and connect with other groundskeepers at all levels and experience. Every one of us shares a common devotion for providing safe and playable fields and it's no different if the end users are million dollar athletes or grade school ballers. We can all learn from one another and STMA gives us the means to do this.

SPORTSTURF: What are your passions and interests outside of work?

Powell: One of the reasons I chose to go into groundskeeping is the love of the outdoors. Hard to imagine, but I really enjoy doing yard work around the house and also working on outdoor projects such as my backyard "Family-Oasis." Whether it's the outdoor movie theater or the in-ground fire pit, nothing beats sitting around with the family under the stars watching classic movies or listening to good music and eating sticky s'mores. **ST**

▼ Chris with his wife and high school sweetheart, Stephanie, who's been by his side for 26 years.



STMA COMMERCIAL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: **WORLD CLASS ATHLETIC SURFACES**

Another installment in our new, occasional series highlighting STMA commercial members. This month we hear from Mike Williams of World Class Athletic Surfaces, Leland, MS:

SportsTurf: How do you develop relationships with turf managers?

Williams: When first calling on a new customer, it's important to let them know who we are, and let them know how World Class products can help make their facility the best it can be. We let them know our various product lines and help find

the best product that is a fit for their particular fields. We share with them positive experiences our current customers have had at their facilities with our products. We spend as much time as the customer desires to learn about them and not 'get in the way', while at the same time trying to build a long-term relationship. The goal of

World Class is to make the turf manager's job easier and to exceed our customers' expectations.

ST: Do you have any recommendations for customers on how to get the most out of their supplier relationships?

Williams: Turf managers should have no reservations about asking any questions about our products' performance. The suppliers should always be available to help in any situation. Good communication is the key, whether it is about how good the field looked, or an occasional problem. There is a remedy for almost anything, and we will always find a solution. If our customers are not happy, then we are not happy.

ST: How do you typically research and develop new products?

Williams: We have test plots at our manufacturing site. We are constantly working on improving our products and keeping up with any needs or ideas the turf managers may have. Customer feedback is the key to our product development.

ST: Are there any new technologies you are developing that you can share with us, or any new products that will soon be available?

Williams: We are working on new products and ways to help enhance the look of the stadium or facility, not only the playing field. We aren't ready to announce the details at this time.

ST: Are there any new markets that you are entering?

Williams: We aren't ready to announce details at this time. **ST**



Getting your fields ready for winter stresses

Editor's note: This article was supplied by Macro-Sorb Technologies, Inc., and was written by John Haguwood, Macro-Sorb's technical manager, www.macro-sorb.com.

While many sports turf managers breathe a sigh of relief when temperatures start to cool off in the fall, it can still be a busy time of year.

Depending on where in the country you are located, you will likely aerate your sports fields in the fall. And it is a good time to think about building up carbohydrate storage to help turfgrass survive winter months and emerge brimming with plant health in the spring. Aeration provides many benefits for turf such as alleviating soil compaction, improving gas exchange between soil and atmosphere, reducing thatch, and improving water and nutrient movement into the soil.

Fall aeration on cool-season turf is often delayed as long as possible due to fall sports schedules. But this delay often comes at a price with very slow recovery due to cold temperatures. For warm-season turfgrass, timely recovery from summertime aeration before the fall season is extremely important for a healthy recovery and promotion of new root growth for warm-season grasses.

Ultimately, aeration leads to enhanced plant health and better playing conditions for sports fields. However, aeration also causes stress to turf. Fortunately, there are ways to help reduce stress and promote quicker recovery.

Carbohydrate storage

Turf needs to build up root mass and carbohydrates in preparation for winter months. Stored in crowns, stems and roots, carbohydrates are created from photosynthesis. Needed by the plant in greater quantities through winter and coming into spring, carbohydrates are essential for healthy turf.

Cool-season turfgrasses need to build up adequate carbohydrates to maintain root growth and development in winter months, as well as recover from injury sustained from any pest, environmental stress, or mechanical damage.

Carbohydrate storage is important for warm-season turfgrasses because the plant uses carbohydrates that have been stored in roots, shoots and crowns to supplement its energy supply to get through the winter months and break dormancy in the spring.

Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins, necessary for the physiological processes all plants undergo. Plants require higher concentrations of amino acids before stressful periods, such as drought, high heat and cold temperatures. They supply plants with essential components, which improve stress tolerance and overall plant health.

The amino acids in products are chelating agents, meaning they improve uptake and translocation within the plant, specifically when tank-mixed with mineral nutrients. When amino acid products are tank-mixed with products such as fungicides, herbi-



Amino acid fertilizers can help with aeration recovery and carbohydrate storage during fall months.

cides and insecticides, they help them move into the plant more efficiently as well.

Macro-Sorb obtains its amino acids through a process called enzymatic hydrolysis, which uses specific enzymes to break down proteins into individual amino acids. These are called free amino acids and they are immediately available to the plant—as soon as they are applied.

Amino acid products help get plants through stressful periods like aeration recovery and winter stresses on warm season turf. And amino acid fertilizers help plants conserve plant energy so they can maximize production of carbohydrates.

Fall recommendations

Apply root-enhancing amino acid products 2-3 days before aeration, and again 5-7 days post aeration. This will improve turf recovery, enhance root mass, and provide much needed amino acids to aid in carbohydrate storage.

Apply foliar amino acid products every 2 weeks going into winter. This will help conserve energy and aid in carbohydrate production. Amino acids also improve stress tolerance related to winter stress, such as frost.

Apply amino acid minor nutrient products monthly going into winter for enhanced turfgrass color. You can also use them for seedling establishment; applications can be made as soon as 5 days after emergence.

By planning ahead for improved aeration recovery and enhanced root mass build-up/carbohydrate storage for your turfgrass, sports fields will better survive the winter months. You'll start the spring season with stronger, healthier turf. **ST**

PRODUCTS

NOVO 2WIRE CONVERTER

The Underhill Novo 2Wire Converter is a practical new solution for expanding or renovating multi-wire irrigation systems. Compatible with all major controllers, Novo installs alongside the host multi-wire controller as part of a hybrid system and can manage up to 32 new two-wire stations. In a hybrid plan the host controller continues to activate the original, multi-wire stations, while the Novo converter manages the newly added two-wire valves. Rather than digging up the existing landscape to connect a multi-wire system, installers can now set up a compatible Novo hybrid system by connecting a single pair of properly-sized wires from the last existing multi-wire valve to new two-wire valves with decoders. No grounding or special wire is required.

Underhill



PROFILE FIELD & FAIRWAY

Profile Field & Fairway turf conditioner is ideal for construction and maintenance of sports fields. Field & Fairway is easily applied as a top-dressing before or after rain and heavy traffic events. The uniform particles provide a

balance of air and water pore space to increase drainage and prevent muddy conditions. Field & Fairway's nutrient-holding capability aids turf recovery. Pamela Sherratt, Sports Turf Specialist at the Ohio State University's Horticulture and Crop Science Department, conducted research on Field & Fairway, comparing its use for preventing turf damage and rescuing turf from rain game conditions. Her conclusion: "One rain game can destroy a natural grass field. I'm pleasantly surprised with Field & Fairway in both preventing damage and speeding recovery of natural grass fields in rain game situations."

Profile Products



KIOTI SNOW BLOWERS

KIOTI Tractor makes it a priority to provide quality equipment to its operators to accomplish even the toughest tasks and those in the snow are

no different. Clear any terrain with KIOTI's front mount snow blowers. They quickly hitch to the sub-frame for easy mounting and operate on a mid-mount PTO drive, offering plenty of snow blasting power. Chute rotation and the raising and lowering of the blower unit are controlled by the same single lever joystick as the front-end loader. Furthermore, since the snow blower is front mounted, it allows the operator excellent visibility despite the weather condition.

The front mount snow blowers are available for all CS and CK tractors and for most DKSE tractors. The snow removal units include: SB50, SB54, SB66, and SB72. These units come with a 12-month warranty.

KIOTI Tractor



SECTIONAL SNO-PUSHERS

Sectional Sno-Pusher, a product division of Arctic Snow and Ice Control Products, offers its line of Compact-Duty Pushers. Compatible with small skid-steers, compact tractors and small wheel loaders, the CD pushers are perfect for clearing small parking lots, sidewalks and larger driveways. Unlike traditional one-piece moldboard plows or pushers, the Sectional Sno-Pushers feature a sectional moldboard design. Each 24-inch-wide section is also equipped with its own spring-loaded trip edge and polyurethane cutting edge to further allow precision pushing. This unique design allows each section to move up and down independently, enabling the pusher to effectively contour to uneven surfaces and remove snow in dips and depressions on the first pass. The CD pushers are outfitted with Sectional Sno-Pusher's patented Slip-Hitch system, allowing the pusher to automatically adjust and continuously readjust to the pavement grade.

Arctic Snow and Ice Control Products

HONDA INTRODUCES HSS SERIES SNOW BLOWERS

The all-new HSS Series products are being manufactured domestically in Swepsonville, NC, using domestic and globally sourced parts, allowing for increased flexibility to meet customer demand. Key features include: Finger Tip Steering Control conveniently located hand lever controls allows for easy maneuvering, and disengagement of transmission for easy movement when



not powered; Hydrostatic Transmission, superior than traditional disk drive; provides single-lever variable speed control when operating in forward or reverse; Joystick Electric Chute Control, a single joystick control (4-directions) provides precision control of chute rotation and discharge angle; directly powered by the engine's power coil with no battery required; and DC Electric Start, no extension cord necessary, the on-board battery is automatically charged by the engine.

Honda Power Equipment



BOBCAT SNOW PUSHER

The Bobcat snow pusher allows operators to collect and push snow, and clear big-time winter jobs. The open bottom and wide body deliver pure pushing power, for maximum snow removal speed and efficiency. And with more collecting and holding capabilities, larger areas can be cleaned without stopping as often. Flotation and oscillation of the moldboard keep the snow pusher in contact with the ground without damaging equipment or property, allowing for snow removal over decorative and sensitive surfaces. When operating on terrain that isn't perfectly flat, allow the blade to float for following ground contours and collecting more snow. When powering through snow on flat surfaces, keep blade position fixed for clearing hard-packed snow and ice

Bobcat

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CLOVER MEMORIAL STADIUM, Clover, SC



The Field of the Year Awards program is made possible by the support of sponsors Carolina Green Corp., Ewing, Graff's Turf, Hunter Industries, Pro's Choice, and World Class Athletic Services.

Category of Submission: Schools/Parks Football

Sports Turf Manager: Will Rogers

Title: Sports Turf Manager

Education: Sports Turf Management Certification

Experience: 2 years at Clover Recreation Department: Athletic Fields Assistant Manager; 5 Years at City of York Recreation Department: Sports Turf Manager; 2 years at River Hills Golf Course: Fairway Turf Specialist; 16 years at Clover School District: Sports Turf Manager

Full-time staff: Christi Clay, stadium manager, and (formerly) Don Frantz

Original construction: 1948

Rootzone: Native soil, sandy loam; 80% sand

Turfgrass variety: Kentucky Bluegrass- Barrari, Full Moon, Barduke, Moonlight SLT, Barvette, Everglade, and Regenerating Perennial Rye (RPR)- Barbeta RPR, Barlennium.

Overseeding: We overseed multiple times a year. This year was a little different because of our regrading project. During the schools' spring break, we core aerated and overseeded lightly with regenerating perennial ryegrass. After our soccer field project, we seeded with RPR and HGT, followed by another rye overseed in early June and twice since the fall season started. Lightly topdress- ing follows each seeding.

Turfgrass variety: Tifway 419 bermudagrass

WHY STMA SHOULD CONSIDER YOUR FIELD A WINNER?

Clover Memorial Stadium has been natural grass since 1948. For over half a century Clover Memorial Stadium has been the focal point of our "one high school" community.

This past year has been tough for Clover Memorial Stadium. Part of the bond referendum vote in March 2014 included the renovation of Memorial Stadium. One of the changes for the 2015 football season will be the installation of synthetic turf.

This year we have encountered three major challenges. The first major challenge at Clover Memorial Stadium was being asked to maintain a Division 1 quality field with less time and money being devoted to it. School district officials felt that there was no need to pump money into field improvements to a field that would be demolished at the end of the season. The second major challenge at Clover Memorial Stadium was the purchase of a new school district maintenance facility. Hours that are usually devoted to sports turf were spent moving equipment, renovating bathrooms, hanging sheet rock, and running wire. Many extra, unpaid hours were spent at Memorial Stadium doing things that were usually done during business hours. The third major challenge was the renovation of our practice facility. The practice field at the high school was converted from a Bermuda surface to synthetic turf. The football team was forced to move their 7 on 7 passing league games to Clover Memorial Stadium. Each Wednesday, from June 11 to July 9, eight teams were at Memorial Stadium from 8 am until noon. This added



From L to R: Will Rogers, Jim Funderburk, Tony McCarter, Frank Falls and Lee Clinton accept their Field of the Year Award from former STMA President David Pinsonneault, CSFM, CPRP, at the 2015 STMA Awards ceremony in Denver.

traffic caused us to reschedule sodding jobs, aerification, spraying, and fertilization applications. Even with the challenges with which she was presented, Clover Memorial Stadium came through with flying colors.

To be honest, we disagree with the changeover to synthetic turf. We believe in the great turf we have at Clover Memorial Stadium. Clover Memorial Stadium has been part of our community since 1948. For 66 years, our sports teams have poured blood, sweat, and tears on our two sacred acres. Our team has a combined 44 years of service working on Clover Memorial Stadium. The change to synthetic turf has been a blow to us. It would have been easy to whine, pout, and throw in the towel, but we didn't. Clover Memorial Stadium never let us down, and in her final season, we were determined not to let her down. To say that we love Clover Memorial Stadium would be an understatement. She is what is right and good about our profession. She is a living creature, and when she goes away, a part of us will die with her. She has been a blessing to everyone who has played on her, and especially the ones of us who have been privileged to work on her. For the last time, for now, we submit the MVP of our team Clover Memorial Stadium for Field of the Year consideration.

SportsTurf: What changes if any are you making or have you made to your maintenance plan for 2015?

Rogers: With Clover Memorial Stadium gone we are committing our time and effort to making all of our fields Clover Memorial Stadium quality.

ST: What's the best piece of turf management advice you have ever received?

Rogers: Caring is 99% of the process.

ST: What are your specific job responsibilities? What do find most enjoyable? What task is your least favorite and why?

Rogers: Cutting and fertilizing. Most enjoyable is sharing in the results of our work with our team. Least favorite is being pulled from our job to do other things. We have to be team players with the organization we work for, but timing is everything in our profession so if you snooze, you lose.

ST: How do you balance your work and personal time?

Rogers: It's easy to do that when you love what you do. The fields are always on our minds. We are always talking and texting about what we can do, and what we need to be doing. It's fun for us. It's like a kid getting paid to play.

ST: What's your most valued piece of equipment and why?

Rogers: Our team: Lee Clinton, Tony McCarter, and Frank Falls. We all bring something different to the table, but the com-

mon denominator is we care. You can have all the latest gadgets, equipment, and technology but if you don't care they mean nothing. Give us someone with a shovel, and some "want to," and we can get something done. We'll take that over a piece of equipment, and someone who doesn't want to be there any day.

ST: How do you see your job changing in the future?

Rogers: Synthetic turf is the flavor of the month. The National Field of the Year was sold as sod and carpet put down. It's like anything. We feel like once the price of replacing the carpet is figured in, and another study is done grass will return. You just play the cards you are dealt knowing that what you do works, and you just have to trust the process. Our teammate, Lee Clinton, says it best: "When it comes to fields, you can't beat what cows can eat."

ST: Are you yet involved in "sustainable" management practices? If so, what are you doing?

Rogers: We love our fertigation system. We are using good, old-fashioned organic practices to get the roots deeper, to ease compaction, and give our fields better color, recovery, and playability. Nothing like shooting out some Bovamura, Bio Turf, and Hydro Turf. You get instant and long lasting results knowing what you are putting out is good for the environment. We call it "Jungle Juice." It's like Flintstone vitamins for our fields. [ST](#)



Thanks to crew members Dean McCarter, Jamie Sciba, Robbie Wiggins and Chris Dalton, and to the Clover maintenance department for all their help at the stadium.



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Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) & The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (www.aaos.org)

“Spotlight On: It’s the Field” now in Spanish!

STMA’s “Spotlight On: It’s the Field” movie about the sports field management profession has been produced in Spanish.

Its English version has been airing on PBS to educate the general public that sports field management is a profession; and that those in it are highly trained professionals. The Spanish version will help STMA communicate the same awareness information to Spanish-speaking audiences, and in particular, to those outside of the US.

The STMA International Committee, chaired by Abby McNeal, CSFM, developed the idea for a Spanish version as part of its international outreach program. Members of the Committee include: Jose Maria Aldrete, Rene Asprion, Tab

Buckner, Richard Campey, Murray Cook, Ken Curry, Russell Chambless, Roberto Gurgel, Noel Harryman, CSFM, Stanley Hing, Marcella Munoz, Don Scholl, CSFM, Jimmy Simpson, CSFM, Paula Sliefert, John Sorochan, PhD, Massimiliano Del Viva, Matthew Weaver, and Doron Zur.

The movie will be distributed to sport governing bodies, teams, academics, commercial companies and other contacts in Spanish-speaking countries. Please feel free to share it with any of your contacts. You can access it and the English version at STMA.org (right navigation panel).

Another use for both versions will be to introduce sports turf management as a career to high school students. [SI](#)

1978 Football/Baseball Transition at Mile High

Pictured is the portable pitcher’s mound that had to be taken out and put in during the baseball/football overlapping season (Aug-Sept) from 1977 to post-1988. The Broncos and the AAA team Denver Bears (later named the Zephyrs) shared Mile High Stadium. The mound also was moved for many events other than football.

A trailer, built by the Parks Department, was used to lift and move the mound and was pulled by a 5-ton tractor (not shown). Due to the weight of the equipment moving on the field, field manage-

ment staff, led by Sports Field Manager Steve Wightman, built a “road-way” from the warning track to the mound with two layers of ¾-inch plywood. The trailer was equipped with four cable winches (hand cranked) to lift the mound once the trailer was in the correct position. To lift the mound, the transition team had to expose the four hooks that were welded to the steel plating located underneath the clay. The winch cables were then attached and the mound lifted, secured and transported.



The mound plate was 13 feet in diameter and made of ¾-inch solid steel plating with a 2-inch steel ribbon welded around the plating to help hold the clay during transport. The plating was also reinforced underneath with a 1-inch angle iron for support when in place and when being moved. A permanent 6-inch thick concrete slab, also 13 feet in diameter, supported the mound when in place with the top of the slab 4 inches below field grade. The concrete slab remained in the playing field year-round. For various events other than football, the 4-inch thick “insert” shown in the photo was laid and secured over the concrete slab. For football, the slab was covered with soil and 1 ½-inch thick sod.

The mound plate was 13 feet in diameter for safety reasons. With an 18-foot pitchers’ mound circle the clay is thinner as it slopes to the edges, and it was critical that no cleats or holes got near the metal plating. [SI](#)

Several major STMA Award deadlines fast approaching!

Several STMA programs, including Innovative Awards, Field of the Year Awards, SAFE Scholarship and Founders Awards, have application deadlines of October 15.

STMA Innovative Award

The deadline for STMA Commercial Members to apply for the STMA Innovative Award is October 15. All commercial companies that are exhibiting at the 2016 STMA Annual Conference & Exhibition are invited to submit an entry (electronically only) to be recognized as an Innovative Award winner.

All entries will be recognized on signage and in the conference on-site guide. This recognition will help attendees identify new products, the company that developed them, and the booth number.

As you select the product, equipment, technology, or service to enter, consider this description of "innovative": Must be cutting edge, must never have been previously seen.

Any STMA Commercial member who is exhibiting at the upcoming STMA Annual Conference and Exhibition is eligible to submit one entry annually. The company must display the innovation in its booth and have introduced it for sale within a 2-year period. The only criterion is that the innovation must substantially enhance the effectiveness of the sports turf manager and/or make the surfaces safer and more playable for athletes.

A panel of non-commercial STMA members representing all segments of membership will judge the entries and may give the award to multiple companies that meet the criteria.

Winner(s) will be kept confidential until being announced during the first day of the STMA Trade Show. Winner(s) will be able to use the special Innovative logo in their promotion of the winning product, service, technology or equipment and will receive an award to display. STMA will publicize the winners through its communication vehicles, STMA press releases, signage at the conference, and with special recognition during the Annual Awards Banquet.

STMA Field of the Year

The STMA Field of the Year program deadline is October 15. All materials must be submitted electronically by this date. Be sure to read the application carefully, as the entire process is electronic. The process requires that applicants fill out no less than four STMA Playing Conditions Index (PCI) worksheets to apply for Field of the Year. However, only the four scores need to be transferred to the application; the full PCIs do not need to be attached. You can find the STMA PCI online.

Through the "Field of the Year" program, STMA is able to significantly further one main element of its mission: To gain acknowledgement for the professionalism of its members. This year,

based on the results of the judging, the "Field of the Year" Awards will be presented at the STMA Annual Awards Banquet, Friday, January 22, 2016, in San Diego. In addition to being featured in this magazine, winning fields will also receive:

- A plaque recognizing the field and the Sports Turf Manager
- Registration to the STMA Conference
- Three nights of lodging at the STMA Conference
- STMA signature apparel

Suggestions from the STMA Awards Committee on Putting Together Winning "Field of the Year" Award Entries:

The committee encourages creative photos, photos that show the versatility of the field, display unique characteristics of the field, and photos that show the unique talents of the crew. Focus on issues specific to your field that tell the story; issues such as drainage, traffic, weather, etc.

"Start taking pictures and documenting your progress now! The STMA Awards Committee encourages sports turf managers to be creative in their applications and pictures, while still working within the framework of the program. The committee encourages creative photos, photos that show the versatility of the field, display unique characteristics of the field, and photos that show the unique talents of the crew. Focus on issues specific to your field that tell the story; issues such as drainage, traffic, weather, etc. Provide before and after shots. Do not simply provide 'beauty shots' of your field, as they do not reflect the true struggles and triumphs of you and your crew."

SAFE Scholarships & Grants

NEW THIS YEAR! SAFE Scholarship applications are all online and need to be submitted electronically. The deadline is October 15.

STMA Founders Awards nominations

STMA Founders Award nominations are due October 15. These are STMA's most prestigious awards and are presented in honor of the founders of STMA: Dr. William Daniel, Dick Ericson, George Toma and Harry Gill. More information, applications, and nomination forms are available online at stma.org.

For applications, nomination forms, and for more information, please log on to STMA.org. 



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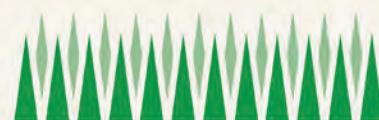
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\$600,000

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A University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine study showed that people saw a **reduction in heart rate** when they walked by a lot that underwent "greening" – cleaning, debris removal, planting grass and trees, and installing a low wooden post- and rail-fence.



Studies have shown that physically active young people demonstrate **higher academic performance** at school.

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Growing it Green in 2015!

The North Carolina and South Carolina Sports Turf Managers Association chapters are hosting their 7th Annual NC/SC STMA Conference November 16-18, in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Spanning 3 days, the conference will feature educational sessions from industry professionals, sports field managers, and university research professors. Participants can go on sports field tours, attend construction education, learn about the latest technology at the new and expanded trade show, and take advantage of many opportunities to network. The 5th Annual Carolinas' Cup Scholarship Golf Tournament will also be held in conjunction with the conference.

For more information about the conference and how you can enhance your sports turf knowledge, visit: www.ncsportsturf.org or www.scstma.org. Make reservations today to attend! 

Continued on page 49

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,
 Dale Croft, dale.croft@ocps.net

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:
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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)

- F Over \$1 million C \$50,001 - \$100,000
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Ecolawn	48	www.ecolawnapplicator.com
First Products	24	www.1stproducts.com
Graff's Turf Farms	3	www.graffsturf.com
Harrell's	17	www.harrells.com
Hydraway Drainage Systems	27	www.hydraway.net
Koch Turf & Ornamental	9	www.kochturf.com
Kubota Tractor	2	www.kubota.com
Pearl Valley Farms	51	www.healthygrowpro.com
Project EverGreen	46	www.projectevergreen.org
Redexim North America, Inc.	5	www.redexim.com
SAFE Foundation	43	http://www.safefields.org
STEC Equipment	19	www.stecequipment.com
STMA San Diego Conference	26	www.stma.org
STMA SourceBook	11	www.stmasourcebook.com
Sport Turf Innovations	48	www.sportsturfinnovations.com
TifSport	31	www.tifsport.com
TurfTime Equipment	15	www.turftimeeq.com
Turfco Manufacturing	33	www.turfco.com
World Class Athletic Surfaces	24	www.worldclasspaints.com

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October brings open registration, brochures, deadlines & more

October 1 is the opening of online registration for STMA's 2016 Conference in San Diego. The event takes place January 19-22, 2016, and features hours of education that you won't find anywhere else, including opportunities to get CEU credits from a wide variety of affiliate associations. CEUs will be available through ASBA, GCSAA, IA, NIAAA, NRPA, PGMS, and NALP. Pesticide Recertification credits will only be available for California residents.

Also featured at STMA's annual conference is the trade show featuring more than 160 companies with the latest technologies and contacts; and receptions, an awards banquet, silent/live

auctions, career resources, networking opportunities and more!

Also, the hard copy conference brochure was mailed out to thousands of STMA members and non-members in September. As a reminder, the registration process has gone digital for your convenience. All members are requested to register for the conference at STMA.org unless your employer requires a hard copy for purchase order (PO) or other administrative purposes. A PDF of the registration form is available to be printed from STMA.org.

STMA looks forward to seeing you in sunny San Diego in January! 

Q&A with Pamela Sherratt

Questions? Send them to 202 Kottman Hall, 2001 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210 or sherratt.1@osu.edu
Or, send them to Grady Miller at North Carolina State University, Box 7620, Raleigh, NC 27695-7620, or email grady_miller@ncsu.edu

Rolling athletic fields

Our baseball outfield is very uneven. Difficult footing for outfielders and even our ZTR bounces too much while mowing. We are contemplating rolling in advance of fall aerate/overseed to smooth the surface but would love some experienced advice. Can you lead us to any resources?

All athletes deserve a consistent, even playing surface and many times rollers can help achieve that. First to consider is

» **As a general rule of thumb,** rolling should only be carried out "as-needed," not routinely. This may be once per year in the spring (after winter soil heave) or several times during the playing season to keep the field safe and playable if grass cover is lost.



the type of roller. There are many types of rollers, including walk-behind, ride-on, or pull-behind. Turf rollers should always have rounded edges, to prevent damage to the turf. Rollers come in all sizes and weights, but are typically 300-2,000 lbs. in weight or greater; this equates to approximately 3-15 lbs. per square inches (psi) load applied to the soil surface and is similar in weight to vehicular traffic, like ride-on mowers.

While there is no set weight for athletic field rollers, on native soil fields the maximum recommended weight is 1 ton (2,000 lbs.). The weight of a roller can be increased by filling the roller with a material like water, sand or cement. The action of a roller is similar to that of vehicular traffic (e.g. ride-on mowers). The stress at the soil surface is proportional to tire pressure, or psi. Therefore, a roller or mower with tires inflated to 15 psi will apply 12-15 psi pressure to the soil surface. What's also interesting to note is that the force applied dissipates as a function of depth. For higher loads, the stress penetrates more deeply into the soil. How much stress a certain soil can withstand depends upon many factors. In particular, soils' ability to resist compaction depends upon soil texture (sand or native soil) and moisture content.

Benefits of rolling include:

- To smooth out uneven surfaces after winter heave or heavy traffic. Rolling cannot rectify poor grades, but is used to address minor surface undulations
- To produce a firm surface that would be considered "faster." Rolling is a common practice in golf green and soccer field management to increase speed short-term
- To produce a firm surface critical for those sports that require ball bounce, such as tennis, cricket, and baseball
- Rolling is often used on newly seeded or sodded turf areas to aid turf: soil contact and speed-up establishment
- Mowing patterns, typically created by the rear roller on a cylinder mower, can also

be achieved by using a roller

- There have been some research reports of rolling reducing disease incidence, such as dollar spot, on golf greens. This is directly related to the use of lightweight rollers used first thing in the morning, whereby the roller is helping to remove dew/guttation water from the leaf tissue.

Issues associated with rolling:]

- Rolling does not improve turf quality. In fact, over use results in turf thinning and quality is significantly reduced

- Soils that are wet and/or frozen are susceptible to surface compaction. Overuse of rollers will also result in surface compaction. It is critical that rolled fields are regularly aerated

- Soils that are too dry will not benefit from the impact of rolling. Furthermore, if the turf is wilted or dormant it will be severely stressed and may die. Rolling should only be carried out if grass is actively growing

- Fields with 100% grass cover and a moderate thatch layer are less likely to be affected by rolling as a method to increase field "speed"

- Never roll fields that have disease problems, particularly infectious diseases like gray leaf spot, pythium, or brown patch

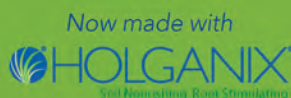
Finally, rolling frequency is a decision that should be made by the field manager and coach on a field-by-field basis. Factors such as athlete safety and playability, soil moisture, recovery time and turf quality all come into play. As a general rule of thumb, rolling should only be carried out "as-needed," not routinely. This may be once per year in the spring (after winter soil heave) or several times during the playing season to keep the field safe and playable if grass cover is lost. Lastly, keep in mind that athletic fields are already prone to compaction, so any rolling that is carried out should always be counter-balanced by a strong aeration program. **SI**

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