

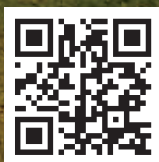


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# SportsField

## MANAGEMENT

March 2023

Vol. 39 No. 3

The Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

Subsurface Insects **10** | SFMA Conference Post-show Recap **18**  
MiLB Symposium **28** | Infield Care **36**

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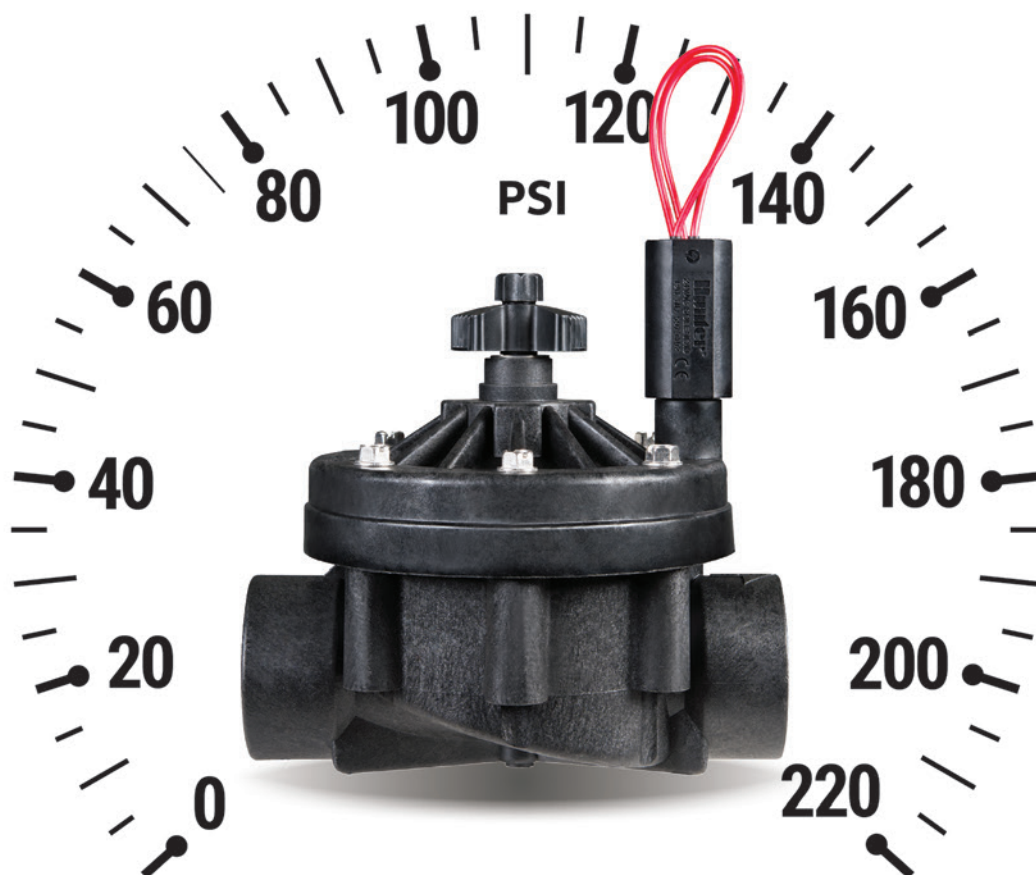
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# Editor's Note



**John Kmitta**

Associate Publisher /  
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763-383-4405

This edition of *SportsField Management* features our annual SFMA Conference & Exhibition post-show recap.

Salt Lake City Utah welcomed the industry's premier event January 16-19, and attendees experienced a wealth of high-level educational opportunities, tours, networking and fun.

I thoroughly enjoyed the Seminar On Wheels (SOW) tour, as SOW participants were shuttled to Provo, Utah, to see firsthand the amazing facilities at Brigham Young University, and learn about the management practices required for their unique and picturesque setting.

From there, we visited America First Field, home of MLS club Real Salt Lake, then rounded out a jam-packed tour at Smith's Ballpark, home of the Salt Lake Bees (Triple-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Angels).

Another highlight for me was the SAFE Night of Bowling, a fun outing that featured some great networking and excellent conversations – all while raising money for research, educational programs and scholarships geared to the sports field profession. I'm sure my teammates wish I had been placed on a different team, but a great time was had by all.

As with all SFMA Conferences, there was more education than one could take in during the live event. But thankfully all session recordings are once again available electronically for post-event consumption.

I also thoroughly enjoyed this year's Keynote Speaker, NFLPA Executive Director DeMaurice Smith, who answered questions about the NFL, the NFLPA, player safety and working toward safer playing surfaces. Smith was kind enough to stick around after the SFMA Annual Meeting for a casual conversation and photos in the convention center lobby.

In addition to the education, networking and events, the SFMA Exhibition featured the industry's finest showcasing the latest products, technologies, supplies, services and more.

It was great to see so much innovation, and I was also thrilled with how many attendees stopped by the *SportsField Management* booth to talk about the magazine, share ideas or just say hello. Those types of conversations are what help us keep touch with the industry and develop the content you want to see.

If you did not attend the 2023 SFMA Conference in Salt Lake City, I highly recommend that you check out the conference recordings. Also, be sure to mark your calendars for the 2024 SFMA Conference & Exhibition, which heads to sunny Daytona Beach, Fla., January 22-25, 2024. For more information, visit <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/conference/>.

Enjoy our post-show recap! **SFM**

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# President's Message



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**Sun Roesslein, CSFM**

SFMA President

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

Regardless of what Punxsutawney Phil predicted, spring is on its way. Spring sports have begun or are starting soon, and we are experiencing longer days with more daylight and working longer hours. I'm even starting to see bulbs begin to bloom through the snow in the Denver area.

Springtime at the NAAC means preparing to host girls soccer, as well as boys and girls lacrosse, which begin the first week of March. As we are getting ready to host athletes, their families and our community this season, there is an underlying excitement about setting the stage for the memories to be made. This season might be a stepping stone to the next level for an athlete to play in college, or it might be the culmination of their playing days. Either way, we hope their experience this season is a great one.

Beyond the games, graduation planning is already underway! Before all the events start, our days are full of a checklist of "extra duties as needed," such as cleaning bathrooms, locker rooms, press box windows and ticket booths; setting up the stadium; and all the other behind-the-scenes work that has nothing to do with preparing the actual playing surface.

The chorus of Bachman-Turner Overdrive's classic rock song *Takin' Care of Business* plays often in my playlist while checking things off the preseason list: "We been taking care of business (it's all mine), taking care of business and working overtime." Those two lines alone are a pretty

good snapshot of a day in the life this time of year at the NAAC leading up to opening day.

Association-wise this time of year, the conference education planning for 2024 is already underway. The call for presentations is now open. If you have an idea for an educational session, I encourage you to submit. Our profession is great at sharing information to help each other succeed, and this has been how the education sessions have been built. Typically, topics cover sports field management, professional development, research and new technologies. Are there other issues you feel need to be covered that would benefit you and your peers? If you're like me, public speaking might be nerve wracking, but stepping out of your comfort zone is an opportunity to help you grow professionally. If you've been on the fence about submitting an idea, please do!

March also brings the first quarter board meeting for the new SFMA Board of Directors. Tackling the strategic plan and setting it into motion is a major goal for this meeting and will set the road map for the association for years to come. I'm really looking forward to working with this group to begin taking care of SFMA business. **SFM**

*Sun Roesslein, CSFM*



# Rising Star Awards Nomination Deadline March 17

Nominations for *SportsField Management* magazine's Rising Star Awards are due March 17. Nominations can be submitted by clicking on the Rising Star logo on [SportsFieldManagementOnline.com](https://www.sportsfieldmanagementonline.com) or directly at <https://www.jotform.com/form/223534508210143>.

The *SportsField Management* Rising Star Awards will highlight the best up-and-coming leaders in the sports field management industry. Nominees can be from any aspect of the sports field management industry.

Rising Star nominees must be under the age of 40 as of January 1, 2023; or, if over the age of 40, must be new to the sports field management industry within the last 10 years.

Candidates will be evaluated based on professional accomplishments, community and industry involvement, philanthropic efforts and other exemplary qualities.

And don't feel as if every box and category need to be answered. Some areas will apply and some likely won't.

Questions? Please email John Kmitta at [jkmitta@epgacceleration.com](mailto:jkmitta@epgacceleration.com) and include "SportsField Management Rising Star" in the subject line.

(Note: Nominees do not need to be members of the national SFMA to be considered for a Rising Star Award.)

Nominations are due **March 17, 2023**. **SFM**



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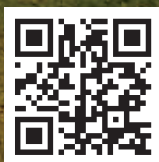


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# Below Deck

*A guide to subsurface insects*

By John C. Fech and Jonathan L. Larson, Ph.D.

*Southern mole cricket. Photo by David Held, Auburn University.*



Critters that feed on the all-important root system of turf plants deserve a close look. Sure, leaves do the hard work of photosynthesis, creating sugars and carbohydrates, but half of the heavy lifting is acquiring moisture and nutrients from the soil. Without roots, that doesn't happen. Keeping root-feeding pests at bay is critical and needs to be a foundational part of the maintenance protocol and budget.

### SCOUTING FOR SUBSURFACE FEEDERS IS HARD

When it comes to insects that feed underground, you can't see what might be lurking (and eating) with all of the leaves and thatch in the way. It's easy to spot stem rust spores on grass blades – the leaves turn orange and leave deposits on your shoes – but not so much with soil-active creatures. In fact, without a proactive approach to pest management, the “out of sight, out of mind” mindset can be pervasive.

Several sampling techniques are effective, starting with recordkeeping. Documentation of insect infestations that have been encountered is invaluable. Records don't need to be sophisticated; simple phrases in a yearly notebook can suffice. Basic maps of recent outbreaks add real value as well. As a management technique, recordkeeping helps to know what to look for from year to year.

The tools for scouting are inexpensive and likely to be on hand in the toolshed. A sod spade (aka square-nosed shovel), heavy-duty pocketknife and a golf cup cutter are easy to use and really helpful for extracting soil, thatch and possibly subsurface-feeding insects. Some of these pests can also be forced from their hiding places by using soap flushes and pouring them on suspect areas. The soap will irritate caterpillars and weevils and drive them to the surface for counting and identification.

Regardless of which tool is used, a “down on your hands and knees” posture should be utilized. In areas

previously injured or spots where damage symptoms are observed, remove the sod and start looking/scanning for anything that looks like it could be a responsible culprit. While inspecting, it's likely that other insects and arthropods such as earthworms, centipedes, pill bugs and sowbugs are likely to be present.

Using your eyes in this manner is particularly important, not only for spotting potential responsible insects, but also for noting the condition of the soil, presence of water drainage limiting layers and the extent of the thatch buildup. All of these factors play a role in overall insect management.

### KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST

#### WHITE GRUBS

As famous sports broadcaster Keith Jackson would say, grubs are “the granddaddy of them all.” They are sort of the poster child for subsurface feeders. Several species of white grubs can damage sports turf including masked chafers, black turfgrass ataenius, Japanese beetles and May/June beetles. All of these grubs damage turf in their larval stage, except for Japanese beetles, which can cause injury in both the adult and the larval stage.

A good “species separator” for white grubs is to simply measure their size; the smallest one is the black turfgrass ataenius, about half of the size of a small fingernail or 1/4 inch. The next largest is the Japanese beetle's larval stage which is about twice that size. The largest ones, the masked chafers and May/June beetle, whose larvae start small, reach 3/4 inch in size. You can also familiarize yourself with the grub's posterior abdominal tip and the spiny hairs that develop there. Different species of grubs have different “raster patterns” that are diagnostic.

Black turfgrass ataenius adults are black (obviously) in color and quite small at about 1/4 inch in size. They overwinter in loose soil, pine needles and leaf litter and begin moving into turf areas in mid-spring. Soon after, larvae hatch and begin feeding on turf roots. Feeding occurs for four to five weeks, then their life stage changes to a resting pupal form for a couple of weeks followed by emergence of adults. In mid-summer, if weather conditions are conducive, a second generation of beetles will develop and prepare to overwinter by mid- to late fall. Large numbers of ataenius larvae are required to cause turf injury.

Japanese beetles have the reputation of being voracious plant feeders and are known to feed on the roots, fruits, flowers and foliage of more than 300 landscape plants, as well as turfgrass. Adults are active from mid- to late summer when egg laying occurs. Their reputation is well deserved – a result of feeding on the roots and rhizomes of most turf species and cultivars. If present in sufficient numbers, severe damage can result from their feeding in a relatively short period of time. Adults are easily identified



**Damage from white grub feeding. Photo by John C. Fech.**





**Japanese beetle larvae.** Photo by Fred Miller, University of Illinois.

as hard-shelled beetles with a metallic-green sheen to their wing covers. Larvae appear similar to the other white grub species. Japanese beetle grubs hatch from eggs in mid-summer, feeding through July into September. They will burrow deeper in the soil as fall arrives and overwinter until May the next year when they will pupate and mature into adulthood that summer.

Masked chafer adults are normally present from early to mid-summer. They deposit their eggs into the top 2 inches of soil, usually in small clusters. Hatching occurs in late summer, with immediate root feeding to follow. As the larvae proceed through several stages, the potential for damage grows significantly. As temperatures drop in fall, grubs move deeper into the soil to overwinter. As soil temperatures warm in the spring, they return to the active root zone, feed for a brief period, pupate and emerge as adults to begin a new cycle.

May/June beetles require three years to complete their life cycle. The stages look similar to the other species of white grub, but the process of maturing is extended over a longer period of time. Between the first two years, the grub is feeding and growing. By year three, they will pupate in the early autumn, overwintering in the pupal stage and emerging as an adult the next May or June, hence the name.



**Japanese beetle grubs.** Photo by Jonathan L. Larson, Ph.D., University of Kentucky.

White grub management is most often predicated upon the use of insecticides. Managers can consider using either a preventive approach or a curative approach. The choice may come down to the need for perfect turf, budgetary reasons or historical problems. Preventive management is the most common choice and insecticides such as imidacloprid, clothianidin and chlorantraniliprole are frequently used active ingredients. Preventive applications occur in the early part of the growing season, usually being applied between May and July. This can appear counterintuitive as the grubs may not be present or not feeding during this window. These insecticides are systemic and will be inside of the turf for the rest of the growing season, killing the future grubs that may be born in the turf. Spraying these chemicals too early may mean that there won't be high enough residues of the insecticide later in the season to provide protection. Going out too



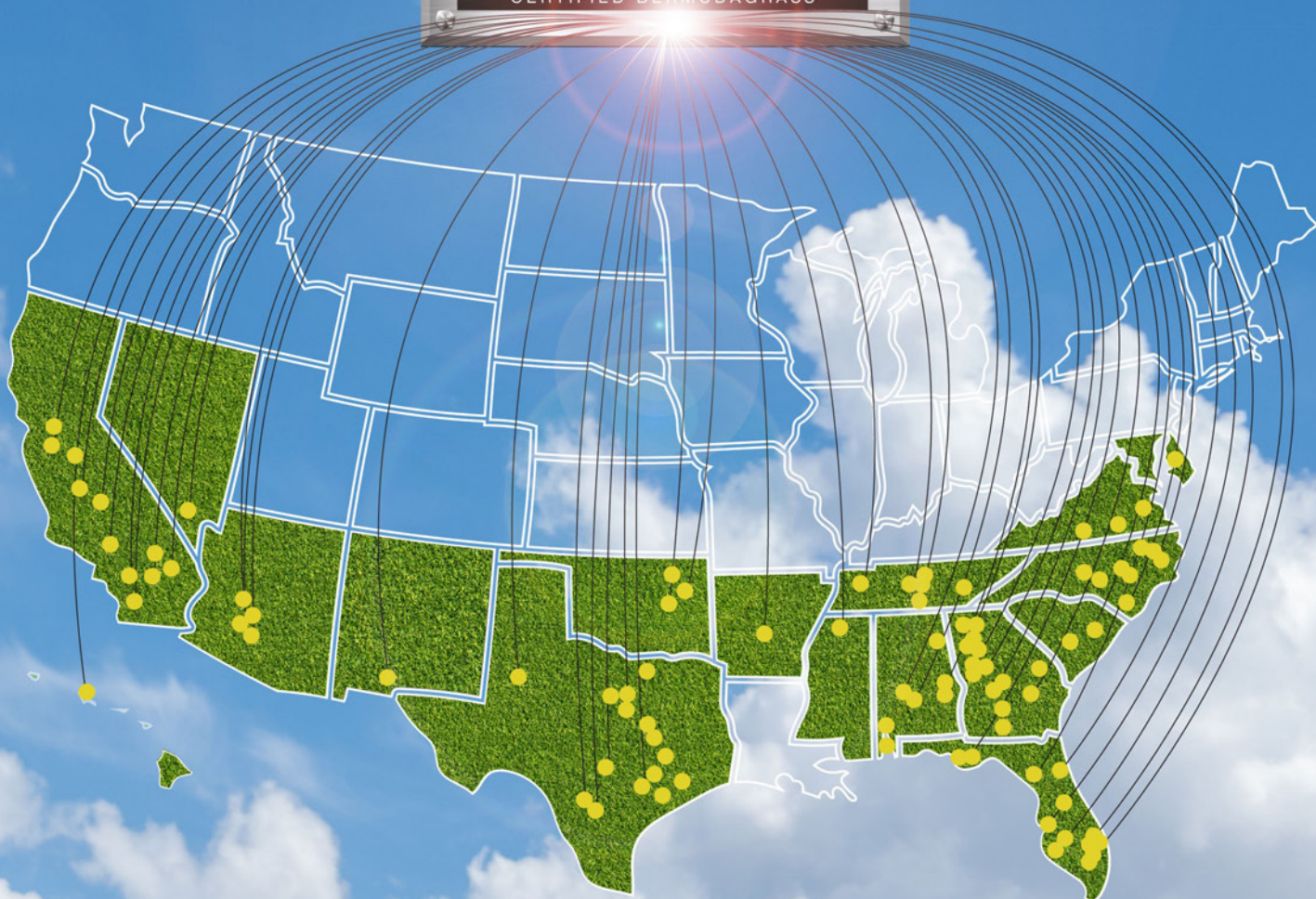
**Black turfgrass ataenius.** Photo by Jonathan L. Larson, Ph.D., University of Kentucky.



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**Masked chafer larvae.** Photo by James Kalisch, UNL.

late means the chemical won't be transferred throughout the plant when it needs to be. Preventive treatments must also be watered in after application in order for them to work. Core aeration before treatment followed by a uniform application of 1/2- to 3/4-inch of water greatly increases the success rate. Curative treatments, conversely, occur when damage may have already happened. These applications most often use Dylox or clothianidin and are done in August or September.



**Bluegrass billbug.** Photo by James Kalisch, UNL

crown and root system and continue feeding on roots and underground stems. It is at this stage when the telltale symptom of stem breakage is evident. To help diagnose damage from billbugs, grab the leaves/stems near the base and give them a sharp tug. If billbugs are responsible, they will easily break off and appear shredded, you may also note sawdust-like material. Billbug larvae look similar to white grubs in coloration, though they are smaller than grubs and are legless.

Depending on the species and overwintering styles, pupation can occur in spring or in mid-summer. In most cases, adult weevils emerge in late summer and move to overwintering sites in hedges, tall grass and tree leaf litter. The greatest injury occurs in early summer as the turf transitions from supportive to stressful conditions for root growth.

Managing billbugs can be complicated when compared with white grub control, and may necessitate more monitoring to be successful. One option is treating for adult weevils that are emerging from their overwintering spots. Reading about billbugs in local Extension factsheets or using pitfall traps can help managers to time their application of pyrethroids, carbamates or organophosphates to turf. These contact products would work by killing adults as they move through them; avoid irrigating these early-season treatments as you don't want to wash the residue off before it has a chance to kill the weevils. Luckily, billbugs can also be controlled through preventive means. The same products and timing will work to prevent these pests as white grubs, though there can be decreasing success by mid-June, making it a tighter window for management. If you find yourself needing



**Bluegrass billbug larvae.** Photo by Jonathan L. Larson, Ph.D., University of Kentucky.

### **BILLBUGS**

Many species of billbugs – including hunting, bluegrass and Denver – cause damage to sports fields. They tend to overwinter as adults in sheltered locations in and around infested turf. Hunting billbugs may overwinter as larvae and adults. Most species become active in mid- to late spring, then mate. The females deposit eggs into cavities chewed into plant stems near the crown. Newly hatched larvae feed for two to three weeks within turf stems, then move into the

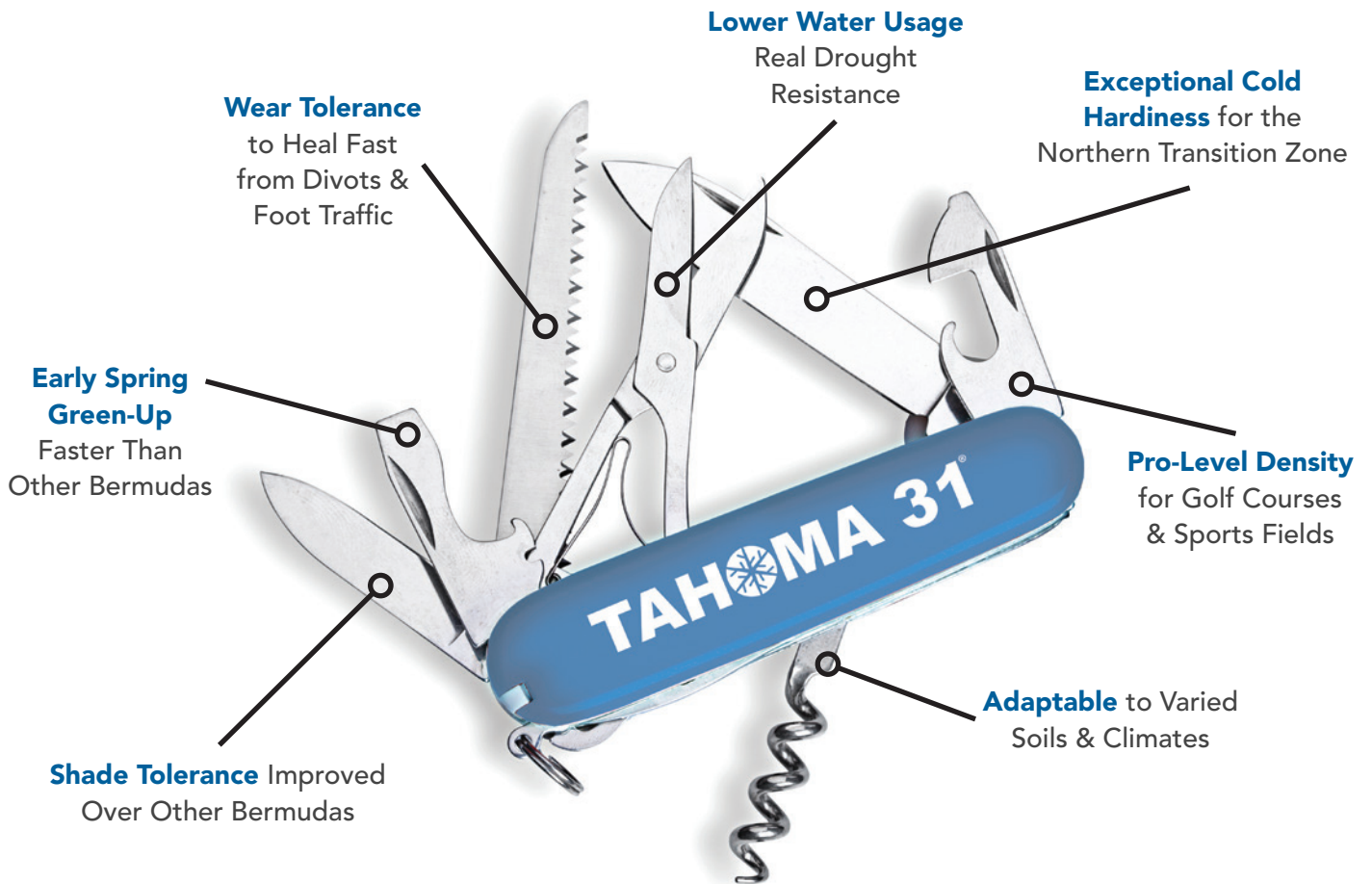


**Bluegrass billbug larvae.** Photo by James Kalisch, UNL

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to treat for a recently discovered billbug problem, a curative approach using neonicotinoids, pyrethroids or an insect growth regulator (such as Novaluron) can be continually done according to label directions until the problem has been managed.

### MOLE CRICKETS

While mole crickets can cause damage from feeding on turf roots, stems and leaves of turfgrass, their extensive tunneling is the key objectional behavior as they are disrupters, occupying portions of their lives below ground. Mole crickets can startle some people, they have a somewhat “cricket-like” appearance, but their front legs have been modified into scraper like digging legs, giving them a mole-like look. There are three species that are most commonly encountered; the northern mole cricket (*Neocurtilla hexadactyla*), the tawny mole cricket (*Scapteriscus vicinus*) and southern mole cricket (*Scapteriscus borellii*). The northern mole cricket is native to North America and is rarely a pest of turfgrasses. The tawny and southern species are invasive and are serious pests of turf throughout the southeastern United States. Blade-like projections from the forelegs help distinguish between the various mole cricket species. Depending on the location, there can be one to two generations of mole crickets per year with the height of damage occurring August-October.

Mole crickets can be managed using insecticidal baits, most often applied in the late spring or early summer. Fipronil, pyrethroids, neonicotinoids and combination products containing both pyrethroids and neonicotinoids are all employed in the management of mole crickets. These can be applied throughout the growing season, with varying lengths of management depending on timing. Monitoring for damage and the crickets can help inform the timing of sprays.

### SOD WEBWORMS

Sod webworms have the unique distinction of being categorized as both surface-feeding and subsurface-feeding pests. Webworm adults are moths that do not damage turf. Larvae feed at night on leaves and stems near the soil surface and hide during the day in silk lined burrows, which extend through the thatch layer into the soil. Small ragged brown spots are the first symptoms of damage; upon closer inspection, these areas have a grazed or scalped appearance. Over time, the spots coalesce and enlarge. While webworm larvae are active from mid-spring to mid-fall, the most serious injury occurs in mid- to late summer when populations are high and root systems are stressed from high soil temperatures.



**Northern mole cricket.** Photo by James Kalisch, UNL.

Pyrethroids are most commonly used when this pest is first found. Applications are most effective when they follow close mowing and removal of the clippings to reduce interference with the product contacting the target species. A thorough irrigation event prior to application will move larvae closer to the surface, in closer contact with the formulation. Granular applications should be followed by a light irrigation to wash the product granules off the leaves and activate the insecticide. Liquid applications may also be enhanced by light applications of water, but, as with all pesticide applications, it's best to consult the label for specific details that are germane to the product. Chlorantraniliprole, when applied for grub control, would also provide season-long prevention of webworms. **SFM**

John C. Fech is a horticulturist with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and certified arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture. The author of two books and more than 400 popular and trade journal articles, he focuses his time on teaching effective landscape maintenance techniques, water conservation, diagnosing turf and ornamental problems, and encouraging effective bilingual communication in the green industry.

Jonathan L. Larson, Ph.D., is an Extension professor for the University of Kentucky who provides insect expertise for people dealing with issues in urban landscapes, turfgrasses, nursery crops, greenhouses, and households. He teaches across a variety of platforms using social media, videos, and traditional Extension publications. He is one of the co-hosts of *Arthro-Pod*, an entomology podcast.

# JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ

## CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

### PROBLEM:

Circles of green turf surrounded by brown turf

### TURFGRASS AREA:

Elevated viewing area adjacent to polo fields

### LOCATION:

Littleton, Colo.

### TURFGRASS VARIETY:

Kentucky bluegrass, perennial rye mix

*Answer on page 33*

*John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International*



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SFMA Awards Banquet. Photo provided by SFMA

## A Look Back at the 34th SFMA Conference & Exhibition

The 34th SFMA Conference & Exhibition was held January 16-19 at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, Utah. The sports field management industry's main event featured seven education tracks, a full trade show/exhibition, networking opportunities, a keynote address, SAFE fundraisers, the SFMA Student Challenge, Seminar on Wheels and more.

Session tracks focused on Turfgrass Management; Water; Research and Technology; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Professional Development; Baseball; and Synthetic.

On Monday, January 16, the Seminar on Wheels event visited athletic facilities at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Tour members were able to visit and learn about LaVell Edwards Stadium (football), Miller Park (baseball and softball fields), the football practice facility, South Field (soccer), and the indoor practice facility. Attendees were then shuttled to America First Field (formerly Rio Tinto Stadium), home of MLS club Real Salt Lake; and from there visited

Smith's Ballpark, home of the Salt Lake Bees and the University of Utah baseball team.

The first day of the conference also featured the inaugural SAFE Indoor Backyard Games and Brunch, a fundraiser for the SAFE Foundation that featured a cornhole tournament. The SAFE cornhole tournament title sponsor was GameOnGrass (a product of Carolina Green Corp.), the drink sponsor was Sunbelt Rentals, and the miniature golf sponsor was Little League. The cornhole tournament winning team was Billy Ellinger and Jackson Price.

Monday evening was highlighted by the SAFE Night of Bowling, a fundraiser for the SAFE Foundation, at All Star Bowling and Entertainment in Draper, Utah. The event was sponsored by Diamond Pro and Tri-Tex Grass. The top winner was Alpha Jones with a score of 182, and the winning team was Mike Kuhn, Jake Schwan, Michael Klakulak, Daniel Peer and Maritza Martinez with a score of 608.





Photo provided by SFMA



Photo by John Kmitta



Photo provided by SFMA



SAFE Night of Bowling. Photo by John Kmitta

Tuesday, January 17, kicked off with the Opening General Session on the topic of “Transitioning from 2022 FIFA World Cup to 2026.” The General Session focused on the hosting and delivery of the 2022 FIFA World Cup and transitioning to the 2026 World Cup. The presentation discussed the challenges of working in parallel on different events in different stages of the event lifecycle, as well as preparing and planning for consistency and uniformity of fields across different climate zones and stadium types.

Following the General Session, Tuesday was packed full of conference education, as well as the Women’s Forum and Lunch, Chapter Officers Training, First Timers/International/CSFM Reception and the Live Auction.

All attendees were then invited to the Welcome Reception Tuesday evening.

Wednesday, January 18, featured morning education sessions followed by the keynote address. Keynote speaker DeMaurice Smith, executive director of the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA), presented “A Safer Field of Play? The NFLPA and Its Advocacy for Player Health and Safety.” Smith and the NFLPA have been at the forefront of issues surrounding NFL player health and safety. During his presentation, Smith answered audience questions on a variety of topics. Lunch and the SFMA Annual Meeting followed the keynote.

Following the Annual Meeting, attendees were able to see the latest equipment, technology and innovations on the trade show floor.

Also on Wednesday afternoon was the SFMA Student Challenge, presented in partnership with the SAFE Foundation, founding partner Hunter Industries, and supporting sponsor Ewing. Students from 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities throughout the country competed in an exam that challenges knowledge in the sports field industry. The winning teams receive a cash award, a plaque and medallions for each team member. The prize money



Photo provided by SFMA



benefits the institution's turfgrass program and creates opportunities for students pursuing a career in sports field management (See sidebar on page 23 for Student Challenge results).

Thursday, January 19, featured more conference education, followed by trade show hours in the expo hall. Thursday's Half Day Seminar on Wheels visited Zions Bank Real Academy & Training Center, training facility for MLS club Real Salt Lake, followed by University of Utah.

The SFMA Conference & Exhibition concluded in style Thursday night with the reception and awards banquet.

## FOUNDERS AWARDS

### THE ERICSON AWARD: WESTON APPELFELLER, CSFM, AUSTIN FC

Weston Appelfeller, CSFM, is a consummate professional and is known for his focus on building and developing a team of field managers to help develop and execute a field management program. When faced with the challenge of moving to Texas and starting with a new soccer club, he dove headfirst into that challenge and helped to design and create one of the most state-of-the-art stadiums and field pitches in the United States. Having a background that was primarily in cool-season turfgrass, he researched and studied every factor possible that would go into a warm-season playing surface and used that in his decision-making process.

Appelfeller is embracing new technology and science such as grow lights, improved turfgrass varieties, and precision data collection tools to maximize his ability to produce a safe playing surface in an extremely difficult environment. In addition, he has recruited and hired a stellar staff to work alongside him, and allows them to utilize their strengths to achieve the high-level results that he is looking for. Appelfeller has been a strong supporter of SFMA,



*Dick Ericson Award winner, Weston Appelfeller, CSFM (right)*

having served on numerous committees, as well as the board of directors for the association, and represents our industry in a highly professional way.

### THE DANIEL AWARD: DR. CALE BIGELOW, PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Cale Bigelow's professional career at Purdue follows in the footsteps of the Founder for this award in Dr. Bill Daniel. Bigelow has continued to play a vital role in the continued growth of the Purdue University turfgrass program, particularly as it relates to undergraduate education. He has been an academic leader in Turfgrass Science instruction and research for several years, and is a regular presenter at SFMA conferences for his expertise in transition zone grassing alternatives for sports fields, nutrient management, and water conservation. Bigelow recently served SFMA as an academic representative in establishing and expanding communications with national FFA HQ in efforts to expand turfgrass science as part of FFA state and national student contests, as well as formal classroom instruction that would include SFMA-developed turfgrass educational programming.

Bigelow has received numerous awards from his department and college as an instructor and counselor, was recognized by the Crop Science Society of America in 2020 with the Crop Science Teaching Award, and has received national recognition as leading one of the best turfgrass social media outreach efforts on Twitter as @BIGTurfTeaching.



*William Daniel Award winner, Dr. Cale Bigelow (left)*

### GEORGE TOMA GOLDEN RAKE AWARD: JESSE DRIVER, CSFM, MID-ATLANTIC TURF, INC.

Jesse Driver is president of Mid-Atlantic Turf, Inc., and is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM). Driver has consistently, throughout his career, been an SFMA member who has made significant contributions by going

above and beyond in the sports field industry both at the association level and also in his local area for improvement of facilities for player safety, education and industry awareness. He has been in the sports field industry for more than 20 years, providing superior athletic fields to the mid-Atlantic area. These fields have ranged from collegiate "Field of the Year" winners, premier regional tournament facilities, high school fields, and parks and recreation fields.

As president of Mid-Atlantic Turf, Inc., Driver has built or renovated more than 500 fields during his long career and is known for going further than the contract requires. His goals are to provide superior natural grass athletic fields for athletes of all ages, and he is specifically requested by name throughout the industry because of his work ethic and knowledge. Throughout his career he has always gone above and beyond to volunteer to provide education to athletic directors and coaches to provide improved athletic fields for their athletes.



**George Toma Golden Rake Award winner, Jesse Driver, CSFM (right)**

#### **HARRY C. GILL AWARD: CHAD PRICE, CSFM, CFB, CAROLINA GREEN CORP.**

Chad Price has more than 30 years in the sports field construction industry. He has been involved in the design and construction of more than 500 fields at the professional, semi-pro, university, municipal, private and public-school level. He is the recipient of the 2009 Washington Building Congress Craftsmanship Award for his work on the Washington Nationals Ballpark.

Price is chairman of The SAFE Foundation Board of Directors, which is a research and scholarship program within the Sports Field Management Association (SFMA). Price holds a BS in Agronomy from Virginia Tech and is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM), a Certified Field Builder (CFB), and a NC Certified Turfgrass Professional. He is a licensed GC and Irrigation Contractor.



**Harry C. Gill Award winner, Chad Price, CSFM, CFB (right)**

#### **FIELD OF THE YEAR WINNERS**

The Field of the Year is awarded to natural grass fields that exhibit excellent playability and safety and whose managers utilize innovative solutions, effectively use their budgets, and have implemented a comprehensive agronomic program. The 2022 Field of the Year Award winners are as follows:

- **Schools and Parks Sporting Grounds:** Pace Academy Lacrosse Field, Pace Academy Riverview Complex, Mableton, Ga., Daniel Prince
- **Schools and Parks Softball:** Brentsville Softball Park, Brentsville District H.S., Nokesville, Va., Drew Miller and students in the Brentsville Turfgrass Management Program
- **Schools and Parks Soccer:** Sportsplex Stadium Field at Mecklenburg County Parks and Rec, Matthews, N.C., Jonathan Waszak
- **Schools and Parks Football:** Jason Brown Complex at Central Regional School District, Lynchburg, Va., Zachary Horsley
- **Schools and Parks Baseball:** Al Leiter Field at Al Kunzman Park, Bayville, N.J., Keith Fisher
- **College Soccer:** Yokubatis Field, University of Houston, Houston, Texas, Brad Finn, CSFM
- **College Football:** Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium, University of Arkansas, Jeff Foor
- **College Baseball:** Williams-Reilly Field at Lupton Stadium, Texas Christian University, Andrew Siegel
- **Professional Baseball:** Greater Nevada Field, Reno Aces, Reno, Nev., Leah Withrow
- **Professional Soccer:** America First Field, Real Salt Lake, Sandy, Utah, Dan Farnes **SFM**





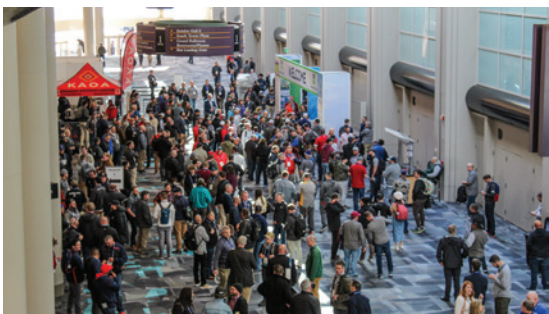
SFMA Student Challenge. Photos provided by SFMA



(Left to right), SFMA CEO Laura Simmons, CAE; George Toma; and NFLPA Executive Director DeMaurice Smith. Photo by John Kmitta



LaVell Edwards Stadium at Brigham Young University. Photo by John Kmitta



Above photos by Robert Augsdorfer



Above photos provided by SFMA



# Student Challenge results

## FOUR-YEAR PROGRAMS:

**First Place** – Purdue Team 404: Emma Seward, Jacob Winger, Drew Coe and William Myrehn

*(There was a tie for first place this year. As outlined in the Student Challenge study guide, in the event of a tie, the team with the higher score on three out of four sections of the exam shall be declared the winner or finish higher. The rules state that if that procedure does not resolve the tie, the team with the higher score in the Short Answer/Case Study section shall be declared the winner or finish higher.)*

**Second Place** – Penn State Team 203: Nate Moore, Zack Newsome, Hunter Shaw and William Hilderhoff

**Third Place** – Iowa State Team 202: Mira Emma, Zackary Messer, James Sprague and Bryce Witham

## TWO-YEAR PROGRAMS:

**First Place** – Penn State Team 402: Nicholas Risso, Jacob Irvin, Garrett Taylor and Matthew Hamel

**Second Place** – University of Maryland Team 205: Brandon Carbary, Jarrett Maynor, Payton O'Connor and Matt Miller

**Third Place** – Kirkwood Community College Team 105: Bryce Boekholder, Ray Martin, Josh Nelson and Connor Scheer



Top: Four-year program first-place team, Purdue Team 404. Bottom: Two-year program first-place team, Penn State Team 402. Photos provided by SFMA



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# Sports Labs and SGL win Innovative Awards

The Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) Innovative Awards program recognizes SFMA commercial company members who have developed a product, service, equipment or technology that “substantially enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the sports field manager and/or makes the playing surfaces safer and/or more playable for athletes.”

Chosen by SFMA's Innovative Awards Task Group, entries are evaluated on a wide range of qualities including whether or not they fill a need, are creative, save time and resources, are cutting edge, make a task easier or more productive, improve quality, protect the environment and improve efficiency.

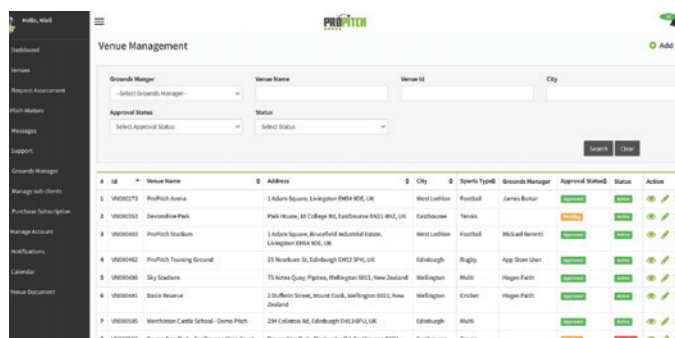
The 2023 SFMA Innovative Award winners are Sports Labs for the ProPitch online portal and SGL for its LED50 lighting unit. Details regarding both products are as follows:

## SPORTS LABS PRO PITCH ONLINE PORTAL

The ProPitch online portal and automatic traffic light reporting system is a performance testing dashboard that synchronizes live with the ProPitch IOS and Android app, allowing users to carry out self-assessment tests and scoring against industry standards. The portal allows users to create their own field passport and manage their fields.

ProPitch allows field managers, owners, maintenance crews, or any field stakeholder to monitor and document their surface. The software, with input from a user, will track various data points from moisture, coverage, lighting, usage, cut height, performance and safety of the surface. The portal will, over time, track data points and provide graphs and charts to see the performance of a surface so key decisions can be made to improve performance and adjust maintenance practices. In addition, the portal allows users to generate reports to share with key stakeholders so an open and transparent tracking of the field's performance can be viewed and the correct decisions made.

Used by elite soccer clubs around the world, ProPitch is an ideal tool to get the best out of your fields.





### SGL LED50

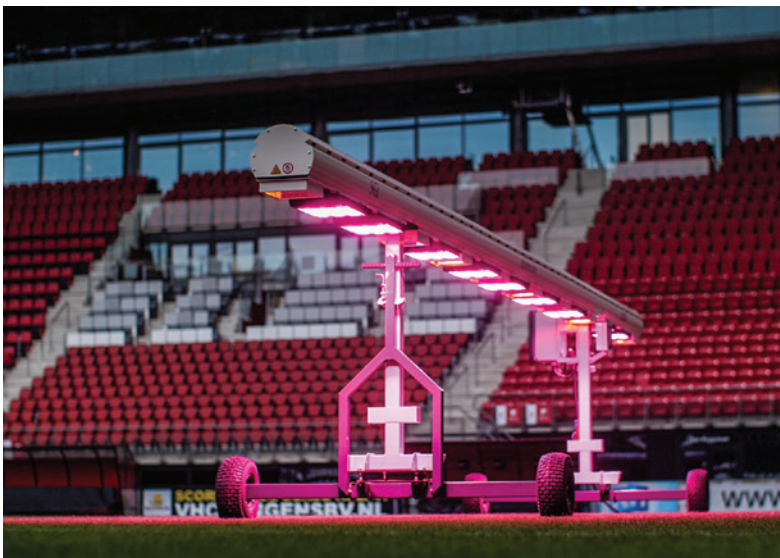
The newest addition to SGL's LED lighting product line, the LED50 is equipped with energy-efficient LED lighting fixtures and infrared heating elements. This design enables sports field managers to control light and temperature independently. Giving the control of the growing environment to the sports field manager allows for a wider range of use. The LED50 is effective on both warm-season and cool-season surfaces for year-round use.

The LED50 is fitted with the most effective and energy efficient light spectrum, along with an integrated Smart Control System. These features combine to maximize growing conditions. Users are able to set a desired surface temperature, which will be maintained while the unit is operating. The LED50's independent control of light and temperature provides sports field managers the ability to maintain ideal growing conditions anytime during the growing seasons.

Covering 540 square feet of playing surface, the LED50 is perfectly suited for those specific areas that endure the most wear and tear during practice or on matchday. Its compact build makes the LED50 easy to operate and store by a single person.

The introduction of the LED50 follows the industry's strong demand for sustainable grass grow lighting and offers clubs the required tools to maintain a high-quality and safe playing surface, while strengthening the transition toward sustainability.

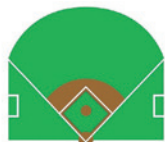
"With sustainability high on the global agenda, we feel we need to carry our weight in the transition to a more sustainable athletic field management industry," said Nico van Vuuren, founder of SGL. "The LED50 enables sports field managers to acquire the high-quality grass growth they strive for throughout the year, in the most sustainable way possible. Winning the SFMA Innovative Award with our LED50 confirms that we're on the right track. Although it's an honor to receive recognition for our strive for innovation from such a highly regarded authority within the pitch management industry, we realize there's still a lot to be gained. Therefore, we keep innovating so we can help our customers with the best service and products." **SFM**





# Thank

**SFMA and SAFE would like to thank our conference sponsors. If you didn't get a chance to visit these companies at the exhibition, please seek them out online or throughout this publication. And be sure to let them know you appreciate their support!**



# Thank You!







# 2023 MiLB Symposium

In the fall of 2015, Tom Burns and Luke Yoder began discussions with a small group of seasoned Minor League Baseball (MiLB) groundskeepers to gauge their interest in an annual symposium that would provide them the opportunity to gather as a group. Burns attended the first Major League Baseball (MLB) Symposium in the year 2000 and every one after that until 2006, when he was with the Texas Rangers. Yoder attended his first MLB Symposium in 2001 representing the Pittsburgh Pirates and every one after that through 2015, ending while he was with the Padres. Burns and Paul Zwaska (formerly with the Orioles) helped coordinate that first symposium. Yoder eventually took the lead and coordinated successive symposiums for several years following Bob Christofferson's (retired from Seattle Mariners) lead and then passing it on to Bill Deacon (New York Mets).

Attending those meetings provided valuable insights on many aspects of professional development and groundskeeping. It also provided the opportunity to strengthen existing relationships and develop new ones that would last a lifetime. Most years, there was a representative from MLB in attendance that would address the group and provide a glimpse of what was coming. They would answer questions on topics such as base jewels, base cameras, field

inspections/compliance and communicating with umpires on all topics related to the field. Some years the symposium would be on the front or back end of the SFMA conference and other years would meet at an MLB facility to provide the opportunity to tour their operation. One year, the MLB hosted it in their New York office, during which everyone toured the field operations for both the Mets and Yankees.

Shortly after the SFMA (then STMA) conference in 2016, Burns and Yoder began planning the first MiLB Symposium. Except for 2021 (COVID), the MiLB Symposium has met each January. With their experience at the MLB Symposium, Burns and Yoder knew this would be a huge hit and provide value to the attendees. They were adamant about ensuring the integrity moving forward by not dictating or running the show across the board. This meant their job was simply to provide the platform for the group and to give them the power to approve sponsors and content.

The 2023 MiLB Symposium in Salt Lake City was sponsored by two tiers. The first tier was DuraEdge and Beacon Athletics. The second was AerFlo, MVS/MVG, QualiPro, Hunter, and 4Most Sport Group. Keith Winter (Fort Wayne Tincaps) was the point of contact throughout the planning process. Winter met on a





regular basis with the MiLB committee to come up with the agenda and speakers, and served as a liaison to MLB for transparency and support.

Nick Riek from Rawlings, the new official provider of bases for MLB and MiLB, joined Kevin Ma, medical administration senior coordinator from MLB, to explain the new bases, location and layout, as well as to answer any questions. It seemed like the main reason they decided to enlarge the bases was related to safety and reducing close contact or collisions at the bag between fielders and runners.

Mike LaCassa, director of player development from MLB, followed their talk and discussed the PDL related to the field, communication protocol from clubs to the MLB related to the PDL, and some adjustments to the way fields are scored throughout the year to improve upon things. For example, umpires are no longer evaluating various things that were complained about, such as batting practice set up, bullpens, etc. There were also talks on technology in equipment such as field sensors, robotic mowers, etc.

There was a presentation about weather by Brad Jakubowski of Penn State University, who shared great insights. To date, there is no lighting policy at any ballpark. Keith Johnson, manager of the Salt Lake Bees, spoke with Bees Head Groundskeeper Brian Soukup in an open forum that led to some great discussions on communication between coaches, players and groundskeepers.

Winter had a discussion with the MLB regarding next season. One initiative proposed is to get the MLB

to highly recommend to all 120 PDL teams to send their groundskeepers to the symposium. They seemed to be receptive to this and will revisit after the 2023 season. Lisa Goatley, a licensed professional counselor, presented on the topic of workplace mental health.

Current MLB head groundskeepers John Turnour (Washington Nationals) and Larry DiVito (Minnesota Twins) participated in an open forum for the group. There were some good questions and productive dialogue from the MiLB attendees. Since there are only requirements for PDL Field Guidelines in the MiLB, not the MLB, Turnour and DiVito were interested to hear from the MiLB group on the guidelines and what it takes to get their fields into compliance. Overall, there were a total of 65 attendees from MiLB teams at this year's symposium.

"In terms of content and participation, it was the best symposium yet," said Winter. "The continued support of our sponsors not only helps it grow, but has also helped us develop a reputation within the minor leagues and now major leagues, that this is an event to be at if you want to grow and develop in this industry." **SFM**

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## WILLIAMS-REILLY FIELD AT LUPTON STADIUM

### TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, FORT WORTH, TEXAS

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 would be hard for me to believe that there is another collegiate baseball field that has as much usage as ours. From collegiate events including TCU practices, visiting team practices, recruiting visits and games to summer and fall high school baseball tournaments, summer day camps with kids on weekdays, or hitting and pitching camps geared for soon-to-graduate high schoolers, there's seldom a day that goes by where someone isn't on the field. The words adaptability and flexibility have been said many times in regard to working around all the events that occurred throughout the year. These events pushed our field to the limits, but our crew never stopped putting in whatever time and effort it took to continue to produce a product that surpassed expectations.

The toughest challenge was non-TCU-related events. Between May and August, we had 10 workdays that saw no type of usage, with five of those days coming between the conclusion of summer camps and the beginning of TCU's individual practice. Although we knew we wouldn't be hosting a regional, we had to plan based on the possibility of hosting a super regional, which meant holding on to our ryegrass late into May. While preparing to host

a super regional, we also had to prepare for the summer camps, as there was one scheduled the same weekend as super regionals (had TCU ended up not hosting). To alleviate excess work, as well as cut costs, we repurposed old artificial turf that had been pulled out of our indoor football facility for the bullpen, mound and plate. This went down the week after the season ended for TCU. During the period in which we had three days to prepare for summer activities, we had to transition from rye to bermuda. We did this by uniraking, aerifying and scalping the ryegrass to .5". With so little time to transition, we then spent the next two and a half months playing catch up.

Over the course of the summer, TCU hosts community day camps which consist of 200-plus kids, age 6-14, using the field from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each weekday. Starting Thursday, high school travel teams use the field for tournaments. This means that most mornings consisted of mowing, dragging and watering the dirt before we were forced off the field for the day. With this usage, we would use the occasional off day to unirake, aerify and edge the grass, and flood, nail, float and roll the dirt.

– Andrew Siegel, sports turf manager





**Level and category of submission:** College Baseball

**Field manager:** Andrew Siegel

**Title:** Sports turf manager

**Education:** : Bachelor of Science, Agronomy

**Experience:** I have been the sports turf manager at TCU for four and a half years. I am responsible for the four-acre soccer facility, football stadium field, two grass practice fields, baseball field, track complex, two four-acre intramural fields, as well as the common areas surrounding them. I have one full-time assistant sports turf manager with a degree in crop and soil science with a focus in turfgrass management, a sports turf supervisor, as well as six full-time employees dedicated to our facilities.

**Full-time staff:** Christopher Humphrey and Eduardo Cardoza

**Original construction:** 2003

**Turfgrass:** Infield and back arc: TifTuf, installed 2017. Rest of the outfield: Tifway, installed during stadium construction (2003). All natural grass overseeded with perennial ryegrass

**Rootzone:** Sand clay loam

**Drainage:** OwikDrain System

## Do You Know a Rising Star in the Sports Field Management Profession?



**SportsField Management magazine is accepting nominations for its inaugural Rising Star Awards.**

Nominations are due **March 17, 2023**

The SportsField Management Rising Star Awards will highlight the best up-and-coming leaders in the sports field management industry.

For more information, or to nominate a Rising Star, scan the QR code below.

Questions? Please email John Kmitta a [jkmitta@epgacceleration.com](mailto:jkmitta@epgacceleration.com) and include "SportsField Management Rising Star" in the subject line

(Nominees do not need to be members of the national SFMA to be considered for a Rising Star Award.)



## JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



### ANSWER

*From page 17*

These circles of green turf surrounded by brown turf were caused by wear. We were able to visit the polo grounds in this Photo Quiz during the SFMA Seminar on Wheels back in 2015 when it was held in Denver. The unique pattern was caused by an annual charity event that hosts approximately 5,000 people over a three-day period. The tents were placed directly on the turf, and the green areas are where circular tables were located. Polo games are viewed from the tent, causing the crowds to leave brown, worn turf behind. The large worn area on the right side of the photo is where the buffet tables and bars were located, causing additional wear in these areas. After the event, the area was aerated and seeded again. Because it's a high-traffic area used for tailgating and polo game viewing during regularly scheduled games, it didn't fully recover until after the season ended in the fall.

**Photo submitted by Dave Radueg, polo fields turf manager at J05 Equestrian in Littleton, Colo.**

*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.





**SportsField Management (SFM):** Congratulations on winning the College Baseball Field of the Year award for Williams-Reilly Field at Lupton Stadium. What are you most proud of with this field, and this win?

**Andrew Siegel:** Our people. It is as simple as that. As a sports turf manager, I want to hire employees who want my job. When I arrived at TCU, the goal was to hire assistants that wanted to move up, and one of the best ways to do that is by caring for a baseball field every day. Lupton gives us a little bit of everything: skin management, turf management, common areas to care for, a rigorous schedule, personnel management and all the weather one can handle. I was able to bring Trevor Austin in as my first assistant and he laid the foundation for what was expected on a daily basis. I never once had to worry or stress about any issues we may have. He ran our crew and game-day students without hiccups. He interviewed and brought in Chris Humphrey as our baseball field tech starting December of '21. Trevor left us during the season in 2022 and is now the sports turf manager at LSU. Chris and Lalo Cardoza did not miss a beat, and carried us to the end of the season. They are the engine that makes this operation run. Chris was promoted to assistant sports turf manager, while Lalo was promoted to baseball field technician. Their ownership and dedication are what won this award for TCU. Those two individuals pushed us through the summer schedule with more than 100 tournament games in addition to four youth camps. I cannot say enough about their dedication and work ethic.

**SFM:** What were the biggest challenges you have faced with Williams-Reilly Field, and how have you approached those challenges?

**Siegel:** The single biggest challenge we face is the amount of traffic we have on the baseball diamond. We have players and former players that are ramping up for spring training show up at the beginning of January. We have skill instruction followed by team practices then the college baseball season, which lasts through May or the beginning of June if you are lucky enough to host the postseason. The field is scheduled for a showcase tournament the weekend of super regionals, but that can be bumped if we host that weekend. If we don't, we are full bore into summer ball. That includes four youth camps for four days each. Each weekend in June and July are booked with showcase tournaments that are four to five days each with upwards of five games per day. We also host select teams to practice on the field in the evenings when we don't have tournaments.

The rigorous schedule really impacts when we are able to perform cultural practices. Last summer we had five to six days (total) when we had nothing on the field for an entire day. We were also saddled with a drought that lasted the majority of the summer. We did not lose a single event due to rain. Our plan was fairly simple – as soon as we knew we were finished with TCU's season, begin transition. The morning after regionals, we verticut, scalped and began aerification. We pushed bermuda growth when we could, and did any cultural practices when we had a chance. In order to save time, we laid synthetic turf on the mound and plate for the summer.

Upon completion of our last event in August, we used every day we could to make ourselves a bit better. We had two weeks until we hosted an elite camp and needed it dialed in. We also were blessed to finally get a good soaking rain for a few days. When camp was finished, we moved into fall ball and skill instruction. We have pushed the field to the limit and will continue to do so. We try to be creative with our time management while working with the staff to have the field ready.

**SFM:** You won the 2021 College Football Field of the Year for Moncrief Field at Amon Carter Stadium, and the 2021 College Soccer Field of the Year for Garvey-Rosenthal Soccer Field. What is different with this win?

**Siegel:** The construction of the field and age is what sets this field apart from the others on campus. The football and soccer fields are built to USGA specifications. Lupton, however, is 20-plus-years old with a native soil rootzone. It had drain lines added to it years after its initial construction. We have had to learn and adapt when it comes to caring for this particular area. As stated earlier, it also hosts more events and play than any of our other fields. The traffic may not be as aggressive, but the hours it is in use force us to be more creative with our time.

**SFM:** Also, with three recent wins for three different fields – in three different sports – what does this say about your program?

**Siegel:** There is absolutely nothing special about what we do compared to other places. I believe that TCU has given us the resources to provide safe surfaces for our athletes. In addition, we have been given the freedom to make what we think are the best decisions in regard to the fields. I can definitely say, without a doubt, that those decisions are not always correct. However, we do our best to learn from our mistakes and move forward.

**SFM:** Is there anything you would like to say about your crew/staff at TCU and their efforts to continually produce award-winning fields?

**Siegel:** As I have said before, there is no secret to “award-winning” fields. Our goal is to provide the safest surfaces for any athlete who plays on them. We are lucky to have administration that knows we need the right resources in order to reach our goal. That starts with personnel who are knowledgeable and care. Our entire staff takes ownership for what we provide, and it is a point of pride. Also, we are afforded a budget that enables us to do what we need to do while trusting our process. **SFM**



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Photo courtesy of Verde Design, Inc

# Infield Care

By Mary Helen Sprecher

As a field manager, when you see athletes kicking around in the batting box and knocking the dirt off their cleats with the bat, you're probably playing closer attention than anyone else. After all, that's your infield mix they're messing with.

But long before teams take the field to play ball, there's a lot that goes into getting it ready. Care of the infield and turfgrass (or turf) areas are interrelated, and the field manager needs to work on both components to ensure the optimum performance of the whole facility.

Because the infield and its cousin, the warning track, don't grow, however, it's easy to overlook them or rate them second, since they don't require the preseason work grass does. But by following some good practices, it's possible to have your skinned areas shine too.

Preseason generally means raking off dry material (along with any debris that might have collected over the offseason) and discarding it. New infield mix, which is recommended to be ordered in advance, should be added and leveled.

"Grading is, of course, very important," said Michael Munie with Perfect Play Fields & Links in Belleville, Ill.

The field should be sloped in accordance with the rules of the appropriate governing body, whether this is NFHS, NCAA or another organization. The type of field (for example a native soil field, a sand-cap field, etc.) will also factor into the equation.

For baseball, the high point of the field generally is the pitcher's mound. This is 10 inches above home plate on a regulation field with 90-foot bases. The field is then sloped in all four directions away from the mound and across the skinned areas. Typically, softball fields will be crowned in a line from home plate through the pitching rubber to second base and on through the outfield. Remember that even a slightly low area can cause ponding of water on the surface. Therefore, it is recommended that finish grading be accomplished with laser-guided equipment.

"How often you do regular maintenance depends mainly on how often a field is used," said Todd Smith, Ph.D., PE, LEED AP of R&R Engineers-Surveyors, Inc. "Work that should be undertaken on a regular basis can include raking of the entire area, rebuilding the pitcher's mound, rebuilding

the home plate batter's box and chalking the batter's box along with foul lines." Smith cautions against falling prey to a few common mistakes in maintenance.

"For the infields, the main mistake is not doing a little maintenance each day or each time the field is used. The second-most often made mistake, in my experience, is always dragging from the center in a spiral to the outside to avoid equipment tracks if they end in the center. This is the number-one cause of what is called the 'infield lip,' which is when the infield mix is deposited into the first two to three feet of the outfield edge. This raises the rootzone and the grass grows through it. Then it gets raised again, the grass goes through it again."

Munie noted that an infield lip, "can cause the ball to take some weird hops" that could possibly injure a player. The lip also creates a dam that keeps water from draining properly.

According to Munie, another typical mistake is for a worker to rush through the process of dragging the field; jokingly adding that it "makes the driver look like he is building skills for a national drifting competition."

Excessive speed can also cause infield material to be deposited into the grass of the field itself when the driver makes a turn.

"That being said, slow down and stay away from the edges as much as possible when dragging an infield," said Munie. "Finish the edges with a rake or with one slow lap, being careful to stay on the infield."

The warning track sometimes becomes an afterthought on a field, since so much attention is paid to other components. And that, said Munie, is part of the problem.

"The proper selection of surface materials is important as the warning track is an underrated component," he said. "It can also serve several other functions, including drainage, acting as an access road for equipment and personnel, a place for pregame warmups and pregame ceremonies. The warning track can also serve as the location for drainage trunk lines, as well as valve boxes and irrigation components. But it's important to remember the track needs to be wide enough to fulfill its purpose. If it's not, an athlete moving at a full run might only have one



Photo courtesy of Byrom-Davey Inc.

step on it before encountering the fence."

Synthetic fields often have synthetic infields as well. And while the care regimen is entirely different, preseason maintenance is just as important. If, for example, the pitcher's mound needs to be replaced, it will be necessary to take the level of play into consideration; pitching distances, as well as mound heights, will vary. It is possible to purchase pitching mound forming systems designed specifically for synthetic turf facilities, and to find products that allow the height and size of the mound to be tailored to adhere to standards set forth by the national governing body.

Beyond that, the best way to keep the infield looking and playing its best is to keep an eye on it, and to give it the same care and attention you give the turf itself. Walk it regularly, looking for playing lines that look wavy or places where the field seems to undulate – both of which indicate a displacement of infill. Groom the infield the same way you do the field. Check to make sure seams are intact and that all irrigation and drainage systems work well.

After that, it's time to play ball. **SFM**

Mary Helen Sprecher wrote this article on behalf of the American Sports Builders Association ([www.sportsbuilders.org](http://www.sportsbuilders.org)), the national organization for builders, design professionals and suppliers of materials for sports fields, running tracks, tennis courts and indoor and outdoor courts and recreational facilities.

For those who would like to become more knowledgeable about their options, the American Sports Builders Association publishes *Sports Fields: A Construction and Maintenance Manual*. The book walks readers through the decision-making process that should precede deciding upon a field surface, as well as its location. It also discusses various types of field surfaces: natural, synthetic and hybrid, as well as their relative advantages and disadvantages. The book is available in both hard copy and electronic form from the ASBA website, [www.sportsbuilders.org](http://www.sportsbuilders.org).



Photo courtesy of Stantec Sport Group.



# Spreaders and Sprayers

## JOHN DEERE PROGATOR 2030A GPS PRECISIONSPRAYER

The John Deere ProGator 2030A GPS PrecisionSprayer increases application accuracy and consistency and reduces input costs and operator fatigue.

Automated individual nozzle control allows operators to turn boom sections on and off with AutoTrac Guidance, limiting manual labor and wasted product from pass-to-pass overlap while spraying in less time. Users can create coverage maps that can be shared with multiple units, eliminating overlap and increasing productivity. The built-in satellite technology utilizes Real-Time Kinematic (RTK) navigation to ensure reliable boundary maps, improving overall accuracy. The GPS PrecisionSprayer electronically captures and analyzes spray data, eliminating manual recording and increasing accurate spray event information.



## SITEONE LANDSCAPE SUPPLY LESCO SPREADERS/SPRAYERS

SiteOne Landscape Supply's LESCO ride-on spreaders and sprayers include the LESCO 100, 200, 300 and 600 applicator models. One-hundred-percent stainless-steel frames and coated Peerless transaxle resist corrosive granular chemicals for added life. The LESCO Model 100 features a low center of gravity, and is ideal for projects that do not require liquid application. The LESCO Model 200 releases dry and liquid material, and features a dual-setting spray system. Its narrow width allows easy access through gates in residential areas. With zero-turn drive and a variable spray system, the LESCO Model 300 delivers multiple coverage



widths. Dual liquid spray tanks provide a total capacity of 24 gallons for up to 2.2 acres of coverage. The LESCO Model 600 offers 12-foot spray coverage, plus a pivoting front axle with a low center of gravity for excellent performance on sloping terrain.

## SCAG TURF STORM

The Scag Turf Storm stand-on spreader/sprayer is a must-have tool for the serious chemical applicator, and is a natural fit

for large commercial properties. With right-sized liquid (60 total gallons) and dry/granular (220-pound) capacities, the Turf Storm will help operators get more done per day for maximum productivity and profitability. An 8-foot-wide fold-away spray boom with five nozzles delivers spraying widths of two, six, eight or 10 feet. Dry/granular materials can be spread up to 25 feet wide thanks to a high-torque electric spreader motor. A 21-hp. Vanguard engine delivers ample power, along with exceptional efficiency and dependable performance. The machine's 50-amp charging system ensures dependable spreader operation and battery life.



## STEEL GREEN SGXL

The Steel Green SGXL is a multifunction applicator with industry-leading capacity and versatility. The SGXL is a 120-gallon zero-turn stand-on sprayer featuring a 14-foot, four-section, rear-mounted breakaway boom with electric hydraulic lift actuators. Other standard features include a 100-foot hose reel, 2.5-gallon foam marker, hillside assist system, pressure control system and LED light bar. Its size and versatility make the SGXL the perfect solution for large athletic facilities. Its 12-mph transport speed and 27-gpm centrifugal pump save time, at a time when efficiency is

everything. The SGXL is compatible with an optional granular kit that has a 350-pound hopper and lift system to convert the SGXL to a high-capacity spreader.



## REDESIGNED 2023 Z-SPRAY STAND-ON SPREADER SPRAYERS

Z Turf Equipment redesigned its Z-Spray line of zero-turn stand-on spreader sprayers for 2023. The new design places the operator between the drive wheels, with components placed low and centrally within the corrosion-resistant stainless-steel frame. A bi-directional boom springs both forward and back to avoid damage. A contoured operator pad and revised control layout provide increased comfort and economy of motion, while larger drive tires provide a smoother ride. The new machines are designed to only need annual maintenance, with just one grease point. The patented flip-up hopper eases hopper cleaning and access to the engine for service. A patented magnetic operator pad removes easily, without tools, for access to the spray chart, or for service and maintenance. A new tank design leaves less leftover material in the tank and features a tools-free tank drain.



## RYAN MATAWAY OVERSEEDER

Laying seed this spring? The Ryan Mataway overseeder is heavy-duty, easy to use and provides unmatched seed-to-soil contact for speedy germination, aeration and overseeding. With an easily adjustable seed flow rate and automatic seeding controls, you can overseed with confidence. Adjustable cutting blades allow the user to seed at variable rates for different grass varieties and can cut down to a depth of 0.25 inch. The machine's curve-shaped discs help place the seeds directly into the soil, contrary to other spreaders that only drop seeds on top of the soil. This overseeder's 19-inch working width allows users to cover up to 18,700 square feet per hour, with self-propelled controls that help the operator conserve energy and seed at a consistent rate, yielding better results.



## MILWAUKEE M12 HANDHELD SPRAYER

Milwaukee's M12 handheld sprayer requires no manual pumping; provides instant, constant, and adjustable pressure; and delivers increased performance. The M12 handheld sprayer requires no manual pumping, allowing users to finish the job faster with a reduction in fatigue. By eliminating the time and energy consumed by pumping requirements, this sprayer delivers 60% faster application speed compared to manual sprayers. In addition, this handheld sprayer features a 3-mode pressure adjustment knob that adjusts the pressure between 20 and 80 psi, and delivers a 17-foot vertical spray distance, optimizing user control and efficiency. The instant, constant and adjustable pressure supplies users with the capability to complete a wide range of applications. The M12 Redlithium CP2.0 battery delivers up to 80 gallons of spraying per charge increasing productivity and allowing users to complete multiple jobs on a single charge. The M12 handheld sprayer powerhead is compatible with both the 1-gallon and 2-gallon handheld sprayer tank, allowing users to optimize tank capacity to the application and premix multiple tanks to increase efficiency.



## FERRIS PATHFINDER XC FS2200

The Ferris Pathfinder XC FS2200 stand-on spreader/sprayer releases both dry and liquid fertilizers. Its durable 100-percent stainless-steel frame resists corrosion from the chemicals distributed by the Pathfinder. With a 200-pound dry Spyker Hopper and 1.4 acres of liquid capacity all in a compact size, the Pathfinder marries productivity with best-in-class maneuverability. The unit also has easy-to-adjust spray widths from 3 feet to 10 feet. Its low center of gravity enables the unit to hug sloped terrain while its compact 36-inch width allows easy access through gates and onto trailers.

Available at Ferris dealers. **SFM**





## E-Nano technology for data collection and analysis

E-Nano combines robotics for automation of data acquisition, data analytics for field state reports and AI for real-time evaluation of the sport surfaces to optimize maintenance practices.

E-Nano's Sprout modular scouting robot enables monitoring of any agronomic and sport-specific parameters with its modular design. This unit has space to add additional sensors to meet all your agronomic and performance requirements.

Collect more than 100 data points per hour with only few minutes of preparation. Visualize each variable in every pitch/field for specific dates or for evolution over time. Evaluate in real time the quality and density of turf by using AI.

E-Nano's mission is to empower clubs to increase athlete's performance and wellbeing through improved pitch playability. It combines robotics for data acquisition automation, data analytics for field state reports and AI for optimal maintenance practices.

E-Nano offers sport organizations a wide array of measurements and analytics enabled by automated data acquisition through robotics. For more information, visit [www.e-nano.io](http://www.e-nano.io).



## The Base Buddy

The Base Buddy X1 Pro is the evolution of base anchor technology. It is designed to allow for the same stability and functionality as a traditional in-ground anchor, but without all the hassle of dirt and debris clogging it up, or the need for endless add-on products to make them usable.

The X1 Pro can be sealed and locked when not in use, is easy to maintain between uses, and allows for new features that were not thought possible with traditional in-ground anchors. Due to its design, the X1 Pro will catch all dirt and debris that falls in during extended use. Any X1 Pro can utilize a number of traditional location methods but with a custom plug design, just drop in a Bluetooth tracker and ping it with your smartphone after your field has been dragged.

The X1 Pro Underground Anchoring System can be fully submerged or flush to surface level. The future of base anchor technology has arrived. Get yours today at [www.thebasebuddy.com](http://www.thebasebuddy.com).



## Polaris reintroduces purpose-built Ranger models

Polaris Off Road expanded its UTV lineup with the return of its Ranger Crew XP 1000 Texas Edition and Ranger SP 570 NorthStar and Ranger Crew SP 570 NorthStar Edition.



The Ranger Crew XP 1000 Texas Edition features exclusive Texas badging elements and more capability to tackle tough jobs. The 2023 Ranger Crew XP 1000 Texas Edition starts at \$24,299 U.S. MSRP; its features include:

- Custom styling – The Texas Edition comes with exclusive Texas badging, unique colors and graphics and is fully customizable.
- Towing and hauling confidence – Class-leading 2,500-lb. towing and 1,000-lb. bed capacity, plus a factory-installed 4,500-lb. winch with synthetic rope and autostop.
- All-day comfort – A factory-installed poly sport roof and contoured seats with back bolsters for all day comfort.
- Built for Texas – Ability to tackle tough terrain with high clearance arched A-arms and 8-ply 29-in. Pro Armor tires that provide 14 in. of ground clearance and durability.
- Powerful LED lighting – High-intensity LED headlights provide improved visibility.
- Remain in charge – Phones and small electronic devices can be powered with a new USB charging port in the dash.

The Ranger SP 570 NorthStar edition returns in 2023 and boasts a fully enclosed cab and factory-installed heating, enabling customers to comfortably extend the use of their vehicle through the winter.

The Ranger SP 570 and Crew SP 570 NorthStar Edition features include:

- Pro Shield cab system – Full-cab delivers comfort and protection from rain, dust and cold weather with

full crank-down windows doors and front and rear panels for added comfort.

- Work, play in comfort – Heating and ventilation to allow for year-round use of the vehicle.

- Redefined powerful LED lighting – New for 2023, LED headlights allow users to work with more confidence in low-light conditions.

- Added protection – New mud guards prevent debris collection under the cab for less clean up and more durability.

- Capability – Factory-equipped Polaris Pro HD 3,500-lb. winch with synthetic rope and autostop adds the confidence to take on any task with ease.

- Charged on the move – A new USB charging port in the dash enables users to stay charged and connected while on the move.

The 2023 Ranger SP 570 NorthStar Edition starts at \$19,299 U.S. MSRP; the 2023 Ranger Crew SP 570 NorthStar Edition starts at \$21,999 U.S. MSRP.

## Tracker OX EV electric UTV launched by Tracker Off Road

Tracker Off Road debuted its new all-electric utility vehicle, the Tracker OX EV.

Powered by maintenance-free lithium batteries, the Tracker OX EV's provides a range up to 60 miles. A tilting cargo box (500-lb. capacity) with hydraulic lift assist, full-size dump bed and removeable tailgate add to the UTV's versatility.

Other features include:

- 6-hour recharge time
- 5-year limited battery warranty
- Precision-tuned, lifted suspension
- Limited slip differential
- Custom wheels and tires with superior all-terrain performance



Available accessories on the Tracker OX EV include split windshield kit, rearview mirror, net and d-ring bed kits, hauls-all kit, bed net and more.

## Landmaster reveals new upgrades to 2023 UTVs

Landmaster released a mid-model-year upgrade to its 2023 UTVs. The new changes involve improved engines, redesigning of the throttle and brake pedals and new graphics to the outside of the vehicles.

The L5 and L7 models are now built with more powerful, higher-torque engines from Vanguard. Additionally, the L5 and L7 now come standard with power steering (EPS). Having EPS makes steering the vehicle a smoother experience, similar to an automobile.

The L5 is getting a huge upgrade from a 479cc carb engine to the more powerful 570cc Vanguard engine. This increase in power gives users roughly 18% more torque and more acceleration off the starting line.

"Side-by-side to previous L5 with the 479cc engine, you'll notice a huge improvement and increase in power that the Vanguard 570cc engine gives you," said Bryan King, product engineer for Landmaster. "That increase in punch of acceleration makes this a nice riding machine."

The L7 gets an expansion by shifting from the Kohler EFI engine to the Vanguard 627cc EFI engine. Drivers will get 8% more torque to help with larger loads and hill climbs. Additionally, the Vanguard engine produces more top end speeds of more than 35 mph.

Another big change in the new 2023 models is the improved gas and brake pedal design. The pedals are now designed to provide added comfort for all types of passenger heights and sizes. Additionally, the new design is more comfortable when the driver needs to push the throttle pedal down for long periods of time, for example, when driving on long country roads.

Last, but not least, the Landmaster UTVs have been given a fresh, new look, inside and out, with their modern style badging. The new reflective decals for the model's name and branding elements are fixed to all sides of the vehicle, providing a modern sleek look and aiding as a safety device at night. Additionally, the Landmasters are badged with an aluminum, American flag plate on the driver side, giving drivers a way to proudly show off their USA-made workhorse. **SFM**





*This special edition of From the Twittersverse features industry Tweets from the 2023 SFMA Conference and Exhibition.*



**@leahlou2**

Not sure how but every @FieldExperts conference gets better and better! Had an amazing time in Salt Lake getting to present, enjoying time with friends and collecting our Field of the Year award



**@zachAhorsley**

What an honor it was to accept the high school football FOY award tonight from the @FieldExperts. If you ever see a turtle on top a fence post, he didn't get there on his own... I'm just a turtle on a fence post. #SFMA2023



**@nolpup**

First @FieldExperts conference in the books. Grateful to be part of an industry filled with such good people. Looking forward to next year! #SFMA2023



**@Maritzamows**

#SFMA2023 one I'll never forget! Thank you @FieldExperts & @pioneerathletic for giving me the opportunity to have my voice heard! #twoyearswithpresidentsun





**@Zona\_TURFlete**

University of Arizona Grounds Crew cleans up nicely.  
#Crispy #SFMA2023 #SaltLakeCity



**@CgcChad**

Corn hole finals, with an electrified fan group at @FieldExperts #sfma2023



**@MarkoftheKing25**

A big congrats to @BIGTurfKnowHow tonight on the William Daniel Award! Well deserved #BoilerUp #SFMA2023 @LifeAtPurdue



**@DawnDRigby**

DeMaurice Smith, executive director of the NFLPA and keynote speaker at #SFMA2023, shares how sports field managers can be advocates for player safety.



**@VTTurfTeaching**

@VTTurfgrass students are ready for the @FieldExperts Student Challenge! A HUGE THANK YOU to @VirginiaSFMA and @BulldogFE for supporting our students in this great opportunity to learn, network, and grow at #SFMA2023. #Hokies





**@LinesAndLogos**

What a show. #SFMA2023 out



**@TuckahoeTurf**

Ready for a great week, full of great conversation, great people, and great food! #SFMA2023



**@JTurf**

Massive thanks to @bcall\_turf and crew for showing off their operation to the #SFMA2023 seminar on wheels!!



**@VAturf**

Great to hear from two millennial @FieldExperts in @leahlou2 & @Turf\_Cowboy talking about use of social media to advocate for profession & build interest by students. "It only takes 1 post to change someone's lives regarding a career they would likely never consider."





**@TurfKeydet**

1st day of our @FieldExperts Conference here in Salt Lake. Toured some great facilities @BYUBaseball @BYUfootball @BYUCougars #SFMA2023



**@tylerm047**

One last check in on the fields before going onward to the @FieldExperts #SFMA2023 conference!



**@neongrapefruit**

#SFMA2023 @azsfma @FieldExperts Team Arizona Bowling!!





## George Toma announces retirement

The Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) is honoring and celebrating George Toma's life, career and legacy as he retires. It all began with the work ethic developed as the son of a Pennsylvania coal miner in the 1930s and 40s. Born in 1929, Toma has spent more than seven decades working in the industry, and his expertise and dedication have earned him a reputation as the "Sultan of Sod."

"You do whatever is necessary, and then, when you're sure you've done everything, you do a little more." It's a motto that has carried him through a multi-hall-of-fame career and earned him nicknames like "the Nitty Gritty Dirt Man," "the Sodfather" and "the Man of Sod."

Toma has helped train and develop the next generation of sports field management professionals. Perfectionism and hard work are not only the way he approaches his work, but they are also what he expects of those who work with him.

"Blessed to have had the opportunity to work with George over the years," said Travis Hogan, head groundskeeper with the Kansas City Chiefs. "He is not only a mentor but has become a friend. I am thankful for all he has done for this industry, especially always pushing for safe fields."

Toma was a key leader in the infancy of the SFMA. He continues to serve as a mentor for many in the sports field management industry. He always emphasizes the importance of the entire crew in effective field management. Toma's motto is 'if you love what you do and give it your all – and then some' you can achieve your goals.

"The legacy that George Toma began as one of our founders more than 40 years ago has had an impact on every one of our over 2,300 members," said SFMA President Sun Roesslein, CSFM. "The 'and then some' attitude is part of the fabric of our profession, as sports field managers at every level strive to go above and beyond

providing the best and safest playing fields possible. His impact on our profession is everlasting."

SFMA's George Toma Golden Rake Award validates the "and then some" attitude of a sports field member in on-the-job activities and in community service.

Toma is a true icon in the industry, and his legacy will continue to inspire the profession for years to come. He is a leader in the world of sports field management. His dedication, expertise, and passion have made George a revered figure in the industry.

"George's legacy will live on forever," said Tony Leonard, director of grounds with the Philadelphia Eagles. "At 94, he still continues to share his wisdom of decades of experience and constant words of encouragement. It is truly an honor to have known George for almost 20 years and to consider him a friend and a colleague."

## SFMA's call for presentations is open

SFMA's call for presentations for the 2024 SFMA Conference is open. The 2024 SFMA Conference will be held January 22-25 in Daytona Beach, Fla. Share your ideas and expertise by being a presenter for the education sessions. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to share your experience and increase your visibility within the sports field management profession. SFMA is always seeking engaging presentations in the areas of sports field management, professional development, and new technologies and research.

Submit presentations at <https://proposalspace.com/calls/d/1553>.

Complete and submit all required materials listed in the online form by April 7, 2023. For more information, visit <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/conference/>.

## PGMS School of Grounds Management regional conference

Registration is open for the Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS) School of Grounds Management (SGM) regional conference and will close on March 20. The conference will be held on March 27-28 in Tucson, Ariz.

There will be tours of the University of Arizona campus, including more than eight acres of athletic fields that are home to the Arizona Wildcats of the Pac-12 Conference.

The conference will also have speakers, education sessions and information on the PGMS School of Grounds Management.

More information is available at <https://pgms.org/page/2023SGMregional>.

## Join NCS4 for the National Sports Safety and Security Conference

Make plans to join NCS4 for the 14th Annual National Sports Safety and Security Conference and Exhibition, June 27-29 at the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort and Spa. The 2023 conference theme is “Level-Up,” challenging NCS4’s industry friends and partners to strive for continuous improvement. The conference will offer dynamic programming, solution provider engagement, and opportunities to network with fellow professionals. This highly regarded gathering of sports safety and security professionals is an opportune time to share ideas, tools, and proven strategies to help advance the industry.

Early-bird registration is available through April 14. For more information, or to register, visit <https://ncs4.usm.edu/events/annual-conference/>.

Save \$75 off each attendee registration when registering three or more people from the same organization. Discount will be automatically applied when applicable. (Cannot be combined with the member discount; and does not apply to Private Sector Attendee registration or Exhibitors/Sponsors.)

NCS4 Connect Members receive a discount on conference attendee registration fees. If you are a current member, contact Sara Priebe for the conference discount code at [sara.priebe@usm.edu](mailto:sara.priebe@usm.edu). To become a member of NCS4 Connect, visit <https://ncs4.usm.edu/join-ncs4-connect/>.

## Central Turf & Irrigation Supply hires turf category director for fertilizer

Central Turf & Irrigation Supply announced that Ryan Batz has joined the team as the new turf category director for fertilizer. In this role, Batz will focus on strategic growth for the fertilizer program within the category — bringing the best products, resources and training to Central’s customers alongside the turf team of directors.

Batz has a B.S. in Turfgrass Management from Pennsylvania State University. He is a GCSAA Class A Member with six years of experience as the U.S. technical director for Ferti Technologies. In addition, he brings to the team 11 years as a golf course superintendent and was a former owner/operator of GreenKeepers Lawn Care. During his career, Batz has also been in sales as a golf technical sales representative in the New York Metropolitan area.

## Sod Solutions welcomes Martín Iñes

Martín Iñes has joined Sod Solutions as the new director of retail and professional development for Florida. He has an undergraduate degree in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina and a master’s degree from Mississippi State University in Plant and Soil Sciences with a Weed Science Concentration.

Iñes will help continue to build Sod Solutions relationships with authorized distributors, preferred installers and licensed turfgrass producers throughout Florida. He will help to increase communication and education of Sod Solutions brands within the Florida market.

“I am thrilled to welcome Martín to our team and look forward to how he will help continue to grow our business operations throughout the state of Florida,” said Mark Kann, director of Florida operations for Sod Solutions. “Given his experience and knowledge of turfgrass maintenance and agriculture, I believe he will be a valuable asset in maintaining these industry relationships.”

## Ewing announces new turf products category manager

Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply announced Michael Maravich as its new national turf products category manager.

“Mike’s years of successful turf product sales and marketing experience will be a great addition to the Ewing Category Management Team,” Ewing Chief Revenue Officer Tom Childers said. “His intimate knowledge of the customer and product markets is exactly what Ewing and its customers wanted.”

As National Turf Products Category Manager, Maravich will be responsible for growing the category, managing vendor relationships, engaging customers and providing product support to Ewing branch and sales staff.

“Ewing’s market presence rivals and exceeds any of its in-class competitors,” Maravich said. “My industry passion begins with category and portfolio management and strategy, so I’m excited to have the opportunity to return to those roots and represent Ewing to the industry and our customers.”

Maravich graduated from The Ohio State University in 1997 with a bachelor’s degree in Turf and Landscape Management. **SFM**







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# SportsField

MANAGEMENT

## SFMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

**Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona:** [www.azstma.org](http://www.azstma.org)

**Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.cstma.org](http://www.cstma.org)

**Florida #1 Chapter (South):**  
305-235-5101 (Bruce Bates) or  
Tom Curran, [CTomSell@aol.com](mailto:CTomSell@aol.com)

**Florida #2 Chapter (North):**  
850-580-4026,  
John Mascaro, [john@turf-tec.com](mailto:john@turf-tec.com)

**Florida #3 Chapter (Central):**  
407-518-2347, Dale Croft,  
[dale.croft@ocps.net](mailto:dale.croft@ocps.net)

**Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.gatewaystma.org](http://www.gatewaystma.org)

**Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.gstma.org](http://www.gstma.org)

**Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.stmalabasin.com](http://www.stmalabasin.com)

**Illinois Chapter STMA:** [www.ILSTMA.org](http://www.ILSTMA.org)

**Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
<http://imstma.blogspot.com>

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**Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.iowaturfgrass.org](http://www.iowaturfgrass.org)

**Keystone Athletic Field Managers Org. (KAFMO/STMA):** [www.kafmo.org](http://www.kafmo.org)

**Mid-Atlantic STMA:** [www.mastma.org](http://www.mastma.org)

**Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA):** [www.mistma.org](http://www.mistma.org)

**Minnesota Parks and Sports Field Management Association:** [www.mpsfma.org](http://www.mpsfma.org)

**MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.mokanstma.com](http://www.mokanstma.com)

**New England STMA (NESTMA):**  
[www.nestma.org](http://www.nestma.org)

**Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey:** [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org)

**North Carolina Chapter of STMA:**  
[www.ncsportsturf.org](http://www.ncsportsturf.org)

**Northern California STMA:**  
[www.norcalstma.org](http://www.norcalstma.org)

**Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA):** [www.ostma.org](http://www.ostma.org)

**Oklahoma Chapter STMA:**  
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**Oregon STMA Chapter:**  
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[oregonstma@gmail.com](mailto:oregonstma@gmail.com)

**Ozarks STMA:** [www.ozarksstma.org](http://www.ozarksstma.org)

**Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.pnwstma.org](http://www.pnwstma.org)

**Southern California SFMA:**  
[www.socalsfma.com](http://www.socalsfma.com)

**South Carolina Chapter of STMA:**  
[www.scstma.org](http://www.scstma.org)

**Tennessee Valley Sports Field Management Association (TVSFMA):**  
[www.tvstma.org](http://www.tvstma.org)

**Texas Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.txstma.org](http://www.txstma.org)

**Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.vstma.org](http://www.vstma.org)

**Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.wstma.org](http://www.wstma.org)

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## JOHN DEERE



# Salty Water

**Q:** Our irrigation water was recently tested and found to be slightly salty. This situation is all new to me. Is there anything we can do considering that this is our only irrigation water source?

**A:** Good water quality is often taken for granted, but like the soil you use, irrigation water should be periodically tested to see what is in it. Water may be found unsuitable for a particular use based on selected chemical and biological characteristics. Salts, sodium, bicarbonates, pH and other minerals affect water quality. Water quality is also not static, but may be influenced by a number of situations. For example, pumping and depletion of groundwater can cause saltwater to migrate inland and upward, contaminating the water supply.

Salty water (also called saline water) can cause leaf burn for turfgrasses. Salt water in the soil can pull water from the plant's roots, resulting in physiological drought stress, even with adequate moisture in the ground. If the concentration of some salts is high enough, there can be a direct ion toxicity to the plant, resulting in poor plant health. Another potential problem from salty irrigation water can be ion imbalances that can result in nutrient deficiencies.

There are also significant negative implications of salinity to the soil. Salty water will degrade soil structure, causing more compaction and reducing pore space for water movement. Without adequate water movement through the profile, surface ponding of water will reduce efficacy of fertilizers and pesticides. The compacted soil profile can also negatively impact the soil's microbial ecology, which is necessary for good plant health.

The salinity hazard of water is usually expressed as the total content of soluble salts, measured by electrical conductivity (EC) or total dissolved salts (TDS). These units are used to classify irrigation water quality so that management practices can be suggested for different levels of saltiness of the water. At the lower end of the scale, there is usually little concern since periodic rainfall will dilute the salt water. As the saltiness of the water increases, there is an increased

need to leach the salts from the soil by using additional water, either from the same source or from a cleaner source. I suggest you contact a water specialist if your water tests above 1,000 ppm total salts. They can determine a leaching program for you to use if needed.

Salts and sodium do not act independently. For that reason, water quality tests will usually measure the sodium adsorption ration (SAR) to determine the ratio of sodium to calcium and magnesium. This ratio will also be used to classify irrigation water and help determine the potential damage sodium will inflict on soil structure and permeability. In general, an SAR value below three is considered very safe for turfgrasses. Water with an SAR of nine will cause increasing structural damage to clay soils and then to sand soils with slightly higher SAR values.

Gypsum is the first line of defense to use for soils with high SAR values. Research has started evaluating other amendments that may be helpful when using poor water quality for irrigation. Some of these amendments may be injected directly into the water and others may be applied to soil. Cultural practices such as cultivation and topdressing can be used to improve soil properties. Ultimately, you will likely need to more closely manage your other inputs to try offsetting any negative influences from the water. **SFM**



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## Questions?

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Or, send your question to Pamela Sherratt at 202 Kottman Hall, 2001 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210 or [sherratt.1@osu.edu](mailto:sherratt.1@osu.edu)



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