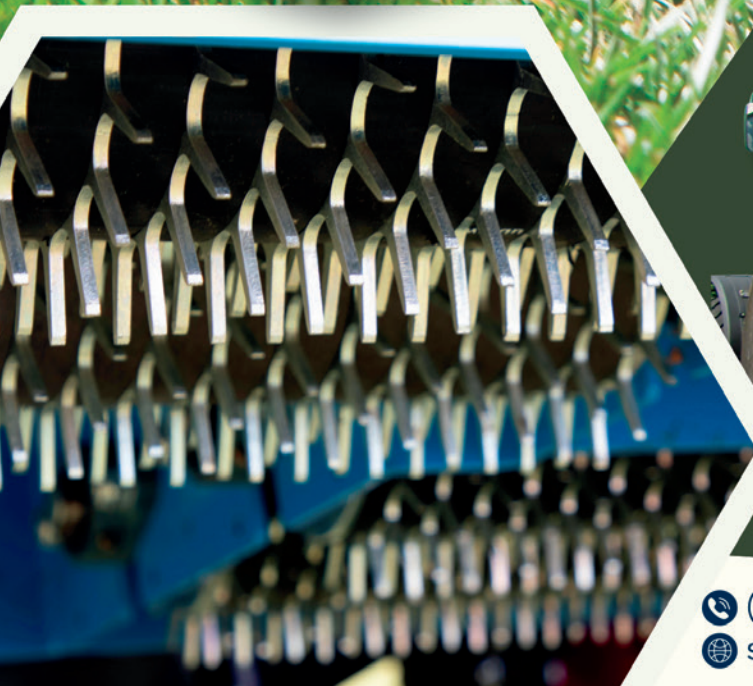




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## MANAGEMENT

August 2023

Vol. 39 No. 8

The Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

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# Editor's Note

**John Kmitta**

Associate Publisher /  
Editorial Brand Director  
jkmitta@epgacceleration.com  
763-383-4405

I can't believe it is August already. Normally, that wouldn't be a problem. It's summer! It's warm! It's relaxing! But this August is different. That's because this August my oldest child goes off to college.

My wife and I knew it was coming, of course, but that doesn't make it any easier. Our daughter is heading to Iowa State University to pursue a degree in Environmental Science. We couldn't be any prouder of her, but that doesn't do much to lower my anxiety level.

Side note: I don't write about my personal life or family very often in this space, but I've been writing editor's notes for so long that I actually included news of her birth in one of my columns back in the day. But only a part of my sharing this is to help me cope with the fact that my baby is all grown up.

As I've worked on our college and university series this year, I have tried not to bore the academic professionals who were kind enough to talk to me about their turfgrass programs with talk about my daughter's college journey.

That said, I feel as though the timing couldn't have been better for me to highlight the great turfgrass programs available to today's college students. It has been enlightening

to discuss the college process with those teaching the next generation, and to hear about the challenges they face and their advice for prospective students.

In going through the college process with my daughter, we faced the hurdles of high school teachers and guidance counselors being unfamiliar with which schools specialize in her area of interest, and online searches that were even more confusing as there are no consensus lists for top schools by major.

She ultimately narrowed it down to a handful of great options. We did the tours, met the representatives, and it was clear from the moment we set foot on campus in Ames that Iowa State was the right choice.

But I know that is not the case for all prospective college students. Deciding on a major – and a career – is daunting at any age, let alone as a teenager. Finding the right academic institution can be challenging. And navigating the college process itself is no easy task.

That is why I am happy to help build those types of resources for the next generation of our audience, and the future of the sports field management industry.

But if I have a few more gray hairs the next time you see me, at least you will know why. **SFM**

## SportsField MANAGEMENT

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# President's Message



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### SFMA EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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**Sun Roesslein, CSFM**

SFMA President

[Sun.Roesslein@jeffco.k12.co.us](mailto:Sun.Roesslein@jeffco.k12.co.us)

August is a very exciting month! Many SFMA members are involved in volunteering at the Little League Softball World Series in Greenville, North Carolina, and the Little League Baseball World Series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. There are almost 50 total volunteer grounds crew members between the two tournaments.

Last year at the softball series, the grounds crew for the last four days of games was a group of 16 women. This year we have 20 women from throughout the country, all segments of SFMA membership, and at all stages of their careers; plus, we have expanded to covering all eight days of the tournament. There are several local guys from the Carolinas chapters who are also volunteering to make the tournament a success, in addition to all the preparations that go into switching the grass infield baseball field over to a full skinned infield. Those who make up the baseball series crew have similar depth — from first time volunteers to seasoned veterans — and are covering an entire two weeks of games!

Regardless of who we are or where we work, our overall goals are very similar. There is a worldwide focus on these fields, and we want to provide top-notch playing fields, give these players an incredible experience and make an impact.

Every volunteer has the opportunity to spark interest in sports field management. Athletes at their level have probably never seen eight people watering the infield for

them, or had a logo painted for their tournament. The players, families and fans all see us work each day and experience the pride we take in providing the best fields possible.

One evening last year, there was a family with two young girls who stayed after and watched the entire post-game process. They asked questions, cheered for the crew, got lots of high fives and we signed a softball for them. It made the little girls' weekend! There were players from other countries who thanked us between innings, took photos with crew members and chanted "Let's go grounds crew!" when we pulled the tarp.

ESPN commentators mentioned the women on the grounds crew multiple times throughout the televised games. With the reach of those broadcasts, the potential exposure of sports field management as a profession is huge! It's just a start, and I know many of us would love to see the day that every field management crew is recognized for sports at all levels.

Those interactions, along with the visibility events like this provide, are priceless. Reaching an audience of young athletes, the spectators and even fans on TV might just inspire some young people to take interest in sports field management. **SFM**

*Sun Roesslein, CSFM*



## SFMA Board of Directors elections

The annual election of SFMA's Board of Directors for 2024 is rapidly approaching. Now is the time to pause and consider if this is the right time for you to serve. The SFMA Nominating Committee invites you to submit your name as a potential candidate by August 31, 2023.

### BENEFITS OF SERVICE

There are many reasons you should consider running for the SFMA Board of Directors. From guiding the direction of your association and giving back to the profession to growing your professional network and raising your profile, the benefits are the incredible rewards one gets both personally and professionally. Board service is a great way for members to contribute expertise and knowledge and help SFMA grow and succeed in the future.

### DO YOU QUALIFY TO SERVE ON THE BOARD?

The only specific requirement is that you are an SFMA voting member in good standing. The Nominating Committee will consider your previous service on committees and task groups, to local chapters, and other community service. You will also be asked to share your qualities that make you a good fit for the board, and your own vision for SFMA.

### BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

The SFMA Board of Directors is the governing body for the association. It sets policy and strategic direction for the programs and services it provides to its membership and is accountable to its membership. The board of directors is responsible for the financial oversight of the association and for putting in place the appropriate management system for day-to-day operations. They have the authority as a collective group to approve contracts, employ persons, engage in legal action, and hold title to property. Individual board members do not have any legal authority to determine policy, employ persons, engage in legal actions, etc., unless specifically authorized by official board action. The SFMA board is covered by Directors and Officers liability insurance.

Individual board member's responsibilities

- Attend and actively participate in board meetings (four per year).
- Set policy and strategic direction.
- Chair one or more committees.
- Attend special events, as needed.
- Attend and actively participate in the annual conference.
- Exhibit a high level of professionalism.

For more information on board service, please visit [www.sportsfieldmanagement.org](http://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org).

## 2023 conference recordings available on demand

If you were unable to attend the 2023 SFMA Conference, visit the SFMA online store and purchase the recordings for \$149. Access to individual sessions is \$20 each.

SFMA recorded the educational sessions at the 2023 conference to benefit sports field managers unable to make it to the conference. The recordings are valuable for those who want to stay current and educated in the industry. The library is accessible on portable devices such as iPad, iPhone, and other tablet devices, and can be accessed at any time throughout the year. Don't miss this valuable opportunity to enhance your education, train your staff, and stay current with industry trends and research!

Full conference attendees have free, unlimited, lifetime access to the online library. Attendees should have received an email with access instructions.

## Field of the Year awards

The Field of the Year Program was developed to feature the excellent field management practices of SFMA members in three categories: Professional stadiums, Schools/Parks, and Colleges/Universities. The program awards single fields in the sports of baseball, softball, soccer, football and sporting grounds (which recognizes non-mainstream sports, such as rugby and lacrosse).

The application covers playability and appearance of the playing surface; innovative solutions employed; effective use of budget; the development and implementation of a comprehensive, sound agronomic program; field management challenges and more. Up to 30 photographs taken throughout the year are also required to be uploaded in the application.

Those who attain a Field of the Year award receive complimentary SFMA Conference registration, three nights hotel, signature clothing, and they accept their award on stage during the annual Awards Banquet held during the SFMA Conference and Exhibition. That event will be held Jan. 25, 2024, in Daytona Beach, Florida.

To help you get started, here are 10 Tips for Preparing Your SFMA Field of the Year Application

1. Start now. Even though the application is online, now is the time to start the process of documenting your good work.
2. Submit a customized application for each field (if you are entering more than one field). Each of your fields has a customized program, so be certain to relay that information.
3. Pictures really are worth 1,000 words. You have an opportunity to present up to 30 photos. Use it. The judges especially are interested in seeing "before" and "after" photos, so do not submit just beauty shots.



4. Budget information is extremely important; your goal is to make the judges understand your effective use of resources. Winners seldom are the ones who have the most resources.

5. Successful submittals use the PCI to the fullest extent. Field use statistics can help you show the judges how much play is taking place on your field, and the corresponding results.

6. Be sure to fully express innovative solutions to any of the problems you encounter in managing the field.

7. Consider submitting your oldest field. (Must be a minimum of two seasons of play old). The key is to showcase your field management savvy, and your skills can really show through on older fields.

8. Give credit to your staff. Be sure to outline the personnel you have on your staff.

9. Highlight all of the components of your monthly maintenance program. Include why you are doing something, and don't forget to call attention to the ways you are protecting the environment.

10. Proofread your application before hitting "submit." Catch those spelling and grammar errors that can classify the submittal as subpar.

## SAFE scholarship program

SAFE annually awards scholarships to students who are planning a career in the sports field management industry. Since its inception, the SAFE Foundation has presented more than \$225,000 in scholarships and travel to the SFMA Conference and Exhibition to more than 120 students.

Each year, SAFE awards several named scholarships: the Dr. James Watson Graduate Scholarship; the Dr. James Watson Scholarships for graduate, four-year and two-year students; and the Dr. Fred Grau Scholarship. The Watson Scholarships are named in honor of longtime green industry researcher and consultant Dr. James Watson, are funded by the Toro Giving Program, and are presented to the top graduate and undergraduate scholarship recipients. The top recipient from a two-year program receives the Dr. Fred Grau scholarship, which is named in honor of the first turfgrass extension specialist in the United States.

To apply for scholarships, simply complete the online application, request your references from your faculty adviser and employer, and submit it to the SAFE Scholarship Committee. **SFM**

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

It is a challenge to maintain our stadium field at the level expected while also maintaining 150 acres of park and additional athletic fields. This year has been the busiest I have been a part of for our stadium. We hosted 178 hours of usage, which was 60 more than the previous year. These events and practices included a variety of sports such as soccer, lacrosse and rugby, as well as a field day. Our highlight of usage was hosting Charlotte FC for three months of practices while their practice facility was being built. Hosting an MLS team in its first year was an awesome experience, because we wanted to provide as close to a professional surface as possible with only a parks and rec budget and equipment. Each event had different prep and clean-up. One thing I have learned is that no matter the challenge, my team always steps up to the plate and gets things done at a very efficient and high level. This year provided us with many more hours of mowing, painting and preparation than usual due to the increase in usage. I challenged my guys with a couple of projects that we wanted to complete, but a major one was adjusting all of our field

proper irrigation heads. We were getting complaints about them being too low and possibly a tripping hazard — plus we didn't have full coverage at times — so we decided to raise and replace all 28 field proper heads. We also strived to improve our cultural practices and take our turf quality to a professional level. This included justifying and adding an additional full-time position, a maintenance and operations turf specialist, to assist in the day-to-day operations and evolve our turfgrass capabilities and knowledge at the Sportsplex. We were able to fully aerify the entire surface three times this year and topdress twice. We are still trying to become more environmentally friendly by limiting our herbicide applications, as well as our total nitrogen rate for the year. This has been my goal for the past few years, and I would like to keep lowering that rate. We also went back onto our plant growth regulator program to limit mowing and provide a tighter, higher-quality turf since we are limited to using only rotary mowers.

– Jonathan Waszak, maintenance and operations supervisor







**Level and category of submission:** Schools and Parks Soccer

**Field manager:** Jonathan Waszak

**Title:** Maintenance and operations supervisor

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in Parks and Recreation Management

**Experience:** Worked on a sod farm in high school. Attended Western Carolina University to play baseball and obtain a degree in Parks and Recreation Management. After graduation became a maintenance technician at Raleigh Country Club. Then became maintenance and operations technician at Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation. I have been with the Sportsplex for five and a half years, four of them as the maintenance supervisor.

**Full-time staff:** Tony Carpenter, Carl Lambert, Marcos Caballero, Matt Whirley and Preston Buckman

**Original construction:** 2015

**Turfgrass:** Tifway 419 bermudagrass

**Rootzone:** Sandy loam

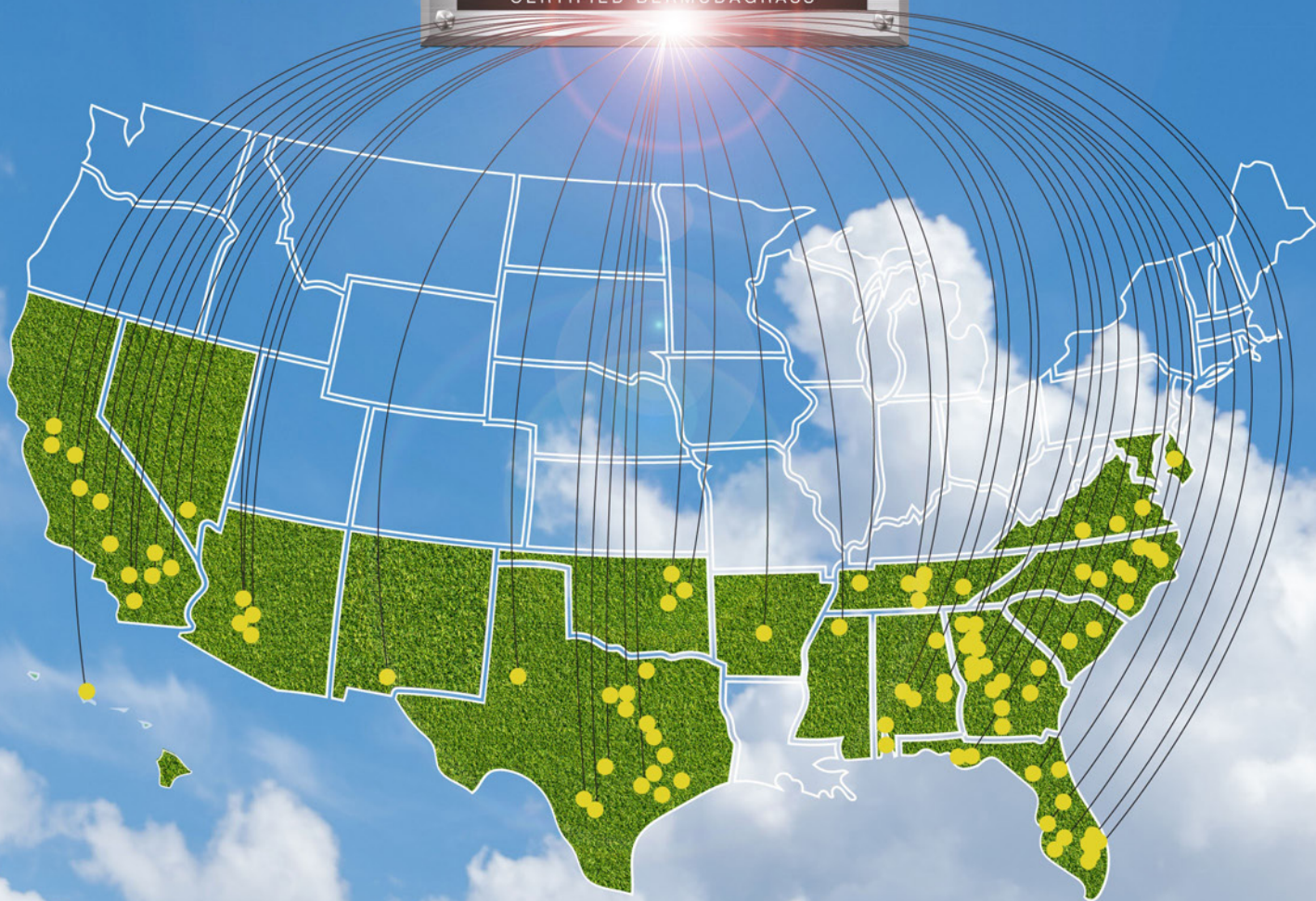
**Drainage:** 4" lateral drain tile embedded in a gravel trench approximately 12"-16" deep with perpendicular sand silt drains above.



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

**Jonathan Waszak:** The thing that I am most proud of about winning this award is the hard work it took from my team to be able to achieve this. This was one of our busiest years to date; and no matter what I threw their way, they were always willing to accept the challenge. From the long days painting to the multiple events in a row, they always were willing to help in any way, and eager to learn along the way. I can't speak highly enough about my crew — they truly are the best.

**SFM:** What attracted you to a career in sports field management, and what has been your career path through the industry?

**Waszak:** I grew up playing sports, which led me to the opportunity to play baseball at Western Carolina. We didn't have the biggest ground crew, so we, as players, had to work on the field, and I fell in love with the work — even though it was just a small taste of what sports field management truly is. After college, I went straight to the golf course, working at Raleigh Country Club because I



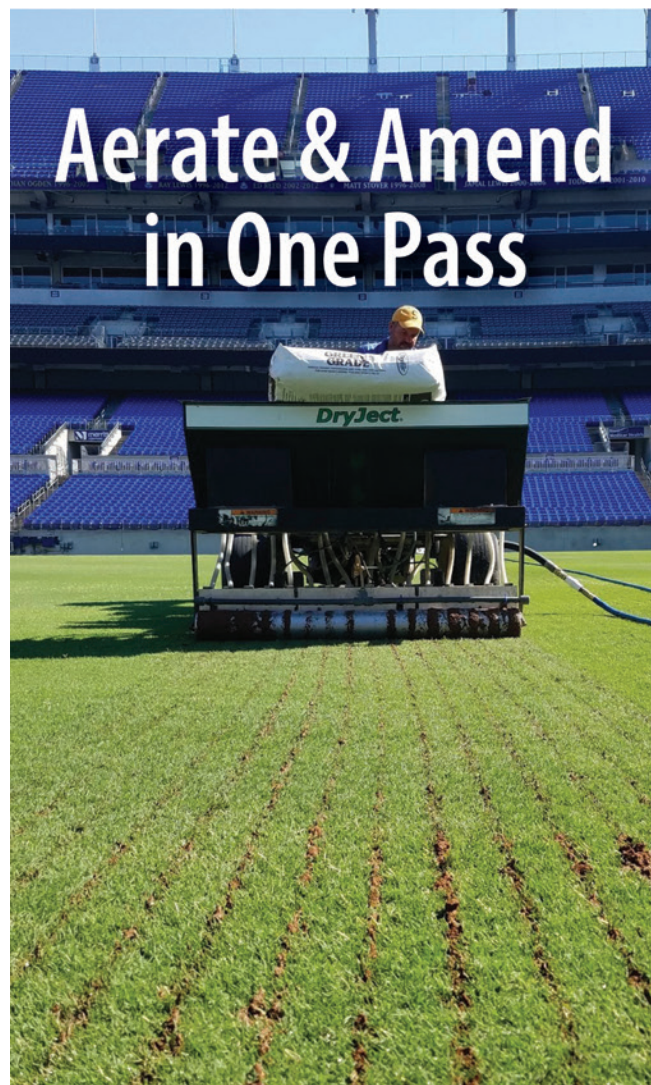


knew I could gain some turfgrass knowledge there. Then I took a leap of faith and moved to Charlotte after accepting an opportunity as a maintenance and operations technician for Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation. Little did I know that opportunity would eventually turn into my current role as maintenance and operations supervisor for the Mecklenburg County Sportsplex and American Legion Memorial Stadium.

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

**Waszak:** My mentors from this industry are the two guys who took a chance on me bringing me to Charlotte — Preston Buckman and Winston James. They were the original managers at the Sportsplex, and set a very high standard for what this place needed to be. I cannot thank them enough for sticking with me and allowing me to grow as a manager, as well as the knowledge and support they have provided over the past five years. When it comes to the best piece of advice, to give some background, I have a bad habit of saying “It is what it is.” I’m working on fixing that after being told that it isn’t “what it is,” it’s what you make of it. This has truly been beneficial to me because things don’t always go our way, but there are often ways we can improve a situation through action.

**SFM:** What are the biggest challenges you have faced with the winning field, and how have you approached those challenges?



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**Waszak:** One of the bigger challenges we faced this past year was an influx in the amount of play we have had. Historically we don't have much play early in the year, but this year we had the opportunity to host Charlotte FC for their training while their new facility was being built. Ensuring that the facility looked top-notch during this increased usage by the FC was an awesome challenge, but my crew's passion for the facility made it less daunting. I also must commend our facility managers who handle booking our events. Not only do they support us, but their commitment to communication and understanding of the facility to deliver the best customer service sets them apart.

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

**Waszak:** I am truly thankful to be a part of the SFMA. The networking opportunities I have gained from both the local chapters and from national, as well as the industry knowledge available to me, has been a tremendous professional benefit. Anytime I have a question or need some help on something, I know I can call on fellow SFMA members, and hopefully someday, as I grow throughout my career, I can do the same for younger turfgrass managers. **SFM**



## JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



### CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

**PROBLEM:**

Green areas by driveway and sidewalk

**TURFGRASS AREA:**

Home lawn

**LOCATION:**

Tampa, Florida

**TURFGRASS VARIETY:**

St. Augustine grass

*Answer on page 33*

*John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International*

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# English Premier League Soccer at Philadelphia's Lincoln Financial Field

*Philadelphia Eagles' Tony Leonard on preparing for international soccer*



*Philadelphia Eagles Vice President of Grounds Tony Leonard. Photo by Daniel Burke Photography.*

The English Premier League Summer Series took place in the United States for the first time, with six soccer clubs participating in matches and events across five major U.S. cities, including Philadelphia, from July 22-30, 2023.<sup>1</sup>

The tournament kicked off at Lincoln Financial Field, home of the Philadelphia Eagles, on July 22, with Chelsea FC taking on Brighton & Hove Albion FC, and continued on July 23 with a double-header featuring Fulham FC vs. Brentford FC followed by Newcastle United FC vs. Aston Villa FC.

In an interview with *SportsField Management* magazine prior to the Premier League Summer Series, Philadelphia Eagles Vice President of Grounds Tony Leonard discussed preparation for the event, as well as how the Premier League Summer Series will help Philadelphia to prepare for the FIFA World Cup in 2026.<sup>2</sup>

**SportsField Management (SFM):** You have hosted major international soccer matches at Lincoln Financial Field in the past, and you deal with a lot of other events — from concerts to Monster Jam to WrestleMania to the NHL Stadium Series — so you are no stranger major events that extend beyond football. What does the overall planning and process look like for these types of special events, and how do you approach the unique challenges?

**Leonard:** It all starts with working with our stadium operations staff and the folks who plan events in our stadium throughout the year. It's like a puzzle — where do you fit in the grass and the grass maintenance? This soccer event is sandwiched between two major concerts — Beyonce and Luke Combs — so we have to balance all of that. But we work with a great sod farm, Tuckahoe Turf Farms, and we direct them on the maintenance. We make





*Photo by Daniel Burke Photography*

weekly trips to the farm to check on the grass, make any recommendations, tweak anything, and make any last-minute adjustments; and then we will be ready for installation a week prior to the first match. Following Beyonce, we will remove the stage, remove the flooring, put the sod in, maintain that for a week prior, and host the matches. Then, the morning after the last match, we will roll the sod back up and get ready for Luke Combs. As with anything we do, details matter. When you get to this level, you just have to make sure you cross your t's and dot your i's.

**SFM:** You will be hosting three Premier League matches in the span of two days. What does the preparation entail leading up to the event, and also on game day, to ensure the best and safest playing surface?

**Leonard:** This starts months ago when the event is first announced, and then we go from there. It's going to the sod farm and seeing what we have to work with. And it's working with great partners — FMC and Tuckahoe Turf Farms.

Going into the weekend of the event, there will be training on Friday. Saturday — with one game — will be fairly simple, weather dependent. Sunday will be a little bit of a challenge having two games. We have the first game in the afternoon, so there will be pre-game waterings to keep the surface integrity and keep the ball speed up. That's a little different from what we normally do. Then, of course, we will preserve the surface and make sure it is in top shape for the second match. Any athlete that hits our playing surface wants to be on the best possible surface, so we try to achieve that.

**SFM:** What turfgrass will be used for these matches?

**Leonard:** This will be Kentucky bluegrass, which is a little different from what we typically have on our stadium field, but closer to what the soccer players are used to and what they like. Ball roll and ball bounce are important. It's still going to be the middle of summer, and it will still be hot. We are keeping our fingers crossed that it won't be too hot. It will be a good test. We are looking ahead to 2026, the FIFA World Cup, and what will be the best surface.

**SFM:** Speaking of the World Cup, how does hosting the Premier League Summer Series help you prepare for 2026?

**Leonard:** I think the biggest thing in 2026 is how our fields are going to expand — the length and the width. Unfortunately, that's something that's not easily done in any NFL stadium without removing some rows of seats, but it's something we are gearing up for. The technology and techniques are always evolving. We were in Qatar in November for the World Cup, and we learned quite a bit from those folks and seeing how they do things; then we can add our little spin to it. We all work together; this is not a competition to see who can have the best field. One thing is for certain, FIFA wants all of the venues to have the best field — they want them all to be great. That collaborative approach between us and FIFA is how we achieve that. To do these international soccer matches and bring in the English Premier League, get their feedback to see what works and what doesn't work, will be great for us.

**SFM:** Beyond the 16 host stadiums, what will the practice site situation look like for the World Cup?



*Photo by Daniel Burke Photography*





Photo courtesy of the Philadelphia Eagles

**Leonard:** There will be 49 base camps. There will be a record 48 teams playing in this World Cup, and there will be one referee base camp (the referees will have their own practice facility). On top of that, there will be 32 practice sites outside of the base camps. When a team comes to Philadelphia, there will be a couple fields here in the city. We will work with whoever manages those fields to make sure we have consistency. Easy to do in Qatar when you have eight stadiums in the same city versus 16 stadiums spread out throughout Mexico, the United States and Canada. You are hitting every different climate and a lot of different areas with regard to humidity, heat and altitude.

**SFM:** You briefly mentioned your partners. FMC Corp is serving as presenting sponsor and “Official Turf Care Provider” for the Premier League Summer Series at Lincoln Financial Field. What does that partnership mean for you and your crew?

**Leonard:** It ensures that we have some of the top people in that industry here in Philadelphia. They are literally a phone call away. We can work with them at our practice facility, and we were able to do some different trials with them. We have some unique situations here with the heat system and trying to grow grass in January, and they can help us with that.

**SFM:** Is there anything you would like to add?

**Leonard:** We have a dedicated crew, and it takes a lot of time and attention — at a time when we’re shifting gears to get ready for Philadelphia Eagles training camp. I have to give a shout out to everyone on our grounds staff who makes all this happen.

Also, kudos to the Eagles organization. We couldn’t do any of this without support from the top, and that starts with Mr. Lurie. He always wanted a natural grass field coming from Veterans Stadium, and he gave us all the tools to work with: a SubAir system, underground heating, and being able to go from cool-season to warm-season grasses — and to trust us to do that. A lot of that has helped build a case for Philadelphia to get a World Cup — not only the commitment by the Eagles but the commitment by the city. I think that’s how we ended up where we are today. **SFM**

<sup>1</sup> The Premier League Summer Series also visited Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia; Exploria Stadium in Orlando, Florida; Red Bull Arena in Harrison, New Jersey; and FedEx Field in Landover, Maryland.

<sup>2</sup> Lincoln Financial Field be one of 16 stadiums across the United States, Canada and Mexico to serve as a FIFA World Cup 2026 host venue.



Photo courtesy of the Philadelphia Eagles





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# College and University Turfgrass Programs

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following is the next in our series delving into colleges and universities that offer programs devoted to turfgrass management, turfgrass science, and related disciplines. In this edition, we examine the Turfgrass Management and Science program at Purdue University.

## PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Purdue University Turfgrass Management and Science students learn to oversee and implement programs for the production, maintenance and performance of a variety of turfgrass areas such as golf courses, athletic fields, lawns, parks and sod farms. The program combines basic scientific principles, technical agronomic information, business and management coursework, written/oral communication and problem-solving skills to prepare graduates for a wide range of careers.

This program's storied history dates back to SFMA Founder William H. Daniel, Ph.D., who was heavily involved in all aspects of turf education and research as one of Purdue's first turf professors. Daniel has been honored by scientific societies, foundations, associations and the governor of Indiana for his career efforts, and Purdue's turfgrass research and diagnostic center is named after him.



All photos provided by Purdue University.

"His emphasis was all things turf — lawns, golf and sports fields — but he recognized that there were some things that needed to happen to raise the bar professionally for sports field managers," said Cale Bigelow Ph.D., professor, Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, Turf Science, Management and Ecology at Purdue. "He was very interested in the safety of the athletes on the fields, especially keeping them dry."

According to Bigelow, in the early days of the Purdue turfgrass program, there were only two faculty members involved. Today, there are five faculty allocated to turfgrass, as well as a fine-tuned curriculum. Sixty of the 120 credits required for graduation are the basic sciences, humanities, social sciences, and other general education classes. Thirty credits are related to the technical aspects of turfgrass management — including three turfgrass-specific classes, soils, soil fertility, pest management, as well as electives in everything from plant propagation to landscape contracting. The remaining 30 credits are business related.

"We made that change approximately 10 years based on feedback from alumni and industry professionals, because once you ascend in your role in the industry, you become a resource manager," said Bigelow. "It's a fairly balanced plan of study. There are the basic sciences, there is the technical aspect, there are the practical things related to turfgrass management, but there is also the business side of it, which really prepares a student to pursue a wide variety of career options."





According to Bigelow, the majority of Purdue Turfgrass Management and Science students are pursuing careers in the golf course management industry due to attractive starting salaries. However, Purdue turfgrass alumni can be found in the National Football League, Major League Baseball and other high-level sports field management roles, as well as careers as Extension educators, sales and in other areas of the green industry. But Bigelow has also had students who have gone on to pursue careers in medical, dental, financial planning, business management, and other fields.

"It has reinforced that the recipe we have for our plan of study is a good one," he said. "They can do a lot of different things — wherever their passion takes them."

For those enrolled in the Purdue Turfgrass Management and Science program, there are plenty of opportunities for internships, hands-on experience, clubs, and even undergraduate research.

Bigelow added that students have the opportunity to work with the Purdue sports field management staff at the various venues for Boilermakers athletics — including football, baseball, softball and soccer.

"That has been a really big strength for us, and the students get hands-on practical experience," he said.

Between their first year and graduation, Purdue turfgrass students have to log 320 hours of work related to the green industry. According to Bigelow, that could be anything from working on the campus sports fields to working in the greenhouse or in a traditional summer internship.

Bigelow added that enrollment in the Purdue Turfgrass Management and Science program typically hovers in the range of 26 to 31 students. Most students join the program as freshmen, but others enter the program as transfer students or through other avenues.

"We have an exploratory college on campus that attracts approximately 800 students who enroll directly into exploratory, and they have four semesters to find a home. Sometimes we will pick up one or two from there," said Bigelow.

The "Pathway to Purdue Agriculture" program is another unique offering for in-state students entering the College of Agriculture. If Purdue admissions won't directly admit a student to the program, the Pathway to Purdue Agriculture allows in-state College of Agriculture majors to take classes

in West Lafayette at Purdue in addition to taking classes at a community college five miles from campus.

"They are co-enrolled," said Bigelow. "Then they don't have to wait four semesters to get into the degree stream. It's a helpful mechanism to get additional students in the door."

According to Bigelow, the Purdue Turfgrass Management and Science program faces a challenge faced by many turfgrass programs throughout the country — university admissions requirements limit the number of students who have the necessary GPAs and test scores for admission.

"It's a battle that we fight continually with admissions," he said. "It would be nice to crack that open a little. If I had 20 students as freshmen, all of them would have great careers in our industry in four years."

Another challenge that is not unique to Purdue is attracting students to the turfgrass program and raising awareness of the turfgrass industry in general.

"Our department — because we have horticulture, lawn and landscape, turf and other majors — did a marketing campaign highlighting the different majors," said Bigelow. "But, as far as attracting students, a lot of it has been word of mouth through alumni or others in the industry."

He added that he and other colleagues throughout the country have been working to raise awareness with high school teachers and guidance counselors.

"A Master's student who is working with me right now, Stephen Campbell, is putting together a small pilot turfgrass curriculum for Indiana high school ag educators," said Bigelow. "He has eight or nine high school educators who are going to give it a try this fall. Those are the types of things we need to do to create awareness."

According to Bigelow, what sets the Purdue Turfgrass Management and Science program apart is the faculty, the support of its deans, the history of the program, and the strong network of alumni. Another benefit of Purdue is that everything is close on campus — students who live in the dorms and work in sports field management have to travel no more than a mile and a half to get to work. **SFM**

*For more information about the Purdue University Turfgrass Management and Science program, visit <https://turf.purdue.edu/students/>.*





# Listening is Communicating

By Alpha Jones, CSFM

One of several satisfying moments in the career of a sports field manager is seeing an amazing play on a field they maintain. The skills athletes display are developed through repetitive drills and hours of practice. The athlete must also have confidence in the playing surface on which they perform. It is this foundation of abilities and assuring surface that promotes confidence to perform and stretch beyond their base skills. Like the athlete, today's sports field management (SFM) professionals and tomorrow's leaders require foundational skills that will provide confidence to extend beyond their expertise.

For an effective leader or role player, communication is vital in building relationships and gaining trust. When it is absent, misinterpretation, confusion and doubt can result. One might assume that the art of speaking is the most important communication skill of a leader, but it's not. For today's crew members and tomorrow's leaders, the most significant communication skill to master is the ability to listen. Listening is an easy skill to use and essential to master.

The sports field, no matter the size or level of play, has become, and will progressively be, a stage and backdrop for non-sport, revenue-generating events. Today's SFM professionals have many different individuals with which to interact when developing their field management plans. This diverse group of personalities includes the coaching staff of both teams using the field, their organization's executive management team, the events coordinator, community relations coordinator and marketing team, to name a few. If that is not enough to take in, there are the voices within their own department, as well as public opinion. The input from each of these can be overwhelming and leaves the field crew leader deliberating over whose needs are most important.

The first responsibility of the SFM professional is to provide a safe, playable and aesthetically pleasing playing surface and facility. Job priority number two is to defend the field against anything that lowers or disrupts the integrity of the field (this includes field-use requests). Your success in doing this depends on hearing what others are asking. Their words can give insight to the true request and why it is important to that department or organization. The challenge for SFM professionals is these requests often differ or go outside of what is deemed as proper or preferred field use. Consider this approach to the conversations around field-use requests and other talks.

First, be quick to listen and slow to speak. Hesitate to respond immediately to what has been said. Avoid distractions, and ask to move the discussion to a place where both parties can hear. Switch notifications to vibrate or off, and set your phone to the side. Give your attention and focus to the speaker and what they have to say. Do not tense up or mentally block out the remainder of a conversation if a request or suggested idea differs with you or your way of thinking. Keep an open mind. Sometimes field-use requests seem to disregard or not take into consideration the hard work, time and resources needed to achieve and maintain the integrity of the field. Hear the full idea the user has, and understand the message; it may be different than it sounds.

Second, conduct this simple test: Can you, the listener, now explain the "what and why" of the request back to the requestor? If you can, respond thoughtfully. Once you have heard their ask and listened to the explanation of its importance, summarize in your words what you heard them say. Be solutions-minded with the idea of accommodating both parties with a version of what they want. You can accomplish two things here. You confirm to the speaker that you heard them, and you create a connection that could build trust. Trust is key to successful communication.

Third, as you practice listening, hear the language or lingo the speaker uses. SFM professionals have a reputation for speaking grass lingo when talking with others and find themselves having to stop mid-sentence to explain what they just described. For an events coordinator, band director or coach, their passion for what they do drives their requests for field use and their words. Learn and use their terminology, create a common language that bridges the gap of understanding and a familiarity that should decrease tension around difficult topics. Ask

questions that seek to gather information. Conversations in their terms will show an interest in what they do, and a willingness to work together. **SFM**



Alpha Jones, CSFM, is director of field operations for the Fayetteville Woodpeckers, MiLB affiliate of the Houston Astros. He also serves on the SFMA Board of Directors as professional facilities director.





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# Defeating the Great Resignation



By Chelsey Paulson

The war on talent is real, and it doesn't appear to be getting better anytime soon. This workforce challenge has been a significant pain point for many business leaders. The answer to this issue is not simple or easy, and it's certainly not found in the way we've always been doing things. The solution is multi-faceted and requires a people-centric approach with a healthy dose of curiosity and creativity.

## THE FACTS

According to a report published by McKinsey & Company in September 2021, more than 19 million people have quit their jobs since April 2021. Among the employees in their survey, 36 percent who quit in the past six months did so without having a new job in hand. In addition, of those who were somewhat likely to leave in three to six months, nearly two-thirds would leave without a new job lined up.

Now is a really good time to get curious. Why would a person leave a steady paycheck in the middle of a seemingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world? McKinsey & Company cited three top drivers for leaving:

1. Not feeling valued by their organizations (54 percent)
2. Not feeling valued by their managers (52 percent)
3. Employees did not feel a sense of belonging at work (51 percent)

Unfortunately, those reasons don't appear to be where most companies or organizations are putting their efforts to attract and retain employees. Conversations around business tables and across industries are focused on pay and sign-on bonuses, continuing to favor years of experience and ability to work nights/weekends, as well as preferences for primarily in-person work. Leaders are feeling desperate but not ready or always willing to adjust their expectations.

## WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Curiosity is a requirement for today's leadership. Curiosity is a superpower that helps us better understand the perspectives of others while opening our creativity to find new ways of doing things. Leaders need to show curiosity by dipping into the psychology of people and designing an authentic and healthy workplace.

Lead with purpose. Employees want to be part of something that matters — to feel they are adding value and contributing to a bigger purpose. Leaders must first understand the purpose, or the why, behind the company/organization. Then, leaders need to communicate the organization's purpose clearly and consistently to their teams and how each employee impacts the purpose.

Human Resources is a team effort. Managers must be involved in sourcing and recruiting because they know the work — and the workers — the best. Ask leaders to source their networks and support the organization's social media posts. Reach into the employee base and ask the same; help them be successful by giving them communication/position information to share. Help leaders expand their definition of what a qualified candidate can look like. When you start to look at the work differently, you may find more qualified workers could be retirees, disabled, students or those only interested in temporary hours.



Capture your culture. If you have high turnover, it's likely culture is lacking. Evaluate your culture to gain a realistic baseline, and take immediate action on those things that are hurting the work environment. You can benefit from holding focus groups that include employees and leaders to gather the honest feedback you need. Ask powerful questions that give the insights you need, such as:

- Where are we strong in our culture? What are the top opportunities for improvement?
- Do you believe we have the right people in the right roles?
- Do you believe your manager values your work and contributions?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging in your team? Within our organization?
- How can we improve our sense of community and belonging?

Approach this evaluation with a beginner's mindset and sense of curiosity, use empathy, and be humble. Remember to strengthen and celebrate the elements that are going well, as well as the opportunity areas.

Build and strengthen relationships. To get your employees invested at a deeper level, you must get involved with them at a deeper level. Work should feel like a beneficial part of life that provides fulfillment beyond income. Think about relationships in three levels: employee, team and organization. Put deliberate effort into building the essential skills of emotional intelligence at each level. Provide opportunities for employees to get to know one another on a personal basis (this helps build community as well). Encourage team leaders from across the organization to get together on a regular basis to boost departmental collaboration. Invest in mentoring programs that give exposure to the big-picture functions that make the entire organization run.

Are you ready to become a people-focused organization? It's the future of work, and it starts today. **SFM**

*Chelsey Paulson is chief strategy officer of Keystone Group International, a firm focused on leadership development and organizational strategy, growth and change. Paulson's areas of expertise are in culture revival, strategic planning, and leadership academies. Paulson is the co-author of The Culture Climb.*



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# The Impact of Climate Change on Pesky Pests

By Anand Persad, Ph.D.

As the climate continues to change, we'll likely begin to see invertebrate vectors such as mosquitos, fleas, lice and ticks adapting to potentially more favorable weather conditions.

On a global scale, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports that every year there are more than 700,000 deaths from vector-borne diseases such as the West Nile virus, malaria, dengue, yellow fever and more.

While these diseases may not be as prevalent in the United States as they are in other parts of the world, when subjected to the impacts of climate change, there is potential for more dynamic and even migrating vector populations.

Take the impact of flooding coupled with increasing temperatures for example. Chances are we will begin to see rising sea levels, backed-up brackish (slightly salty) water and freshwater levels and generally higher water levels in inland areas. This will lead to areas with saturated and increased moisture levels, the rise of vectors, and possibly the increasing spread of vector-borne diseases.

For example, the more mosquitoes that inhabit an area, the greater the potential for mosquito-borne outbreaks such as West Nile, dengue and malaria. Additionally, as human populations increase in high-density, urban areas, the chance of vector-borne diseases also increases.

Warmer temperatures also create the perfect environment for these insects to multiply faster. In turn, it may be easier for vectors to maintain high populations, bolstered by shorter lifecycles, and increase the number of generations per year.

Even if temperatures rise by half to one degree over the next decade or so, it will still be in favor of rising vector populations.

According to the *Human Impact Report: Climate Change — The Anatomy of a Silent Crisis* published by the Global Humanitarian Forum, currently “over half a billion people are at extreme risk to the impacts of climate change, and six in 10 people are vulnerable to climate change in a physical and socio-economic sense.”



Photo provided by ACRT

The *Human Impact Report* also shares, “the number of those severely affected by climate change is more than 10 times greater than, for instance, those injured in traffic accidents each year, and more than the global annual number of new malaria cases.”

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The Global Humanitarian Forum anticipates the number of affected individuals to double — if not more — within the next 20 years, noting “one in 10 of the world’s present population could be directly and seriously affected” by vector-borne diseases.

In the green industries, it’s important to consider the impact of increasing vectors, disease incidence, the effect on green workspaces, and our physical and mental health. We must consider and understand that employees are subject to encounters with ticks for example, thus increasing the likelihood of becoming infected with Lyme disease (among other diseases and illnesses) by working outdoors daily.

There is an imbalance when studying climate research. There isn’t an abundance of studies that showcase the parallels between climate change and the potential impact on our health caused by the spread of vector-borne diseases.

It’s fair to question whether these risks will take a toll on employees’ mental health or even lead to attrition within the workforce. That’s why our Research, Science and Innovation team at ACRT Services is looking at the correlative imbalances between climate change and vector migration.

## ACCLIMATING TO CHANGE

As vectors continue to adapt to climate change, so must our workforce — especially those in the southern United States.

Think about warm, humid places such as Florida. As the climate continues to mimic a tropical environment, more vibrant vector populations and diseases that have been historically tropically based may now begin to appear with increasing frequency.

## PROTECT YOURSELF WHILE OUTDOORS

It's impossible to reverse climate change overnight, but it is possible to better protect ourselves — especially while outdoors.

An infographic provided by ACRT outlines several ways to protect yourself from pesky pests, including mosquitos, bees and wasps, ticks, chiggers, spiders and other stinging insects (see <https://acrt.com/articles/protect-pesky-pests/>).

Keep the following best management practice recommendations in mind to reduce your exposure to insect bites.

- Apply both repellents and insecticides, or approved alternatives regularly, and by following the instructions found on the label.

- Be sure to apply a pesticide, such as Permethrin, to your outerwear — including footwear and work gear. Clothing that is pre-treated with Permethrin is also available for purchase.

- If you're having trouble determining what to apply, consider using the United States Environmental Protection Agency's search tool (<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents>) to help choose the repellent product that is right for you.

- Wear the appropriate type of clothing that provides an additional barrier to prevent ticks (and other insects) from reaching the skin.


- Conduct frequent body checks throughout the day, followed by a full-body check at the end of each shift.

Despite the intimidation of climate change and the dangers that may accompany it, many of these vector-borne diseases are preventable through research, protective measures and education. **SFM**

Anand Persad, Ph.D., is director of the Research, Science, and Innovation (RSI) team at ACRT Services. He has an extensive background in arboriculture,

invasive species, tree biomechanics, pollinator health, wetland restoration, avian studies, and more. He is the research committee chair for the Utility Arborist Association (UAA), chair of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Science and Research Committee, and actively works with city, state, and federal organizations in taking innovation and technology from development to implementation. He holds a Ph.D. in invertebrate ecology/entomology from the University of the West Indies. In 2021, he was recognized as the recipient of the ISA L.C. Chadwick Award for Arboricultural Research as well as the Award of Achievement by the Ohio Chapter of the ISA.

**Editor's note:** This article originally appeared on Landscape-Business.com, sister production to SportsField Management magazine.



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## BILLY GOAT AET60 TOWABLE AERATOR

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



## DRYJECT FRANCHISE-BASED AERATION SERVICES

DryJect is a premier injection service that aerates, topdresses and amends in one pass. High-pressure water penetrates the turf rootzone, and dry or wet amendments including sand/peat mixtures, inorganic soil amendments and more are injected into the aeration holes. Key benefits are speed, labor savings, and decreased field downtime. Aerate, amend and back-fill the holes completely on a 70,000-square-foot sports field in less half a day. Fields are playable shortly after completion. Using the DryJect service will loosen the soils and guarantee that the aeration holes are fully filled with the desired amendment.



## JOHN DEERE AERCORE 800

The smallest within the John Deere Aercore line of aerators, the Aercore 800 is also the only walk-behind aerator in the series. The Aercore 800 utilizes a pin and spacer system to

establish aeration depth, letting the user select the depth they would like to reach, with settings up to 3.5 inches. The industry-exclusive verticutter attachment provides this aerator with more versatility than any other walk-behind aerator within the market while the lightweight, turf-friendly design contributes to the user's satisfaction with a smooth, quiet operation. With increased maneuverability, as well as consistent narrow hole depths on undulating greens, the Aercore 800's powerful 25-hp. gas engine packs a punch for aerating and verticutting simultaneously.



## REDEXIM VERTI-CORE III

The Verti-Core III from Redexim is one of the fastest, smoothest and most well-built core aerifiers on the market. Over-built construction, combined with simple adjustments, makes the Redexim Verti-Core reliable and easy to use. It features a working depth up to 5 inches and operating speeds up to 3.5 mph. A number of tine options are available for the Verti-Core, and it comes in two different sizes; the 1600 (63") and the 2100 (83"). Fewer moving parts ensures simple service and less maintenance. These things all contribute to its unmatched speed and smooth operation.



## RYAN LAWNAIRE ZTS AERATOR

Aerate with precision, cover more ground, and rejuvenate turf with the Ryan Lawnaire ZTS aerator. Capable of covering two-and-a-quarter acres per hour at ground speeds up to seven miles per hour, along with its zero-turn maneuverability, this stand-on aerator moves swiftly and efficiently — aerating anywhere from 2 to 5 inches deep. The machine's intuitive and easy-to-use control system allows users to adjust tine depths on the go, while

automatic chain tensioning ensures proper tension during use, reducing chain maintenance. The shock-absorbing platform will keep operators comfortable enough to aerate all day long, while the machine's quick latch allows the

operator platform to flip up, transforming the machine to a walk-behind aerator and

effectively saving space in storage or on the trailer. With optional add-ons like an LED light kit or seed spreader attachment, turf professionals can trust in the Ryan Lawnaire ZTS to help accomplish any aeration job with ease, comfort and efficiency.



### SITEONE LESCO PRO-AER 30 AND PRO-AER 36

Exclusive LESCO renovation products at SiteOne Landscape Supply include the Pro-Aer 30 and Pro-Aer 36 stand-on aerators. These aerators add oxygen to soil, which aids in filling bare spots, improving turf density, grass variety, color and more. These highly productive commercial stand-on units feature a chain-free design to eliminate the hassle of expensive breakdowns and the need for grease. Powered by a robust Vanguard V-twin engine, the LESCO renovation units are supported by a 3-year commercial limited warranty and are available both with or without a seed box. The integrated seed box model allows projects to be completed in one easy pass by eliminating the need for post-aeration seed application.



### STEC EQUIPMENT DEEP TINE AERATOR BY GKB

STEC Equipment offers the Deep Tine Aerator (DTA) by GKB. Deep tine aeration is key to relieving compaction, healthier root growth and opening your turf to receive the amendments you are using. The DTA and its 3-drive gearbox, sealed bearings, front and rear roller, and easy-to-change tines make this high-quality piece of equipment a great addition to your fleet. The DTA can be found in widths of 4 to 7 feet wide and a working depth from 10 to 15 inches. The variety of widths and depth make one of these machines the ideal solution for your field.



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### TORO PROCORE 648S

The latest iteration of Toro's popular ProCore 648 aerator builds on an industry standard. The new ProCore 648s features Delayed Mode, which reduces disruption of the turf surface and allows operators to mark the spot where they want the coring head to drop/raise using the leading edge of the front tire as an indicator. Electronic drive control maintains more consistent hole spacing when aerifying sloping terrain and provides a tighter turning radius. In addition, proven InfoCenter technology enables precise "set and save" increments for tine depth and hole spacing. Toro incorporated some of its customers' most requested features in the new ProCore 648s. That includes a 95-cubic-inch storage box that comes standard, and an optional LED light kit.



### TURFCO TURNER XT10

The Turfco TurnAer XT10 stand-on aerator offers more of what turf pros need: longevity, productivity, reliability and decreased downtime. The high-powered, zero-turn XT10 aerator uses a 27-hp. engine and cyclone air cleaner to maximize productive uptime. Power over ditches and navigate hills without bogging down or damaging turf. The foot-operated control makes for fast and nimble operation in all terrain conditions. Pull plugs of all soil types consistently without stopping thanks to the patent-

pending Auto Depth Control that adapts

automatically to changing ground conditions. Set the desired depth once, and get that same depth all day long regardless of

turf conditions. The XT10 drive system keeps chains protected and outside the aeration area, so they remain clog-free.



### WIEDENMANN TERRA SPIKE DEEP AERIFIERS

The Terra Spike deep aerifiers by Wiedenmann have set new standards with regard to speed, productivity, depth, and hole quality. The Terra Spike XF (eXtra Fast) can aerify at a depth of 8-1/2 inches at the speed of a shallow aerifier. The twin drive transmission can produce square hole spacing of 2-1/2 inches and 5 inches with a forward travel speed of 1.2 and 2.4 mph, respectively. The quickset feature of the central depth adjustment and the central angle adjustment allows depth and angle adjustments to be performed on the fly. The shock-absorbing systems, VibraStop and PowerPack, remove any vibrations resulting from the high aerification speed. The XF offers an optional hydraulic depth adjustment, windrow, and a variety of needle tine holders.



### Z AERATE 40 STAND-ON AERATOR

Capable of aerating more than 100,000 square feet each hour, the Z-Aerate 40 from Z Turf Equipment features a 40-inch floating tine head with down pressure, which allows the operator to maneuver around obstacles during aeration. The thumb-controlled hydraulic lift system enables quick turnarounds, lifting the tine head in less than three seconds. Patented locking front caster wheels increase hillside stability, and the dual-pump hydraulic wheel motor transmission delivers 8 mph maximum ground speed. The Z-Aerate 40 accepts accessory add-ons (available separately), including a 30-gallon spray system, 46-inch dethatching rake, or 36-inch slicer seeder.

This multi-function versatility makes Z-Aerate 40 the perfect machine for professionals looking to maximize profitability. **SFM**





## JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



### ANSWER

*From page 17*

The green St Augustine turf on this home lawn, by the front driveway area and sidewalk, is actually quite amusing as to its cause. I took this photo while walking through a neighborhood in Tampa, Florida. It was during a very dry period, and this homeowner had not fertilized his lawn in more than a year. He owned four Yorkshire Terriers that would only venture a foot or two off the paved surfaces to relieve themselves. As you can see, the lawn was in dire need of nutrition and seemed to appreciate the fact that this homeowner had four dogs. It is a great photo showing how a little fertilizer can go a long way in drought situations.

**Photo from John Mascaro's collection.**

*John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International*

If you would like to submit a photograph for John Mascaro's Photo Quiz, please send a high-resolution digital photo to John Mascaro via email at [john@turf-tec.com](mailto:john@turf-tec.com). If your photograph is selected, you will receive full credit. All photos submitted will become property of *SportsField Management* magazine and the Sports Field Management Association.

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# 5 Ways to Help Your Infield Skin Rebound from Rain Quickly



By Paul Zwaska

While some parts of the United States are battling a daunting drought, other parts of the country may be dealing with lots of rain. You just never know. In fact, things can change very quickly. For example, a few years back, within a three-week span, the entire state of Texas went from a major four-year drought to being totally drought free. It takes a lot of rain to knock out four years of drought in just three weeks. With all that rain, surely there were many having issues with trying to get their fields ready after a rain. If you have already encountered a lot of rain, or you do later this season, let's take a look at what you can do to help your fields recoup from a rain event as quickly as possible.

## 1. KEEP YOUR INFIELd PROPERLY GRADED

First and foremost, make sure that your infield is properly graded to promote positive surface drainage. Ideally, the infield should be graded so that the area around the base of the pitcher's mound is the highest point on the infield with the surface grade then sloping away from the mound in all directions. However, depending on the lay of the land on which the field was built, the other way of grading an infield would be to "sheet drain" it. This means the entire infield is tilted in one direction; for example, the infield may tilt from the first base foul line toward left field. In either instance, both of these surface grades are only

efficient at draining the water off if the surface is smooth and consistent. In other words, there are no high spots or low spots to impede or deflect the drainage. Proper nail and float dragging are crucial maintenance practices that, when done correctly, will keep your skin surface in smooth and consistent surface draining condition.

## 2. MAINTAIN YOUR TURF EDGES

Maintaining your turf edges to prevent lip buildup will allow the water to easily pass over from infield skin to turf area without any issues. When infield soil and infield topdressing build up in the edges of the grass, that ridge or "lip" impedes the water from freely moving off the field. The more severe the lip, the more water it will hold back onto the infield skin. Properly maintain those lips to keep them from slowing your field from recuperating.

## 3. CHOOSE APPROPRIATE INFIELd SOIL MATERIAL

The right infield soil material has a huge impact on speed of reentry onto an infield after a rain. Infield soils that are either high in silt or high in fine and very fine sand drastically affect how quickly the field is playable again after a rain. Even worse is when you have both problems. High silt and high fine sand content infield soils can take a day or multiple days to recuperate. Have your infield soil tested to check to see how your soil material lines up with the acceptable specifications. Strive for a balanced infield soil with the right amounts of medium to coarse sand and



the proper ratio of silt to clay. It'll make all the difference in the world as to how easy it will be getting the infield back into playing condition.

#### 4. USE AN INFIELD TOPDRESSING

Use topdressing on your infield skin surface. An infield topdressing is a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " to  $\frac{1}{2}$ " layer at the infield skin surface of a granular material that will not stick to a player's cleat, even when wet. These materials, usually made of calcined clay, vitrified clay, expanded shale, crushed aggregate or crushed brick, tend to dry more quickly on the surface than if you just had the bare soil exposed. The topdressing will dry on the surface while your infield soil underneath is still moist, but the topdressing allows you still to reenter the field. It acts much like a mulch in a landscape bed, and provides many benefits in the performance of the infield.

#### 5. DRAG THE FIELD BEFORE RAINSTORMS

When you know a rain event is coming, keep the field dragged smooth if possible. The water will flow more easily and rapidly off the infield if it is smooth and not pockmarked with cleat marks and divots. Additionally, keep the field tight. A tight field absorbs less water than one that has been deeply nail dragged, which will create pores for water to fill and slow the drying process down considerably after the rain event.

How it rains can also have an impact in how fast your field will recuperate and come back online for play. A long, slow, light to moderate rain of a couple hours or more is very penetrating and will be deeply absorbed by your infield soil. This type of rain usually requires longer for the field to dry. Compare that to heavy rain lasting 15 to 30 minutes, or even an hour. This kind of rainfall, while possibly dumping many times the amount of water than a slow rainfall did, is a violent rainfall to the soil. That violent pounding of the soil compacts it and doesn't easily allow water to be absorbed into the infield soil. With the right weather conditions, you may



be amazed sometimes how fast you can get back onto a field after one of these gully washers, provided you did everything else mentioned above.

#### ONE MORE THING...

Let me leave you with one other piece of advice. The weather after a rain event matters just as much as how the rain fell. If your humidity is very high and has not lowered much below 75% after the rain, it will take much longer for the field to dry out. Sun and wind help, but there has to be room in the air parcel floating over your infield skin to take in more moisture. If the air parcel is 75% full, it won't take much more in, but if it is only 50% full (50% relative humidity) then there is a lot of room to evaporate water from your field and be absorbed into the air parcels. The faster the humidity lowers after the event, the faster the drying process.

Make the right moves ahead of your rain events on your fields and you may come to not fear the rain as much or need to work as hard afterward either. **SFM**

*Paul Zwaska has spent 40 years in the sports turf industry, including more than 20 years with Beacon Athletics. He has experience maintaining, building and renovating ballfields, including more than 15 years with Major League Baseball as the Baltimore Orioles head groundskeeper. Zwaska holds a Bachelor of Science in Soil Science with a specialty in Turf and Grounds Management from the University of Wisconsin. For more than 18 years, Zwaska has volunteered with the Little League crew at West Madison Little League overseeing maintenance, renovations and crew mentoring at their facility. In addition, he initiated Beacon's Groundskeeper University online training program in 2012.*

*Article and photos provided by Beacon Athletics.*



## Landscape Business “Twenty for 2023” New Product Award winners announced

*Landscape Business*, sister production to *SportsField Management*, recently announced its selections for the “Twenty for 2023” New Product Awards.\* The Twenty for 2023 New Product Award winners, in alphabetical order by company name, are as follows:

### ALTOZ DECK WING EXTENSION

Altoz introduced a new 16” Deck Wing Extension for the all-terrain deck on its TRX 766 tracked zero-turn mower models. This accessory is designed for mowing solar fields, under fence lines, shorelines, ditch banks, orchards, water retention ponds and anywhere you need to mow. With the Altoz Deck Wing Extension, increase your bottom line by reducing the amount of string trimming needed and reducing man-hours. The extension provides 16” additional cutting width (82” total) and flexes up to 12 degrees to follow the terrain. The Deck Wing Extension is designed with a low lift, reversible, hardened-steel straight blade for efficient cutting. A spindle cover protects the spindle, bearing and seals, preventing grass from wrapping, and increasing spindle life. The Deck Wing Extension is equipped with a locking transport position for easy trailering and storage, and is designed for easy installation and removal.



### BILLY GOAT LEAF DRAGON

Billy Goat’s DL3700VETR Leaf Dragon leaf loader features electric start, and generates 6,900 cfm of high-volume leaf suction. The unit’s fuel-efficient 37-gross-hp, EFI Vanguard 933cc engine is coupled to a 25-inch-diameter shredding impeller with a long span belt for increased life. Curbside intake with a 16-inch-diameter x 10-foot-long hose is ergonomically supported with a three-position locking boom, allowing for 45 square feet of clean-up coverage before moving the unit. A no-tool, two-pin door closure for quick access to the impeller and liner



eliminates the time and effort it takes to remove more than 15 bolts for impeller access on other units, encouraging preventative maintenance for longer life of the loader. The road-ready DOT trailer is fully wired with LED lights for smooth, safe operation. The trailer has wide leaf-spring axles, and an adjustable hitch accepts a standard 2-5/16” ball. The Leaf Dragon comes complete with wheel chocks, cone and holder, and rake holders.

### CATERPILLAR EASE OF USE TECHNOLOGIES

Caterpillar introduced two new mini hydraulic excavator (MHE) Ease of Use (EOU) technologies — Indicate and E-Fence — for the Cat 306 CR, 308 CR and 309 CR next-generation mini hydraulic excavators. New to Cat mini excavators, EOU Indicate helps operators to reach grade faster, while EOU E-Fence constrains machine motion to within operator preset boundaries. These technologies are ideal for digging footings, drainage and septic systems, irrigation, electric utilities and applications near structures or obstacles operators need to avoid. They allow operators of all experience levels to work more efficiently and consistently.



### DITCH WITCH PT37

The Ditch Witch PT37 ride-on plow/trencher brings durability and usability to a proven model while retaining a simple, mechanical design. The PT37 is a dedicated plow with an optional trencher, reel-carrier and hydra-bore configuration. An adjustable side-facing seat allows the operator to see all four tires and the plow box while operating. The PT37 is largely



mechanical and features a simplified control display. The compact footprint can scale down to 36 inches wide so users can enter standard gates and tight workspaces. A foldable ROPS design allows users to keep the PT37 on a trailer for easy parking and storage. Its tires provide cost savings compared to a tracked version, and minimize the impact on yards. An optional dual-wheel configuration adds traction and stability. A Yanmar diesel engine provides 36.8 hp. at 3,000 rpm. An optimized plow design provides down pressure to maintain consistent plowing up to 24 inches deep.



#### DOUGLAS DYNAMICS WESTERN PILE DRIVER

The Western Pile Driver lineup of pusher plows — available in 8-, 10- and 12-foot widths — come in three heights and are compatible with skid-steers, wheel loaders, tractors and backhoe loaders. Patent-pending Trace cutting edge technology is made up of independent 2-foot sections that oscillate, move vertically, and trip to accommodate contours and obstacles in the plowable surface. Each blade section is



equipped with a 3/4" cutting edge with carbide insert for heavy-duty commercial applications. Self-leveling side plates with reversible, bolt-on skis make serviceability easy, allowing you to use both edges of the ski before replacing. The Pile Driver is perfect for clearing large open areas such as airports, manufacturing facilities, retail spaces, parking lots and other job sites with an expansive footprint. Given its size and effectiveness, these pusher plows can eliminate the need to find multiple drivers, thereby reducing labor costs.

#### EXMARK VERTEX V-SERIES

Exmark introduced its first stand-on electric mower — the Vertex V-Series. Designed specifically for commercial mower applications, the HyperCell batteries run cooler to provide more runtime and longer service life. Exmark's patent-pending management software optimizes performance and delivers up to seven hours of runtime per charge. Commercial high-torque wheel motors and a planetary transmission deliver smooth, responsive control and ground speed of up to 10 mph. The electric powertrain eliminates maintenance associated with gasoline engines, including oil and filter changes, while the electric spindle motors eliminate belt maintenance and replacement. Horizon360 Connect smart equipment remote software provides app-based connection to the machine for real time equipment data, battery charge status and location information. The 52-inch Electric Series 4 side-discharge cutting deck is fabricated and welded from high-strength steel to deliver Exmark's signature cut quality. High-torque deck motors feature 9-inch-diameter cast-aluminum spindle housings with blade retainers for maximum durability.





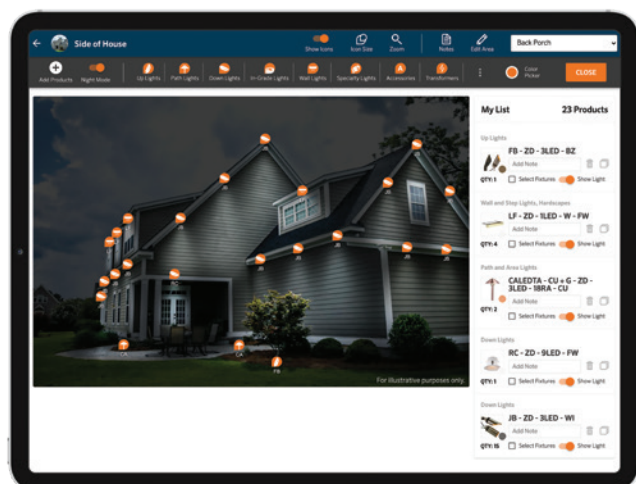
### FERRIS 300S

The Ferris 300S is taking the four-point suspension that made Ferris a favorite among lawn contractors and making it available in an entry-level zero-turn mower. It offers coil-over shocks suspension, available on the rear for the 42-inch-deck option and stepping up to four-point suspension in the 48- and 52-inch-deck options. This patented suspension system eases the impact of uneven terrain on the operator, making it possible for them to mow longer and feel better. The newest addition to the Ferris lineup features a fully fabricated steel mower deck. The durable mower deck combines with a pivoting front axle, and ball bearings in the castor spindle to ensure durability and a quality cut for years to come. The Ferris 300S is powered by a Briggs & Stratton PXi OHV V-twin engine.



### FX LUMINAIRE MY DESIGN

My Design is an easy-to-use free tool from FX Luminaire. It simplifies the design process by combining the power of My List with real images of your project site. The simple controls available in Night Mode let you illustrate the nighttime lighting experience, including the direction and intensity of each fixture. Simply take pictures of the location and import them into the tool. Then drag and drop lighting products over each image and area of the property. Once complete, you'll have two key takeaways to help close the sale: a stunning proposal and a complete and accurate product list. You can also export a high-quality PDF of your design for your clients and send the product list to your local distributor for faster ordering.



### GRASSHOPPER SO26

With the Grasshopper SO26 stand-on mower, operators of all sizes will appreciate the adjustable command center tower, which provides 4.5" of range and easy accessibility to switches, levers and controls. The extra-wide, extra-thick pad provides all-day comfort. The EZ Deck Lift Lever allows for effortless cutting height adjustment, and the T-Drive transmission and engine are mounted on the deck, ensuring no damage to drive belts or engine components when raising or lowering the deck. The anti-slip operator platform's shock-absorbent coil-spring suspension makes users feel like they are floating on air. The SO26 has a low center of gravity. Since the operator platform is nestled between the drive tires, the "slingshot" effect is eliminated. Choose between 52" or 61" extra-deep DuraMax decks. Both models are powered by an 810 cc Vanguard OHV engine. The 9.25-gallon fuel capacity allows users to refuel less often and mow up to 5.27 max acres per hour.



### HUSQVARNA CEORA

In January 2023, Husqvarna Group launched the Ceora, a new autonomous solution for large green spaces. Ceora features the Husqvarna EPOS (Exact Positioning Operating System), a satellite-based technology that enables it to work within virtual boundaries. Ceora will mow up to 18 acres in a 24-hour period at a max cutting height of 2.8 inches. The Husqvarna Ceora is perfect for sports fields, golf courses, city parks or commercial properties, and works under various



weather conditions — rain or shine — delivering extraordinary results. Additionally, Ceora offers total turf control — all from your smart phone. Steering, defining cutting areas or changing the schedule is fast and simple. Husqvarna Fleet Services allows surveillance and map localization for full control and theft protection.

### KIOTI ZXD DIESEL SERIES

Kioti's ZXD Diesel Series was designed with the customer in mind, combining features they know and love paired with the power of a diesel engine. The two new models — the ZXD61 and ZXD72 — are equipped with a 24.5-hp., three-cylinder diesel engine, built to conquer the toughest of jobs. The heavy-duty 17.1-gallon fuel tank reduces the downtime needed for refueling, allowing users to maximize efficiency on the job all day long. Customers can choose between a 61- or 72-inch fabricated mower deck, which feature a reinforced 7-gauge deck for long lasting durability. Not only is the ZXD Series durable and comfortable, but the mower provides top-of-the-line cut quality.



### KUBOTA F3710

The new F3710 front-mount mower is equipped with a 36.9-hp. Kubota Common Rail System diesel engine for fast, powerful and efficient job performance. Available with both side-discharge and rear-discharge pro-commercial mower decks in 60 inches and 72 inches, the F3710's high lifting capacity provides the versatility to handle an array of implements such as a grass catcher, snow blower, rotary sweeper and debris blower, and is compatible with all implements currently available for Kubota mowers. An LCD digital panel comes standard on the F3710 and provides operators

with vital information like Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF) level, engine speed, remaining fuel, water temperature and hour meter. Because long hours on the job can take a toll on operator efficiency, a deluxe high-back seat with four separate adjustments for weight control, lumbar support, back angle and arm rests helps keep operators comfortable and productive all day long.



### MILWAUKEE TOOL M12 BRUSHLESS PRUNING SHEARS

Milwaukee Tool's M12 brushless pruning shears deliver the fastest, most controlled pruning while reducing user fatigue by implementing user-focused technology to revolutionize how the job is completed. These pruning shears deliver the power to cut 1-1/4" branches in a single pass while simultaneously reducing muscle effort by 75% compared to manual solutions with their inline, lightweight design. When paired with the M12 CP2.0 battery, these pruning shears deliver up to 1,000 cuts per charge in 1/2-inch branches. The cutting-edge mode select board delivers ultimate user control and efficiency by providing the ability to set blades into half of the maximum capacity, increasing application speed by 40% for smaller, more repetitive cuts. Also incorporated is the advanced Active Blade Control with trigger tracking technology, which allows blade movement to mirror trigger movement — providing users the ability to adjust and optimize cut capacity in application, improving accessibility and control in detailed pruning applications.





### RC MOWERS AMR

The Autonomous Mowing Robot (AMR) from RC Mowers directly addresses the labor availability problems in the landscaping industry. With these autonomous mowers, landscape contractors can reduce the number of employees needed to handle mowing jobs. The AMR allows a single operator to generate the same revenue as a crew of three. RC Mowers' Autonomous Mowing Robots provide the opportunity to increase profit from mowing services, which traditionally is the number-one source of landscaping companies' revenue, but also generally the least profitable.



### SITEONE LESCO 300 TRUCK-MOUNTED TANK SPRAYER

SiteOne Landscape Supply's LESCO 300 truck-mounted tank sprayer offers increased profitability for green industry professionals. The new unit features a 300-gallon tank, all-electric start and 6.5-hp. Vanguard engine. The truck-mounted design offers alternative efficiencies compared to a stand-on unit, such as easy towability and space savings. Featuring a Hydra-Cell pump engineered to be trouble free and low maintenance, providing users a lifetime cost savings of up to \$6,500 compared to traditional double diaphragm and piston pumps. The tank sprayer is resistant to corrosive chemicals and features molded, peel-resistant measurement labels for easy reading. It also includes a waterproof, lockable storage compartment. The unit attaches to most truck models and covers a large application area.



### SCAG AERSTORM

Designed and engineered for long-lasting durability, improved productivity and all-day comfort, the Scag AerStorm is the next generation of aeration. The machine's heavy-duty construction ensures years of dependable service and worry-free productivity. Behind the AerStorm's ultra-smooth drive controls is a rugged, dual hydraulic drive system, delivering dependable power with 10cc Hydro-Gear pumps and 14.5ci Parker wheel motors. A powerful and efficient 23-hp. Kohler Command Pro engine delivers huge power, along with exceptional efficiency and dependable performance. An aerating width of 30-inches, paired with speeds up to 7 mph, allows the operator to cover up to 2 acres per hour. The AerStorm features 48 strong, self-cleaning coring tines for reliable and continual turf plug extraction. Adjustable down pressure helps to penetrate even the hardest and driest soils, ensuring effective aeration performance in all conditions.



### STEINER AIRFX

The Steiner AirFX mower deck attachment is the newest Steiner turf attachment, engineered to produce a pristine quality of cut on various turf types and uneven terrain. This adjustable and easy-to-maintain mower deck can cut at varied heights between 1 and 5 inches, and is available in 61- or 72-inch-width sizes, built to maneuver tight spaces or large acreage efficiently. With a deep-deck, bullnose design and patented Air-Gap baffle system, the AirFX mower deck creates a vacuum that lifts the grass for a superior quality of cut. The deck's hydraulic lift allows operators to easily raise and lower the deck for height-of-cut adjustments, transport, or cleaning and maintenance, featuring an 80-degree flip-up for optimal accessibility. The attachment's Air-Gap design increases airflow and aggressively shoots clippings out of the extra-large discharge opening, providing a cleaner deck, while various blow-out ports make end-of-the-day cleaning a breeze.



### STIHL AP 500 S

The Stihl AP 500 S battery is the most powerful battery in the Stihl AP Battery System, and features proprietary power-laminate cell technology. With the AP 500 S, Stihl introduced a new type of battery. Thanks to its power-laminate cell technology, this battery offers not only high-energy density and comparatively low weight, but also longevity. When properly cared for, the AP 500 S can accept up to twice as many charging cycles as compared to the conventional Li-ion batteries, providing a significant increase in service life. The AP 500 S battery powers the Stihl AP System of tools that are designed for professional users. It provides an outstanding power-to-weight ratio, packing 337 watt-hours of energy at 4.2 pounds. The AP 500 S is needed to unleash the full power of ground-breaking products such as the new MSA 300 C-O battery-powered chain saw.



### TORO EDINGO 500

Specifically designed with the same innovative spirit Toro has applied for more than a century to its equipment, every detail of the new eDingo 500 has been poured over. The HyperCell Power System allows operators to gain efficiency, eliminate engine exhaust emissions, and complete more jobs with less hassle. The new eDingo boasts a powerful rated operating capacity of 515 pounds and a new narrow width of 30 inches, making it capable of fitting through even the tightest of doorways. Plus, the new design has a hinge pin height of 81 inches, which allows for clearing into most standard dumpsters, and 6.5-gpm hydraulic flow. The high operating capacity allows for the effective use of many Toro attachments, including the 4-in-1 bucket, grapple bucket, floor scraper and many more.



### WALKER MOWER C23I

The Model C23i is the latest addition to the Walker Mower line-up, incorporating years of development and testing to deliver an upgraded mowing experience. This mower is designed to be fast, quiet, simple and easy to maintain. The C23i features laser-bend construction, extensive robot welding, and modular assemblies, resulting in precise and repeatable components that offer long-lasting durability. With a 13.25-inch thru-shaft Grass Handling System blower, Hydro-Gear transaxles and a Kohler Command Pro EFI engine, the mower is built for efficiency, reliability, and low maintenance. The key design goal of the C23i is to simplify the Walker Mower, improve manufacturing and operational efficiencies, and reduce the number of parts involved. The result is a mower with fewer belts and pulleys, reduced bearings, no gearboxes and a design that is accessible and easy to maintain for service shops worldwide. The chassis assembly alone has 64% fewer individual parts than a comparable Walker Mower. **SFM**



*\* Manufacturers were allowed to submit more than one new product for consideration, as long as the product was introduced to the market between June 2, 2022, and June 1, 2023. The 20 winners were selected from among all qualifying nominations.*

*EPG Brand Acceleration produces Landscape-Business.com, OPE Business magazine and SportsField Management magazine, as well as a wide range of publications and digital properties for other industries.*



The following are some industry Tweets from the past month. Follow us @SportsField\_Mag.



**@INDYINDIANSTURF**

Why aren't foul lines yellow to match foul poles?



**@DBAPGrounds**

Happy 4th everyone!



**@CrewGroundsCrew**

Happy July 4th from the Crew Grounds Crew! #GroundsCrew96  
#Crew96 #OHPC #July4th #americanflag #USA #USMNT  
#SportsTurf #SFMA #OSFMA #OTF #Groundskeepers #Art



**@barnstonworth**

Today's pitch for @WarwickshireCCC T20





@ChengsTweets

Perfect games = pulling out and changing a new rubber



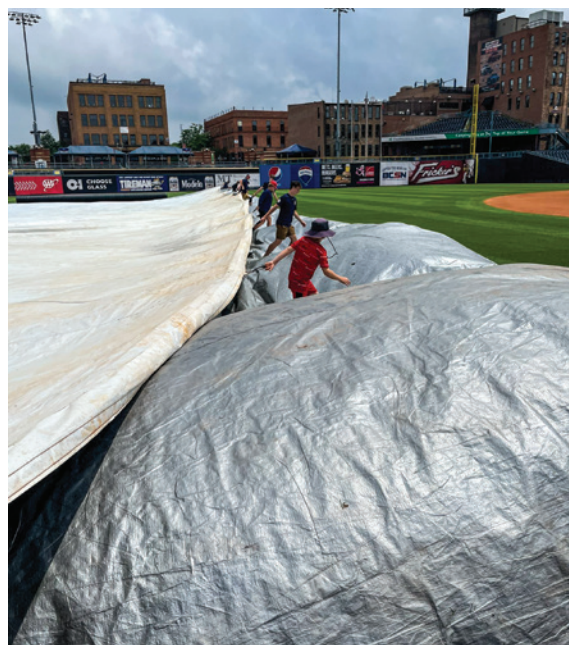
@Mike\_Kerns\_

Ready for Gold Cup Semifinals here at Snapdragon.



@K\_Dvorak13

The countdown is over! Welcome #MLB #AllStarGame to #tmobilepark. I couldn't be more proud of our crew to showcase our hard work on this global stage.



@LeppelmeierK

Little man's ball game gets rain out, he chooses to come work with us until I am pulling tarp and cleaning up fireworks. It sure makes the long days better having him around.





**@MichiganSFMA**

Andy Flynn leading the tours this afternoon at Old College Field with top notch facilities on display.



**@haymarketgcrew**

Quick lineup on the baselines this morning. Still crazy that the field looks the best it has all year, right now, in July...



**@klmoses**

2023 London Series in the books! It was a pleasure working with all involved — especially Hewitt's, the London Stadium crew, and our BrightView crew.



**@CUBuffsTurf**

#TheMayor doing the needle tine in the stadium. Seeding on deck, topdressing in the hole, and granular fert batting cleanup today in Folsom. 64 days until the @CUBuffsFootball home opener.





@masonmturf

My irrigation guy was hard at work today @DogsOfTurf



@WillColeRTurf

Millie supervising bullpen work today. Team comes back tomorrow getting the small details checked off the list.



@TurfgrassTiger

Happy Independence Day!! #4thofJuly

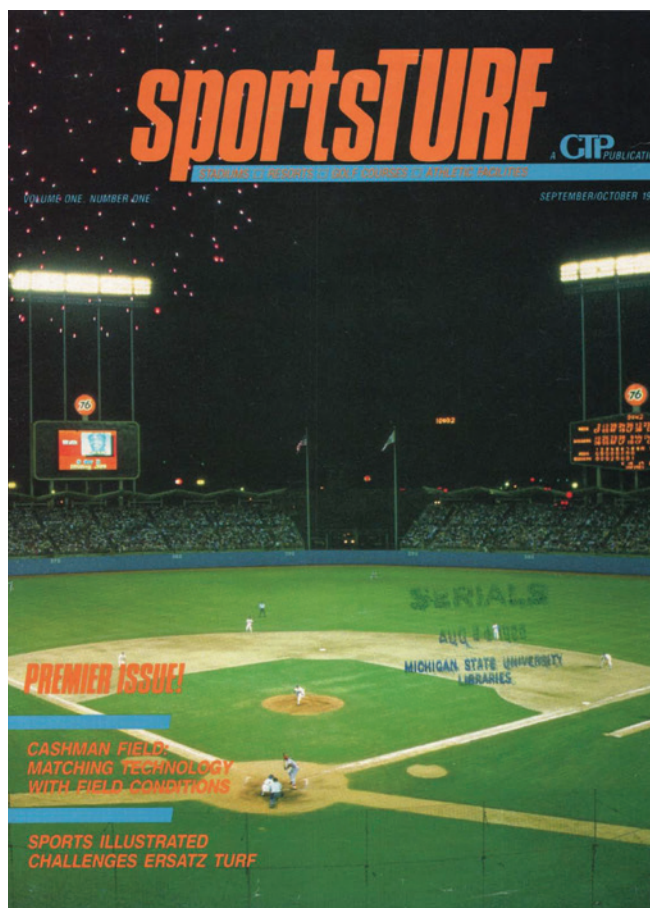


@JeffRoss2015

Had to bust out our best work for the 4th of July weekend!!!!  
@GLGroundsCrew @greatlakesloons



# September/October 1985



In this retrospective, we will examine historic issues of *SportsTurf* magazine, predecessor to *SportsField Management* magazine. In this issue, we start at the very beginning of the publication.

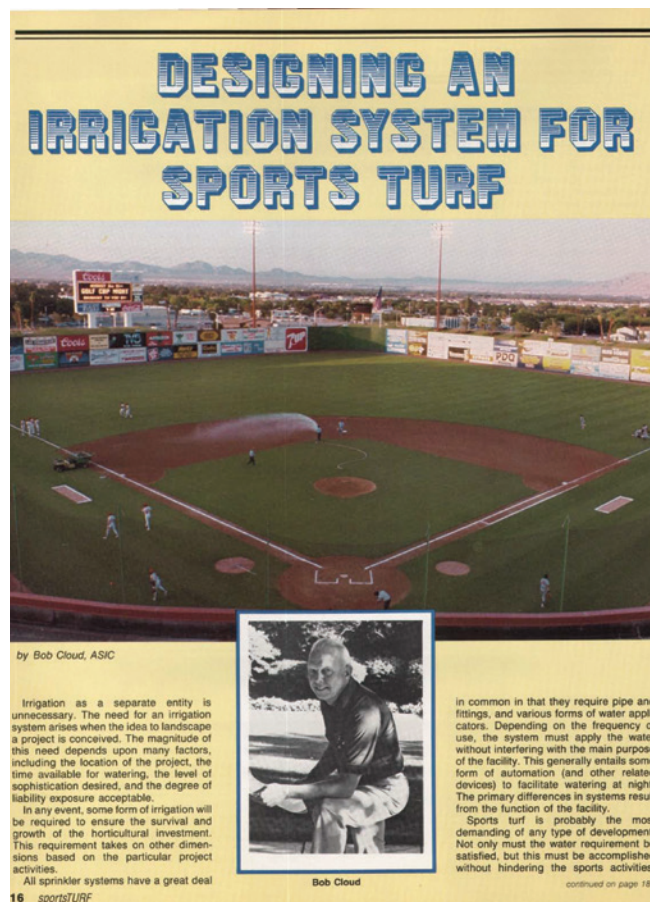
*SportsTurf* magazine (then stylized as *sportsTURF*) published its first edition with the September/October 1985 issue. At that time, *sportsTURF* was not yet the official publication of the Sports Turf Managers Association (that didn't happen until 1988).

The cover of the first issue featured Dodger Stadium without a headline other than "Premier Issue!" and an inside cover caption of "Dodger Stadium at night shows a strong combination of quality natural turf, a stadium designed for baseball, and a scenic location."

Then-publisher Denne Goldstein billed *sportsTURF* as "a special magazine for a special market." He stated that the publication was directed at "recreation and sports stadium managers, golf course superintendents, greenskeepers and groundskeepers at colleges, parks and universities."

Associate publisher Bruce Shank wrote, "Until this first issue, the only publications covering the problems and technology of sports turf were either coaches magazines, general landscape or grounds care publications, or magazines that really focus on food service, general services, or janitorial maintenance. These magazines devote very little space to the needs of the playing surface and the people responsible for it."

The lead news item of the inaugural issue was analysis of a *Sports Illustrated* report about artificial turf, along with a rebuttal article from Monsanto, inventor of AstroTurf. The debut issue of *sportsTURF* also included profiles of the maintenance practices as Cashman Field (home of the Las Vegas Stars Minor League Baseball team), and the athletic fields at Towson State University in Maryland. There was also an article on "Designing an Irrigation System for Sports Turf" and another about a football field improvement program at 37 high school football fields in north Texas.





## ROOKIES

### PRODUCT UPDATE

#### RIDE, DON'T WALK



Turn your commercial walk-behind into a rider with Bunton's heavy duty, one-wheel rider. The large walk-behinds have been replacing many small trim mowers recently. Now its versatility is expanded for large, open areas where riding is more practical. The new rider allows tighter cornering than previous riders.

BUNTON CO.  
Circle 128 on Postage Free Card

#### HEAT TOLERANT RYEGRASS

Improved heat and drought tolerance are two big features of Palmer perennial ryegrass from Loft's Inc. Rapid germination, strong resistance to brown patch and leaf spot, and clean cut are benefits of this ryegrass named for a golfer who ought to know a quality turf when he sees one.

LOFTS, INC.  
Circle 353 on Postage Free Card

Tired of repainting wood bleachers scarred by vandalism? Hannah Industries may have a solution for you. The company's bleachers feature aluminum seats and foot planks and resist weather and vandalism. The hardware has a hot-dipped galvanized finish. The elevated and nonelevated bleachers are guaranteed for one year and are covered by product liability insurance.

HANNAH INDUSTRIES, INC.  
Circle 291 on Postage Free Card

#### VEHICLE-MOUNTED VAC



Once you finish sweeping up gravel, stone, clippings, or glass with Mr. Air Sweepers 2200, you can back up to a dumpster and dump. The unit is designed to fit on a Cushman, Sanfu, Daihatsu, Taylor-Dunn, or most any turf vehicle or compact pick-up truck.

The unit comes with a wandering refuse hose and is removable in minutes.

MR. AIR SWEEPERS  
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#### TRUCKSTER BOOM SPRAYER



Get more out of your turf truckster with Agrotec's new boom sprayer. The compact unit features a 100-gallon tank, boom pressures up to 250 psi (hand gun pressures up to 550 psi), and a boom unit that hangs over the tailgate of any truckster.

The entire unit weighs 230 pounds empty and can be easily removed from the vehicle when not being used.

AGROTEC, INC.  
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#### AERATOR WITH TINE GUARD



A new slip clutch prevents the Ride-Aire II riding aerator from breaking lines on solid objects hidden in the soil. The unit automatically stops the tine arms if they hit a solid object. The clutch is torque adjusted and reactivates the line arms when soft ground resumes.

The Ryan unit is designed to aerate 12,000 square feet per hour with cores spaced 3-1/2 inches apart. Seven sizes of case-hardened tines are available in lengths from 2 to 3-1/2 inches and diameters of 3/8, 1/2, and 5/8 inch.

RYAN GMC LINCOLN  
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#### ALUMINUM BLEACHERS



#### TRAVELLING FIELD SPRINKLER

Irrodelco engineers had sports fields and parks in mind when they designed the Mini Traveler. All components are mounted directly on the open chassis for easy access and all parts are stockable for easy maintenance. The "surround the reel" design of the galvanized chassis distributes stress more effectively than "under the reel" designs according to the manufacturer.

The Mini Traveler features a galvanized detachable reel for easy storage and shipment.

IRRODELCO CORP.  
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The product news section from 1985 (titled "Rookies") is definitely a time capsule. It featured, among other things, information about the Billy Goat BL-61 blower, Salsco 30-12 aerifier, and the Mr. Air Sweeper 2200 vehicle-mounted vac, as well as aluminum bleachers (as an alternative to wood), and a Bunton one-wheel rider attachment that turns walk-behind mowers into a "ride-behind."

Toward the back of the inaugural issue was an article from STMA (now SFMA) Founder Dr. William H. Daniel titled "Taking the First Step Toward Sports Field Improvement." In the article, he provided an overview of fertility, overseeding, core aeration, sand topdressing, weed control, resodding and plugging, mulching, vertical drainage, and needed supplies. Daniel wrote, "A few

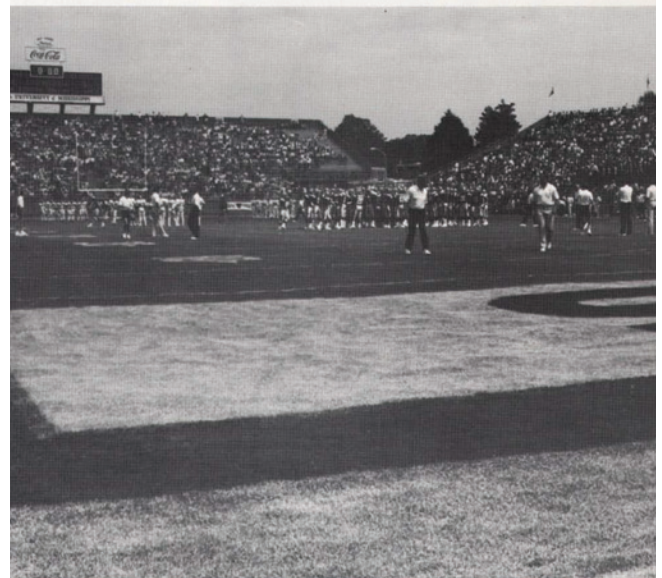
tried and true techniques to improve tired sports fields might be just the motivation needed to get a field improvement program off the ground. In fact, start with one field and use two or three of the following budget-minded improvements. Don't put off field improvements with the idea every field must be rebuilt...start with these primary steps on a few fields and work your way up to safe, uniform fields." **SFM**

All content for this section is pulled from the SportsTurf/SportsField Management archives, an ongoing cooperative project of EPG Brand Acceleration, SFMA and the Michigan State University Libraries (<https://sturf.lib.msu.edu/index.html>).

If you have any personal stories/anecdotes about the early days of the magazine, please contact John Kmitta at [jkmitta@epgacceleration.com](mailto:jkmitta@epgacceleration.com) or 763-383-4405.

## Taking the First Step Toward Sports Field Improvement

By William H. Daniel



due Field is a luxury for visiting teams who are used to harder surfaces. Turfgrass roots penetrate more than 18 inches of soil zone. Despite its excellent condition, the field is aerified regularly.

few tried and true techniques to improve tired sports fields might be just the motivation needed to get a field improvement program off the ground. In fact, start with one field and use two or three of the following budget-minded improvements. Don't put off field improvements with the idea every field must be rebuilt...start with these primary steps on a few fields and work your way up to safe, uniform fields.

#### Beef Up Fertilizer

Any injured organism requires more nutrients than healthy ones. Sports turf is regularly injured while serving its purpose to reduce injuries to players. Sports turf needs extra fertilizer to replace injured leaves, torn roots, and tillers. Heavy wear areas need twice the nutrients as the rest of the field.

When seeding, apply 100-100-100 lbs. of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium to the prepared seedbed. After the seed germinates, but prior to the first mowing, apply fertilizer again at half the

above rates to favor rapid earlier use of the field.

Fertility requirements vary by turfgrass species and the turfgrass type. The applications per year are recommended. Start fertilizing in late winter to early spring growth. Follow it up in spring with an application of a crabgrass preventer.

In midsummer, apply a third application of a broadleaf weed killer. This is the right time to apply insecticides for grubs as well. Just prior to the start of the fall season.

continues

September/October





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## JOHN DEERE



# Bluegrass/Ryegrass Swards – Mixing and Matching

**Q:** With a mixed ryegrass/Kentucky bluegrass field, is it possible to shift back to a majority KBG surface through overseeding; or is it better to go all-in on ryegrass to have a more uniform surface?

– Dan, New Jersey

**A:** The short answer is yes, it is possible to shift back to a majority Kentucky bluegrass field if you are overseeding bare soil/thin areas with 100% bluegrass seed and you have prepared a good seed bed with a slit-seeder, weasel or similar. Overseeding a dense perennial ryegrass sward, and hoping that bluegrass will establish is futile.

Regularly overseeding thin and bare soil during optimum bluegrass germination and establishment times is key. The ideal time to seed is fall — from mid-August to late September — due to cooling temperatures, timely rains, no competition from crabgrass or goosegrass and seven to eight months of root development and maturation before the summer stress period. Bluegrass does not do well mid-summer when average daily temperatures are above 75 degrees Fahrenheit, especially if it's dry.

The challenge in spring will be weed control because bluegrass is just too slow to out-complete aggressive spring weeds such as annual bluegrass, prostrate knotweed, crabgrass, goosegrass and yellow nutsedge. Avoid renovations during peak crabgrass germination period and consider applying an herbicide such as mesotrione that will control weeds but not have an adverse effect on bluegrass germination. Dormant seeding in late winter is also an option to get a jumpstart on the season. Pre-germinating the seed and mixing it with divot mix is also a good tip, as the divot mix can be applied to high-wear areas and bare spots after each game.

The main reason bluegrass overseeding fails is lack of moisture. The seed needs to be kept moist until it germinates. This means that someone must commit to lightly watering (syringing) the seed several times per day for one to two weeks until the seedlings are visible. Even then, there must be a robust fertilizer, irrigation and mowing program to get a dense, healthy ground cover. In essence, it's a high-maintenance grass and the reason that many sports field managers use perennial ryegrass.

In response to your question about going all-in with perennial ryegrass, many cool-season turf managers do overseed with just ryegrass, but you must be vigilant for disease. Three of the grass-killing diseases — brown patch, pythium and grey leaf spot — can kill ryegrass quickly. In some cases, the inoculation period is so quick that by the time you see the disease, it is too late to save the grass. Protecting the ryegrass with a preventative fungicide program can prevent major grass loss, but it can be expensive. There are more disease-tolerant cultivars available, but keep in mind that new, seedling ryegrass is more susceptible than established ryegrass, and that while some cultivars are more tolerant, no cultivar is immune.

Having a mixed sward of the two species provides the best of both worlds. The perennial ryegrass will give you quick ground cover, great color and striping ability, and a hard-wearing surface. The bluegrass will give you great color and striping ability, a hard-wearing surface that can recuperate via rhizomes and pretty good disease tolerance (bar summer patch). If the crown stays hydrated, bluegrass can survive several weeks of drought stress and be able to recuperate; perennial ryegrass typically cannot. To further maximize sward diversity, several cultivars of each species can be added to the mix. Most managers rely on their seed supplier to make sure the mix is uniform in growth habit, color, cultural requirements and mowing height.

Further complicating the issue of uniformity, certain cultivars of Kentucky bluegrass will react differently if you are on a plant growth regulator program. Some bluegrass cultivars will become very compact and dense when under regulation, while others will not. I recommend putting out a test plot so you can evaluate how your field will respond to certain growth regulators and other products. **SFM**



**Pamela Sherratt**

Sports turf extension specialist  
The Ohio State University

## Questions?

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

Or send your question to Dr. Grady Miller, North Carolina State University, Box 7620, Raleigh, NC 27695-7620, or [grady\\_miller@ncsu.edu](mailto:grady_miller@ncsu.edu)





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