

SportsField

MANAGEMENT

August 2020

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The Official Publication of the Sports Turf Managers Association

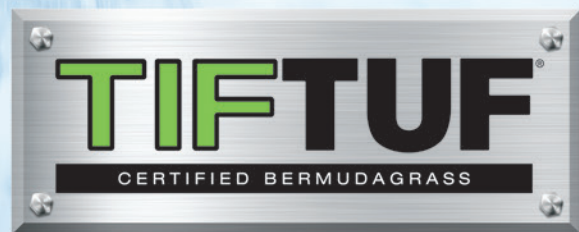
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Small but Mighty

Three-man crew earns Professional Soccer FOY
for Rio Tinto Stadium

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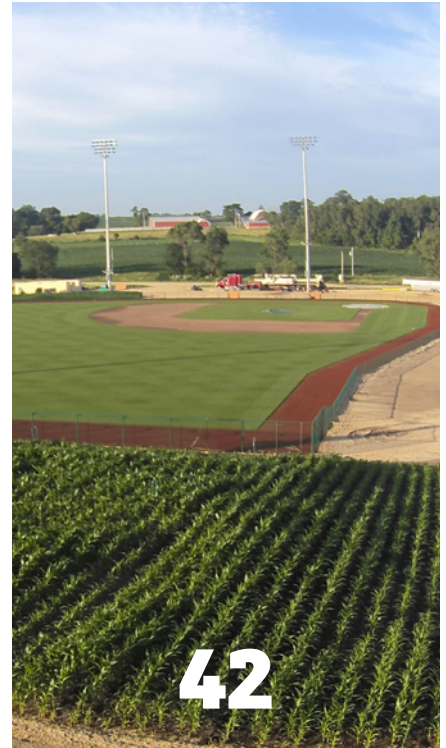
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Editor's Note



John Kmitta
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Professional sports are back. At least that's the plan as I write this (in mid July). It is hard to state anything with certainty these days. However, as of our editorial deadline, professional soccer has already returned, MLB Opening Night was scheduled for July 23, the NBA season was set to resume July 30, and the NHL's Stanley Cup Qualifiers drop the puck on August 1.

Now, granted, fans won't be in attendance, the NBA and NHL are operating in "bubbles," there are testing protocols, contingencies, and, of course, uncertainties. But, still, sports are back, and I'm thrilled. Watching professional soccer during the past month has been a big psychological boost, so I feel like MLB, NBA and NHL all going on at the same time will be a joyous sensory overload.

As the father of two youth athletes, I realize that sports at other levels are at various stages of reopening, there are still plenty of hurdles along the way, and we are far from "normal." But I have been impressed with how sports field managers have come together these past few months and helped each other on the Route to Recovery.

The camaraderie in this industry is impressive, as is the ingenuity being shown by sports field managers. A great example of that is Travis Sales, MCPTM, director of parks, recreation and animal services for the City of Rockwall (Texas), whose crew built its own hand-washing stations for use at events (see page 24).

Folks like Travis have been amazing — not only in their innovative approach to problem solving, but also in their willingness to share their insight with the industry via articles and photos, as well as phone and Zoom interviews. My thanks go out to all who have come together as a community to support the industry and this publication.

One final thought on the return of professional sports: I am thrilled to see that not even a pandemic could put a damper on something as special as the Field of Dreams game (scheduled for August 13). See page 42 for a look at how the project has unfolded. There is something comforting about the fact that the magic of baseball carries on through adversity, and gives us hope during these trying times. **SFM**

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President's Message

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STMA needs you.

It is up to all of us to play a part in shaping the future of STMA. This year has been filled with plenty of twists and turns as we all try to navigate the waters and move forward.

One of my main takeaways from this year is that STMA continues to need each one of you. You are extremely important to the success of our collective mission to advance professionalism in sports field management through education, awareness programs and industry development. You are the women and men who live and breathe this industry, and who can bring about positive change in the future.

STMA recently put out a call for members who may be interested in serving on the board of directors. I want to take this opportunity to encourage every member of the association to think about putting his or her name in the hat for this opportunity. As I have said in previous messages, each one of you has great ideas about this industry and this profession, as well as a vision for the future direction of this association.

Board service is the opportunity to put your vision into motion. Many years ago, when I finally put my name in the hat, I did not think I would have a chance to serve on the board. It did not happen on the first attempt. It is hard to continue to put yourself out there and risk the unknown;



Jimmy Simpson, CSFM

STMA President

Jimmy.Simpson@townofcary.org

but, as the adage goes, "Nothing ventured is nothing gained."

The calendar has now turned to August, and, through all the events of this year, I have never been more encouraged about the future of the association than I am today. It is tremendous to see how members from throughout the country have come together to share ideas and help others through their struggles. With that said, I challenge each of you to think about your vision of what STMA is right now, and what it can be in the future. Then take this and future opportunities to volunteer for board or committee service and make your vision come true.

One thing is for certain: If you take this opportunity, you will meet – and subsequently work with – many great people. It will most likely be, as it has been for me, the highlight of your career. Thank you all for everything you do for the association. I am excited to see how your contributions moving forward will help shape the future of STMA. **SFM**

Collaborating in change together,
Jimmy Simpson, CSFM

The Sports Field Manager/ Sod Producer Relationship

Insight from the 2020 NFL Field Managers Symposium

By Suz Trusty

“In-season resodding is a partnership between the field manager and the sod producer,” said Tony Leonard, director of grounds for the Philadelphia Eagles. “They are as big a part of the field management at our stadium as anyone else. We trust them to provide us with a field that will be ready to play an NFL game. It’s not an easy thing to do. It takes a lot of investment, babysitting and care. The most important factor in doing it successfully is communication.”

That’s why the 2020 NFL Field Managers Symposium invited the eight sod farms that regularly produce sod for NFL teams in-season to participate in a roundtable discussion earlier this year.* It was a two-hour, interactive session, teaming the sod producers with 125 field managers and staffers. Three members of the NFL Team Operations Department also attended.

The eight sod farms and their attending representative were: James Betts for Tuckahoe Turf Farms, New Jersey; Chad Price for Carolina Green



(Left to right) Andy Levy of the Arizona Cardinals, Steve Trusty of Trusty & Associates, and Jimmy Fox of Evergreen Turf. Photo by Suz Trusty

Corp., North Carolina; Jonathan Holland for Precision Turf, LLC, Georgia; Donald Thomas for Quality Sod, Florida; Jimmy Fox for Evergreen Turf, Arizona; Joe Wilkins for Green Valley Turf Co., Colorado; Greg Dunn for West Coast Turf, California; and Marty Schaafsma for Schaafsma Sod Farm, Illinois.

The field managers and sod producers covered a broad range of topics, including sod farm certifica-

tion, on-field events, growing scheduling, harvesting and installation timing, transportation, scheduling and the most important factor — communication.

While each of the sod producers has developed their own proprietary product, and those products differ in the grass species and cultivars, and vary in production methods from grown on plastic to grown in the field, they all face similar issues and challenges, and all have the same objective — a safe, game-ready field that meets NFL expectations.

Two examples of successful field manager/sod producer partnerships are

Tony Leonard (Eagles) and his warm-season ready-to-play field provider, Chad Price (Carolina Green Corp.); and Andy Levy, turf manager for the Arizona Cardinals, and his ready-to-play field supplier, Jimmy Fox (Evergreen Turf). Those four shared their takeaways from the symposium.

“The NFL home office doesn’t control the stadium managers or owners or the team logistics,” said Fox. “They set standards, but every



The Arizona Cardinals field inside and set up for play. Photo courtesy of Andy Levy and the Arizona Cardinals

team is responsible for their own field and their own field conditions. It's up to the home team to determine the relationship they want to have with the sod producer. The NFL is trying to put the testing and guidelines in place, but that isn't making a big impact on the team's planning, or lack thereof. Communicating to the stadium managers and the team management is essential — we all need to be on the same page. During the symposium we were able to share how it can work when that happens, discussing the partnership we have with Andy and the Cardinals and that Tony has with Carolina Green and his cool-season ready-to-play grass provider, Tuckahoe Turf Farm."

Added Price, "I think it was eye opening for the league to hear what happens at the farm in growing this specialty sod — how the process can

work, where the concerns and liabilities are when planning a project, how much lead time do you need, how much time to produce the sod, and the logistics in harvesting, transporting and placing the product."

DEMAND FOR THESE FIELDS

In-season sodding impacts nearly all the NFL field managers.

"Even the synthetic turf field managers have done it at some point if they have hosted international soccer in their stadium," said Leonard. "Installing ready-to-play natural grass over synthetic turf has its own set of challenges with keeping newly laid natural grass sod alive indoors."

The demand for ready-to-play fields now extends beyond the NFL.

"Every major stadium that has a concert wants this sod — Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, top-tier universities," said Fox.

Added Price, "It's also in demand in the construction of new ballparks. Sometimes they don't have a choice because of the construction schedule. For others, it's a choice to buy time. If they use ready-to-play sod, they gain an extra month or two for construction. On a multi-million-dollar project, an extra \$200,000 to sod the field is a tradeoff sort of like pennies on the dollar."

Said Fox, "The NFL field managers understand the quality of the sod they require for the same week play is far higher than is needed for baseball or soccer. The expectations have changed, especially over the last five years. What the players expect is a shorter, denser, natural grass. That puts a lot of pressure on the grower; no thatch, no grain, no disease, fully mature — it has to be right on the day it goes down. The weight and speed of the NFL player is greater, and the

way the football player connects with the grass is different. The NFL field needs an extra level of maturity and complexity, but everyone else thinks they need that product.”

The perception of many stadium managers and team owners is that sod growers will have a field that meets their expectations on the shelf, ready to go.

“That’s not the case,” said Fox. “Their stadium may book an extra concert and need an extra field to install right after it. But it takes us from 12 months to 24 months to have a field ready to go; the average is 18 months. So we’re planning that far

out for how much grass we’ll need, where it will go, and when it will go.”

An extra concert and the need it creates for an extra field puts a lot of pressure on everyone. If the field manager does not have a contract and a good relationship with the sod producer, he could be scrambling to find one.

“The field manager needs to communicate that extra event as soon as he finds out about it,” said Fox. “For the sod producer, there’s a huge cost in carrying that inventory. It’s a business decision. It’s vital that management also understands what it takes, how long it takes, how important it is to have a relationship and contract that covers you not just for the playing season but for the concert season, too.”



The Lincoln Financial Field Philadelphia Eagles natural grass playing surface is game ready. Photo courtesy of Tony Leonard and the Philadelphia Eagles

The field manager must find another field after the concert. “But the sod producer may have to say my grass is not ready to go,” said Fox. “I hate to send you to anyone else, but I don’t have any other choice because I don’t want to send an inferior product. It may not hold together well for harvesting or installation, it may not be as dense or mature as needed and the players are slipping. If any of that happens, everyone wants to blame the sod producer for not sending the right product. We don’t want to make compromises on field quality. The field manager can’t afford to have that, and neither can the sod producer.”

Added Levy, “It’s in everybody’s best interest to have the best fields possible. When my guys go to Chi-

cago or Carolina, I want them playing on a great field. The field portion of the NFL isn’t a competition — we’re all trying to make the fields as safe as they can be. As field managers, we’re looking at all the potential hazards, anything that might put our team and their team in jeopardy.

“That’s why the relationship between field managers is so important,” said Levy. “There’s such a unique body of knowledge within the NFL group of field managers, we can share hundreds of years of turf experience by working together. I can call Tony Leonard or Tom Vaughan (head grounds-

keeper for the Carolina Panthers) and so many others to ask what my players should expect when they go to play on their fields and know they’ll level with me, as I do with them. I’m confident that they and their staff and the sod grower they are working with are doing everything they can to ensure these fields are the safest they can be for the players.”

When someone has a rough game, it’s not about placing blame, noted Levy. “When one of us looks bad; we all look bad and we’ll all get asked about it,” he said. “I want to be able to explain that they did the best they could under the circumstances. Our goal is the safest fields possible, that’s why we get involved and communicate with our colleagues — we’re all working together.”

COMMUNICATION — YOUR FIELD AWAY FROM HOME

The communication starts from day one. Growing grass to meet NFL standards for in-season resodding is a big investment for the sod grower. For the field manager, that's his field and it's going to be his field from the point of commitment until it's installed in his stadium, whether that's in six months or in two years.

"It's your field away from home," said Leonard. "So you go to see it, check how it's doing, and coordinate its management program with the sod grower. Carolina Green, our bermudagrass grower, is a 10-hour drive away. About

three times a year, I fly down to Charlotte to see the field, talk with Chad and his team, and review the schedule with them. Tuckahoe, our bluegrass grower, is about a half hour from us, so I'll visit there more often, between seven and 10 times a year. Tuckahoe has multiple microclimates across their 700-acre farm, which impacts plant growth and thus harvest timing. We have it all planned in advance, but we're dealing with natural grass — a living thing — so at both sod farms, every season varies with the changing weather patterns."

Said Levy, "It takes open communication to grow a custom piece of grass. We need to have it financially covered when we commit to it. It's vital that I be at the farm to have my input and have my maintenance practices used on the sod so that Jimmy is



This photo shows the depth of the soil profile and the root development of Carolina Green Corp.'s GameOnGrass. Photo courtesy of Chad and Kerry Price, Carolina Green Corp.

growing it just like we do it here in Glendale. I used to have the whole summer to manage my field for the start of the season. Now we're the only team that holds our training camp on our game field. We resod immediately after it ends. So from week one of the season, I'm playing on Jimmy's grass."

TRUCKING ISSUES

Trucking is a major issue.

"It was important for the NFL head office to hear about that," said Leonard. "Not all sod growers have their own trucks, and those that do probably don't have enough trucks to run the sod all over the country. They need to have strong relationships with outside trucking companies, and even when they do, there is more demand for trucking than there are qualified truckers.

And the new federal regulations make it even more challenging."

Price added, "Just changing the schedule by a couple days makes it hard to arrange up to 30 trucks to be delivered within a tight window."

Because of the strong relationship between the field manager and the sod grower, both know the sod is healthy when it's harvested.

"The big unknown for us is the transportation," said Leonard. "The communication during that stage is vital. Once the sod is on that truck, it could be involved in an accident, or blow a tire, or the driver could get pulled over for a

traffic-related issue or run into unexpected traffic or road construction."

Price added, "With the distances between our farm and the field sites, the weather could vary from warm to cold to frozen, or from rain to ice or snow. That increases the possibilities of what could go wrong. The field managers know all these variables, but the league and the team administrative personnel probably didn't."

It's a 10-hour drive from Carolina Green to the Eagles. Whether the shipping will involve 14 trucks or 30, each is making that trip. Each truck is assigned a number, from one through 14 or 30, as it is loaded. "We want those trucks to arrive and be unloaded in that order, so the first sod harvested is the first sod installed," said Leonard. "In theory, that should happen based



Harvesting thick-cut sod at the Evergreen Turf natural grass fields. Photo courtesy of Jimmy Fox, Evergreen Turf



Harvesting is underway at the Carolina Green Corp. sod farm. Photo courtesy of Chad and Kerry Price, Carolina Green Corp.



The Evergreen Turf crew is installing the thick-cut sod on the Arizona Cardinals moveable field outside of State Farm Stadium. Photo courtesy of Jimmy Fox, Evergreen Turf

on the time each truck leaves the sod farm, but, because of all the potential variables, that doesn't always happen. The logistics manager at the sod farm will have the names and cell phone numbers for each of the drivers and know which driver has which truck. I'll be communicating with that logistics manager, who will let me know when each truck leaves the farm and relay any potential problems that come up in their communications with the drivers. The logistics manager also will provide the contact information for the dispatcher for the trucking company or companies. If there is an issue, I'll reach out to the logistics manager first, who typically will be able to contact the driver or drivers and get things moving. If that doesn't work for some reason, I'll reach out to the dispatcher. We're all working together to get the sod on the ground, so we can coordinate the installation.

"We work with the field managers at the other stadiums that use the same sod growers to lay out a plan that takes our varied schedules into consideration and helps give the grower a better handle on what he needs to do," he added.

Logistics get even tougher when the schedules are tighter, with multiple events and game schedules overlapping and adverse weather conditions kicking in. Additional scheduling challenges come with working through weekends and around holidays, such as Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

"There needs to be continual communication and cooperation to determine the best time to start the harvesting and shipping process," said Leonard. "Sod growers have developed strategies to keep the

harvested sod fresher longer. Tuckahoe Turf Farms starts harvesting around 2:00 a.m., when temperatures are cooler, for summer shipments. In December, they time their harvesting to the daily temperature fluctuations, cutting the sod when it's not frozen."

There is no margin for error with the NFL field.

"Because of our partnership with the sod grower, we trust them to provide us with a safe field in excellent condition to play an NFL game," said Leonard. **SFM**

Suz Trusty is communications director for Trusty & Associates, a longtime supporter of sports field managers, and is co-editor of Turf News, the official publication of

Turfgrass Producers International (TPI). TPI members are sod producers from around the world that grow natural grass for many different user groups including sports fields, golf courses, landscape contractors, retail outlets and homeowners, and those companies and individuals that provide services to them. This article originally appeared in the May/June issue of Turf News.

* Note: The 2020 NFL Field Managers Symposium was held prior to the progression of the coronavirus pandemic, so there was no discussion about what could happen if the NFL has a shortened season or no season or if the scheduled concerts are not held.

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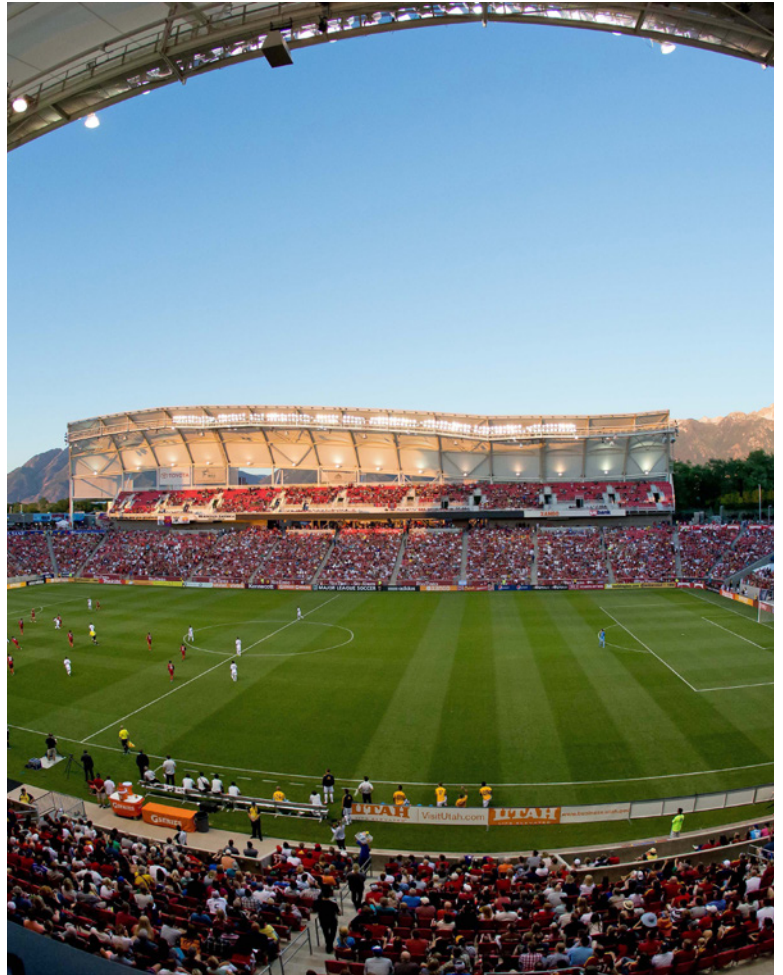




RIO TINTO STADIUM REAL SALT LAKE AND UTAH ROYALS FC SANDY, UTAH

I have worked at this stadium for a long time. I started as an hourly employee, part time, and worked my way up to where I am now as director of fields and grounds. We have a small crew — only three of us here to take care of the stadium field, a practice field and all of the grounds. We also do a lot of the operations work around the stadium, such as fixing seats, small construction projects, painting walls, etc. The crew here also has to help out a lot at our training facility a half hour away. This means that we are very busy all year round. We do have a decent budget that allows us to aerate, seed and topdress when needed, and we also are able to use some great products for fertilization.

The Field of the Year Awards program is made possible by the support of sponsors Carolina Green Corp., Precision Laboratories, and World Class Athletic Services.



Being a small-market team, we don't have all the fun equipment such as grow lights, fraze mowers, pedestrian mowers, electric heating, etc. We are lucky enough to have a big shop, and a deal with Toro where they lease equipment to us. This helps us stay under budget and use funds to make the field the best it can be. We don't have to deal with a lot of disease pressure, because we live in a desert, so our main issue is a bad infestation of *Poa*. When we re-sodded our field three years ago — it was infested with *Poa*, and we have been trying to get rid of it ever since. The best way to do that is to cut it out, so we try to cut out as much as possible when there is time. This year is the best this field has ever looked. This is because this is the

best crew I have ever had here. We all can work together and we all have the same goal to give our two professional soccer teams the best and safest field in the league. I have been lucky to be surrounded by guys who are knowledgeable not only about grass but about life, and that helps when you are with guys at work more than with your family at home. They keep it fun and professional, even though we are working in 100-degree heat, below-zero cold, rain, sun, wind and drought. The biggest compliments we hear are from the players and coaches. When an away player or coach tells us that the field played well, that is a huge compliment, and we have heard that a lot this year.

— Dan Farnes, director of fields and grounds

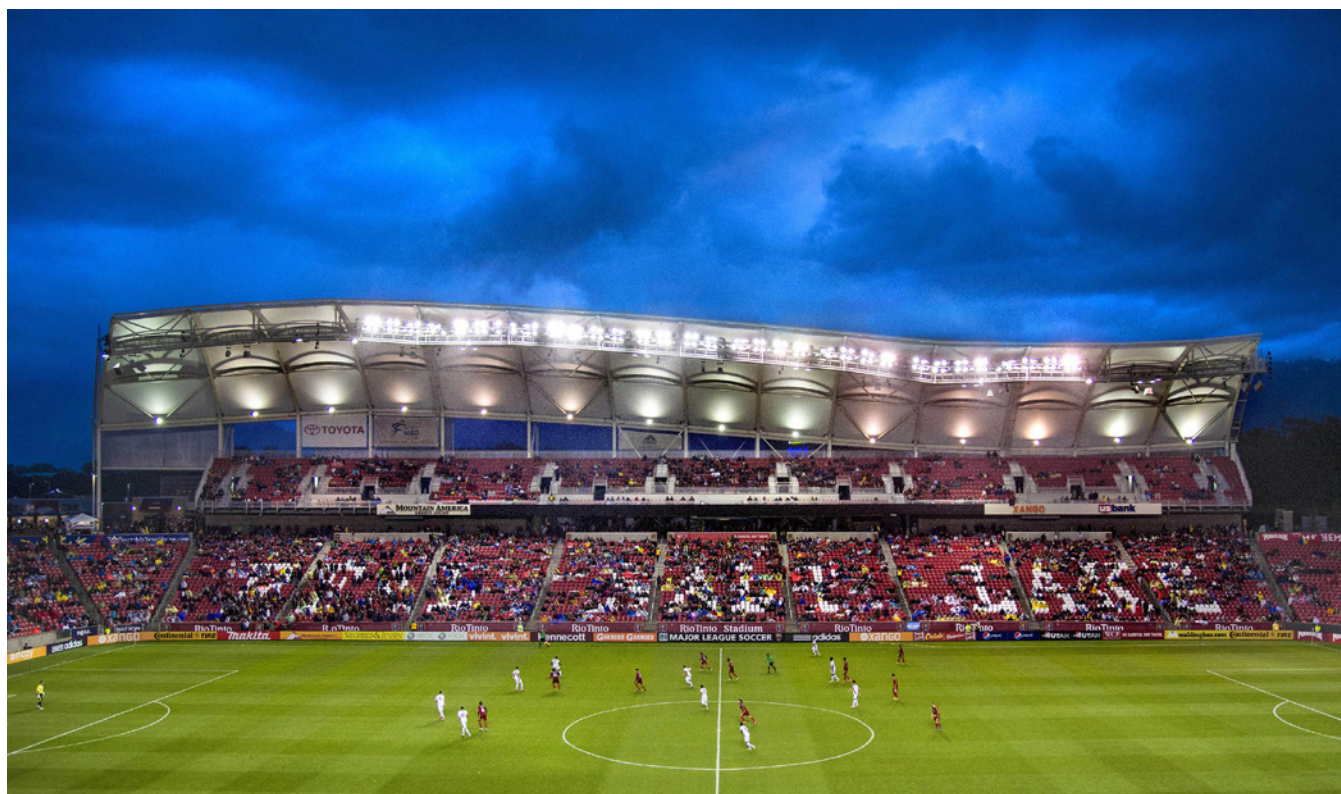
SportsField Management (SFM): What are you most proud of with this win, and/or what do you think stands out most about the winning field?

FARNES: Winning this award is very exciting. It is validation for all the hard work we put in day in and day out. Credit to the guys I work with, Dustin Pixton and Spencer King, for all the long hours and crazy times we have been through. (You guys are great, and lunch is on me next week.) I have a lot of respect for

all the past winners, so I'm happy to be part of that group. The guys at the stadium and at our training facility have put in so much work over the years, it is nice to be recognized.

SFM: What are the biggest challenges you face?

FARNES: The weather is the biggest challenge for us here in Utah. We have all four seasons that fight us all year long. It's very hard to predict, so we need to have contingency



Category of submission: Professional Soccer

Field manager: Dan Farnes

Title: Director of Fields and Grounds

Education: Utah State University

Experience: I started taking care of soccer fields at a young age with my dad and then in a parks and recreation setting. I then went to college and after graduation I started as an hourly employee here for RSL. I worked my way up to full time assistant direc-

tor, and then, when my boss left, I was lucky enough to take over as director.

Full-time staff: Dustin Pixton and Spencer King

Part-time staff: Tanner Coffman

Original construction: 2008

Turfgrass: Kentucky Bluegrass

Rootzone: Sand

Drainage system: 10' on center Herringbone

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

PROBLEM:

Dark green patches of turf

TURFGRASS AREA:

Minor league baseball stadium

LOCATION:

Toledo, Ohio

TURFGRASS VARIETY:

HGT Kentucky Bluegrass

Answer on page 33

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International



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Judge's Comments

It is apparent that crew at Rio Tinto Stadium works as a team. Teamwork is how success is obtained. The grounds leader talks about his crew and how they work together to accomplish the difficulties of maintain the stadium and the all take pride in making it the best. That is impressive and nice to see. The team together has overcome obstacles and continues to take pride in making the field look so great. They may be small but they are mighty in what they accomplish.

— Jackie Mroz, inside sales/ customer service manager, Pioneer Athletics

Editor's Note: A panel of 11 judges independently scored Field of the Year entries based on playability, appearance of surfaces, utilization of innovative solutions, effective use of budget and implementation of a comprehensive agronomic program. We have asked the judging panel to provide insight into why each winning field was selected, and we will share those comments with the corresponding field profiles.

plans in place in order to keep the field safe and playable. Those plans change monthly, weekly, daily and hourly, so the staff here must be able to adapt to those changes.

SFM: What advice do you have for other sports field managers?

FARNES: Don't be afraid to try new things. Everything can be fixed, and the grass will grow back. It might take some time, but you will learn from those new experiences. For example, we fraze mowed for the first time this year, and the field looked rough when we were done. It was a bit scary, but with a solid plan in place and a great amount of work from the crew here, we were able to get the field performing even better than it was last year.

SFM: What attracted you to a career in sports field management?

FARNES: My first job was working on a mow crew for Bountiful City, Utah. I loved the smells, being outside, learning about the equipment, and working with some fun people. That led me to get a degree from Utah State University in Parks and Recreation with a minor in Horticulture. I started here at RSL 10 years ago, and from the first day I knew that this career was for me. It hasn't always been easy, but I am lucky to be here.

SFM: Who are your mentors in the industry, and/or what is the best piece of advice you have received?

FARNES: All the other MLS groundskeepers have been very kind and helpful to me from day one. It is really a fun and knowledgeable community to be a part of. Also, when I was first promoted to director of fields and grounds, I was a little nervous, so I gave the previous Stadium GM, Hans Niska, a call. Hans taught me a lot when I first started for RSL, and he told me to not freak out and don't be afraid to make mistakes. He also said I would be successful, don't sweat the small stuff, and call him if I ever needed anything. Thanks for that, Hans; it really helped me calm down and focus on the job at hand.

SFM: What is the greatest pleasure you derive from your job?

FARNES: The sense of accomplishment you feel after working so hard during the week and to see the finished product on TV with your team out playing on it gives me a ton of pride. I'm a soccer guy, RSL and Liverpool FC are my teams (#YNWA), so I don't think I could have chosen a better profession.

SFM: How has your career benefited from being a member of STMA?

FARNES: There are a lot of great resources on the website from education to job posts. The yearly conferences have expanded my knowledge in the sports turf world, and have introduced me to a lot of new friends and colleagues. Twitter has also been a huge resource from the STMA and others in the sports turf world. I have met a lot of contacts from the U.S. to Europe who I never thought I would ever talk to (@danfarnsey). It has been awesome to see how this community has banded together during this weird time, and the STMA has been a leader that we can lean on for help. **SFM**



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The SportsField Management Interview: Eric Harshman

In this edition of the *SportsField Management Interview*, we meet Eric Harshman, grounds superintendent, Berea College, Berea, Ky. In addition to a degree in turf science/management from Rutgers University, Harshman also holds degrees in graphic design and business management. Prior to Berea College, Harshman worked at Hurstbourne Country Club (Louisville, Ky.), the Louisville Bats (Minor League Baseball), Louisiana State University, University of Kentucky, and the Lexington Legends (Minor League Baseball). Harshman has served on various STMA committees through the years, and has won two STMA Field of the Year awards — both the College Softball category (one while at Louisiana State University, and the other at University of Kentucky). He is military veteran, having served in the Air Force National Guard.

SportsField Management (SFM):

Please start by telling us a little bit about Berea College.

Harshman: The college itself was founded in 1855. It integrated African American males, giving them a place where they could get an education. From there they opened it to African American females. It has since opened to people who would typically not have the opportunity to go to college. A lot of our student population is from Appalachia, but we have students from throughout the United States and internationally. The college is 100-percent work based, so the students work for their tuition. The students are required to work what equals out to about 160 labor hours per semester. So I have stu-



Eric Harshman

dents who work anywhere from 10 hours per week to some of my upper classmen who work up to 15 hours per week. They work, they don't pay any tuition — they pay for room and board and books. At the end of the day, they can graduate with a four-year bachelor's degree and maybe only have \$5,000 to \$8,000 of student debt, which is almost unheard of. The student athletes don't get a break either. Not only do they have to fulfill their academic responsibilities, they also have to work. They have a labor position and they have to juggle that on top of practice schedules and events.

SFM: What types of jobs do the students who work for you perform?

Harshman: I have them doing anything that any of my full-time staff do. When they come in as a freshman, I key in on certain things. All the new students coming in that freshman

year have to present a resume to the labor office. I think last year I sorted through 220 resumes. I'm looking for students who have landscape backgrounds, who come from farms, who have that kind of work ethic and a willingness to learn. I even look for students who were Eagle Scouts and things that show they have commitment and have that determination to reach something bigger. The students do a lot of our weed eating and landscape maintenance. I bring them up to speed slowly. A lot of them come from situations where they've never had a job before, so I really have to get to know the students as best as I can, but pretty quickly as well. I'm not going to take students and put them on a mower if they are not comfortable. But I definitely give the students the opportunity to learn all the equipment — tractors, mowers, weed eaters, even chain saws and chippers. We go through training with all of the students, and refresher courses with the full-time staff as well.

SFM: Tell us about how you got interested in sports field management, as well as what got you to where you are today.

Harshman: I was born and raised in Bluffton, Indiana, just south of Fort Wayne. I really liked playing sports and hanging out with my friends. I didn't have a dead set career path. I ended up joining the military straight out of school, and I went into the Air Force National Guard. I knew that if I went into the military I could offset some of the costs with G.I. grants. My first bachelor's degree is in graphic design. I did a lot of catalog layout design work, and was in an office setting. I



thought I would enjoy that. I later went back to school and got a business administration degree from Indiana Tech University with an emphasis on sports marketing, but I didn't really find the type of job I was looking for. I ended up working at a golf course (owned by the family of my now wife) and really enjoyed it. We got married and moved to

Louisville, Ky. I made some cold calls, and ended up working at Hurstbourne Country Club. I worked for a great superintendent — Walter Pritchett. He gave me a start, ended up making me his third assistance, and I was managing the 9-hole practice facility at the golf course. The first assistant and I hit it off pretty well, and he started

talking to me about furthering my education. He was a graduate of Rutgers University's two-year accelerated program. One thing led to another and I was in New Brunswick, N.J.; I went in January 2006 and graduated in March 2008.

I was working at the golf course, and they gave me a pro-rated salary while I was in school. I came back home needing to do an internship. I spoke to James Bergdoll [CSFM], director of parks maintenance in Chattanooga (he is my cousin). He said I needed to talk to Tom Nielsen with the Louisville Bats. I made a call, and Tom asked me to come down to the stadium. He offered me a game day job. For the first several months after being home from Rutgers, I was getting to work at the golf course at 6 a.m. or earlier, working until 1 or 2 p.m., then going straight to the baseball stadium and working game day for Tom until 10 or 11 at night. I was burning the candle at both ends, but loving every second of it. I was passionate about what I was doing. I was a sponge. I was soaking it all in. I was gaining some valuable knowledge on the golf course side; and then on baseball it's a whole different animal. I had to make a tough decision. I couldn't continue to do both. I told Walter that I had an opportunity — Tom was going to bring me on as seasonal full-time. Working at the golf course I had a full-time job. But working with the Bats, I would work until October and then be on my own until the next March. But I was willing to take that gamble, because I wanted to be in professional baseball. I ended up leaving the golf course on good terms. I still talk with Walter and we have open lines of communication. I worked with Tom at the Bats for four-and-a-half seasons (game day for one season, seasonal for one year, and then as his full-time first assistant for two). It was awesome. I learned a great deal from Tom — not only on the grass side of things, but I try, even to this day, to mimic his relationship with his staff and the management of people. That

was probably the most valuable thing I took away from that process.

In the middle of my last season with Tom, he knew I was ready to spread my wings and venture out. I really wanted to get into college athletics. I ended up landing an assistant position at Louisiana State University. I worked with Eric Fasbender [CSFM] down there for two years. I learned a lot about bermudagrass, and I learned a lot about football and soccer. I managed the softball and soccer facilities, and then helped out whenever needed at football and baseball. It gave me an opportunity to start working on my management style. I had my own game day crews for soccer and softball, and then helped management crews for game day for football in Tiger Stadium. While I was there I was fortunate enough to win College Softball Field of the Year. It was a big team collaboration on that.

From there I got a phone call regarding an open position at the University of Kentucky, and I reached out to Marcus Dean [CSFM], who was there at the time. We had met during my time in Louisville. My wife and I were working on starting our family, and, although we loved our time in Louisiana, getting back closer to home was something we knew was inevitable. I ended up taking the assistant position at the University of Kentucky. It mimicked exactly what I was doing at LSU, so I was helping out on game day for baseball and football, but again I was managing softball and soccer. I was at UK for two years. I enjoyed my time in Division I college athletics, but it's nonstop.

A position came open with a Minor League Baseball team — the Lexington Legends. That was a huge decision for me to make, knowing what I was getting into with the hours involved. But it was an opportunity for me where everything falls directly on me.

I had a young family at the time, and being away from them put things in perspective. At the end of that one



baseball season I started looking to see what was out there. So I applied for the position here at Berea College, knowing that I would not have college athletics. I was just going to be the grounds team lead.

My title has since changed. I've been given more responsibility. After a year and a half of being here, they approached me about taking over the athletic complex. The athletic complex has baseball, soccer, softball, an outdoor track complex, tennis courts, and a cross country course.

They were making the jump from NAIA to Division III, so they had to up their game quite a bit on the field maintenance side. That first year and a half I was here, for my own well-being, I never went down to the athletic complex. I never looked at any of the fields, because I knew that once I did I would start critiquing things and make a list of things that needed to be fixed.

When I had that conversation with my vice president, I finally went down there, and it was in pretty rough shape. It wasn't where I had to completely overhaul everything, but there were a lot of little things that could be done to make a vast improvement. So I was given the title of grounds superintendent, and took over everything.

Including myself, there are eight full-time staff members, and six or seven students (during the summer), some working full time (40 hours a week). During the school year we will have 16 students. I have to factor in their labor around their class schedules. One of the full-time staff members is the recycling coordinator, but that falls under my umbrella. It's more than 200 acres that we manage, from turf to landscape to sidewalks to roadways to snow removal to leaf removal. Leaf removal for us starts in September and doesn't end until

February or March, because we have more than 2,000 trees on campus. Since I took over the athletic complex, I was able to hire a full-time sports turf coordinator who manages the day-to-day operations, builds relationships with the coaching staff, and has students who work with him. I'm still over there, but I'm in more of an administrative role these days.

SFM: What are you most proud to have accomplished in your career?

Harshman: The Field of the Year stuff is great, but that doesn't compare to building teams. That was probably the biggest hurdle I had to overcome here. I didn't reinvent the wheel, but I definitely wanted to streamline things and make things more efficient and effective. Building group dynamics is the biggest professional achievement. I've got a group of guys now that will bend over backwards to help each other out.

Then having the opportunity to take over the athletic complex. The field that needed the most work was our soccer field. It was an original 419 bermuda field but had been cross-contaminated with neglect and improper care for many years. That was the first thing I had to dial in and fix. That was a complete kill. I roughed it up, reseeded it with Riviera at the time. Growing it back in to what it is today that is one of the biggest accomplishments I have made here on the field side of things.

SFM: What are the biggest challenges you face?

Harshman: The training of students. I've got a handful of students who come in and don't have a lot of experience with landscape maintenance. So it's constant training and retraining. And setting the tone early, letting them know what I expect from them. Proper communication seems like something simple, but it is not when you are dealing with 17 to 20 year olds.

They want to send a text, and don't want to call my office to contact me. Not everyone is cut out for this line of work. So if they have avenues where they can transfer out and do another labor position somewhere else on campus that is more suitable to their career path, then I support it 100 percent. The ones I'm making an impression with and I'm seeing results on their end, that's when I give them more opportunities or more responsibility. I try to retain those students for more than one year, and we reap the benefits when we do, because we are investing time in them and watching them take off and run with things. It's a challenge, but there is a reward to it.

SFM: What advice do you have for other sports field managers?

Harshman: Don't sweat the small stuff. Control the controllable. Don't be afraid to take risks. Don't be afraid of a challenge. It is going to be hard at the beginning, but the end results are totally worth it. Don't be afraid to experiment with things. You're going to make mistakes. You're going to spray the wrong thing and kill some grass. But it's grass. It will grow back. It may happen at the worst time. But if you build relationships with the coaching staff, explain the situation, and they see you are doing everything you can to remedy the problem, that goes a long way.

SFM: How have you benefitted from being a member of STMA?

Harshman: Networking is a big one. I can scroll through my phone and if I have an issue, I can call people from throughout the country who may have dealt with the same issue. Also, the ability to meet and interact with some of the young, up-and-coming sports field managers. I know that one day I may need to fill a position and I may know several individuals with a good track record who are willing

to cut their teeth and put in the work. You are also able to meet with vendors and build relationships. I don't go with just one product; I have a wide variety of vendors.

Social media is big, as well. I have two Twitter accounts — my own personal account and one for Berea Grounds — and it is 100 percent turf-related. Photos and videos go a long way. I may have a question that someone may have dealt with, and I can go back and look or call that person.

SFM: Please tell us a bit about yourself outside of work.

Harshman: I run. I don't run as much as I used to [Editor's note: Harshman ran the Boston Marathon in 2010 in a time of 3 hours and 3 minutes, and completed his 10th marathon in 2018.] I like to ride my bike and stay active. We like to hike. I like taking care of my own yard. I help friends and neighbors with their yards and landscapes. I'm pretty simple.

I've been married for 14 years. We have three children: Emma is 8, and will be going into third grade; Elyse is 5, and will be going into Kindergarten; and my son, Felix, is 3. That takes up a lot of my time, staying busy with them.

My son thinks his dad has the coolest job on the planet. He has toy mowers and weed eaters, and puts them right next to mine in the garage. He loves coming to work with me. All he wants to do is go outside and work. As he grows, I hope he still has that love, because I wish more young people had what I see in him. Now, granted, he's 3 — a lot can happen between now and then. But I love seeing his enthusiasm for the line of work that I love to do.

As big of a challenge as it is, being a sports field manager, being in the golf course industry, and now running an entire campus has been so rewarding on so many levels. I love it. I can't see myself doing anything else. **SFM**

DIY Hand-washing Stations



The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges, and the return to play has had its own set of unforeseen issues, such as an increased need for hand-washing stations. But sports field managers are innovative and up for any challenge.

Take, for example, Travis Sales, MCPTM, director of parks, recreation and animal services for the City of Rockwall (Texas). As a result of no hand-washing stations being available for purchase or rental during COVID-19 response, Sales and his team decided to make their own.

“We saw many DIY versions, but they all looked cheap and not very sturdy, so Brian Sartain, park superintendent, came up with his own design,” said Sales. “We have made four of them, and they are utilized at all events and COVID-19 response. They look great and operate great.”

The hand-washing stations are self-contained and contain soap dispenser, paper-towel holder and a five-gallon water dispenser. All greywater goes back into the unit, and is unseen.

“They are very easy to fill and dump, and have been a lifesaver during our COVID-19 response,” said Sales.

According to Sales, the hand-washing stations are very simple in design and function. In an effort to help

other sports field managers who have a similar need, Sales shared the step-by-step details to build your own hand-washing station.

“We used material from the maintenance yard at our service center, keeping the build cost efficient,” he said.

In addition, the following items were purchased:

- Oil drain pan
- On/off hot water heater valve
- 12 inches of 3/8-inch all thread
- One 3/8-inch castle nut
- One 3/8-inch wing nut
- Box of T25 deck screws 1-1/2 inches long
- One bag of concrete
- Two 5-gallon buckets
- One 3/4-inch chrome faucet cover
- Set of hinges
- Set of latches
- Sheet of 3/4-inch plywood



Start by cutting a 1-inch-thick/15-inches-in-diameter pipe to a length of 54 inches with a skill saw as straight as possible and use a sander to get a flat finish.

Attach the pipe to a 2-foot-square piece of plywood at the base to stand it upright, rounding the corners for safety. Cut a 15-inch-diameter circle and a 12.5-inch-diameter circle out of plywood for the lid. Screw both together, creating a lid insert so it won't just slide off.



For the paper towel holder, cut a 12-inch-long piece of 8-inch PVC pipe and insert a bottom section of plywood (7.75-inch-diameter circle) for the floor. Cut an 8.25-inch-diameter circle of plywood for the lid and screw another 7.75-diameter circle of plywood to the bottom of the lid so it won't slide off (just as with the large pipe). Drill through the middle of both and the top of both and use the allthread to hold the paper towel roll in place. Thread the castle nut on the bottom and the wing nut on the top for easy swap out when supplies get low.



The soap dispenser holder is 4-inch pipe cut 5 inches long with a wood base that is bolted to the side of the paper towel holder.



Cut a tight fit for the oil pan in the front of the large pipe and drill a hole in the back bottom of the oil pan for it to drain into the bucket placed inside. Make sure the drain pan is at an angle so it will run to the drain hole before screwing it directly into the thick pipe. Cut another 12.5-inch-diameter circle of plywood and set it inside the large pipe on some long bolts tightened down on the large pipe on four different points for the five-gallon water tank bucket.



Drill through both the thick pipe and the bucket with a 3/4-inch drill bit and install the on/off valve. With some proper shimming with washers, get the 3/4-inch slip thread coupling and homemade gasket to tighten down and seal. Cut an access door in the back and install mixed concrete in the bottom for the counterweight. Cut a 17-inch-tall-by-10-inch-wide door 9 inches from the ground.



“When we cut the door, the pipe warped, making the latches hard to line up,” said Sales. “But with some effort we finally got the door hinges and latches installed.”

Pour the mixed concrete directly into the bottom and flatten with the correct tools. After the concrete setup, place a bucket into the door and it is ready to paint.

“We may have some scratches on the pipe and imperfections due to the old age on some supplies, but we believe it just adds character,” said Sales. **SFM**



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Utilizing the STMA Playing Conditions Index

STMA recommends utilizing the Playing Conditions Index (PCI) to assess the playability of your natural grass fields. According to STMA, the data gathered through the instrument will provide excellent insight into the readiness of your fields' playing surfaces and your athletes return to play post COVID-19. The instrument addresses the complexities involved in conditioning sports fields for safety, playability and fan enjoyment. Information from the PCI should be shared with administrators, coaches and athletic directors. It will provide a basis for your joint decision-making regarding play.

Mike Tarantino, CSFM, was on the original task group that developed the Playing Conditions Index in 2008. He said the PCI originally came about when the STMA Board of Directors hired a public relations company to increase the visibility of the association and the sports field managers' expertise of their playing fields.

"The PCI was originally developed as a tool to gain attention to promote professionalism for the sports field manager," said Tarantino. "The PCI would draw attention to what we do, how we do it and why we do it."

According to Tarantino, the original PCI was a simple tool to use but left room for a lot of subjectivity. "You really needed to be honest with yourself when filling in the data on the sheet," he said. "It soon morphed. New technologies were being developed — new products, new equipment, etc. There were better ways to do what we were doing. The PCI added categories to incorporate many of those new technologies, products and equipment."

Tarantino added that the PCI provided sports field managers with a tool that could be used when addressing the media, the public, coaches, management and staff.

"The PCI gave me the flexibility to write notes on, for instance, products used, time of year, and weather conditions," he said. "By using the PCI, I could determine how products performed based on the time of year, weather conditions and staff utilized. This is vital information when making budget decisions and purchasing of

By using the PCI, I could determine how products performed based on the time of year, weather conditions and staff utilized.

— Mike Tarantino, CSFM

products, and staff development for the following year. My PCI was a scribbled mess (organized to me) but those notes were invaluable. You still need to be honest in your evaluation."

According to STMA, the PCI captures STMA members' knowledge and expertise of turfs and grasses, the effects of weather, proper maintenance and care, as well as other factors affecting field-playing conditions. The PCI packages and presents the members' expert evaluation of the field in a concise and easy-to-understand manner. The PCI allows STMA members to provide relevant information to the media and become a consistent provider of this information.

"The PCI has been an essential tool to not only ensure an athletic field's safety and playability, but also

a valuable resource in demonstrating the complexities needed to maintain high-quality playing surfaces," said Travis Stephen, sports field manager, Park District of Oak Park (Ill.).

Tarantino recommends using the PCI four times or more per year. "Using the PCI on that frequency allows you to determine the playability of your sports fields, determine what type of renovation you may opt to do, determine if what you did to your sports field previously worked, any in-season renovations, product evaluation and needed staff development," he said.

"The first time I saw the PCI score was on my FOY application, and I found it to be a great overall tool to see the current stance of the field," said Andy Ommen, sports turf manager, McLean County (Ill.) PONY Baseball.

"We get caught up on each individual part of the field, and this tool brings it all together into a good overall rating. It helps point out the areas of the field you need to focus on for improvements."

Ommen added that the PCI worksheet forces the sports field manager to look at every aspect of his or her field. "I know it forces me to go out and pay attention to some of the minor details that get overlooked," he said. "I have also used it with my board of directors to show them areas of our playing services we can improve upon."

According to STMA, the PCI makes field conditions a more easily referenced and more precise piece of information for use by the media and other communication professionals. It will also help to establish STMA as the acknowledged expert

and provider of playing conditions data, and “institutionalize” STMA in the minds of the media as an important contributor to the success of sporting events.

The PCI also adds value to STMA membership through increased exposure of the organization and by establishing STMA as an organization that actively involves and promotes its members.

Interpreting and sharing the data is huge, said Tarantino. The more data you add to the PCI only helps your decision-making process.

“The data would assist me in the budgetary decisions, staff development, addressing my supervisor concerns from the public and the media,” he said. “The PCI is a profes-

sional report that shows the sports field manager’s expertise in the field and his/her decision-making process.

“I cannot overstate the importance of the PCI as it pertains to staff development,” Tarantino added. “How many times have we thought we selected the best staff members to perform a renovation only to see that the expected results were not met? Is it possible we selected the wrong staff members to perform the task or that the sports field manager failed to relay the expected results or did not train the staff properly? Communication is paramount to having success.”

According to Tarantino, the PCI provides a tool for a proper field assessment; however, it is up to the sports field manager to

take the PCI to the level he or she wants by adding notes that pertain to the specific sports field being assessed, and using the data to provide a safe and aesthetically pleasing sports field.

“The Playing Conditions Index is a great way to look at your field each year and lets you look back at previous years to see where you have come and where you need to be,” said Lee Clinton, CSFM, sports turf manager, Clover School District (Clover, S.C.). “Using the PCI allows us to notice things we can improve on that we wouldn’t see without the PCI.” **SFM**

Materials compiled by John Kmitta, associate publisher/editorial brand director of SportsField Management.

PCI Media Advisory Bulletin

STMA encourages sports field managers to use the PCI Media Advisory Bulletin (see page 30) and work with their media departments on providing game day field conditions to their fans and other constituents.

PCI MEDIA ADVISORY BULLETIN INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

- If you do not already have a relationship with your sports information director and/or local media, be sure to introduce yourself and begin building a professional relationship.
- Prior to beginning the program, it is recommended that you have a short conversation with your sports information director in regards to the Playing Conditions Index and what it entails.
- It is recommended to set a specific time aside each week for the completion of the PCI; this will make it much easier to prepare the media advisory.
- The media advisory should be completed the day of an event several hours prior to game time. In many cases sports information directors release “game day notes” with specific references to current weather, temperature, injuries, etc., an hour or so prior to game time. The advisory will need to be completed and given to a member of the sports information office in time to be included in these “game notes.”
- To fill out the STMA PCI Media Advisory Bulletin
 - Note the venue, time, date, and what sport is to be played on the field.
 - Transfer the corresponding number from the PCI Worksheet to the Media Advisory (5 – Excellent, 4 – Above Average, etc.).
 - Indicate how the performance of the field will affect the performance of the athletes using the surface.
 - In the comments section of the advisory, make note of specific conditions affecting the field including weather, temperature, amount of precipitation received, etc.
 - Provide the STMA PCI Media Advisory Bulletin directly to the public relations or marketing arm of your athletic department or organization.
- Although there is not a PCI assessment for synthetic surfaces, there is a section in the Media Advisory Bulletin for synthetic surfaces. This is to allow members who manage synthetic fields an opportunity to provide information to the media on how the field is playing based on temperature, precipitation, age of the field, etc.

STMA PCI Media Advisory Bulletin[®]

Venue: _____

Date: _____

Game Time: _____

Playing Surface

Baseball / Softball

Football / Soccer / Lacrosse

Playing Conditions Index

- 5-Excellent
- 4-Above Average
- 3-Average
- 2-Below Average
- 1-Unplayable

The STMA Playing Conditions Index is an overall field quality rating that takes into consideration factors such as weather, turf health, drainage, maintenance, and events or activities scheduled for the field.

Game Day / Game Week Considerations

Field Playability & Effect on Athlete Performance

Playing field conditions affect performance. While all STMA-member managed fields are professionally managed for safety and appearance, field attributes vary by design, maintenance, and other variables.

The field at _____ has the following performance attributes:

Natural Surface

- | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Speed | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast | <input type="checkbox"/> Average | <input type="checkbox"/> Slow |
| Traction | <input type="checkbox"/> Tight | <input type="checkbox"/> Average | <input type="checkbox"/> Loose |

Synthetic Surface

- | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Speed | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast | <input type="checkbox"/> Average | <input type="checkbox"/> Slow |
| Traction | <input type="checkbox"/> Tight | <input type="checkbox"/> Average | <input type="checkbox"/> Loose |

Comments:

This playing field is professionally managed and maintained by STMA member _____. STMA members are committed to producing safe and aesthetically pleasing playing surfaces for athletes at all levels.

Synthetic Turf Council Releases 2020 Synthetic Turf Market Report for North America

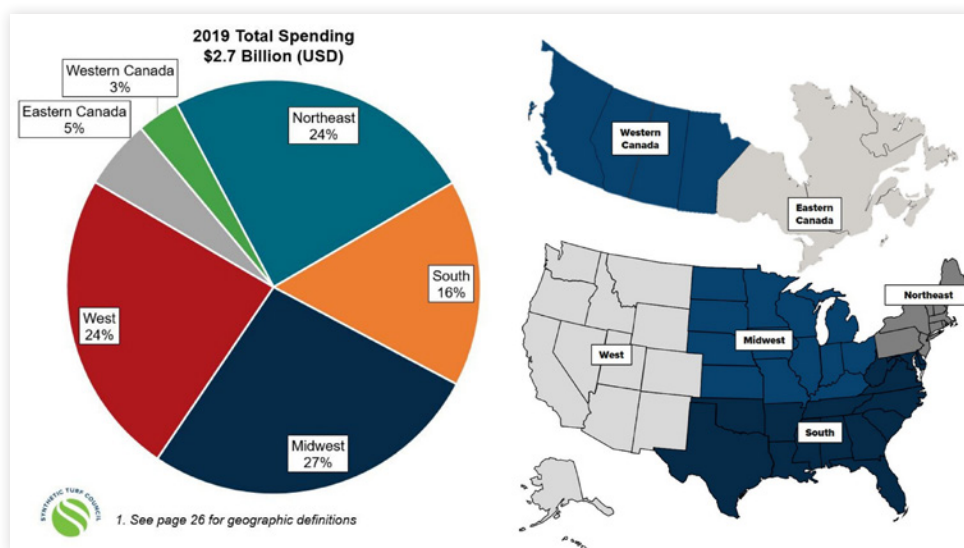
The Synthetic Turf Council (STC) announced the release of the 2020 Synthetic Turf Market Report for North America.

“The 2020 Synthetic Turf Market Report for North America is the most comprehensive examination of the North American synthetic turf market ever to be developed,” said STC President and CEO Dan Bond. “The STC engaged FMI, a major national consulting and research firm, in order to produce this complete, fact-driven analysis.”

According to Bond, the report measures the total value of synthetic turf systems and estimates future growth, while breaking down sports field and landscape/recreation applications.

“I would like to thank all industry participants — members and non-members included — for their input, and member volunteers and staff for their incredible work,” said Bond.

The report examines the market size, shape and direction, geographic and material segments. Some highlights of the report show that the total installed value of synthetic turf in North America is \$2.7 billion, with industry growth of 15 percent since 2017. This activity translates into approximately 265 million square feet (24.6 million square meters) of installed turf and 777 million pounds (352 million kilos) of infill.



“The forecast methodology included quantitative market modeling, secondary publication scanning and market-driven validation to determine the market size and direction,” said Bond. “The report also lists key market drivers and trend identifications that will impact the industry over the next five to 10 years.”

While the industry is poised to contract slightly in 2020 due to the short-term impact of COVID-19, it will grow 5.7 percent through 2022. Sports field applications represent 63 percent of the installed turf in 2020 and are expected to remain the largest end application, though use in landscape applications is increasing at a faster pace.

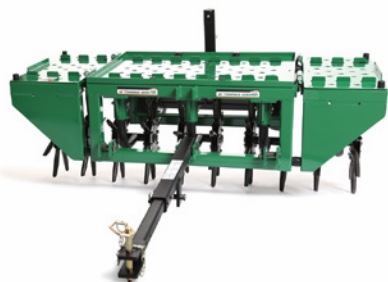
The 2020 Synthetic Turf Market Report for North America is free to all STC Full Members and available for purchase by affiliate, allied and non-member organizations.

ABOUT THE SYNTHETIC TURF COUNCIL (STC)

The STC is the world’s largest organization representing the synthetic turf industry. Founded in 2003, the STC assists buyers and end users with the selection, use and maintenance of synthetic turf systems in sports field, golf, municipal parks, airports, landscape and residential applications. It is a resource for current, credible, and independent research on the safety and environmental impact of synthetic turf, as well as technical guidance on the selection, installation, maintenance, and environmentally responsible disposal of synthetic turf. Membership includes builders, landscape architects, testing labs, maintenance providers, manufacturers, suppliers, installation contractors, infill material suppliers and other specialty service companies. **SFM**

For more information, visit www.syntheticurfCouncil.org.

Aerators



BILLY GOAT AET60 TOWABLE AERATOR

At up to four acres an hour, the Billy Goat AET60 provides a 6-inch by 7-inch aeration pattern up to 4 inches deep. The unit offers flexible aeration widths at 36-, 48- or 60-inch aerations with a simple flip up or down of the aerator's wings. Weighing in at 440 pounds, for deep hard soil aeration, the unit will also accept sandbags for extra weight. Swiveling tine assemblies offer smooth maneuverability when used with a 3-point hitch. Mounts to a standard tow bar or category 1, 3-point hitch.



DRYJECT LLC, FRANCHISE-BASED AERATION SERVICES COMPANY

DryJect is a pioneer in injection/aeration service. High-pressure

water penetrates the turf rootzone, and wet or dry amendments including sand/peat mixtures, inorganic soil amendments and more are injected into the aeration holes. Key benefits are speed, labor savings, and increased profitability for sports fields. Aerate, amend, and back-fill the holes on your field(s) in one day with time to spare. Turf surfaces are playable immediately after completed.



FIRST PRODUCTS UNIVERSAL AERA-VATOR

The First Products Universal Aera-vator uses "patented" solid vibrating tines to fracture and loosen up the soil without tearing the established turf. That means no cores to clean up. This action helps improve the infiltration of water, air and nutrients. First Products' swing hitch allows the user to turn while using. This unit can be used on any type of turfgrass. With six different optional shafts and seed box to increase its versatility, the

Universal Aera-vator is must have piece of equipment.



JOHN DEERE AEROCORE

The John Deere Aerocore 1500 and 2000 aerators — offering a 57.5-inch and 77.5-inch coring swath, respectively — allow operators to efficiently aerate without sacrificing time or quality. The Flexi-Link coring system on the 1500 and 2000 models ensures the tines stay perpendicular longer, resulting in a higher-quality hole. The belt-driven design on the Aerocore models is quieter and doesn't require lubrication, making it easier to maintain. The 1500 and 2000 models are both tractor-mounted systems, allowing the operator to work efficiently, pulling as many as 30 cores per square foot depending on the ground speed of the tractor. The six-inch-diameter roller offers better ground clearance and reduces the potential for turf scuffing. Four tine holder size options provide a solution for any type of turf.

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ

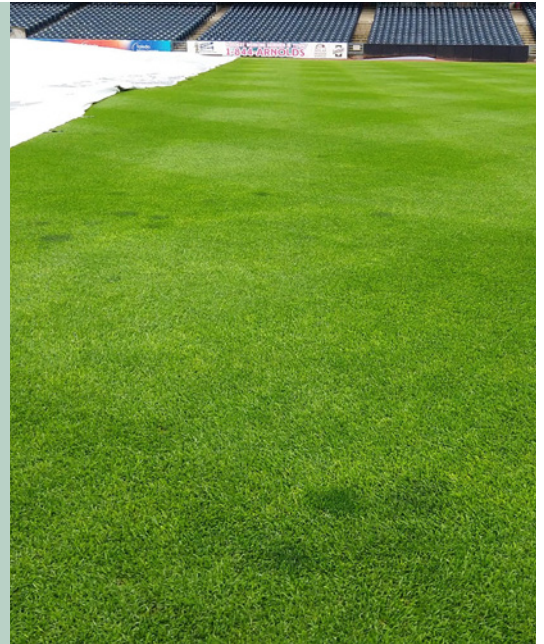
ANSWER

From page 17

These dark-green patches of turf are not from a spill or damage of any kind as you may have guessed — they are another variety of grass encroaching up from below. This field was originally a rye/blue mix and renovated to HGT Kentucky Bluegrass in the winter/spring 2014/15. The irrigation was removed and reinstalled before removing the old surface, adding and grading sand and fumigating the soil. Late fall geotextile fabric covered the field in preparation for an outdoor hockey event. In the spring, the field was sodded with the new turf. These dark areas are ryegrass and became noticeable after about two years, especially in wear areas where the original field was heavily overseeded. The spots have gotten slightly larger, but they don't necessarily see more of them. The field will be renovated again in conjunction with another hockey event. The sports field manager noted that the ryegrass typically looks pretty good as it is a very deep, dark green, compared to the light color of HGT — it only tends to stick out on cloudy days or when the sun is low in the morning, but does feel different under the foot.

Photo submitted by Cory Myers, sports turf manager for the Toledo Mud Hens at Fifth Third Field in Toledo Ohio.

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International



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 SportsField Management and the Sports Turf Managers Association.

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SportsField

MANAGEMENT



REDEXIM VERTI-DRAIN 2519

The new Verti-Drain 2519 from Redexim is setting new standards for what can be achieved with a deep tine aerator. With a working width of 76 inches and max depth of 10 inches, the Verti-Drain 2519 can do up to 94,000 square feet per hour, making it one of the most productive aerators on the market. The Redexim parallelogram action maximizes sub-soil decompaction with minimal surface disturbance. This is all achieved while still being smooth and quiet; reducing fatigue on its operator.



RYAN LAWNAIRE ZTS STAND-ON AERATOR

The Ryan Lawnaire ZTS brings a new level of efficiency and profitability to turfgrass professionals. The ZTS maneuvers easily thanks to its low center of

gravity, zero-turn drive, and top speed of seven miles per hour. Its efficient operation and quick speed make it ideal to tackle large sports fields. The Lawnaire ZTS achieves high-quality aeration with an automatic chain tensioning system. The user is always in control with a precise aeration depth stop and a fast hydraulic tine lift. Aerating can be tough, so comfort is key, especially during large tasks. With a sturdy, shock-absorbing operator platform and zero-turn maneuverability, the Lawnaire ZTS does the work without taking a toll on your body. The intuitive controls of the ZTS also make it ideal for seasonal or new staff, requiring less time and effort to operate.



TORO PROCORE 648

The Toro ProCore 648 aerator has an operating weight of 1,590 pounds, features an aeration depth of up to four inches, and boasts a 48-inch aeration swath. The unit is equipped with a 23-hp. Kohler gasoline engine and can reach speeds of up to 3.5 mph. The ProCore 648 has a TrueCore ground-following system that

maintains consistent coring depth. The design of the ProCore 648 puts the wheels in front of the aeration head so that you can make pass after pass without running over cores or freshly aerated turf. Consistently round holes are achieved by the elastomer RotaLink geometry that ensures tines remain vertical as they enter and exit the ground. The individually floating turf holders prevent turf lift when the tines exit the ground to maintain a true and level surface.



TURFCO TURNAER XT8 RIDING AERATOR

The Turfco TurnAer XT8 riding aerator is designed for hassle-free operation, day after day after day. The XT8 gets its zip from a 22-hp. engine equipped with a cyclonic air cleaner. With an operating speed of up to 7-plus mph and a 30-inch aerating width, the XT8 can aerate more than two acres per hour. It's slim enough to slip through a 48-inch gate opening. The high-profile ground clearance setup enables the XT8 to hop most standard road curbs, and the patent-pending Auto-Depth Control allows operators to pre-set

a consistent tine depth across any type of property and terrain. The XT8 is the only ride-on aerator with drive chains positioned outside the aeration area, so they won't get clotted with dirt and lawn debris. The system's self-aligned, sealed bearings are also grease-zerk-free, eliminating another common source of maintenance issues. Use the optional XT8 drop seeder attachment to simultaneously aerate and seed, effectively doubling the productivity of the XT8 aerator.



TURF PRIDE DEEP TINE AERATORS

Turf Pride deep tine aerators feature one-piece solid-steel main frame. The crank assembly is driven by one chain drive and three heavy-duty belts, dividing the drive torque with less stress to the connecting arm assemblies, resulting in longer life of the crank assembly. The crank assembly with perfectly timed offsets between each connecting arm assembly maintains balance without the need of counterweights.

The patented, spring-loaded tine assembly arms and the parallel linkage arms perfectly position the tines so they move down and back, producing maximum aerating action

deep into the soil without disturbing the playing surface. Front and rear rollers are standard. Operating widths in two models of 54 and 70 inches. Options include Turf Pride's core collector for core removal.



WIENMANN TERRASPIKE DEEP TINE AERIFIERS

Wiedenmann has worked for decades to develop the technology to offer the fastest deep tine machines on the market with the TerraSpike XF (extra fast), TerraSpike XD (extra deep), and the TerraSpike GXi HD (heavy duty). The TwinDrive ribbed V-belt drive system allows for speeds up to 485 rpm with the use of any size tine in the Wiedenmann range. In addition, because of the continuous crankshaft, timing issues are never experienced. The TerraSpikes are user-friendly machines offering a variety of features such as the Quickset adjustment of the entry angle and of the depth, the VibraStop and PowerPack anti-vibration and absorption systems, the Quickfit tine mounting and extraction system, and the Advanced Tine Control system, as offered on the GXi HD. Turf retainers, safety guards, rear

rollers, multi-tine holders, tight hole spacing, ballast weights, and windrows are a few of the other options available for the TerraSpike family of aerifiers.



Z AERATE STAND-ON AERATOR FROM Z TURF EQUIPMENT

Z Turf Equipment — the parent brand of Z-Spray lawn care equipment — introduced the 2020 Z-Aerate stand-on zero-turn aerator. Capable of aerating more than 100,000 square feet each hour, the Z-Aerate features a 40-inch floating tine head with down pressure, which allows the operator to maneuver around obstacles during aeration. The thumb-controlled hydraulic lift system enables quick turnarounds. Patented locking front caster wheels increase hillside stability, and the dual-pump hydraulic wheel motors deliver 8 mph maximum ground speed. The Z-Aerate accepts accessory add-ons (available separately), including a 30-gallon spray system, 46-inch dethatch rake, or 36-inch slicer seeder. This multi-function versatility enables one operator to do more work, faster.

Reviving Bermudagrass in the Transition Zone

[Editor's Note: The following was provided by Ecologel, makers of CytoGro, and was written by Hal Phillips, managing director of Mandarin Media.]

In the transition zone, all things agronomic would appear to deviate from the norm. But when it comes to reviving his 26 acres of bermudagrass each May, Bret Mash, the River Campus director at the University School of Nashville, takes that deviation up a notch, to something approaching obsession.

Mash estimates, for example, that he spends 30 percent of his annual budget (and countless man-hours) working to effectively revive his bermudagrass stand each spring. That process typically starts on May 1, once the spring sports season is all but completed. Come mid-September, when he overseeds (with ryegrass), he and his team maintain that stand of cool-season turf throughout the winter until this process starts all over again.

Mash has participated in this ritual dance 18 times, but 2020 produced the finest bermudagrass coverage ever. The story of exactly why that came to be should warm the cockles of root-growth biostimulant fans everywhere.

The University School is a private K-12 whose main academic operations are located on seven acres adjacent to Vanderbilt University, near the center of Nashville, Tenn. Mash looks after the River Campus, nine miles away but still in the Tennessee state capital, on the Cumberland River.

Each spring, Mash is obliged to manage the final weeks of the spring sports season alongside killing off his ryegrass. Come June and July, there is no sport activity at all down at the River Campus. And so, 30 percent of



one's budget might seem an awful lot to spend on bringing back healthy bermudagrass for but a single month (Aug. 15 to Sept. 15) of athletic activity.

"Eighty percent of the sports we play during the academic year is done on cool-season turf, but you can't ignore the bermuda," said Mash. "In order to overseed properly, you need really good bermuda – to ensure you're going to have a really good ryegrass stand. From an agronomy standpoint, they are not that compatible. If you push all your chips into the middle of the table on the health of your cool-season grass, it's to the detriment of your warm-season grass."

While it remains a dance of mutual dependence, the issues don't come to a head in the fall when Mash transitions to rye. They come each spring, typically the beginning of May, when Mash kills off the ryegrass and attempts to revive the bermuda.

"What I've always wanted was something to speed up that transition," he said. "In the past we have verticut and aerated to a ridiculous degree. I've used PGRs (T-Nex) to get the bermuda

back (and hardier) but it's always been a struggle. I'm a firm believer that in order to cultivate thick, dense, healthy turf, you need to lower your weed pressure. Weeds need opportunity; they need space. And the weeds here really aren't a problem until I spray out the ryegrass each spring. What that situation creates is a ton of opportunity for warm-season weeds – goosegrass, crabgrass and yellow nutsedge, something everybody south of the Ohio River deals with.

"We really don't have a lot of nutsedge; there are good chemicals out there to combat all those things (in concert with Katana, an herbicide I use at lower-than-label rates). But the problem has been, what can I do to expedite the regrowing of my bermuda and reduce that space?"

Mash felt like he could lick this weed problem — and reduce his inputs, and create better stands of ryegrass — if he could just get that bermudagrass to come in thicker, faster and healthier each spring. His entire overseeding cycle more or less depends on it.

The first component in Mash's quest for a better rye-to-bermuda transition took place in early 2019, when he secured funding to sow new bermudagrass that summer. Not all 26 acres – just enough to get the new turf going.

"What we had here was bermuda that was state of the art 22 years ago," said Mash. "I figured that if I sow better, more aggressive bermuda, it would push the old stuff out. That was the idea and, today, going into our second summer, we can see that is happening. That was our cost-effective approach because bermuda seed is very expensive."

But Mash did something else in 2019 that, in his opinion, resulted in the most successful transition in nearly two decades of transitions: He let Eric Steffensen talk him into buying a 30-gallon drum of CytoGro, an EPA-registered, seaweed-based root growth biostimulant. Steffensen reps Ecologel, manufacturer of CytoGro. So he's not exactly an unbiased observer. But he's also a former assistant golf course superintendent and previously owned a turf management company, so he possesses a certain level of agronomic cred.

"Eric talked to me and said he had this product that is really gonna help with root development on the bermudagrass," said Mash. "To be honest, I'm pretty skeptical about products like this. I'm an agriculture guy. My wife and I have a beef cattle farm. I honestly feel that good cultural practices are 90 percent of the battle. But that last 10 percent is where a product might help."

"So last spring I started mixing the CytoGro in with the T-Nex. I do five applications of T-Nex a year, and I did the last three full applications with the CytoGro. Pretty soon after, Eric wanted to know how it was going, but I was reserved. I knew the goal posts for this product would be the spring transition of 2020. My guys hate to hear it by now, but if there's a success or failure with turf, 95 percent of the time it had nothing to do with anything you did that week, but rather something you did three months ago. All these things have a really long

fuse on them. With the new bermuda we have here, if the CytoGro had helped push the roots deeper, we wouldn't know it until transition time 2020."

Well, transition time 2020 has come and gone. The verdict?

"It has been absolutely the best transition I've ever had," said Mash. "One hundred percent. More bermuda, quicker and faster than I've ever had. Now, we did spray [to kill off the ryegrass] early because of COVID-19. And all the sports were cancelled this spring. Once they made that official, on April 1, there was no sense in waiting any longer."

"So, part of the success of this transition was our getting rid of the ryegrass a month early – and the low traffic on account of no sports. But on the other hand, we had a lot of rain after April 1, and we've had abnormally cool temps. And we still had great results. By June 1, I had 100-percent coverage. In a normal year, we're looking more at the first of July," Mash added.

Steffensen has been in the turf business long enough to recognize and appreciate Mash's skepticism regarding "non-normative turf products."

"In today's market, that sort of skepticism is probably warranted when it comes to products that fall outside of the 16 essential nutrients – products like growth hormones, amino acids or microorganisms," said Steffensen. "All that said, and however you see fit to classify it, CytoGro promotes and maintains healthy root mass in heat/stress periods. We've seen it demonstrated over and over. One reason is the consistency of the cytokinin load in CytoGro."

Cytokinins are a class of plant growth substances (phytohormones) that promote cell division, or cytokinesis, in plant roots and shoots. They are involved primarily in cell growth and differentiation.

Mash is trying to distill all that he has seen and learned in the last year, and he is gaming out all the weather and seasonal factors. He's more than keen to repeat his killer transition of 2020.

"You know, on one level, if you can't grow bermuda in Tennessee, you don't know what you're doing," said Mash. "But what we're doing here? There's a lot to it – a lot of education and experience and hard work. No matter what you're trying to do, there are two things you need to control: the clock and the weather. And you know what? You cannot control them. The CytoGro really helps hedge your bets on the weather and the clock."

"Here in Nashville, we've had 90 degrees in March. We can be in situations where, in the latter half of April, we have to syringe every day or lose it. This year it just happened to be unseasonably cold and wet. My point is, it's a year-round thing," he added. "With the cool-season turf, once you spray it, you're not done. The bermuda is there all the time. By and large, is it the same plant year over year – maybe not above ground, but the roots are the same long-term resident. But continually sowing a cool-season [seed] into bermuda year after year, that thins it out. Bermuda is hardy but everything has its limits – then the ryegrass stand suffers because the thinned out bermuda won't support it"

Another crucial element in the turf equation at the University School of Nashville is that Mash and his team – Drew Stinson, Ty Johnson, Dillon Anderson and Brian McLaughlin Williams – have taken an extraordinary level of ownership over the cultural practices and programs on the River Campus. According to Mash, this has made a huge difference in the results, short- and long-term.

"We do it all here, from the turf care to game prep to irrigation to construction," said Mash. "No contractors. We do everything from tree trimming to replacing toilet paper in the bathrooms. I enjoy the work and I think my guys all enjoy the work. We've had a lot of success here, in this area and others, because I have a really good crew. We would not have had that success without them. Ownership is a great motivator to get it right." **SFM**



TURFCO'S NEW TRACTOR-MOUNTED TORRENT 2 PTO BLOWER

Cleaning up turf debris can be a time-consuming task made even more challenging these days when so many are working with smaller crews. Now, sports field managers looking to reduce the amount of time spent on debris management can hitch their hopes to the new Turfco Torrent 2 PTO debris blower.

By substituting on-board engine power with tractor-mounted PTO hydraulic power, the Torrent 2 PTO blower weighs in at less than 340 pounds — about 150 pounds lighter than its self-powered sibling. That makes it a lightweight, agile turf performer that's also quiet, stingy on fuel consumption, and easy to maintain.

"The new PTO-version of our well-received, self-powered Torrent 2 blower features all of the power, ease of use and time-saving virtues of the original model, with great maneuverability and of course less noise and no engine maintenance requirements," said Scott Kinkead, executive vice president of Minneapolis-based Turfco Manufacturing.

Connect the PTO version to a standard turf tractor — minimum 20-hp. engine to run the blower hydraulics — and hit the field. The supplied handheld controller enables operators to change nozzle direction fast and on the fly, without having to slow down and wait for the nozzle to swivel around.

For even greater productivity, Turfco's optional patented MagnaPoint technology eliminates guesswork. It ensures the operator is as productive as possible all day long. Users can preset the optimal degree angle for the debris being blown, whether it is grass clippings, leaves or aeration cores, saving up to two hours per day.

Getting the angle correct and holding to it is critical to maximizing the efficient use of the blower. Even a seemingly slight 15-degree "miss" on angle direction will result in a large percentage loss of efficiency.

Turfco encourages customers to demo the Torrent 2 PTO debris blower through an authorized dealer or via an interactive online demonstration.



JOHN DEERE UNVEILS NEW DUMP-FROM-SEAT MATERIAL COLLECTION SYSTEM

John Deere is providing customers with a more efficient product for collecting grass clippings with a new and improved Dump-from-Seat Material Collection System (MCS). The new Dump-from-Seat MCS is compatible with all John Deere gas-powered Z900 ZTrak zero-turn mowers, and features an enhanced design to improve operator efficiency and material collection.

"We know that efficiency, productivity and ease of operation are critical to the success of our customers," said Ruben Pena, product manager, John Deere. "When developing the new Dump-from-Seat design, we focused on improving and simplifying the dumping process to make it even easier to empty the hopper without leaving the seat."

The new design of the MCS moves the fulcrum of the dump lever closer to the operator for easier operation. With the new design, operators can be more efficient when dumping materials.

The new MCS also features a heavy-duty steel blower, to help increase productivity and reduce clogs while operating. The blower finely chops materials, enhancing the collection process, while the powerful suction requires less passes, resulting in saved time and money. In addition, tool-free clips provide easy access to the chute if a clog occurs.

The location of the blower housing was moved from the deck to behind the rear tire of the mower, creating a shorter path for the clippings to travel into the hopper, which helps reduce the occurrence of plugs during operation.

The new design reduces the overall length by 14 inches and width by six inches versus the previous model, making it easier to maneuver and transport. The weight of the machine with a full collection system is also two percent lighter than the previous model, reducing fuel usage and improving ground compaction.



2021 KAWASAKI MULE LINEUP

The Kawasaki Mule family has a machine for any need you may have on the job site with the Mule SX lineup, the four-wheel-drive Mule 4010 4x4 models, as well as the rear-wheel drive Mule 4000 side x sides.

Select models from the 2021 Kawasaki Mule SX line of side x side vehicles are available with digital fuel injection, making the compact, capable vehicles even more user friendly. All Mule SX models are also equipped with a winter kit, which facilitates easy starting in colder conditions.

The compact Mule SX takes many of the same styling cues from its siblings in the Mule PRO line of side x sides.

This durable workhorse easily fits in the bed of a full-size pickup truck for easy transport. The Mule SX side x side is available in six configurations, starting with the standard SX two-wheel-drive model up to the fuel-injected 4x4 XC LE model.

The Mule 4010 and Mule 4000 models are durable, dependable and capable vehicles designed to get the job done. They also offer a wide variety of Kawasaki genuine accessories available to add even more comfort, convenience and capability including both a hard cab and a soft cab, winches, windshields and skid plates and are all backed by the “Kawasaki Strong” 3-year warranty.

The entire Mule lineup is assembled in Lincoln, Neb., from domestic and imported parts.

HUNTER INDUSTRIES NODE-BT CONTROLLER

Avoid the valve box with the battery-operated Node-BT controller from Hunter Industries. Node-BT is enabled with powerful wireless Bluetooth technology that can be easily managed from a smartphone. The waterproof controller makes battery-powered irrigation convenient and comfortable in gardens, parks, medians, roundabouts, greenhouses, and other outdoor applications where AC power is unavailable. Node-BT is controlled by a multi-language smartphone app. The app maps controllers by location and sends helpful battery-change reminders. Controllers can also be configured offline, making field adjustments quick and easy to deploy later. Runtime flexibility is perfect for germinating seeds. For versatility during installation, the controller is mountable in five unique ways. Total app control removes the task of opening dirty valve boxes and programming schedules on a dark screen. Professionals can also enable irrigation and check battery status on the controller with the touch of a button, greatly speeding up maintenance.

FROM THE TWITTERVERSE

The following are some industry Tweets from the past month:



@TampChamp

“The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It has been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt and erased again. But baseball has marked the time.” - Field of Dreams #BaseballisBack

JUNE 23



@Homefield_

@mack_jaehnig helping the guys at PNC Park get their field ready for the season. Only three more weeks until MLB is back! Yes, we're excited too

JUNE 29



@JoeyElmore38

Fairly happy with where we are right now. My staff and I have come a long ways. But all hats off to my staff. You're only as good as the people around you!

JUNE 26



@TurfSpartanLord

One last look before #SpringTraining 2.0 starts tomorrow. #Reds #RootedInRedsCountry #reds

JULY 2



@FieldExperts

Mark Kuhn and his wife Denise established the All Iowa Lawn Tennis Club in 2003 on their farm. Inspired by the courts at @Wimbledon, the grass court has become a travel destination for tennis players far and wide

JULY 3



@Mariners

Easy like Sunday morning

JULY 5



@ryan_woodley

Summer Camp.

JULY 4



@EricOHare11

It's a hot one in Southern Illinois but it's perfect for field renovations!!

JULY 7

Field of Dreams

“Field of Dreams” is a film that has resonated with people — baseball fan or not — since its debut in 1989. Major League Baseball (MLB) hopes to capture the magic of that story with a regular season game this month at the Dyersville, Iowa, farm that is home to the titular baseball field and its iconic cornfield.

The game, scheduled for August 13, will be played on a newly constructed field near the field from the movie site (the field from the movie is not up to MLB specifications). The new field — built and managed by BrightView Sports Turf — is located beyond the northern perimeter of the movie site field.

According to an MLB statement issued in mid-July, “To date, there has been no change in the status of the event, and we hope to have the option to play. Construction is continuing, and we are following all CDC and state protocols regarding recommended safety practices, including social distancing, washing hands, and temperature checks before arriving to the site. Safeguarding public health is our top priority. We are monitoring ongoing events and plan to remain as flexible as these circumstances demand.”

The St. Louis Cardinals recently replaced the New York Yankees in the matchup with the Chicago White Sox because, due to the pandemic, MLB is



using a regionally based schedule this season in order to mitigate travel.

SportsField Management will feature an in-depth profile of the Field of Dreams project in an issue later this year, but, as a sneak preview, MLB and BrightView have graciously provided the following photos and captions showing how the project has unfolded since August 2019. **SFM**



August 2019

The selected site for the field is on a piece of land just to the northwest of the movie site field (the lights for the movie site field can be seen in the upper left-hand corner of this image). This photo was taken just before the corn was chopped down and 30,000 cubic yards of soil was moved from the site.

**December 2019**

Site work — including the sub drain system and sub base— was completed in fall and early winter of 2019, and all sand (USGA sand mix) was down for the winter. The build team worked in conjunction with the farmer and the site survey team, because fall prep for the corn had to be completed at the same time.

**February 2020**

In February, BrightView reviewed the components and planning to get ready to reopen construction in March, including signing off on fencing design and bullpen design.



April 2020

Construction began on the bullpen areas, and the roadway to the field was finalized. Corn was planted on April 20th.



June 2020

Sod was down by mid to late May; and the clay areas (courtesy of DuraEdge) were ready by the time this photo was taken in June. Musco Lighting installed permanent LED light pole structures. And the corn was already knee high.

STMA Chapter Philanthropy

The following are some highlights of the fine philanthropic work being done by STMA chapters:

SOUTH CAROLINA STMA

"I have a little travel ball group here in Lexington I have been helping with their little field. They basically started with a typical 'cut out' skin infield in the middle of a grass field at an old tree farm for practice purposes, but they now have a little playing field with donated old wooden power poles and temporary fencing for their sides and outfield fence. I gave them an old set of foul poles and warning track material for around their little backstop, and some fertilizer and some calcined clay conditioner for their infield. I have been impressed by the hard work and due diligence of these guys. I swear it made my heart feel good to see what they have done after starting with nothing a year ago. I gave them an old scoreboard I had that came from Wilson High School in Florence. It's nothing fancy, but it works."

— Alan Wilson, CSFM,
Wilson & Associates Sports Turf,
Lexington, S.C.

WISCONSIN STMA

In 2019:

- Funded research on *Poa annua* control with the University of Wisconsin-Madison — \$4,800.00
- Funded a college student scholarship, Nick Quarberg — \$2,000
- Advertised in Wisconsin Inter-scholastic Athletic Association with



Lexington, S.C., travel ball team

a one-page advertisement in their baseball championship program to support their efforts.

In 2020:

- Continue funding research on *Poa annua* control with University of Wisconsin
- New research funding for traffic control with growth retardants
- Sponsor college student scholarship — \$2,000

■ Sponsor grant for a member to attend the national conference; including airfare, registration and lodging. **SFM**

If your chapter has interesting news or notes, or if you would like to share the efforts of what your chapter is doing in your community or region, please e-mail information and photos to John Kmitta at jkmitta@epgmediallc.com.

2021 STMA Board Service Interest Deadline is August 15

The STMA Nominating Committee is seeking interest from voting members to place on the 2021 slate of candidates. Up for election are the following director positions:

- Schools K-12
- At-large elected (can be any voting category)
- Facilities used by professional athletes
- Commercial

In addition, the STMA Nominating Committee will slate two candidates in the secretary/treasurer race, and the new president will make an at-large director appointment.

To submit your interest, visit *STMA.org* and fill out the Volunteer Interest Form by Aug. 15. The form includes questions about STMA committee and other volunteer service (within/outside of STMA), why you want to serve, leadership qualities you bring to this position, and your vision for the association.

Board members' responsibilities

The STMA Board of Directors is comprised of 13 board members, which includes five officers and eight directors. Directors represent each category of membership, and they are elected to a two-year term (except the at-large, which is a one-year term). The director positions not up for election in 2021 include academic, higher education and parks and recreation.

The STMA Board of Directors is the governing body for the association. It sets policy and strategic direction for the programs and services it provides to its membership and is accountable to its membership. The board of directors is responsible for the financial oversight of the association and for putting in place the appropriate management system for day-to-day operations.

The outcome of the secretary/treasurer election determines who is on the path to the presidency. The commercial vice president is not eligible to be slated in this race; and thus, cannot serve as president. Once elected, the secretary/treasurer ascends to the president-elect office unopposed at the next election,

and the president-elect moves to the president office unopposed. The president automatically ascends to the immediate past president office.

The responsibilities of the directors include attending and actively participating in quarterly board meetings, although the frequency and timing can change year to year. This year the board met in person in January, and has subsequently met virtually. All expenses for board meeting attendance are paid by the STMA.

Board members also chair one or more committees. Committees are the lifeblood of STMA. These volunteers help to develop new programs and services and enhance current offerings for the membership.

Attending and participating in the annual conference is also a responsibility of serving on the STMA Board of Directors. Board members moderate sessions and attend all activities; again, STMA pays the expenses to attend and participate in the conference.

Each board member is expected to exhibit a high level of professionalism and is required to abide by the membership's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Guidelines.

The election process

The STMA election process is straightforward and guided by the STMA bylaws and an SOP.

The Nominating Committee leads this process, and there is no board involvement to avoid any appearance of cronyism. Per the STMA bylaws, there must be representation on the Nominating Committee from every category of membership up for election. Because STMA has a director at-large position up for election each year who can be from any voting classification, the Nominating Committee has each voting category represented. The chair of this committee is specified in the bylaws; it is the year's immediate past president. Thus, Jody Gill, CSFM, is the chair for the 2021 election process.

After the call for interest in board service closes, the Nominating Committee reviews all the applications, and, in some cases, reaches out to additional candidates, if needed. Qualifications, geographic representation, skills, involvement and other criteria are assessed. If this information is not known, committee members are assigned to find out that information. This process usually takes one

to two months, and, at the conclusion, the slate is developed. Those who were interested but not slated are individually contacted by a Nominating Committee member to thank them for their interest and to explain why they were not slated.

The electronic ballot is developed next. STMA headquarters creates a link to the electronic ballot that is specific to each voting member and sends out that link. Each voting member accesses the ballot through his or her individual link. After members have selected their choices, they hit "submit." After submitting it, the link ceases to work; thus, the link

cannot be used by anyone else, nor a vote counted more than once. The results are automatically electronically compiled, and STMA's audit firm, Summers, Spencer & Company, P.A. (SS&C) is the sole keeper of the results link. When voting closes (in mid-December), SS&C forwards the results link to the Nominating Committee chair and STMA headquarters. The chair notifies the committee, and all on the ballot are notified of the outcomes.

The new board is introduced to the membership and takes office at the annual meeting, which is usually held at the STMA Conference and Exposition. **SFM**

STMA releases new infield care infographic

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) released a new infographic about baseball and softball infield care. The infographic highlights the most important maintenance practices necessary to keep fields safe and ready for play. **SFM**




Infield Care

+

Safety should be your #1 priority. Evaluate your infield for safety hazards such as rocks, debris or an inconsistent surface.

STMA has a safety checklist for baseball/softball fields to assist.

🚫

Remove weeds by hand, mechanically or using a non-selective herbicide labeled for turfgrass application.



! (Warning)

Remove any lips that may have developed between the turfgrass and skinned surface to improve surface drainage and eliminate a safety hazard.

💧

Fill in low spots or consider laser grading on the infield skin to return to a consistent slope and improve surface drainage.

🔬

Keep the surface smooth and firm to assist with surface drainage.



📊

Understand the composition of your infield mixture (sand, silt, clay %). Take a sample and have it tested at a lab or perform a jar test for a rough approximation.

STMA's Management of Skinned Infields provides more information about surface composition.

www.stma.org
1-800-323-3875

Connect with us:







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

Keystone Athletic Field Managers Org. (KAFMO/STMA): www.kafmo.org

Mid-Atlantic STMA: www.mastma.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

North Carolina Chapter of STMA:
www.ncsportsturf.org

Northern California STMA:
www.norcalstma.org

Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA): www.ostma.org

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

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

Ozarks STMA: www.ozarksstma.org

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

Southern California Chapter:
www.socalstma.com

South Carolina Chapter of STMA:
www.scstma.org

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

Texas Sports Turf Managers Association:
www.txstma.org

Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association:
www.vstma.org

Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association: www.wstma.org

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Q&A WITH PAMELA SHERRATT

Q: Our soccer field comprises mostly prostrate knotweed, crabgrass and clover. Should we try to convert it to grass by overseeding, or start over?

A: What a timely question! Fall 2020 offers a unique opportunity for field renovations that may not have been possible in a normal year.

Two of the weeds you mention — crabgrass and prostrate knotweed — are warm-season summer annuals that will die at the end of October, but clover is a perennial that will continue to compete with any grasses you seed, particularly if the field does not get fertilized adequately. This leads me to the first point that needs addressing: Why is the field in such bad shape in the first place? Listen to your weeds, because they are great indicator plants. For example, if the field is infested with prostrate knotweed, chances are there are soil compaction issues. I also regularly see soccer fields being mowed too low, which could be contributing to the crabgrass problem. If the grass on the field isn't being maintained properly, any renovation you do now is just a Band-Aid, and the field will probably convert back to the status quo. So, before you embark on a potentially expensive and time-consuming renovation project, make sure plans are in place to take care of the field in the future.

The best time to renovate cool-season fields is mid-August to mid-September. This timing is based on the assumption that there will be timely rains in the fall to aid establishment, soils are warm, and there is much less weed pressure than in the spring. This timing also allows for the new grass to establish and be hardy enough to face the impending winter stress (grasses seeded at this time should be at least 5 to 7 weeks old before the first frost of the season).

If you are leaning toward overseeding because of a budgetary or manpower issue, you could overseed by slit-seeding into the existing vegetation so the grass establishes as the summer annuals die out, then you could control the clover with a selective broadleaf herbicide when it comes out of winter dormancy next spring (usually mid-March). This practice would need

to be carried out several times over several years to get a clean sward of grass.

If you decide to go with the total do-over, a non-selective herbicide, such as glyphosate, can be used to kill the existing vegetation. Another route is to remove the vegetation by fraise mower. Killing or removing the existing vegetation opens up an opportunity to improve poor soils and reestablish levels. Adding organic matter to the existing rootzone will significantly improve soil health and drainage capabilities, alleviating soil compaction issues. If some areas of the field are low, a good quality topsoil can be brought in to reestablish levels. Having the field laser-graded with a crown after incorporation of organic matter or topsoil is extremely important to ensure surface drainage. Native-soil fields must have good surface drainage, and full renovation offers an ideal opportunity to get surface levels right, so don't skip this step.

The type of grass you choose to establish on the field will depend entirely on the level of maintenance the field will receive moving forward, so plan accordingly. Post-seeding practices for maximum success include (1) irrigation, even if there are timely rains, because syringing cycles are important until seed has established; (2) a solid fertilizer program tailored for seed establishment; (3) weed control during seeding with a herbicide, such as mesotrione, that will not adversely affect the grass seed; and (4) if the weather is warm and humid during the renovation period, use a fungicide-coated seed to prevent pythium, or apply a liquid or granular fungicide at the time of seeding. I have found that granular fungicides not only offer protection against seedling diseases, but also offer non-target, beneficial effects on establishment quality. **SFM**



Pamela Sherratt

Sports turf extension specialist
The Ohio State University

Questions?

Send them to Pamela Sherratt at 202D Kottman Hall, 2001 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210 or sherratt.1@osu.edu

Or, send your question to Dr. Grady Miller, North Carolina State University, Box 7620, Raleigh, NC 27695-7620, or grady_miller@ncsu.edu

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