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July 2021

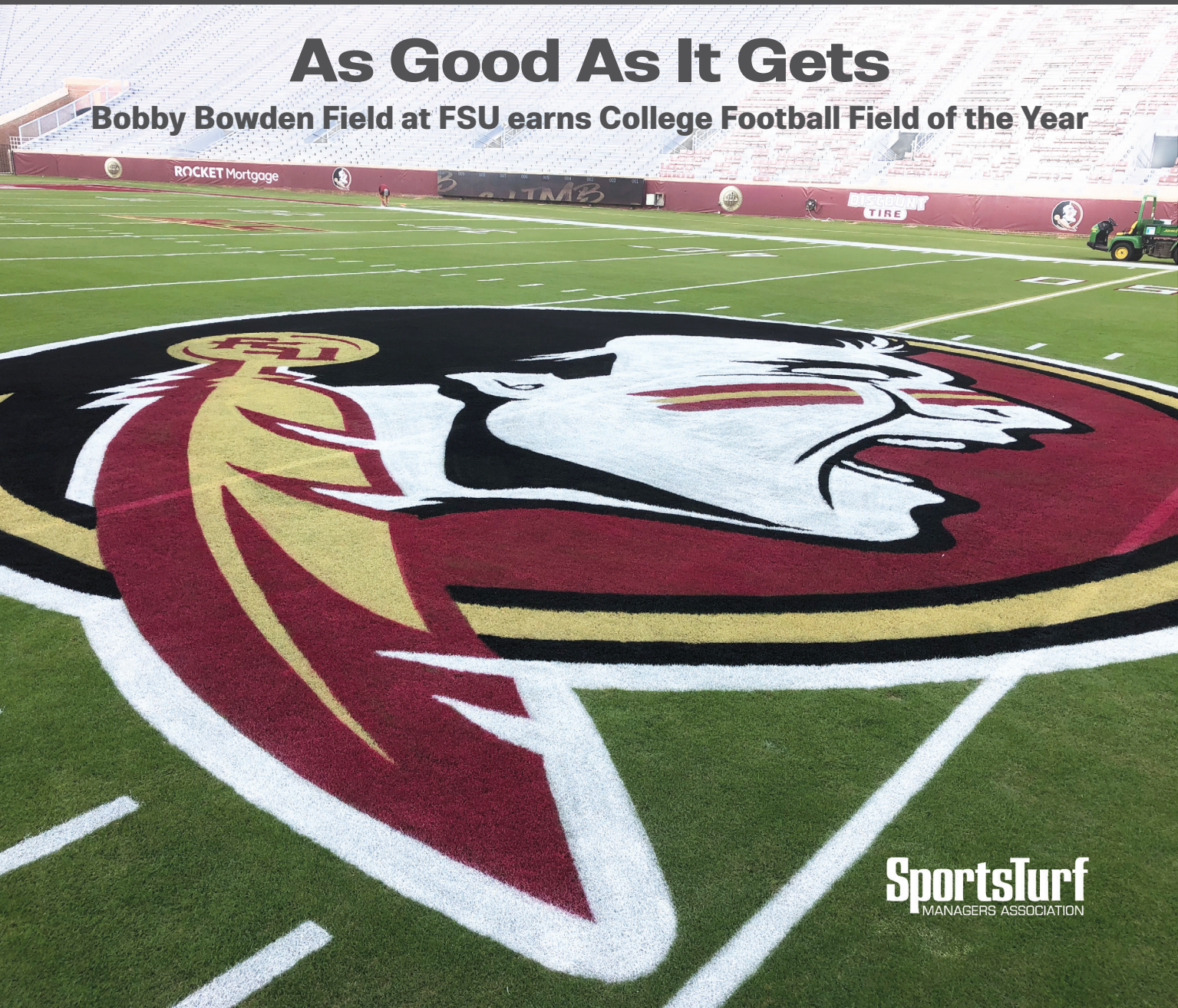
Vol. 37 No. 7

The Official Publication of the Sports Turf Managers Association

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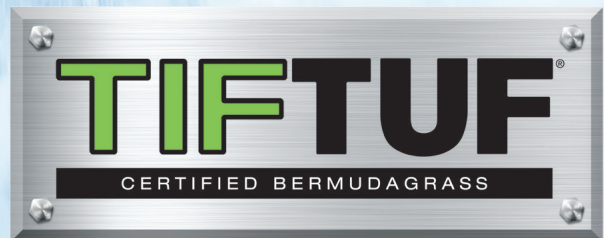
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Editor's Note



John Kmitta

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July is Smart Irrigation Month. This annual, month-long initiative from the Irrigation Association (IA) is an opportunity for the irrigation industry to promote the importance and value of smart irrigation practices.

According to IA, the irrigation industry has been able to find solutions to weather and overcome the obstacles of the past year, and Smart Irrigation Month celebrates the solutions that irrigation professionals bring society through best practices and efficient technologies.

The 2021 theme for Smart Irrigation Month is "Smart irrigation. Sustainable solutions." Throughout the month of July, the IA and its members are promoting how smart irrigation practices and technologies are providing solutions to today's and tomorrow's challenges.

Irrigation professionals are encouraged to wear blue on July 6 to raise awareness about smart irrigation, as well as the practices

and technologies to apply water to landscapes and turfgrass. Participants are encouraged to share photos of themselves wearing blue on social media using the hashtag #SmartIrrigationMonth.

"With the challenges our industry faced over the past year with the COVID-19 pandemic, we are proud to be able to celebrate our industry through Smart Irrigation Month this year," said IA CEO Deborah Hamlin, CAE, FASAE. "Smart Irrigation Month is our opportunity to highlight the value and importance of efficient irrigation."

According to IA, Smart Irrigation Month is the showcase month for the irrigation industry and the public to recognize and promote the benefits associated with smart and efficient irrigation.

The IA offers numerous resources and tips for engaging the media and the public, and for use on social media. Visit www.smartirrigationmonth.org for these resources and more information. **SFM**

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"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness"



Nick McKenna, CSFM

STMA President

nmckenna@athletics.tamu.edu

Howdy STMA members! As I begin this July message, in homage to Independence Day, I felt it appropriate to begin with those famous words from the Declaration of Independence. As I read those words, I am reminded that the freedoms we enjoy on a daily basis are not given, but must be earned; and I hope we all remember that as we celebrate this month.

I recently returned from a trip to Iowa during which I got to attend the first in-person event that the Iowa STMA chapter has held in more than a year. Let me just say how refreshing it was to once again spend a day with fellow sports field professionals, sharing knowledge and experiences with one another. One major topic of discussion from the event was the current labor shortage that many of us in the turfgrass industry are starting to experience. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix to this issue, and STMA recognizes this is a challenge to many of our members. We are working to develop as many helpful solutions as we can, but we can't do it alone. To truly be successful combatting this issue,

it will take a grassroots effort; and we all must actively seek opportunities to spread the message of the sports field management industry to anyone who will listen (i.e., elementary schools, sports teams, city councils, parent/teacher associations, etc.). If we truly want to make an impact on our industry, we must live the words of Mahatma Gandhi and, "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

As chapters resume activities throughout the country, I can't wait for our members to share and learn from each other. Speaking of learning and sharing, I encourage you to start making plans now to attend our annual STMA Conference and Exhibition, scheduled to take place in Savannah, Ga., January 17-20, 2022. The conference will feature 45 speakers, leading 39 educational sessions, covering nine different tracks. Additionally, we will have our full trade show, welcome reception, student challenge, and awards banquet — pretty much everything we have come to know and expect from our annual conference! I hope to see you all there! **SFM**

Nick McKenna, CSFM



BOBBY BOWDEN FIELD FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Bobby Bowden Field has overcome numerous turf issues in the past two years to become a quality playing surface at the level that is expected from it. As a 17-year-old playing surface, major issues that have plagued the field in the past have been identified, and are in the process of being rectified. As resources become less available, the staff has implemented sound turf maintenance practices in order to get the most out of every resource put into the field. A major lance nematode population has been reduced to near recommended threshold levels, and continues to drop. A major nutrition deficiency has been corrected, and the turf has responded accordingly. An aerifier was introduced into the fleet, and aggressive core aerification has been started to alleviate the layering and compaction issues. The response and improvement of Bobby Bowden Field is a true testament of how sound groundskeeping practices can, and will, produce a quality and safe athletic field.

— Chris Denson, athletic field superintendent

The Field of the Year Awards program is made possible by the support of sponsors
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*To see the grass striped up, the
paint shining, crisp edges,
recovery from previous events,
and all the other small details we
work on with the crew,
that's as good as it gets.*

— Chris Denson



Category of submission: College Football

Field manager: Chris Denson

Title: Athletic Field Superintendent

Education: AAS, Golf / Landscape Technology

Experience: Athletic Grounds Manager, University of Miami, 2003-2012. Hard Rock Stadium / Miami Dolphins, 2000-2018. Super Bowl grounds crew, 2003, 2007 and 2010.

Full-time staff: Robyn Sullivan, Harold Williams, Jeremy Henderson, Nils Jefferson, Levi Cunningham

Original construction: 2004

Turfgrass: 419 bermudagrass, Northbridge bermudagrass

Rootzone: Sand

Drainage System: Gravity drain



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

CHRIS DENSON: I am probably most proud of winning this award for the staff here, and for their tireless efforts to be recognized. The field has had some challenges to overcome in the past, and each person on the crew here has definitely put their work in to keeping it maintained at the highest level. A lot of pride and investment goes in to maintaining and presenting the surface of Bobby Bowden Field. For the efforts and investment of not only the crew, but the entire staff of Florida State Athletics to be recognized by the STMA is definitely something to be proud of. This recognition really shows the effort and hard work for everyone involved with the field. Definitely a thank you to the grounds crew here — Harold Williams, Jeremy Henderson, Robyn Sullivan, Nils Jefferson and Levi Cun-

ningham — for the pride and work they put into Bobby Bowden Field to make it the surface it is.

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

DENSON: I grew up in a small West Texas agriculture town, loving sports. I saw this career as a way to stay involved in both. I have always enjoyed working outside and with my hands. Growing up, there was always a curiosity and admiration for how athletic fields looked. Going into the industry, I could have never imagined the amount of work and effort that so many people put into making all these sports surfaces play and appear the way they do. I grew up surrounded by Longhorn and Cowboy fans, and I was a little bit of an outcast rooting for the Miami Dolphins and Miami Hurricanes (kind of ironic now). I saw this as a career path in which I could possibly be a small piece of those two programs at some point in my career. I was fortunate to be able to be a part of the Miami



Dolphins/Hard Rock Stadium grounds crew for so many years and manage the fields for the Miami Hurricanes for nine years.

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

DENSON: Spending 20-plus years around the Miami Dolphins organization, and being a part of the Alan Sigwardt and Tom Wilson grounds crews, I owe them, the grounds crews there, and the many people affiliated with them, a debt of gratitude for being able to be a part of those crews and the knowledge of the industry I gained from being there. I have truly been fortunate in my career to work with, and get to know, some of the best groundskeepers from all over the world. I have also been

fortunate to be surrounded by so many great managers and coaches that have had an impact on my career. There are so many people out there that have had a major influence on not only the agronomy side of the industry, but also the management and business aspects.

SFM: 2020 was a year unlike any other. Please walk us through what the past year was like for you, how you were impacted, and how you approached the challenges you faced?

DENSON: 2020 was definitely a unique and challenging year. I think our impacts here were similar to what most in this industry dealt with once COVID made its way around. Our staffing, budgets, revenue, safety, and just the unknown were all issues that came up quick. We were very

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Judge's Comments

"The attention to detail displayed at FSU was impressively above the required professional standards needed to be successful in sports turf management."

— Steve E. Peeler, CSFM, CSFB, ISSA, director of horticulture and turfgrass management,
CVCC Environmental Life Science

Editor's Note: A panel of 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.

fortunate our staff was essential and able to stay working through the whole process. With all the sports being suspended, this allowed us additional time to be on the fields. We were able to transition out of our winter overseeding a month early, and really concentrate on our bermuda. It gave us a chance to get a few additional cultural practices in on all of our fields. We definitely utilized our growth regulators as much as we could to relieve any additional pressure on our equipment. We were able to address some of the other areas that don't receive as much attention throughout the course of the year. Our responsibilities really stayed the same when we were able to start up our fall sports — just without as many people in the stands. It was a relief to be headed in the right direction with events able to go on. In the beginning of the shutdown, we adjusted some of our nutritional and pesticide applications since the turf wasn't being stressed, used, and pushed as much as it is when there is activity on it. The university did a great job of staying ahead of safety protocols, and allowing us to continue working in a safe environment with all of the unknowns of what was to come with COVID.

SFM: Beyond COVID-19-related challenges, what are the biggest challenges you have faced with Bobby Bowden Field, and how have you approached those challenges?

DENSON: After taking over the field a few years ago, and running all our tests on it, we identified a few major problems we have been working to address. The age of the field and layering in the 18 years of biomass buildup are major things we have been working to improve. The field still maintains its ability to drain well during a heavy rain, but our infiltration rates are greatly reduced in the top several inches. We have been working with an aggressive aerification and topdressing program to try to aid in the layering, and increase our drainage in the top several inches. This has already shown major improvements in root growth and water movement.

Lance nematodes have been, to say the least, a difficult problem to work with. There are other problematic nematodes present — they have just shown good response to treatments. Numerous tests were done to monitor the counts of the lance, and, even after chemical treatments, counts would continue to increase. At some points, we reached higher than 10 times the recom-

mended thresholds for lance. We have since pushed an aggressive biological program in the field, and have seen counts drop back into the threshold limits. With these two challenges addressed and improving, our root mass, recovery time, strength during play, general aesthetics, and overall plant health have improved greatly. Another challenge that has been fun to work with is the turf variety. Bobby Bowden Field is an original 419 bermuda field, but has had a Northbridge center installed in past years. Although both are similar bermudagrasses, they each have different growing characteristics. We have worked to try different cultural practices to keep the playing surface uniform, and we have also worked with different nutritional inputs to try to match the colors of the different bermudagrasses.

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

DENSON: It's the few minutes I am able to stop and look back on what has been accomplished with the crew. It gets busy, and a lot of time and work go into preparing any of these fields for competition. These fields take a beating through the course of the year. Sometimes it is hard to stop and look back at the finished product and really see what has been accomplished. To see the grass striped up, the paint shining, crisp edges, recovery from previous events, and all the other small details we work on with the crew, that's as good as it gets. It takes everyone on our staff to make this operation go. Each individual has their responsibilities, their strengths, their input; but, when you get that few minutes to look back at what the team has come together and assembled with all the other duties, deadlines and activities going on, that's as close to perfection as it gets.

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

DENSON: STMA has been a resource for me to use over my 20-plus years in the industry. I have utilized information published that has increased my knowledge in numerous aspects of the industry. STMA has also helped me make contacts and relationships, at both the local and national levels, that have grown over the years. **SFM**

The Most Important Part of Construction Comes Before Construction Starts

By Mary Helen Sprecher



Photos provided by the American Sports Builders Association

Whether you're planning to build a field or improve upon an existing facility, the picture you probably have in your mind is the finished product. It's lush, it's green and it's providing a great game for your athletes.

But those who design and build sports facilities have some advice: try re-winding your expectations. Spend some time on your version of a blueprint by making a list of the following items:

- What is your budget for the field? Does that figure take into consideration ancillary expenses, such

as lighting, fencing and spectator seating? If not, is there the potential for these to be added later?

- What is your budget for maintenance? Will you have an onsite crew. Will any maintenance be outsourced?

- What sports do you want to host? Will the field be strictly for one sport, or will it host a number of different sports? Will it include a track?

- Have you decided whether the field surface is natural or synthetic? (If synthetic, have you decided which type of infill to use?)

- Will the field be used just by one user group (such as school students) or will it be hosting multiple events, such as commercial tournaments and community functions?

- What season(s) will the field be in use?

While nobody likes to backtrack, particularly when there's a field waiting to be built (or rebuilt), sitting down and defining exactly what you want and need can create a better flow for the project as a whole.

"The expectations for the field are key when planning a construction

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

PROBLEM:

Divots in new sod

TURFGRASS AREA:

Park multipurpose field

LOCATION:

Miami, Fla.

TURFGRASS VARIETY:

419 bermudagrass

Answer on page 33

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International



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Kansas City, MO

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– Travis Hogan,
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project,” said Matt Wimer of Hummer Turfgrass Systems, Inc. “Usage details include sports types and age of players using the field, number of total events and other non-sports potential uses. Usage and expectations should be taken into consideration when planning the type of surfacing (natural or artificial), and other field infrastructure that is included in the construction, such as drainage and irrigation.”

While many field owners want to pay attention to the surface of the field, which is admittedly important, they often don’t take into consideration something equally important: what’s underneath that surface.

“I think one of the big things that should always be considered is the existing subgrade,” added Mike Czeschin of Byrne & Jones Sports Construction. “That is the only way of making sure you start with a good, solid foundation from the beginning. Oftentimes, soil stabilization is required using lime or cement to modify the existing soil to create the proper compaction and base.”

A qualified soils engineer should be brought in at the outset of the project to assist with identifying any

potential problems. Ground water level determinations also are recommended, and are critical for sites where the possibility of a high water table exists. If the site for the field is in an area with poor drainage, flooding or seasonal water problems, it is essential to identify this in advance and address the problem in the beginning stages of the project. While soil remediation may add to the overall cost, it is essential to having a successful end product.

Unfortunately, said Wimer, that is sometimes a hard sell.

“On natural grass fields, the first thing that clients tend to cut out is drainage,” he said. “Drainage is an insurance policy for the field in wet weather; it prevents a potentially destructive rain game.”

Said John Schedler of Baraka Sport, “Shortcuts are the biggest mistake to make in this business.”

According to builders, a field is only as good as the drainage under it. If one rainstorm renders it unplayable for days at a time, it isn’t worth the cost savings. Although drainage isn’t the most exciting thing to spend money on, it’s one of the most important.

Just as important is the need to approach the job with the right partners — those who are skilled in sports facility design and construction.

“Hire an expert,” said Schedler. “Find someone who knows how to build a sports field.”

Landscape contractors may know the grass, soil, weather conditions and vegetation of an area, but they lack the design and construction knowledge to produce a high-performance sports field tailored to the needs of the specific athletes who will be using it.

“Too many times, we see fields that are specified the same as lawn areas,” said Wimer. “However, the expectations are so much higher for sports fields. The lack of planning and proper construction specifications are major sources of field failure, especially on natural grass fields.”

By choosing a contractor, as well as a design professional, with sports-facility-specific expertise, owners have a better chance of getting what they want. Getting recommendations from colleagues with facilities similar to the one you are planning is one way to obtain good information. Make sure to

ask questions about the responsiveness of the contractor to questions, their ability to deal with problems, and anything else of importance.

Another way of finding an appropriate professional is by checking the website of the American Sports Builders Association (www.sportsbuilders.org), the professional organization for designers, contractors and suppliers for the sports facility construction industry. The website includes a lookup feature for builders, design professionals and suppliers, as well as individuals who have become certified through ASBA's voluntary certification program, and who hold the designations of Certified Field Builder, Certified Track Builder or Certified Tennis Court Builder.

ASBA also publishes its book, *Sports Fields: A Construction and Maintenance Manual*, which contains user-friendly but in-depth information that leads the reader through the decision-making process, as well as the design, construction and maintenance of sports fields. This book is also available through the ASBA website.

In all cases, said Schedler, an informed owner is best — particularly one that keeps open the lines of communication and takes time to understand the options that are available on the market.

"Some of the owners I've helped recently have had very good questions regarding vendors and their materials and systems, as well as how sport-specific those materials were," said Schedler. "If someone is putting in a baseball or softball field, for example, and they have questions about which vendor or system best mimics clay or dirt, I know they've been reading. If someone has been gathering a lot of information, it shows." **SFM**

Mary Helen Sprecher wrote this article on behalf of the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA).

THE BEST STEP TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL ATHLETIC FIELD

The first step when considering renovations on your athletic field is to consult with an expert in athletic facility construction. Who are these experts? Certified Field Builders (CFB), as certified by the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA) are the highest qualified individuals in athletic field construction. CFBs can help you design, build and then maintain your field at a pristine level.

ASBA is a national organization of 400 companies recognized as a centralized source of technical information about natural and synthetic fields, running tracks and tennis courts. ASBA works to raise professional standards and to ensure owners receive the highest quality services through a professional certification program, education initiatives, construction guidelines publications, and awards.

Why is a CFB important when renovating or constructing your facility?

By having passed a rigorous comprehensive exam on field construction and maintenance, Certified Field Builders have demonstrated the highest level of expertise. CFBs must be well versed in project planning, project administration, site work, sub-grade, base work and maintenance. They must have at least three years of experience and at least 20 projects built, before even taking a three-hour comprehensive exam.

A Certified Field Builder can help develop a realistic budget, layout, and then build your facility to meet or exceed national best practices. They are best positioned to solve problems as they arise during construction, and adhere to Certified Builder Standards of Conduct. They are well positioned to walk your facility and provide expertise and solutions for drainage, premature wearing and facility design.

By having specified a Certified Field Builder, you have prevented the average landscaper or a builder from cutting their teeth on your project. While landscapers may have knowledge of smaller field projects, they are not well-equipped to handle problems that may arise during construction, locate drainage issues, or provide high-performing solutions for your facility. This is why it is important to specify when bidding your athletic facility project that proposers are required to have a CFB on staff and on-site during construction. This prevents having less-qualified bidders from offering a lower price commensurate with the quality of their work.

The easiest step you can take to improve the odds of constructing a great athletic field or running track is to specify that the contractor performing the work, and the superintendent onsite during the work, be a Certified Field Builder (CFB). The return on this simple investment will be measured over many years to come with a better performing and safer facility with fewer maintenance problems.

Article provided by Sports Turf Company, a specialty athletics construction company that constructs natural grass and artificial turf fields, tracks and tennis courts. The company has three Certified Field Builders and two Certified Track Builders, as recognized by the ASBA.

The SportsField Management Interview:

Ross Kurcab, CSFM

In this edition of The Sports Field Management Interview, we meet Ross Kurcab, CSFM, owner of Championship Sports Turf Systems. Kurcab spent 30 years as head field manager for the Denver Broncos Football Club, and is an award-winning sports field manager, sports field and turfgrass consultant, speaker, author, and columnist. He is a proud alumnus of Colorado State University's landscape horticulture/turfgrass management program. He can be followed on Twitter @NaturalGrassMan.

SportsField Management

(SFM): Please tell us about Championship Sports Turf Systems, LLC.

Kurcab: CSTS is my way of creating purpose with the skills and knowledge I developed during my time in professional football, and to create my own job that will better suit me into and through retirement. I'll always enjoy working with professional sports teams and leagues; but now I can be of service to many more youth and amateur athletes, and help field managers who have fewer resources. That feels very fulfilling. I also wanted to find out what weekends and holidays are like.

SFM: What originally attracted you to the turfgrass industry?

Kurcab: A drifting horticulture student met Dr. Jackie Butler at CSU on advice from a friend. He gave me a rudder. He showed me that turfgrass management is not just for lawns that look good. He showed me how turfgrass is the preferred surface for almost every outdoor team sport, and how I can contribute to the health



and wellbeing of people through sports field management and golf course management. Having worked hard landscaping jobs to pay for school, I envisioned a life of driving in a shaded golf cart around a beautiful course, with a glass of lemonade in my hand, telling others what to do. Things didn't exactly work out like that, but I am eternally grateful for that meeting. Passion inspires passion.

SFM: You have earned a lot of industry recognition and awards during your career. What would you say are the biggest accomplishments of your career and/or what are you most proud to have achieved?

Kurcab: My "coaching tree" is my favorite accomplishment. Watching my former assistants and technicians successfully advancing their careers on their own just makes me smile. This list includes some amazingly talented field managers like Troy Smith, CSFM; Brooks Dodson; Abby McNeal, CSFM; Cody Freeman; Andrew Hoiberg; Chris Hathaway; and Abe Picasso. I also consider my friend Sarah Martin, CSFM, on that list as well.

In 30 years, I had exactly two workers comp injuries on my team — none very serious. While it's never perfect, no one ever left my turf team on bad terms with me or the other team members.

I've always championed the cause for more women in our profession. My friend Lynda Wightman instilled this in me early in my career. She sets an amazing example for women to follow. There is absolutely no good reason why women don't represent half of all sports field managers. It's just cultural bias. We, as an industry, are only tapping half of our talent base! We will never get to where we want to go until we address this.



SFM: You were the first sports field manager ever to achieve CSFM status. What did that mean to you, and what advice do you have for other sports field managers regarding the value of the CSFM certification?

Kurcab: Being the first Certified Sports Field Manager wasn't my goal. Back in the '90s, some of us were pushing for a certification program to grow the professionalism of our industry. After two years of committee work, we actually came up with a great program that has passed the test of time. We planned to announce the new CSFM program at the January 2000 STMA conference. I offered myself up to the committee to go through the entire process as a proctored test so that we might identify any issues before launch. Dale Getz, CSFM, and I were the only two committee members with enough qualification points to sit for the test that was written by the academics on the committee. It quickly turned into a friendly race between Dale and I to study up and become the first ever CSFM; to be recognized in front of the entire audience at the general assembly. Due to a snafu with his

proctor, I edged out Dale by a couple of weeks. Pure luck, and, to this day, when I see Dale working the Super Bowl fields, I remind him that he's #2!

I could write a book on all the advantages my CSFM designation has given to me during the last 20 years, but it's all right there on the STMA's web page. I would just say to anyone considering it: Try to find anyone who has gone through the process, passed the test, and says that it was not worth it. It's a great template for your career growth, and more than worth it!

SFM: What are the biggest challenges you have faced in your career, and what advice do you have for other sports field managers when it comes to facing similar challenges?

Kurcab: What I call "Turfism" — the cultural bias that views the sports field manager as an unskilled, uneducated "worker," the groundskeeper. Try to find any piece of popular culture (movies, books, etc.) that does not reinforce this bias. I never liked that term, "groundskeeper," and never used it



on myself. I've never kept any ground. I am a highly qualified professional sports field manager. My advice to others that experience this discrimination is to drop any notion of victimhood, and pick up the pace. Set your standards higher than your organizational standards. Build your education, body of work and skills to where you are seen as a professional. Refer to yourself as a professional, and behave like one. An old friend once told me, "Act like a doormat, and people will treat you like one." Act like a professional, and people will treat you like one as well.

SFM: 2020 presented a unique set of challenges for everyone. What has the past year been like for you, and what can be learned from dealing with unprecedented times such as these?

Kurcab: Travel is part of my work, and the COVID pandemic pretty much eliminated that for 2020. But we've now learned that a lot of business travel is just unnecessary and wasteful. I can conduct a high-quality remote site visit on many projects and even conduct field inspec-

tions and testing remotely in some situations. Face-to-face is great — it's what I prefer, and so do others — but I'm not there to hold your hand. My clients hire me for solutions, information, understanding and credibility — not my physical presence. Many more business meetings can, and should, be done via platforms like Zoom. It saves my clients a lot of money. I saved a client \$10K in a 1-hour zoom call, and they were more than happy to send me a check. Speaking at conferences and seminars has also become much more efficient. To come speak at your conference used to cost me three days of work with no income. Now I can do it in an hour and the conference doesn't pay travel, hotel and meals. To the extent people can get their arms around this change, it has really opened up new opportunities.

Many budgets were frozen, some through 2021. It's been so inspiring to see the creative ways that sports field managers around the world adapted to this major disruption. Many took a financial haircut, but marched on. Amateur sports, where I love to work, basically fell off the table, but is now coming back online quickly.



I learned perspective. What is really important in your life? I learned mental health care has to be a priority, not just a notion, for us all. I learned that tough times never last, but tough people do.

SFM: How has STMA benefitted you during your career, and what is your advice to other sports field managers when it comes to the importance of service to, and involvement in, the industry?

Kurcab: I worked about 10 years as a professional field manager before we had the Sports Turf Managers Association. It was a lonely, barren existence, professionally speaking. I figure I have made about 1,500 or more new friends through the STMA over the years. The STMA membership, with its culture of open-book sharing of information, has been my best professional resource. I have thousands of friends that I can call anytime and pick their brains, and they can do the same with me. What confidence this brings. Such a welcoming group!

Definitely get involved in the STMA on the national and chapter levels. Just offer yourself up to a committee, and you won't have to be elected in — unless you want to sit on the board. You'll connect and create relationships with the movers and shakers in the industry. Getting involved with the STMA will create your own professional legacy. Do it.

SFM: How do you think the profession and industry will change in the next 10 years, and what would you most like to see in terms of industry advancement in the future?

Kurcab: Water. Both the quantity and quality of fresh water will become perhaps the most critical issue moving forward. The sports field manager's role as environmental steward will only increase. Field quality standards will only grow. What is a good surface today will not be acceptable in the years ahead — a thankfully continuing trend. Automation will grow, and technical advances will continue on the fast track. We will always be an information-driven industry. Our national love of sports means there's always work for a talented sports field manager.

I'd like to see a major growth in female field managers, more outreach to teach girls that this is a great lifestyle completely within your means. I'd like to see horticulture and turfgrass science included in the concept of S.T.E.M. curriculums, where it belongs. I want to see our great university turfgrass programs flooded with young students in a well-coordinated outreach program into schools. In my experiences, once a young person sees the real deal of sports field management, they want in. I'd like to see more and more field managers gaining the self-care skills to manage the stress and create happiness in their work and lives. We are in the business of fun — act like it and be joyful! If you have to work 80 hours/week to get a professional job done, something is out of balance. Take your job seriously, but not yourself. I speak from experience. **SFM**

Artistic Expression

Developing the creative aspects of sports fields

By Drew Miller

In the sports field management industry, there are so many different components that go into the science and cultural practices for the overall management of natural grass playing surfaces. Still, one thing that stands out to the untrained eye is the crisp, bright stripes on the impeccable playing surface. Industry professionals have found that we are artists, and our fields are the canvas on which we paint with our brush — which happens to be a large piece of machinery

Throughout my career, there have been many field managers who have pushed the limits of the complexity of a design to the point where the finished product truly is a masterpiece. I have always loved to try different field designs since the beginning of my career, but I gained skills working for Matt Brown. Matt pushes the envelope when it comes to mowing patterns at the Major League Baseball level, putting logos in the outfield, including his iconic Roberto Clemente Bridge silhouette. He taught me what it takes to create these designs while maintaining a consistent playing surface. Matt taught me that the artistry behind striping was something that we took pride in, because, with the extra time, energy and care that goes into these unique patterns, we took pride in the product.

As director of the Brentsville Turfgrass Management Program, I have had the opportunity to see my students gain a passion for what we all love to do — and that is care for our fields the best we can. Something that I pride myself on in this program is giving our students



All photos provided by Drew Miller

ownership of the creative aspect of field care — from our paint scheme for our end zones to the mowing pattern for the soccer state title game. Seeing how creative they

are is truly incredible. It is great to see how they develop different designs by reviewing the everyday work of industry professionals. Our students truly love to study other



techniques and patterns to develop their skills as sports field managers, while learning how to properly maintain the safest natural grass playing surface possible.

The most essential aspect of on-field artistry is to understand that no one wants to sacrifice proper ball roll or the safety of our players for field aesthetics. As sports field managers, we understand what level of artistry is considered to be within the bounds of maintaining the safest natural grass playing surfaces for our athletes.

Another reason that striping athletic fields truly is an integral part of what we do is that it is aesthetically pleasing, and it is a way for sports field managers to catch the eye of those who are unaware of what we do. A couple of years ago, our students developed a mowing pattern sampled from a couple different designs — including those of industry-leader John Ledwidge of Leicester City Football Club, and Billy Ellinger of the Pittsburgh Steelers. The students' design was selected as the winner of the Sports Turf Man-

agers Association's annual Mowing Patterns contest that year. The design itself looks complex and is highly appealing to the eye. Still, it is crucial to understand that our students truly took into account the playability of our soccer players to ensure that there was nothing that impeded ball roll. There were no hazards for the players to trip on. It was just a design that brought the attention of many of our community members to the work of our students, and provided a better understanding of what a sports field manager is and the artists that they are.

There are sports field managers throughout the country who enjoy a classic look that is simple and eloquent, but I have always found my work to be more enjoyable when I am creative. There are so many individuals out there who have such incredible ideas, and that is what makes us unique as sports field managers. Every year, there is something new — from new mowing patterns to calcined conditioner designs in infield skins to new paint schemes.

Many people don't see sports field managers as artists. But, when you take a step back and look at how grand our fields can be and how much time and effort goes into them, it is truly inspiring to my students and other sports field managers everywhere. Artistry on

the field is such a critical part of our industry because it grabs the eye of the unknown viewer.

I bring this story up a lot, but I always go back to when I was a kid at Shea stadium, walking out to see the New York skyline etched into the outfield grass, not knowing how it got there. Over time, and by gaining understanding, it is unbelievable to see how my passion for field management has brought me to the point where I have been able to do similar things with my students at Brentsville.

I always tell my students that there are times where you need to take risks to truly be able to develop the design or the pattern that you hoped for, but to never risk any harm to the field because it is not about just the artistry. It's about ensuring player safety and ensuring plant safety; but by having strong technical skills, we can produce these designs and enjoy the work that is being done.

I have been fortunate to meet and speak with so many sports field managers from around the world to discuss their passion and understanding, and how they view certain aspects of what we do as sports field managers. Something that I believe has been a common denominator — especially when discussing on-field artistry — is that no matter how complex the design is, every single individual takes great pride in his or her work. Their on-field artistry is truly a reflection of who they are as sports field managers. That is why, when I am working with my students at Brentsville, I have found it critical for them to understand the time, energy, care and the overall work that goes into their field is something in which they need to take pride. They are excited to have the ability to improve safety and playability, as well as the aesthetics, because that is where they gain the interest that then grows into a passion for sports field management.



As sports field managers, we find ourselves developing new and exciting artistic aspects of our fields, as well as new ways of expressing different key components of what is significant to the community. For example, we recently painted a design on our baseball field (above) for one of our students who is fighting brain cancer to show our support and love. Everything we do has significance — whether that is aerating our fields to ensure healthy root growth and soil profile or taking care of crew members who need our help.

Neil Gaiman once said, “The world always seems brighter when you just made something that wasn't there before.”

We come into work each and every day looking to create something new, brighter and more creative than the day before. That is why this is such an incredible life as a sports field manager, because we can be as

creative as we want to be while always making a brighter day for those we serve. **SFM**

Drew Miller is director of the Brentsville Turfgrass Management Program, located in Nokesville, Va. Miller is a graduate of Virginia Tech with a bachelor's degree in Crops and Soil Sciences, focusing in Turfgrass Management, and a master's degree in Career and Technical Education with a focus in Ag Education. Miller has spent the last four years developing a high school program and curriculum that prepares students for jobs in all areas of the turfgrass industry. Prior to that, he spent the majority of his career in professional baseball, football and collegiate athletics. Recognized nationally for his on-field artistry, Miller has won the STMA Stars and Stripes Contest, as well as the STMA Mowing Patterns Contest.



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5 Steps to Help You Prepare for a Successful Interview

By Erin Wolfram and Melissa Johnson



Congratulations! You have made it through one of the hardest parts of the job search process and secured an interview. Now it is time to prove to the hiring committee you are the best candidate for the job. Preparation is the key to making a positive impression on a potential employer. The following are helpful steps you can take to prepare yourself for your next interview:

STEP 1: RESEARCH THE COMPANY AND POSITION TO DEMONSTRATE YOUR INTEREST

The more you know about the company and position, the easier it will be to respond to their interview questions. Therefore, the first step in preparing for an interview involves gathering information about the company, including its organizational structure, values, company culture

and work environment. Utilize sites like *Glassdoor.com* and *Indeed.com*, company social media pages, and the organization's website to help you conduct your research. In addition to gathering information online, utilize your network. Reach out to professionals in your field who may have firsthand knowledge about the organization, and request a brief meeting to discuss your questions.

This information will be very useful when developing your own questions to ask the hiring committee at the conclusion of your interview.

Next, consider why you are interested in the position and how you are uniquely qualified for the job. Carefully read through the job description, write down all of the reasons you are interested in the position, and how you meet or exceed each of the qualifications (required and preferred) outlined in the job posting. You will likely be asked why you are interested in this opportunity, so you need to have compelling reasons that relate directly to the position and facility. The hiring committee does not care that the location is convenient for you or that you are simply looking for a new opportunity. They want to know why you want this position at their organization and why you are the best candidate, so be prepared to discuss why you are qualified.

STEP 2: PREPARE STORIES THAT PROVE YOUR VALUE

Throughout the interview, you want to provide evidence of your strengths, skills and qualifications. The most effective way to do this is by telling stories that demonstrate positive results of your actions. The more your stories are directly related to the job and organization, the better. Utilize the information you gathered during your research, as well as information from the job description to help you tailor your examples. Telling stories will also keep your answers more organized and to the point so you avoid rambling. As a general rule, you do not want any of your answers to exceed two minutes.

Consider the following to help you generate your own stories:

- What professional accomplishments are you most proud of?
- What impact have you made on the facilities where you have worked?

- When have you overcome a challenge, obstacle or difficult situation?
- What accomplishments best demonstrate your strengths most closely related to the position for which you are interviewing?

Write or type out these examples (and others) and practice delivering them. Think of these examples as stories that have a beginning, middle and end, and utilize the acronym STAR to help you organize your responses. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action and Result. For each story you describe, share the situation you were in, the task(s) you were assigned, the action(s) you took to complete the tasks, and the result(s) of those actions. Read through these stories as you prepare for your interview so they are fresh in your mind when you are faced with behavioral interview questions.

STEP 3: PRACTICE RESPONSES TO COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In addition to behavioral interview questions that directly ask you to provide a specific story or example, some interview questions are more open ended. Whether asked directly or not, aim to share a story in each answer whenever possible to further strengthen your response. Although it is difficult to predict what questions you will be asked during an interview, there are certain interview questions that you will want to be ready to answer. For example:

Tell me about yourself.

This often is the first question asked in an interview, and it can set the tone for the rest of the conversation. You want to stick with professional content related to any relevant education or special training, and highlight related work history,

key strengths relevant to the position, and why you are interested in this new opportunity.

Why are you interested in this position?

This is where you really need to express your passion and excitement for the position and the organization. Wanting a new opportunity or desiring to move up within the industry is not enough. Be able to thoughtfully express specific reasons why you want this job at this organization. If you cannot do this, the position may not be the best fit for you.

What is your greatest strength?

This is an excellent opportunity for you to highlight your unique qualifications and skills. Focus on the strengths that are most relevant to the role for which you are interviewing. Also, anyone can state a strength, but you want to prove it! For example, when describing your greatest strength, state your strength, and then provide a story that demonstrates an accomplishment you achieved using that strength.

What is your biggest weakness?

The weakness question can be tricky, but it is inevitable. Of course, you want to be honest; everyone has weaknesses. Think of a weakness that is not directly related to the duties you would be performing in the new position and that you can provide tangible information on what you are doing to overcome the weakness and turn it into a strength. You could also consider a technical

skill that you may not have much experience with currently and discuss what you are doing to develop this skill such as enrolling in a training course or participating in professional development workshops.

Why should we hire you for this position?

This is often one of the last questions asked during the interview, and it is the perfect time to reiterate your related strengths and qualifications, as well as your interest and passion for the position. Do not be afraid to express how much you want the job. You also have the opportunity to share any additional information that you feel is valuable and have not yet discussed in previous answers. Really highlight what makes you unique. Remember, your goal is to stand out among the competition in a positive way!

One final note about responding to interview questions: if you are asked a question that you do not know the answer to, it is perfectly acceptable to take a moment to think about your response or request clarification if you are unsure what they are asking.

STEP 4: DEVELOP INSIGHTFUL QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER(S)

An interview not only gives you the opportunity to demonstrate the value you will bring to the organization, but it also allows you to evaluate whether the culture and position are a good fit for you. Therefore, you always want to have questions prepared to ask at the end of the interview. This is your chance to not only continue to demonstrate your interest, but also acquire information to help you make a well-informed decision. Accepting a new job is something you do not want to take lightly, so the more information you can gather throughout the process to

make sure you are a good fit for the position and organization, the better. You want to avoid questions related to salary and benefits or that you can easily find answers to on the internet or within the job posting. Rather, ask thoughtful questions that show you have done your research and will help you better understand the organization's culture and environment.

Example questions:

- How long have you worked here, and what have you enjoyed most throughout that time?
- What are the top priorities you see for the person filling this position?
- If selected for this position, what will my training look like?
- Are you active in any professional organizations, and if so, are there professional development opportunities for the person filling this position?
- Is there any additional information I can provide to you that will help you better understand my qualifications?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?

STEP 5: PLAN YOUR OUTFIT AND OTHER LOGISTICS

In addition to practicing interview questions, make sure you plan what you are going to wear. The higher the level of the job, the more professional you will want to dress. For director positions or higher, a conservative suit is recommended; however, for other positions, slacks or a skirt and coordinating shirt or blouse will likely be appropriate.

It is also important to obtain some details regarding the location of the interview. If you are unfamiliar with the area, it might be beneficial to travel to the location in advance of your interview (if you are able) to ensure you know how to get there,

Accepting a new job is something you do not want to take lightly, so the more information you can gather throughout the process to make sure you are a good fit for the position and organization, the better.

where to park, and how to access the building. On the day of your interview, be sure to leave early to give yourself some extra time in case there is heavy traffic, construction, or you have trouble finding parking. If you arrive too early (more than 5 minutes before your scheduled interview), take that time to review your notes and relax. Finally, it is a good idea to take three to five copies of your resume and references to give to those interviewing you, a notebook with your questions for the hiring committee, something to write with, as well as some cash in case you need to purchase water from a vending machine. Also, be sure to turn off your cell phone to avoid any embarrassing disruptions during your interview.

Last, but certainly not least, be sure to demonstrate confidence from the time you arrive at the interview site to the time you leave. Know why you are a strong candidate for the position, why you are interested in the job and organization, and how you are uniquely qualified. Prove to the hiring committee that you are the best person for the job and that you will bring value to their organization. Also, remember to treat everyone you meet with kindness and respect. Even those who are not part of the hiring committee will likely be asked about their interactions with you, so represent your best authentic self the entire time to ensure you receive the offer. Taking the time to prepare for an interview will increase your confidence level and is guaranteed to make a positive impression on the hiring committee. Good luck! **SFM**

*Erin Wolfram has more than 15 years of experience in career services, and owns and operates Career Advantage Golf (<http://careeradvantagegolf.com>), specializing in career services for those in the turf management field. She has a podcast called *A Year of Career: 52 Practical Answers to Your Questions*, where she provides quick career and job search advice. Wolfram has a Bachelor of Science in Secondary English Education, Master of Science in Counseling Psychology, Master of Science in Educational Technology, and is a certified professional etiquette consultant. She can be reached at erin@careeradvantageresumes.com.*

Melissa Johnson has more than 20 years of experience working with individuals from a variety of careers and industries. She specializes in one-on-one career coaching, resume and cover letter development, and job search assistance. Johnson has a passion for providing individualized support and guidance for each of her clients to ensure they are able to achieve their career goals. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Education in Counseling Psychology.



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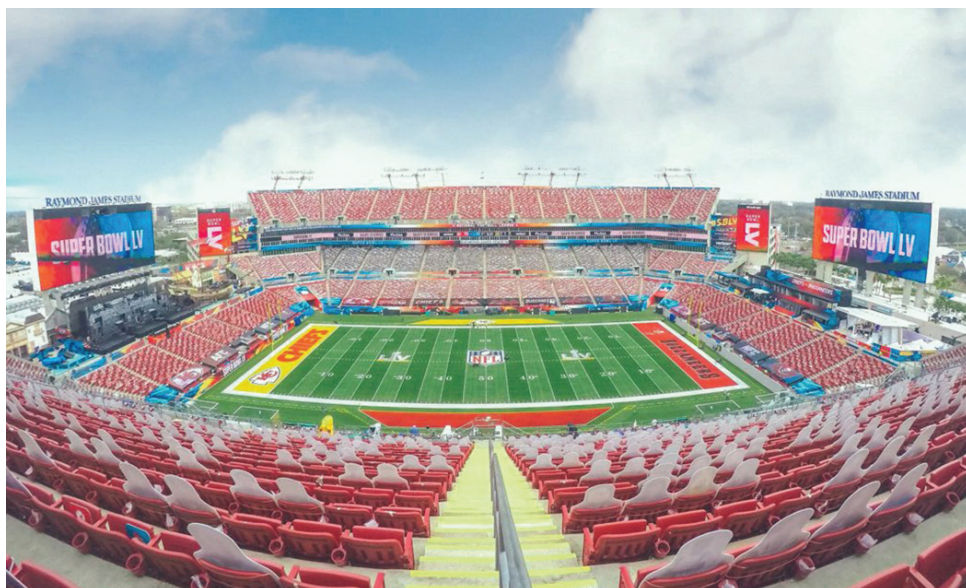
Keeping Fields "Big Game" Ready

By Steve Harris, CGCS

Getting that idyllic, lush green field is as much about preparation as it is daily management. Choosing the right products is key, but the real difference is in the details — from new technology and equipment to pest control, fertilizer and combination products, specialty chemicals and adjuvants, precision turfgrass management techniques, and weather profile considerations.

When it comes to something as elite as a professional game or the largest national spectacle sport that exists today — the "Big Game" — the stakes are even higher. For insight into preparing for the football season, we spoke to someone who knows firsthand what goes into getting fields ready for the camera spotlight, Wayne Ward. As Turf and Grounds Manager at Raymond James Stadium (Tampa, Fla.), Ward is no stranger to the high demands and proper care necessary to create and maintain a beautiful field space; and his experience in the industry spreads far beyond his current role and 29 years of experience with Tampa Sports Authority.

For Ward, turf management is much more than a job. His passion for agriculture and experience with his own family farm in south Georgia growing peanuts, corn and cotton, combined with his commitment to always putting player safety first, has earned him an impressive career and a plethora of experience within the turf and sports field management industries. Day and night, he is always



Photos provided by Wayne Ward and the Tampa Sports Authority

focused on continuous improvement and proper management to prepare the beautiful and safe fields for each team that steps foot on them.

"Because the ultimate goal is to have that pool table-like field, I sometimes even wake up in the middle of the night thinking about something I didn't do or may have missed," said Ward.

When it comes to developing those championship field conditions, it all starts with a good base, which means good roots and high-quality sod.

"In the event world, we are only growing grass for up to a year, so I'm looking for instant results, which is a different approach than a field you were growing in long-term," said Ward. "So, we have to rush the process a bit without sacrificing the quality of the grass."

Ensuring the soil has proper nutrients to help it survive and thrive, and then additional preparation,

constant regulating and testing, and adjusting to stay on top of what the plant needs to avoid problems before they arise is key.

Player safety has always been Ward's highest priority, and, again, it's all about the details. Factors like the turf's exact hardness or softness rates can directly impact player injury, as certain levels make it more or less likely that a player will experience injuries, such as a concussion, during game play. To ensure the field meets the highest safety standards, Ward and his team are constantly measuring surface hardness to evaluate and make adjustments as necessary. Because turfgrass surfaces are not uniform, continuous testing and monitoring is performed at various points around the field to ensure all surfaces are not only ideal for game play, but are also as safe as possible. Another example is cleat

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ

ANSWER

From page 17

The divots in this new sod are a result of COVID-19...well, in a sense. During the COVID-19 shutdown, many parks used this downtime to do some long-delayed renovations, such as the re-sodding of worn areas at this park. In addition, as many of us know, without constant play and activities at these parks, wild animals have become more brazen and have taken over areas previously occupied by humans. The day after the sod was laid, the company owner went back to examine the sod installation job and saw all the torn-up sod. He immediately called his foreman and demanded answers for leaving the sod looking like this. When the foreman arrived at the site to see what the problem was, he insisted that it did not look like this when the crew left the day before, and that everything was laid down nicely and rolled in. After closer inspection, it was determined that raccoons had found some grubs in this newly laid sod, so they dug multiple holes and feasted overnight. The maintenance company applied insecticide and eventually was able to control the situation after several days of patching in sod.

Photo submitted by Kevin Hardy, president of Ballpark Maintenance, Inc., Miami, Fla.

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 e-mail 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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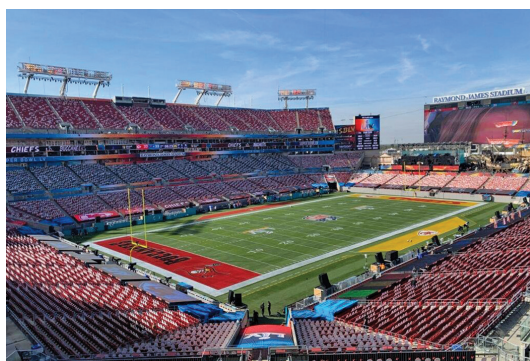
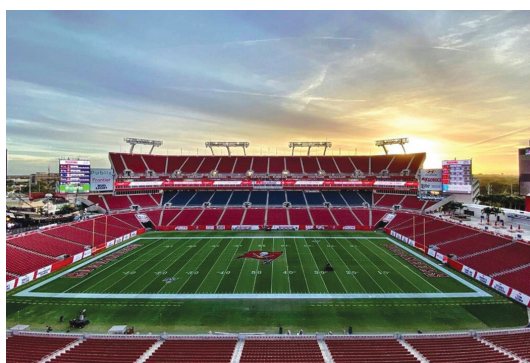


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interference with the turf, in which the field management team will use a machine that simulates a cleat to take around to different areas and measure turf strength, and moisture sensors to maintain ideal levels for safety.

Measuring and adjusting moisture and hardness levels is important not only during the off-season, but between non-sporting events that take place on fields and greatly impact such levels. For example, a concert — or, in the case of the “Big Game,” pre-event and halftime performances and practices — can alter these levels and require quick work and adjustments to ensure the turfgrass is in prime condition. Other elements that can directly impact these levels or cause quick action for adjustment and maintenance are weather conditions. Ward describes the additional challenges of staying in front of Florida pests and fungus due to high moisture and humidity levels, but because Raymond James Stadium is an open stadium, the turfgrass does not face some of the same shade issues or air quality issues of other locations.

Preparing for the 2021 game at Ward’s home stadium is far from his first experience. In fact, he has been helping with turfgrass management for other “Big Games” since 1991, as part of an elite team of 24 to 28 groundskeepers that travel to the locations to help with the fields. Ward describes preparing to host the “Big Game” as, “different from other events because of the magnitude of the game and a lot more people, cameras and other details, such as



landscaping around Raymond James Stadium to consider; but our approach always puts player safety first

and we have similar preparations regardless of the event.”

So, what is it like to prepare for the event? According to Ward, you must first consider the weather and stadium condition factors, which vary greatly by location. “We’ve had ‘Big Games’ in New York where we had to heat the field, or those in Miami where we had to worry about sunlight and root issues,” he said. “For the most part, the type of building, the weather and the city itself really differentiate each game.”

In addition to the field itself, Ward explained that the team must create NFL-standard artificial and grass fields for the teams to practice on. His group works directly with each team to sort out all of the details to help make the field feel like a “home field” for both teams, including specific design elements that must be perfected.

According to Ward, whether you’re preparing for your local team’s upcoming season opener or one of the largest stadiums in the nation for the “Big Game,” it’s important to encourage root growth, grooming and manicuring the fields to be in the best possible shape ahead of game time. Soil testing and regular agronomic maintenance are key to preventing issues. **SFM**

Steve Harris, CGCS, is manager, golf and sports turf national accounts at SiteOne, which offers fertilizers, fungicides, growth regulators, pesticides and more. SiteOne has a partnership with Raymond James Stadium for its turf management product needs. For more information, visit www.SiteOne.com.

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The Consequences of Complacency

By Jeremy McCombs

Skipping one small step here and there may eventually lead to more serious dangers in the future. Complacency is a major hazard when employees cut corners and take shortcuts, whether it's for the sake of comfort or to "just get the job done."

Complacency — a feeling of calm satisfaction with your abilities or situation that prevents you from trying harder — is often a focal point when discussing workplace safety; but what does it mean?

This idea of self-satisfaction is often experienced by veterans in our industries — folks who, perhaps, are highly experienced, yet complacent of hazards. They are not unaware of the risk, but are more likely to accept those risks without taking the proper time to address known hazards because they have been doing the work for so long.

It can be easy for industry veterans to become numb to specific hazards, due to feeling confident in their skills. Repetition becomes automatic and workers "go through the motions" to satisfy protocol or policies.

Complacency comes well equipped with consequences.

THE COSTS OF COMPLACENCY

What are the results of complacency in the workplace?

- **Lost work time.** Preventable injuries, such as a rolled ankle from taking the shorter, riskier walking path, could cost time off for healing.

- **Lost mobility or health.** That heavy load you lifted by yourself will take a toll on your body in the long run. When you absolutely must perform a task by yourself, remember to always use proper lifting techniques.



- **Lost family time.** Someone loves you — they do not deserve to suffer for your mistakes or complacency.

- **Lost production.** The few moments you gain with a shortcut will eventually cost everyone in the long run.

- **Permanent disability.** Laziness is a choice, not a disease or disability. Don't chance spending the remainder of your life in a wheelchair or missing an extremity by being complacent.

- **Death.** This is certainly the absolute worst-case scenario, but, unfortunately, too many families have experienced this reality. Somewhere, a family is celebrating a birthday, wedding, or graduation without a loved one. Don't let it be your family.

CONQUERING COMPLACENCY

To conquer complacency — whether it's in the field, on the road, or in the office — we need to go back to the basics and look at the tasks we perform with repetition, daily. Chances are, we aren't taking the same precautions as

when we first learned the task. Think back to the first few times you did that specific task; did you follow safety procedures more consistently?

Other ways to combat complacency can be done by auditing yourself — or better yet — having a coworker audit your performance regularly. Having someone else provide feedback can paint a clear picture of where you might be taking chances, and set a path for improvement.

Look for instances where you allow yourself to cut corners, leaving yourself open to increased risk. Hold yourself and others around you accountable to do the right thing the right way every time.

Discuss with your teams what risks you are leaving yourselves exposed to, and hold each other accountable each time.

As leaders, make it your priority to keep your employees up to date on safety training and explain that complacency equals a false sense of security.

The National Safety Council (NSC) offers tips on how to engage

employees in the safety process.

1. Show that you care about workplace safety.

2. Integrate safety into your business objectives.

3. Empower employees to contribute to safety initiatives.

The NSC also suggests implementing a safety team/committee to address employee complacency with safety processes.

- Include employee representatives from all areas of your organization.

- Conduct regular safety meetings and periodically rotate employee representatives.

- Nominate members who will serve as safety champions.

- Recognize employees for their commitment to safety.

- Implement a safety suggestion program that responds to all suggestions.

- Allow employees to participate in investigations and facility walk-throughs.

Start deliberately making a habit to take the steps for eliminating worksite hazards. Once a positive action is repeated over and over, it will become automatic, and you will be much less likely to suffer an injury.

Complacency kills, and you are the cure! **SFM**

Jeremy McCombs is a traveling crew trainer with ACRT Arborist Training. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and a Tree Care Industry Association Certified Treecare Safety Professional. In 2011, he earned an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification and Low Angle/High Angle Ropes Rescue training through Columbia College's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program, in Sonora, Calif. McCombs has been involved in the tree care industry for more than 25 years and dedicated over a decade to wildland-urban interface vegetation management in the State of California.

INJURY FACTS

The National Safety Council has provided the following facts regarding workplace injuries:

Overexertion and bodily reaction

Overexertion and bodily reaction is the leading nonfatal injury event involving days away from work, representing 31% of all such injuries. This category includes several types of injury events:

- Non-impact injury or illness resulting from excessive physical effort directed at an outside source of injury or illness. Common worker activities include lifting, pulling, pushing, holding, carrying and throwing.

- Injuries or illnesses resulting from motion that imposes stress or strain on some part of the body due to the repetitive nature of the task. There is typically no strenuous effort (such as heavy lifting). Common worker activities include typing, texting or using a mouse; or repetitive use of tools such as screwdrivers or hand tools.

- Injuries or illnesses resulting from a single or prolonged instance of free bodily motion. Common worker activities include bending, crawling, reaching, twisting, climbing, kneeling, and walking or running without other incident (such as falls).

Work-related fatigue

Research using data from the National Health Interview Survey found both shortened sleep duration and more weekly working hours are independently associated with increased risk of a work-related injury (Lombardi et al., 2010). These results are found even after controlling for several socio-demographic, job-related and physical factors. Because sleep and working hours independently impact injury risk, reduced sleep increases injury risk, regardless of number of normal hours worked.

Similarly, an increase in normal hours worked increases injury risk, regardless of the number of normal hours of sleep (Lombardi et al., 2010). Injury rates are highest among workers who generally sleep less than seven hours per day and workers who typically work more than 40 hours per week. Injury rates peak among workers who regularly get less than five hours of sleep a night (7.89 injuries per 100 employees) and among workers who typically work more than 60 hours a week (4.34 injuries per 100 employees).

On-the-job non-roadway incidents involving motorized land vehicles

Injuries resulting from non-roadway incidents involving motorized land vehicles caused 236 deaths and 7,970 nonfatal injuries involving days away from work in 2019. The non-roadway category includes injuries to vehicle occupants occurring entirely away from a public roadway, such as in a field, factory or parking lot.

Musculoskeletal injuries and illnesses

The private sector experienced 266,530 musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) injuries or illnesses involving days away from work in 2019. MSDs are a grouping of related injuries sometimes referred to as "ergonomic injuries." MSDs generally occur when the worker uses muscles, tendons and ligaments to perform tasks in awkward positions or in frequent activities that, over time, create pain and injury. To be considered an MSD, the nature of the injury or illness must be one of the following: pinched nerve; herniated disc; meniscus tear; sprains, strains and tears; hernia (traumatic and non-traumatic); pain, swelling and numbness; carpal or tarsal tunnel syndrome; Raynaud's syndrome or phenomenon; or musculoskeletal system and connective tissue diseases and disorders.

For more injury facts and other workplace safety resources, visit the National Safety Council at <https://www.nsc.org/workplacelresources>.

Field Paint and Marking



CAMPEY LINE MARKER

The Campey Line Marker is a simple, durable and easy-to-operate liquid transfer line marker. Marking material is transferred from the 30-liter hopper to the 10cm-wide marking wheel by a grooved rubber roller, which allows marking up to post or flag. It has pneumatic tires and an adjustable flow rate, giving even and accurate lines. The tubular steel handles can also be adjusted for operator comfort. Many professional sporting clubs in the UK and Europe, such as the Salford Reds, have the line marker. In the United States, sports facilities including the Philadelphia Union Soccer PPL Park stadium and the New York Mets' Citi Field use it regularly. The Campey Line Marker is even used in Costa Rica at the Estadio Alejandro Morera Soto, the home of Liga Deportiva Alajuelense.



NEWSTRIPE HASHMARK-MASTER 3400

The Newstripe HashMark-Master 3400 is specifically designed to fit the Graco LineLazer 3400 striping machine. The HashMark Master 3400 quickly and easily attaches to the Graco FieldLazer 3400, making it a fast, efficient hash mark painting machine. It eliminates the need for repeated measuring or using stencils and templates that require a two or three man crew. One person can easily paint hash marks up

to eight times faster than other methods. Made in the USA.



PIONEER ATHLETICS GAME DAY QUICK CURE

Through years of research and development, Pioneer Athletics created a bulk field marking paint that cures quickly in moist or cool conditions, will not re-wet, and does not adversely affect grass plant health. Sports field managers can successfully enjoy the benefits of bulk field marking paint in weather conditions that previously made the use of bulk paint unavailable.

Some key facts about Game Day Quick Cure include the following:

- Specially designed to cure faster and not re-wet.
- A great alternative for locations with regular high humidity or seasonal cool temps and moisture.
- The super-premium quality you expect from Pioneer's Game Day paint.
- 50/50 dilution (1 part water, 1 part paint) provides best results.

- Works best in fall, winter and spring sports seasons.
- Mixed with a high concentration of super premium pigment and optical brighteners.
- Adheres better to the tips of grass blades (better for grass health).
- Available in standard and custom Game Day colors.



SWOZI ROBOTIC SPORTS FIELD LINE MARKERS

SWOZI offers two robotic sports field line marking solutions; the SWOZI Cart Pro, a precision-guided walk-behind or ride-on line marker with GPS robotic arm, and the SWOZI Cart Auto, a fully self-guided autonomous line marking robot. Both units utilize SWOZI's patent-pending technology to achieve centimeter sports field line marking accuracy. SWOZI sports field line markers allow the user to autonomously lay out and paint athletic fields with centimeter accuracy in 20 minutes. SWOZI offers more than 100 pre-loaded and customizable sports field templates.

TRUMARK FIELD STENCILS

TruMark will help you make your vision a reality on the field. TruMark works in a collaborative manner to bring your team's logo, team name or mascot to life on the field. This includes guidance when converting a printable logo to



a paintable one, offering professional mock-ups and a quick turnaround for quotes and production. TruMark will make the right recommendation on style of stencil and plastic used to ensure that you have the most accurate and longest lasting stencil. There are standard options for items such as end zone letters, number sets and hash marks, or TruMark can help design custom options to make your field one of a kind.



TURF TANK ONE FIELD PAINTING ROBOT

The Turf Tank One field painting robot features autonomous design that enables turf managers to save time and be more efficient in completing other tasks, all while the robot marks the fields. It is controlled with a smart tablet, which requires just two minutes for setup. After a route plan is launched, the robot will drive straight to the starting point and begin painting. Due to advanced GPS technology, the robot draws precise lines every time. It memorizes all locations from the initial

marking, making overmarking 100% accurate. The robot can perform precise line marking on both natural grass and artificial surfaces, for all types of athletic fields, with the option to customize the size according to the user's needs. Equipped with a low-pressure paint pump and nozzle system, Turf Tank One can reduce paint consumption up to 50%, while completing a field seven times faster than traditional line marking methods.



WORLD CLASS ATHLETIC SURFACES

World Class Athletic Surfaces has been "making the games look better" since 1988 with sharp, vibrant field graphics created with eco-friendly paints and patented custom stencils. The "World Class Ready-to-Use Paint Tote System" delivers high-quality paint in 275-gallon totes with a built-in mixing blade to effortlessly mix paint, resulting in reduced man hours and brighter, consistent colors. The Paint Tote System saves on shipping costs, eliminates waste, and allows storage of more paint in less space. To reduce waste, World Class Athletic Surfaces will pick up empty totes at no charge to refurbish and reuse them. This product reduces preparation and paint time, while increasing quality and consistency. **SFM**



Turfco upgraded smart controllers

Turfco gives a boost to superintendents' ability to control their topdressing programs by upgrading the number of preset positions for storing specific spread applications from four to eight when used with the company's WideSpin 1550 and CR-15 large-capacity topdressers.

For the first time, superintendents can also input travel speed into the on-board calculator to assure specific material application. The calculator uses the travel speed and desired spread rate as inputs to calculate the exact amount of material required for the specified tasks.

"Having to reset your applications each time you go out is a thing of the past. Now you can save up to eight different presets with upgraded smart control on the WideSpin 1550 and CR-15 topdressers," said Scott Kinkad,

executive vice president, Turfco Manufacturing. "Customize your rates by season and set different widths but keep the same rate. Now, input your speeds into our rate calculator and get a more accurate application rate. Calculate your spread rates, save your preferred settings and make sure that you're meeting your topdressing agronomic and budgetary goals with the upgraded digital Smart Controller in tandem with either of the two topdressers in question."

Operators can, with just the push of a button, change to any of the saved spread applications on the fly. No need to pause the operation for time-consuming manual changeovers. Use the on-board calculator to determine exact material requirements. Just input square footage and the desired spread rate to get the amount needed for one job – or over the course of a season.

Coupled with the Smart Controller, the WideSpin 1550 and CR-15 edge-to-edge spread capabilities deliver pinpoint spread accuracy, boosting productivity and lowering materials costs resulting in uniform consistent surfaces.

The digital Smart Controller is an available option for the WideSpin 1550 and CR-15 in both the truck-mounted or tow-behind models.

Club Car Current electric truck

Club Car announced the launch of a new electric vehicle (EV), the Club Car Current, in partnership with AYRO, Inc. The Current is a compact, all-electric, light-duty truck equipped with automotive features and comforts. The Club Car Current has the agility and versatil-



ity that's essential in a campus or urban environment, filling the gap between full-sized trucks and small utility carts.

The Club Car Current is available in three different bed configurations — with a flat bed, pickup or van box — to tackle any job. With a range of up to 57 miles and 72V AC electric powertrain the Club Car Current is positioned for use as an all-purpose work vehicle.

"We are excited about the all new Current vehicle and the specific enhancements to boost performance and comfort," said Brant Mitchell, commercial portfolio leader, Club Car. "The Club Car Current is our latest addition to our commercial products providing new opportunities for our existing channel and customers and new emerging market opportunities like last mile delivery. The all new styling and additional automotive features such as new lighting, interior comfort and more resilient body panels have created a reliable and hardworking vehicle that can tackle the biggest jobs and last all day."

Club Car Current also features a new modern exterior design with specially designed automotive body panels, LED lighting, newly designed two-tone gray bucket seats, new cup holder design and location for larger drink cups, upgraded 1,000W heater, new 170-degree rearview camera, new backlit digital gear selector design, additional legroom, a rear window standard providing more

ambient light, the latest software, and VRLA gel battery technology providing improved performance and range.

The Club Car Current is a certified low speed vehicle (LSV) and can be configured to be registered and licensed to operate at 25 mph on city streets with posted speeds up to 35 mph. This compact low-speed EV can also maneuver through car-free zones, bringing essential services directly to the point-of-demand.

The Current provides sustainable electric transportation with the ability to replace full-size trucks. The Club Car Current is CARB (California Air Resource Board) certified with the "Cleanest" Scores for Global Warming and Air Quality – ZEV (Zero Emission Vehicle).

RightLine launches PROHEX 27.5 WDG plant growth regulator

RightLine LLC entered the turfgrass plant growth regulator market with the launch of PROHEX 27.5 WDG. The new product is the first alternative source of the active ingredient prohexadione calcium.

Prohexadione calcium is a late-state growth inhibitor, affording turfgrass professionals a new technology option to standard practices. With this new active ingredient, RightLine PROHEX 27.5 WDG allows end users to control turfgrass growth patterns and control their maintenance budgets as well.

Used in alternation or combination with trinexapac-ethyl, RightLine PROHEX 27.5 WDG lasts longer in the

plant and provides a unique mode of growth regulation. Turf professionals report seeing fewer negative side effects of trinexapac-ethyl, including bronzing of treated turf, damaged collars and rebound.



Packaged in a 6-pound resealable bottle, RightLine PROHEX 27.5 WDG provides turf professionals with the convenience and value needed for more efficient and economical plant growth management.

Curtis Industries, LLC., launches new Modular Cab System

Curtis Industries, LLC, a manufacturer of cab enclosures, accessories and attachments for utility vehicles, tractors, golf carts, and zero-turn mowers, announced its latest cab innovation: a Curtis Advantage Modular Cab System for the Polaris Ranger



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XP-1000, 1000, XP-900 and 900 Model Utility Vehicles. All Curtis cabs and accessories are made in America. Polaris Ranger Cab components can be purchased factory direct from Curtis.

Curtis' Hard-Coated Polycarbonate Windshield is designed to provide long lasting, scratch-resistant visibility. It includes two independently adjustable vents for driver and passenger comfort. An optional 172-degree sweep electrical wiper is available for wet weather conditions.



The Curtis Advantage Door Kit features highly durable rip-stop vinyl panels mounted on strong powder-coated steel frames. Upper and lower windows provide maximum visibility. The lockable doors are removable, without tools, for operation in hot weather. An optional gas shock door assist kit is also available.

The Curtis High Molecular Weight Polyethylene Roof is designed to provide a stylish, lightweight and durable overhead cover for protection and comfort.

Curtis' Hard-Coated Polycarbonate Rear Panel offers lightweight durable design, full visibility and protection from the elements.

Installation for all of the Curtis Advantage Modular Cab Components is quick and easy.

The Curtis Advantage Modular Cab System allows you to easily add any of these cab components to your

Polaris Ranger. Each cab component is sold separately.



New attachments for Kubota SCL1000 stand-on track loader

Kubota Tractor Corporation announced a new line of attachments for its SCL1000 stand-on track loader. The SCL1000 became available earlier this year and comes equipped with wide tracks, narrow body and a Rated Operating Capacity (ROC) of 1,000 pounds. And now, with the new attachment package, users will be able to add compact buckets, trenchers, pallet forks, a compact mount for breakers and even a skid auger or power rake to the SCL1000, increasing functionally on a jobsite.

Kubota is announcing five new attachments for the SCL1000, including:

Compact buckets - There are six compact buckets available for the new SCL1000, including both standard and high-capacity options. Standard-capacity buckets include the CL136L, CL142L, CL236L and the CL242L, which are either standard 36-inch or 42-inch bucket options and available with bare edge, bolt-on edge or bolt-on teeth. High-capacity buckets include the CL148H and CL248H, both of which

offer 48-inch bucket options with bare edge, bolt-on edge or bolt-on teeth.

Compact pallet forks - The CPF12 pallet fork comes in 36-inch and 42-inch fork length options and helps contractors and material handlers in a variety of industries efficiently move loads from trailers, flatbeds, or racking systems. The pallet fork boasts a 1,200-pound capacity, Category II hitch and spill guard.

Compact power rake - A new compact power rake, the CSR10, is also available for the SCL1000 with a 48-inch working width and heavy-duty Category II hitch. With its center pivot, it allows narrow width access. Side plates can be added to angle the CSR10, making seed-bed prep a breeze. And, the power rake features tubeless tires with sealant and easy, adjustable hydraulic angling.

Compact trencher - The CTR compact trencher is available in three sizes with 30-inch, 36-inch and 48-inch trenching depths, and ranges in chain widths from 4 to 10 inches. Chain styles are designed for efficient digging of trenches.

Compact skid auger - The CSA10 compact skid auger has a pendulum mount and features a reversible gearbox with a 2-inch hex output shaft to attach to a variety of augers. The CSA10 is a durable tool for digging holes for footings, fences, signs or trees.

Compact mount for breakers - The compact mount is performance-matched for the BR360 and BR460 breakers for optimum efficiency. This unit is ideal for demolition of concrete and rock.

The SCL1000, and attachments are available at Kubota authorized dealers now. **SFM**

The STMA Conference is Coming to Savannah in January

Now is the time to advocate to your boss to attend

The 2022 STMA Conference education program is guaranteed to highlight new strategies and technology in the industry that can help you successfully manage your fields, facilities and staff. From Jan. 17-20, 2022 in Savannah, Ga., the in-person event will feature more than 45 speakers leading 39 education sessions. The conference continues virtually every Tuesday for four weeks post-conference from Jan. 25 through Feb. 15. Each week, two sessions will cover topics including common calculations used to manage fields, new technologies such as precision water and pest management, and synthetic turf management. These post-conference sessions are included in the conference registration price.

The conference education and events are nearly all finalized, so start laying the groundwork now with your employer to attend. In the sidebar to this article (on page 45), STMA has provided an example communication to customize for your boss. Follow up with your boss and provide the full conference brochure, which will be available in early September.

EDUCATION

Program, Speakers and Student Challenge

The conference kicks off with the General Session on Tuesday morning. Labor shortages in the industry are truly challenging field managers to do more with less. Many facilities are working hard to maintain normal standards with less than half of a typical workforce. The General Session will discuss investing in the next generation of sports field managers, finding qualified employees, and utilizing unique strategies to improve efficiency.

The education continues Tuesday through Thursday with nine different tracks on turfgrass and soil management, environmental and pest management, professional development, construction, baseball, facility management, water, synthetic, and industry developments. Back this year is the highly attended New Trends and Technology in Sports Fields, where 10 commercial companies each have five minutes to present about the latest innovative

product or service they offer. Other highly anticipated sessions include:

- Chemical (e.g. Glyphosate) Exposure for Employees and Players: Health Concern?
- Back to Basics: Troubleshooting Your Irrigation System's Electronics
- Research, Trial, and Error; Selecting Warm-season Grasses for Stadiums
- Performance Testing and Player Safety: What the Research Tells Us
- Addressing Public Concerns with Synthetic Pesticide Use in Turfgrass
- Applying Business Lessons to Your Sports Field Operations
- Hiring... Assistants...and Interns...and Seasonal Crew. Oh My!

The in-person education concludes Thursday afternoon with repeats of the most popular sessions as voted on by STMA members. Just in case you missed a session during the week, you can catch up Thursday afternoon. All conference attendees will receive a link post-conference to all the education sessions as part of their registration, thanks to sponsor STEC.

The STMA Student Collegiate Challenge is back for the 2022 Conference. The event is presented in partnership with the SAFE Foundation, founding partner Hunter Industries, and supporting sponsor Ewing. Each year, students from 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities throughout the country compete in an exam that challenges knowledge in the sports field industry. The winning teams receive a cash award, a plaque, and medallions for each team member. The prize money benefits the institution's turfgrass science program, and creates opportunities for students pursuing a career in sports field management. The 2022 event will take place Wed., Jan. 19 from 2-4:30 pm. The competition brings together more than 30 teams from collegiate turfgrass programs across the United States to compete on a multiple-choice exam, live identification, and a hands-on activity. STMA looks forward to seeing young professionals showcase their knowledge and skills through this opportunity.

EVENTS

Field Rebuild, SAFE Golf, Seminar on Wheels, Chapter Office Training, Welcome Reception, Women's Forum, Trade Show, Annual Meeting and Keynote, Awards Banquet

For the third year, STMA is partnering with Project Evergreen to renovate a field in need in Savannah. The

rebuild will take place on Mon., Jan. 17. All members are invited to participate. Transportation, products and materials will be provided. Pre-registration is required.

SAFE will be hosting its annual fundraising golf tournament, and plans are to hold it at the Westin, on property, so that golfers will not need to travel off-site. Sponsoring the event on Monday are Diamond Pro and Tri-Tex Grass.

Bush Sports Turf is again sponsoring the Tours program, which is still being finalized by the Conference Tours committee. This event will take participants off-site to see a variety of sports venues. The tours are set tentatively for Monday and Thursday.

The Chapter Relations Committee will be presenting an informational guide to chapter leaders that presents a wide variety of practices and ideas to consider to make the affiliated chapter network more vibrant. The guide showcases how chapters are applying these strategies for success.

Meet up with old friends and make new ones during the lively Welcome Reception on Tuesday, sponsored by The Toro Company and Covermaster. The reception will be held on a riverboat!

All women are invited to attend a special session and lunch on Tuesday during the Women's Forum. This event is sponsored by Hunter Industries, now in its 15th year of doing so.

Approximately 175 exhibitors will be showcasing products and services for the industry on the trade show floor on Wednesday and Thursday. The trade show hours will not compete with the educational programs to allow for maximum time visiting booths.

On Wednesday, the new 2022 STMA Board of Directors will be introduced during the annual meeting, and attendees will be presented with an inspirational keynote address by Craig Whelden, sponsored by World Class Athletic Surfaces. After an impressive military career, Whelden decided he wanted to give back by sharing all he had learned about leadership with the next generation of leaders. He will present on Inspired Leadership.

The four-day event concludes with the Annual Awards Banquet on Thursday during which the Field of the Year, Innovative, and Founders Awards will be presented to the recipients; the President's Award for Leadership will be given, and Scholarship students will

be honored. Awards sponsors include Carolina Green Corp., Precision Laboratories, World Class Athletic Surfaces and John Deere.

EXTRAS

Meals, Safety, Southern Charm and More

STMA provides many meals during the conference: breakfast each day; heavy hors d'oeuvres during receptions; lunch and heavy hors d'oeuvres on the trade show floor; lunch during the annual meeting; and a three-course dinner during the concluding banquet.

STMA and all the venues it is using in Savannah follow CDC guidelines, and will provide a safe event for attendees. If you wish to wear a mask, there will be a supply at the STMA Registration area.

The City of Savannah offers a unique conference experience for its members and is also the perfect place for you to bring your partner for a romantic getaway. What better place to combine world-class education and spend quality time with your partner! STMA will offer a guest registration option that will allow full access to the conference offerings, or you can select individual events such as golf, bowling, and the awards banquet. While you are attending education sessions, your partner can take a three-minute water taxi ride to the Downtown Historic District that boasts world-class restaurants, shopping, rooftop bars and breweries. After conference sessions conclude, reconnect with your partner and sample some fried green tomatoes, extra crispy fried chicken, and southern BBQ. Then wash it all down with Savannah's signature drink, Chatham Artillery Punch.

Within the Historic District, you can take a romantic stroll through Forsyth Park and the River Market, visit museums and landmarks, all while indulging in locally made ice cream. Stay through the weekend and visit Tybee Island. Once there, you can watch for dolphins while indulging in oysters and champagne at a beachside restaurant. STMA truly hopes you and your partner consider joining us for the 2022 STMA Conference and Exhibition. The conference hotels are honoring the same rate three days pre-conference and three days post-conference.

The STMA Conference would not be possible without the work of its committees. The Conference Committees have worked hard to select a wide variety of sessions,

events and activities to help you expand your education and improve as a sports field manager professionally and personally. They have made sure there is something for everyone, so don't miss out. Those involved in planning the event include:

Conference Education Committee: Chair – Adam Thoms, Ph.D.; James Bergdoll, CSFM; James Brosnan, Ph.D.; Jason Campbell; Jason Craft, CSFM; Ryan DeMay, CSFM; Ronald Dobosz; Wes Ganobcik; Thomas Goyne; Gerald Henry, Ph.D.; Chris Hohnstrater, CSFM; Bryan Hopkins, Ph.D.; Joe Kovolyan, CSFM; Gregg Munshaw, Ph.D.; Bradley Park; Sun Roesslein, CSFM; Craig Sampsell, CSFM; John Sorochoan, Ph.D.; Clint Steele, CSFM; Chase Straw, Ph.D.; Peter Thibeault, CSFM; Alan Wilson, CSFM; and Keith Winter.

Commercial Advisory Committee: Chair – Jeremy Bohonko; Co-chair – Paula Sliefert; Chris Ball, CSFM; Chris Bell; Turner Revels; Jim Surrell; Erin Wilder; and Chris Welborn.

Conference Tours Committee: Co-Chairs – Alpha Jones, CSFM and Clark Cox, CSFM; Mark Bajno, CSFM; Chris Ball, CSFM; James Bergdoll, CSFM; Danny Losito; John Mascaro; Michael Peters; Sun Roesslein, CSFM; Jeff Sheehan, CSFM; and Troy Von Holdt, CSE.

SAFE Golf: Chair – Steve Wightman.

Chapter Officer Training Session: Chair – Clark Cox, CSFM; Bill Byron; Kevin Lebanik; Dan Leonard, CSFM; Don Savard, CSFM; Bruce Suddeth, CSFM; Michael Tarantino, CSFM; and Lee Van Meeteren.

Student Challenge: Chair – Sarah Martin, CSFM; Matt Anderson, CSFM; James Bergdoll, CSFM; Leah Brilman, Ph.D.; Tanner Delvalle; Samuel Doak; Jeffrey Fowler; Stephen Lord, CSFM; Mark Moran, CSFM; Gregg Munshaw, Ph.D.; Steven Ries; Sun Roesslein, CSFM; Craig Sampsell, CSFM; and Chrissie Segars, Ph.D.

Innovative Awards: Chair – Dan Bergstrom, CSFM; Ryan Bjorn; Scott Dobbins, CSFM; Edward Hall, CSFM; Maritza Martinez; and Leanne Nadwidny. **SFM**

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR BOSS

Adapt the following letter to support your attendance at the STMA Conference in 2022. To customize it, review the education sessions on page 43 and add any specific sessions that you plan to attend that would help you and your facility solve a problem, and help your employer understand why it is important to allocate the funding to send you.

Dear [Employer],

Unbelievably, it has been 18 months since I have had the opportunity to truly engage with my peers in-person and learn more about how to advance our field management practices.

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), my professional association for the past (XX) years is holding its annual educational conference Jan. 17–20, 2022 in person in Savannah, Georgia. This year's conference will offer nine educational tracks, 45 speakers and 39 educational events. The conference will also provide four weeks of virtual continuing education post-conference for all attendees to continue the learning.

Attending STMA in-person will provide invaluable information as athletic events are fully scheduled on our fields. In addition to the opportunity for my personal development, the conference education will provide me with new techniques, turfgrass research findings and technology to save time and money while providing safer field surfaces.

A key feature of the conference is networking. I learn so much from my peers from around the country and the world. The conference offers many events where I can connect with peers – practitioners and academics – to ask questions and hear solutions that have worked for them. The exposition provides tremendous access to the commercial companies that serve our industry. Being able to see all the products and services in one place is a huge time-saver and allows for better decision making.

The cost to attend is far less than the value incurred. Several years ago, the ROI was documented at 1,375 percent. The direct costs include registration, \$375; airfare, \$500; three nights hotel, \$600 plus tax; and a few meals, because the STMA provides most meals. For this, I will gain the equivalent education valued in the thousands of dollars, based on standard professional education costs, and I will receive 1.5 CEUs.

I will be providing the conference brochure with a link to all the educational sessions and events as soon as it is available for your approval to attend. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Thank you for your consideration,
[INSERT YOUR CONTACT INFO]

The following are some industry Tweets from the past month:



@GroundsCrewSC

A new era of soccer in Columbus starts today at the Ohio Health Performance Center!

#GroundsCrew96 #Crew96 #ATD

JUNE 8



@nstubley

Court 2 is usually the first court seen on TV as it has an earlier start time on day 1 to the main Stadium Courts

#SunBathing

JUNE 8



@AndyOmmen1

Stray kid not being watched by parents destroys fresh laser grade.... I flooded it to get moisture through it to roll it and pack it today. Came in to this today. This is why we can't have nice things! Ugh.

JUNE 7



@1scotttyfish

I think this will be a good spot for a pin! #torched

JUNE 7



@campbet004

Season 11....last one out lock the gate and hit the lights....

JUNE 7



@kelren31

Perfect weather for a ballgame

@BuffaloBisons @bluejays

JUNE 4



@CWallaceTurf

Took the interns over to Paul Brown stadium today to talk to @_TJBrewer about fraise mowing! Awesome to see!

JUNE 4



@CBSAFDirt

Lots going on in Hoover today as we get the Met prepped for @SEC baseball tournament. Workouts start tomorrow.

MAY 23



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

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JOHN DEERE

Field Wear Capacity

Q: As I look over our badly worn bermudagrass fields that we used for high school soccer and football this spring, I wonder if I could have done something different that would have resulted in less bare ground. Any suggestions on managing for wear, and how it relates to a field's capacity to handle the traffic?

A: Congratulations on making it through a tough spring. As you have experienced, even the best built and maintained fields have a limit to the amount of traffic the turfgrass can withstand without some damage — especially when used during a period of the year with limited turfgrass growth. In an ideal situation, an adequate number of fields would be available so use could be properly distributed and wear would not be a great concern.

Unfortunately, we do not always have ideal situations. Inadequate land for more fields, poor weather conditions during playing seasons, and concentrated use without recovery periods are all common reasons that some schools have looked to using synthetic field surfaces. There are still some things to do that can help preserve your natural grass surfaces from excessive wear.

Several facility-level management practices that can reduce wear and tear to natural turfgrass include:

1. Having separate play and practice facilities.
2. Preventing or minimizing play or practice when the soil is wet (saturated).
3. Rotating areas of play and practice to allow turfgrass recovery.
4. Avoiding concentrated foot traffic, such as band or cheerleading practices.
5. Allowing turfgrass recovery in spring from winter dormancy before using.

In some cases, these management practices may not be easy to accomplish due to scheduling. This spring, for example, many games and practices had to be played/held on dormant to semi-dormant bermudagrass. Overseeding the field surface with ryegrass could have helped with this issue. A good stand of ryegrass (seeded into a healthy bermudagrass base) provides a wearable surface that can offer some field protection for winter and spring play.

It is also important to adjust maintenance practices to address the conditions of the field. To prevent wear, use agronomic management practices that keep your turfgrass healthy and growing. But once the wear begins to show, step up the maintenance of those specific areas as much as possible. For example, apply supplemental nitrogen fertilizer to high-wear areas to promote recuperation; aerify high-wear areas with small solid tines during the season; and encourage coaches to move practices around the field as much as possible to avoid practicing in areas showing signs of wear.

I wish determining a field's ability to handle wear at the beginning of a season was a simple process. Because field wear is influenced by so many variables, no definitive equation exists to predict when a field will begin showing signs of wear, or when a field will fail.

Years ago, I attempted to make educated predictions relating field use and turfgrass conditions for natural grass fields. These values were related to well-constructed fields that received at least moderate maintenance and were used under reasonable conditions during the year. The field use data suggested that a breaking point between very little wear and significant wear was somewhere between 800 and 1,000 hours of use per year.

This has been a good starting point, but I realize that substantial damage can be done to fields from one extremely wet game, while there are fields that receive 1,500 or more hours of use and still don't have bare ground. As stated earlier, there are just so many variables that impact field wear.

What is important now is that you use good management practices to get your field back in shape. Address soil compaction through aggressive core aerification as soon as possible this summer, and make every effort to begin the next sporting season with 100 percent turf coverage. **SFM**



Grady Miller, Ph.D.

Professor and Extension Turf Specialist
North Carolina State University

Questions?

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

A close-up, low-angle shot of a black pop-up sprinkler head in the foreground, spraying a wide, powerful jet of water across a lush green grass field. The water creates a misty spray as it moves. In the background, the blurred structure of a large stadium with multiple tiers of seating is visible under a bright, overcast sky.

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