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MANAGEMENT

February 2024

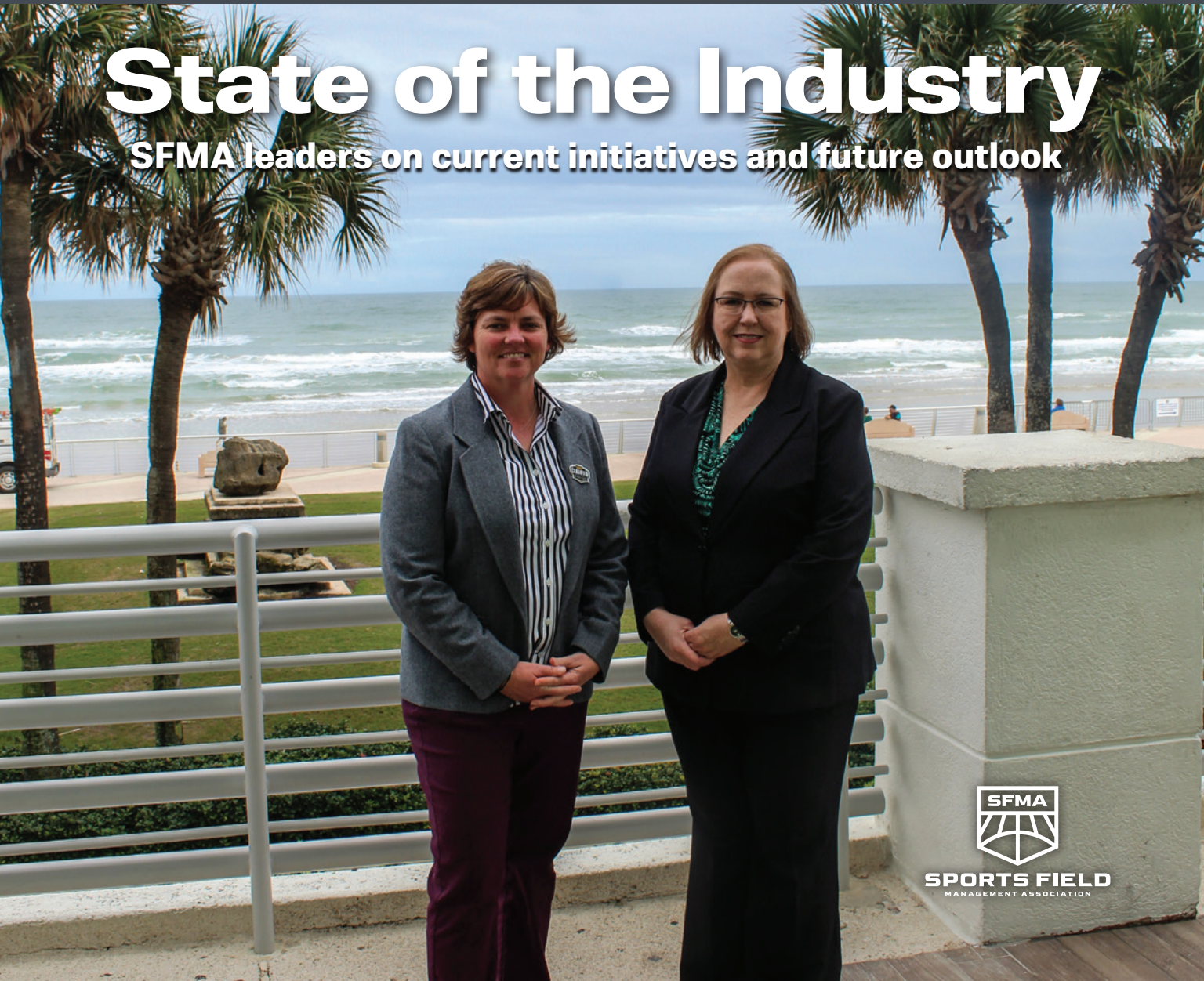
Vol. 40 No. 2

The Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

Mowing Patterns Contest Winning Design **10** | SFMA Launches New Mentorship Program **20**
College and University Turfgrass Programs **24** | NHL Winter Classic **26**

State of the Industry

SFMA leaders on current initiatives and future outlook



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Questions? Email jkmitta@epgacceleration.com with "Rising Star" in the subject.

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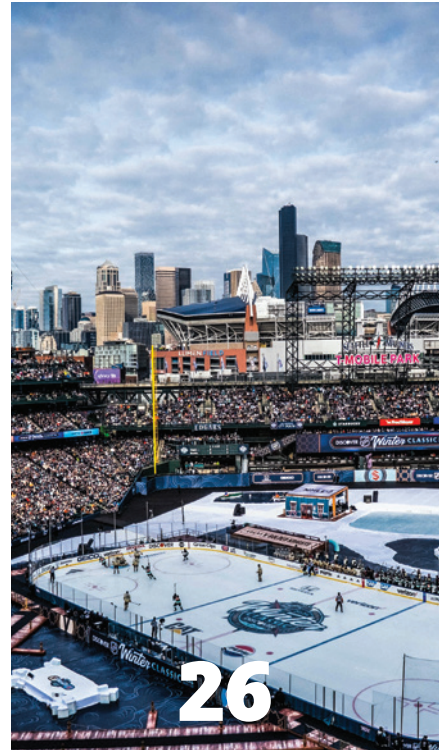
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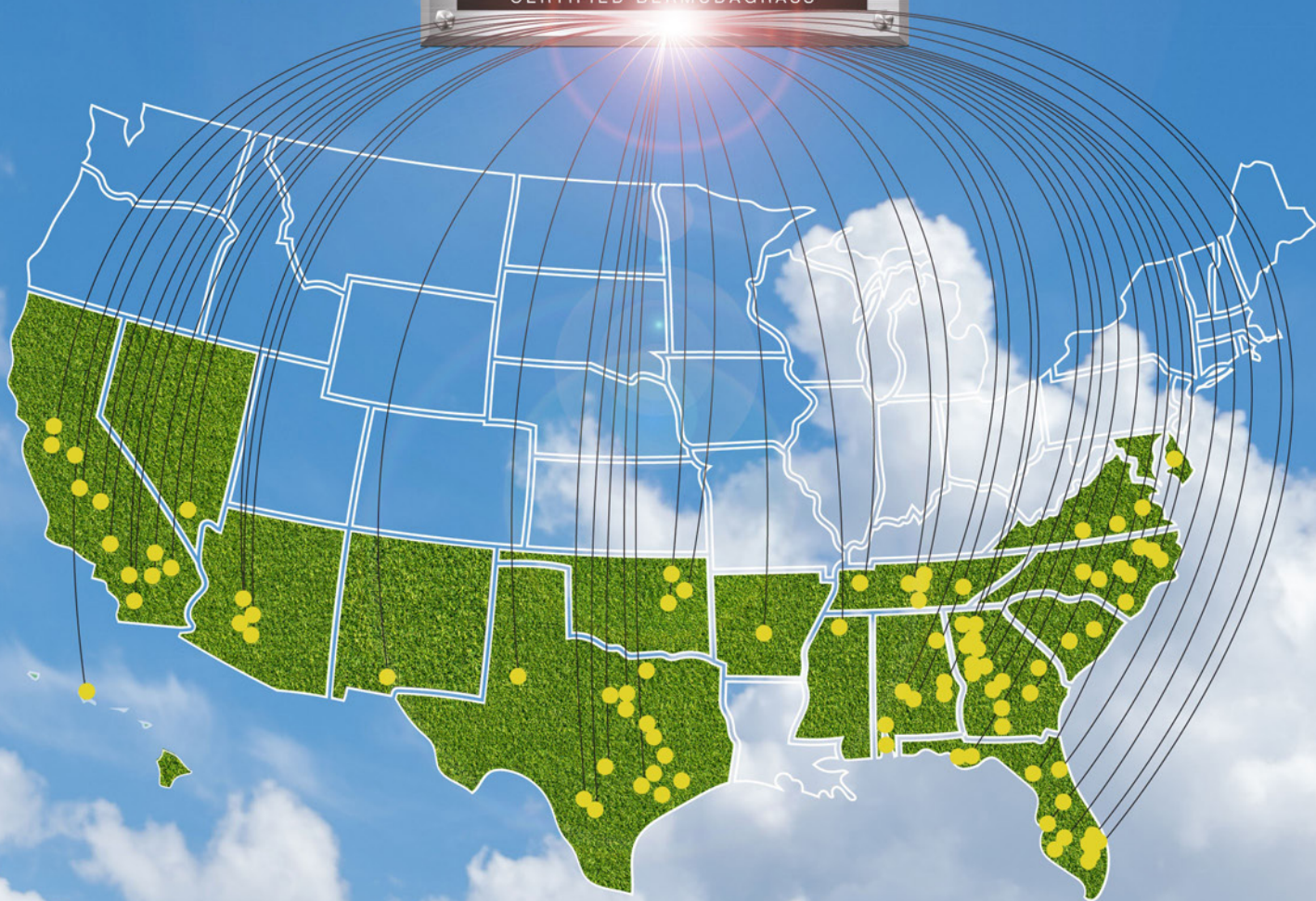
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Editor's Note



John Kmitta

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The February issue of *SportsField Management* has traditionally featured an in-depth profile of the incoming SFMA President. However, this issue is a departure from that format, because SFMA President Sun Roesslein, CSFM, will serve a second year as association president in 2024.

Until the late 2000s, SFMA presidents traditionally served a two-year term, but that switched to one-year terms in 2009 due to the demands of the role. It makes perfect sense, because by the time a person takes over the role of president, they have already served the board as a director, then secretary/treasurer, then president-elect. As a result, each president has served the association for several years.

For example, 2024 will be Roesslein's eighth year on the SFMA Board of Directors. I hope everyone who reads this can truly appreciate the time, effort and dedication board members devote to improving the sports field management industry, advocating on your behalf, boosting professionalism and championing safe playing surfaces for all athletes.

Don't forget, SFMA board members are volunteers who work full-time careers in the industry, then devote many additional hours of their own time to serve the association and the profession.

With that in mind, in lieu of the president's profile in this issue, Roesslein; SFMA CEO Laura Simmons, MBA, CAE; SFMA President-elect Adam Thoms, Ph.D.; and SFMA Academic Director Chase Straw, Ph.D., have graciously shared their thoughts and insights into the past year and the state of the sports field management profession overall, as well as their outlook for 2024 and beyond.

And although they touch upon SFMA initiatives within the state of the industry, we also felt it important to devote a separate article in this issue to SFMA's new mentorship program.

Almost everyone in this industry with whom I have spoken has shared the impact their mentors and teachers have had on their careers. So it is great to see a formal program being launched to facilitate ongoing mentorship, education and communication throughout the sports field management profession.

As we embark on the coming year, I just want to add that I look forward to another year working with Sun and collaborating to share SFMA's message. I am truly thankful to have her support, along with that of Laura Simmons, the SFMA HQ staff and the rest of the SFMA Board of Directors. **SFM**

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Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

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SportsField Management.

SportsField Management (ISSN PENDING) (USPS 000-292)
(Reg. U.S. Pat. & T.M. Off.) is published monthly by EPG Brand
Acceleration at PO Box 96, Port Jervis, NY 12771.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *SportsField
Management*, PO Box 96, Port Jervis, NY 12771-0096.

For subscription information and requests, call Subscription
Services at (763) 383-4492. Subscription rates: 1 year, \$52 US
& Poss.; All subscriptions are payable in advance in US funds.

Send payments to *SportsField Management*, PO Box 96,
Port Jervis, NY 12771-0096. Phone: (763) 383-4492. Fax:
(763) 383-4499. Single copies or back issues, \$12 each
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President's Message



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Churchill; Forrest Jammer; John Kmitta;
and David Schwandt.

Hello again SFMA members!

2024 is kicking off to a unique start in that I have the rare honor of serving a second year as president of our association. Just before our conference last year I learned there were going to be some changes to our Executive Committee for 2023 that would also affect 2024. Per our bylaws and SOP, that means that we needed to go into a holding pattern in order for the elections to catch up to the positions on the board. With the November 2023 SFMA Board of Directors elections, we are now back on track to return to the normal one-year terms for the 2025 year.

I will serve again this year as president; Adam Thoms, Ph.D. moves into the president-elect position; and newly elected Secretary-Treasurer Alpha Jones, CSFM, as well as Vice-President, Commercial Erin Boyd Wilder gets us back on track. The immediate past president chair will be empty for this year. Luckily, we have a very passionate group of past presidents who, unsurprisingly, are willing to help and support the current board as needed.

I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my immense gratitude to Past President Nick McKenna, CSFM, for his unwavering commitment to serving our association. When searching through the SOP for the path forward last year, I learned I needed to name someone to hold the president-elect slot for a one-



Sun Roesslein, CSFM

SFMA President

Sun.Roesslein@jeffco.k12.co.us

year appointment. With all the changes we were facing, continuity was a very important factor, and I'm very grateful that Nick said yes when asked to serve one more year. I've had the distinct honor to serve on the board for several years with Nick, and his commitment, passion and dedication to our association are truly inspiring.

Typically, the February issue of *SportsField Management* includes a sort of "getting to know you" article about the newly seated president. For this year, you'll see a bit of a 2023 recap of changes that happened behind the scenes that you may not have noticed, and a look forward to what's coming in 2024.

You'll see a few other changes this year as well. For example, you'll get to hear from other SFMA Board members in this column throughout the year. In all honesty, I've periodically felt a little stuck about what to write that offers some value to you. My hope moving through this year is that hearing other perspectives from those who are representing you in the boardroom will provide more insight into how we are working toward supporting each of you and focusing on growing our profession.

Here's to a successful 2024! **SFM**

Sun Roesslein, CSFM

SFMA Volunteer Opportunities

Just as turfgrass requires the right soil, nutrients, moisture and maintenance, volunteers are essential to SFMA's future. SFMA offers a variety of ways for its members to get involved — from short-term volunteer efforts to committee, advisory council and board service. With every new volunteer, SFMA grows stronger, more diverse and inclusive, and better equipped to reach its goals. Deepen your roots with SFMA and your colleagues, and volunteer today!

In 2024, SFMA will realign its committees and task groups to fit with the goals of the association and the work required to achieve them. One challenge being addressed is the continuity of activity and progress within each group from year to year. To address this, the SFMA president and president-elect will appoint a chair and vice chair for each committee. These leaders will work side by side, and as the chair completes their term, the vice chair will then assume the chair position and a new vice chair will be appointed to work alongside them. This will help each committee maintain positive momentum and help drive SFMA initiatives.

SFMA's volunteer opportunities are listed below. The sign-up period will open in February, so please watch your email for your chance to throw your hat in the ring and let SFMA know what area you would like to support. SFMA's president and president-elect will work on the appointments, as well as designating the chairs and vice chairs, and you everyone will be notified of placements in late February or early March.

The opportunities for your consideration are categorized within the following areas: association support, awards programs, conference and membership.

ASSOCIATION SUPPORT

■ **Commercial Advisory Council** — Provides a forum to exchange ideas on how SFMA can better serve and engage its commercial members and how this segment can help advance the association. (Commercial members only)

■ **Editorial/Magazine** — Ensures that *SportsField Management* magazine contains information relevant to the sports field manager; to provide ideas and contacts for articles for publication; to provide aesthetic and other recommendations on functionality and readability.

■ **Finance & Audit** — Provides oversight of the SFMA's financial resources by reporting information to the SFMA Board of Directors. The Finance & Audit Committee shall be responsible for reviewing and recommending to the board of directors for approval: 1) annual budget; 2) financial policies; 3) investment policies and guidelines; 4) the annual audit or review.

■ **Historical** — Acquires, documents and displays the history of the association (STMA and SFMA) and the sports field management profession.

■ **Subject Matter Experts (formerly Technical Standards)** — A membership network willing to answer technical questions; to help answer interview questions at times; to review resources on the SFMA website for accuracy; periodically called on to review magazine articles; and to work with the American Society for Testing & Materials on sports facility standards and recommendations as needed.

AWARDS PROGRAMS

■ **Field of the Year** — Judges the association's awards program applicants selecting the Field of the Year winners; develop strategies to enhance the awards program.

■ **Innovative** — Judges the Innovative Awards program; ensures a fair judging process; enhances the program as necessary. (Non-commercial members only)

■ **Scholarship** — Judges the association's SAFE scholarship program applicants; develops strategies to enhance the scholarship program and recommends them to the SAFE Board of Trustees.

CONFERENCE

■ **Conference Education** — Determines the content, topics, presentation formats, speakers and moderators for the conference; recommends ways to leverage conference education.

■ **Conference SAFE events** — Organizes aspects of the SAFE Foundation fundraising events including bowling, golf and cornhole; suggests additional fundraising opportunities tied to conference.

■ **Student Challenge** — Develops the annual student challenge exam questions, answer key and protocols; assist in proctoring the exam as needed. (Non-academic members only)

■ **Tours** — Organizes the appropriate off-site tours, including venues, presenters and formats.

MEMBERSHIP

■ **Membership Enhancement (formerly just "Membership")** — Develops initiatives to drive association membership growth and retention; recommends programs that add value for each member.

■ **Member Resources (formerly Information Outreach/Learning Initiatives)** — Develops educational and informational opportunities for members targeted to specific needs to enhance their personal and professional development.

■ **Member Advocacy** — Develops strategies to advocate for the profession of sports field management and the

knowledge and expertise of SFMA members to the general public and other athletic facility stakeholders.

■ **Certification** — Develops strategies to grow the number of certified members; consistently monitors the program and recommends enhancements to ensure that the program is the top achievement for sports field managers.

■ **Chapter Relations** — Develops a chapter support structure that is beneficial locally and nationally; facilitates the sharing of best practices; supports the growth of the chapter network in states that do not have a chapter.

■ **International** — Positions SFMA as a global leader in sports facility management and the go-to resource for those who work internationally in the industry; grow the international membership segment; and support international efforts recognizing sports field management profession.

■ **Environmental** — Develops environmental strategies that position SFMA and its members as leaders in environmental stewardship; oversees the Environmental Certification program.

SFMA Post-conference Virtual Education

SFMA continues to provide education from industry experts for four weeks following the SFMA conference. Sessions are will be held every Tuesday at 2 and 3:15 p.m. EST. The sessions feature industry experts who share their expertise and insights, enabling attendees to expand their knowledge and develop new skills.

TUESDAY JANUARY 30

2-3 P.M. EST

Using NTEP Data to Select Turfgrass Varieties for Sports Fields

Presented by Geoffrey Rinehart, lecturer, University of Maryland

Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_69khQvdYTVmj9wpRIehng

3:15-4:15 P.M. EST

Turfgrass 101: Focusing on the basics

Presented by Gregg Munshaw, Ph.D., director of agronomy for PARC Research and Consulting

Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FsxH0etSwmDbvqEH-ArDg

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 6

2-3 P.M. EST

Sports Turf Managers and Government Relations

Presented by Patrick Coakley, CSFM, business development mid-Atlantic, DuraEdge Products, and Jason Bowers, CSFM, sports turf manager, Montgomery Parks

Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wHM4n4sxQpeY2saJaG4fLg

3:15-4:15 P.M. EST

Take the Million Gallon Challenge

Presented by Brad Jakubowski, MS, CIT, professor, Penn State University

Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Y2bcricBSP6fKOP3fAKtLA

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 13

2-3 P.M. EST

Fraise Mowing: Uses, Effects and Recovery

Presented by Raymond McCauley, Ph.D.

Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_U0ETr4U7Sp6g2INSSOg8w

3:15-4:15 P.M. EST

Data and Decisions: Applying Research in Sports Field Management Practices,

Presented by Tyler Carr, Ph.D., professor at The Ohio State University, and Dan Sandor, Ph.D., professor at Virginia Tech University

Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8NqGGiIDSVunVL6hgHF_w

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 20

2-3 P.M. EST

Regenerative Athletic Field Management

Presented by Barry Stewart, Ph.D., professor, Mississippi State University

Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kCI4mW9SLS7xUMKGF9euA

3:15-4:15 P.M. EST

Managing Common Insect Pests in Cool-Season Fields

Presented by Geoffrey Rinehart, lecturer, University of Maryland

Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dTKqObmsRra1PfmX7yyP7Q **SFM**



SFMA Mowing Patterns Contest Winning Design

The Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) announced the winner of the 2023 SFMA Mowing Patterns Contest. The winning design was submitted by Dakota Steele, district groundskeeper at Fairfield Community Schools in Goshen, Indiana. The winning "V pattern" was created for the opening round of Indiana high school football sectionals at Fairfield Community Schools. *SportsField Management* magazine recently asked Steele about the winning design.

SportsField Management (SFM): Please tell us about yourself, your crew and the fields/facilities you manage.

Dakota Steele: I was a Sport Management student-athlete at Manchester University from 2014-2018. After

graduation I became assistant track and field/cross country coach at the university for two years until January 2020. I noticed the Fort Wayne Tincaps opened up their internships for the season, and I was intrigued by the grounds crew opportunity that was available. As a fan going to Tincaps games in the past, the field work was always what I admired when going to Parkview Field. Not long after I started in Fort Wayne, COVID shut down the Minor League Baseball season, and I was no longer needed for the grounds internship due to the circumstances. I was determined to be in Fort Wayne, so I stayed on as a general intern for the summer assisting in odd jobs. That fall I was offered the cleaning supervisor position and took on that role through the



2021 season. At the end of that year one of the full-time grounds assistants left, and I was offered the position — thus starting my time in groundskeeping. While I was there, Keith Winter and Jake Sperry passed along a lot of knowledge — not just about groundskeeping but life as well. They are both great people, and I am more than grateful for the knowledge and memories I made while I was there with them. In June of 2023, I became the district groundskeeper here at Fairfield Community Schools in Goshen, Indiana. Since then, I have continued to educate myself about the industry, and have tried to attain the best facilities possible.

I do general grounds work throughout the district and, outside of painting, I am the only one who mows, irrigates and performs cultural practices on the football fields. Eric Smoker is the coordinator of district grounds and maintenance, and assists me with the painting of the football fields and helps with general grounds work when not working on the schools and equipment. Tim Leer (director of facilities and maintenance) and Matthew Morgan (maintenance assistant) were a big part of clearing, prepping and seeding the ground for our new cross country course this summer.

Fairfield Community schools is made up of the JR/SR High school and three elementary schools, which totals 130 acres of grounds with 90 of those acres being at the high school.

Our athletic facilities include a natural game and practice football field comprised of a bluegrass/ryegrass mix that I started to seed with Barenbrug HGT 80/20. We have synthetic turf baseball and softball facilities, which I will spend more time on in the coming season. We also have a new cross country course.

SFM: Please detail for us the winning design and your inspiration for the design.

Steele: This design was created for the opening round of the postseason for the Indiana high school football playoffs. Fairfield had not beaten its first-round opponent, Jimtown, in 44 years, so I wanted to create a V pattern to symbolize an upcoming victory. Fairfield ended up winning this game in a downpour that came through that night. Inspiration for my designs derive from baseball patterns that I have seen with tweaks to fit the shape of the football field. I was very proud of this pattern despite the simplicity of it and had it captured via drone. I wanted to enter the design in the contest not only for myself but for the school district to have an opportunity to be recognized.

SFM: There is a lot of foresight, planning, dedication and hard work in what you do. What is your overall approach with regard to mowing patterns and on-field artistry, and what is your advice to other sports field managers when it comes to the creative aspects of the role?

Steele: When I took over at Fairfield, I immediately took extreme pride in the care of the football field. As the season approached, I took it upon myself to come up with a different pattern for each of the six home games. For the contest design I had a digital template of the field, which I used to find the best angle of the lines to make the pattern look the best. I have a Hustler Hyperdrive zero-turn with a stripe kit that really helped make patterns pop. Some patterns I did were unconventional for football fields, but I wanted to give the players and community something that they can take pride in as well. My advice for other sport field managers is to continue to educate yourself to create the best version of yourself, and to just enjoy what you're doing. The pride you have in your work will have you continually improving your facilities.

“Inspiration for my designs derive from baseball patterns that I have seen with tweaks to fit the shape of the football field. I was very proud of this pattern despite the simplicity of it.”

- Dakota Steele

SFM: What does winning the SFMA Mowing Patterns Contest mean to you?

Steele: Winning this contest was a big accomplishment for us. I was very proud of the work put in this year, and believed this would be a good opportunity for us. As a small district in rural Indiana, being in a contest with some incredibly maintained fields was already a challenge in itself. The other field managers in the contest deserve credit for the amount of work and detail they put in — not only for their contest design but throughout the year. I was unsure how the contest would go, but I was fortunate to have huge support from not only the community within the district but from outside as well. They wanted to win as much as I did, and were a big reason for Fairfield to come out with a win. **SFM**

State of the Industry

SFMA leaders discuss initiatives, challenges, trends and the future of sports field management



SFMA President Sun Roeslein, CSFM (left), and SFMA CEO Laura Simmons, MBA, CAE.

By John Kmitta

“The chance to serve a second term as president is exciting,” said Sun Roeslein, CSFM, who is embarking on a rare second year as SFMA President. “The biggest advantage is to provide continuity in supporting our CEO as she continues to identify growth opportunities and lay the groundwork for the future of SFMA.”

According to Roeslein, 2023 focused mostly on back-of-house investments and process improvements for SFMA, so 2024 can be more outwardly focused.

“Just due to the timing, a few of us have had the privilege to bridge the gap — working with Kim Heck prior to her retirement, working closely with the headquarters staff in the interim, and now working with Laura as we start the new phase of SFMA,” said

Roeslein. “I can bring a little of the past institutional knowledge for reference as we grow into the next phase. Now I get to have a front-row seat to witness how updated systems will support our membership in increasing ways.”

Roeslein is pleased to have the opportunity to work with Laura Simmons, MBA, CAE, who recently completed her first year as SFMA CEO.

“Laura brought the association management experience SFMA needed when she was first hired, and is learning our membership and profession quickly,” said Roeslein. “Helping Laura build a strong foundation in her first year in order to set SFMA up for continued growth has been a fantastic experience. Working together with the passionate board members who represent all segments of membership has really



shown we are all dedicated to working toward an even stronger association for our peers.”

According to Simmons, the biggest challenge during her first year as SFMA CEO has been learning about the past, present and future plans of SFMA.

“This included the analysis of operations and infrastructure and how we can serve our members better,” she said. “I’ve learned so much, and we are very fortunate to have a great team in place that is dedicated to our members and providing them the service and support they want and need.”

Simmons added that the highlight of the past year has been meeting many SFMA members.

“I have enjoyed learning about the profession, visiting chapters, engaging with our volunteers and learning more about SFMA’s history and goals for the future beyond the formal strategic initiatives,” said Simmons.

Meeting with SFMA members during 2023 was a highlight for Roesslein as well.

“I’ve had the chance to connect with members all over the country — attending local events, following more people on social media and having conversations,” she said. “The opportunity to serve our membership is incredibly impactful, and something I never could have understood until truly diving in.”

INITIATIVES

According to Roesslein, SFMA focused on building a stronger chapter support plan in order help SFMA’s chapter network better support field managers at the local level in 2023. The committee structure has also been revamped for 2024 to encourage continuing progress that more than 200 volunteers make in each committee’s focus area.

“We have been hosting virtual town hall discussions, and I’ve been able to meet with the leadership of several chapters,” added Simmons. “This has been enlightening, as each chapter is unique and confirmed what we

already knew — that there is no one-size-fits-all formula for chapter success. We will continue working with each chapter and supporting them as they overcome challenges and strive toward their goals.”

SFMA President-elect Adam Thoms, Ph.D., added that SFMA is continually working on initiatives tied to its strategic plan, and progress on those efforts is reviewed during each SFMA Board of Directors meeting.

Said Roesslein, “2023 felt like a year of regrouping and resetting the foundation to have the infrastructure in place in order to accomplish the goals set forth in our strategic plan. Any good goal-setting coach will tell you that you have to break the big goal down into smaller, measurable and achievable steps in order to succeed. In 2024 we have the opportunity to get back to fully focusing on implementing the business plan set in place.”

GROWING THE PROFESSION

Ongoing goals for SFMA are to grow membership and be more inclusive of underrepresented groups, Simmons added.

“This not only will benefit the association and the networking opportunities for our members, but hopefully will help address the workforce shortage within the profession,” she said. “We are reviewing our communication strategies, and are working diligently on increasing the public’s awareness of the profession — gaining respect for sports field managers and the work they do to provide safe, playable and beautiful fields for our communities.”

Awareness of the profession is also tied to SFMA’s initiatives related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

“We welcome everyone into the profession, but first they must know it is an option — and that there are many entry points available,” said Simmons.

SFMA has also been working with partner iCEV to create a turfgrass certification for high schools and career education programs as part of an effort to bring younger and more diverse individuals into the profession.

In the summer of 2024, SFMA will launch more online learning opportunities to help sports field management professionals earn more respect, and, in turn, grow respect for the industry as a whole.

“From an educational standpoint, we are continually seeking methods to educate and engage our members through cutting-edge research, new technologies and innovative ideas,” said SFMA Academic Director Chase Straw, Ph.D. “We are placing a strong emphasis on developing programs that will expand the sports field management industry and association.”



“At the recent conference in Daytona Beach, we announced the launch of our mentorship program,” said Simmons. “This will facilitate the building of bridges between seasoned professionals and those newer to sports field management. Personal and positive engagement is the best way to strengthen commitments to the profession.”

Simmons added that she has met with representatives from other associations that serve related fields, and plans to strengthen those relationships and collaborations for the benefit of SFMA members.

Added Roesslein, “Working with peer associations is one way to help provide more support for our SFMA membership in a variety of paths. This is an ongoing effort, but one specific collaboration from early in 2023 was the social media campaign with the Grounds Management Association (GMA) out of the UK. SFMA was invited to take part in supporting the campaign, which promotes the expertise of grounds managers and expanded to also promote sports field managers.

“Another example is the Women’s Leadership Academy hosted by the GCSAA,” she added. “This unique event was opened to applications from our membership, as well as theirs, and SFMA had eight representatives in the inaugural class of 40 women.”

SFMA has also had invitations to attend the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS) and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) conferences, which will continue to open doors to collaboration.

“Each peer association has specific areas of expertise that SFMA members can benefit from, and it is my hope

that by building relationships with other associations we can tap into those cross-over resources,” said Roesslein.

LABOR

According to Simmons, awareness of careers in sports field management is also key to addressing the ongoing labor shortages in the sports field management profession.

“We are working on marketing/awareness campaign strategies, bringing more of our communications efforts in house for more immersive knowledge of the profession, the challenges and most importantly the benefits,” said Simmons. “We plan to get more messaging out to key audiences to educate the public on the importance of having qualified sports field managers maintaining fields and complexes.”

Added Straw, “The key lies in finding ways to inform young people about the career opportunities available in this field and demonstrating the value that skilled sports field managers bring to sports organizations, collegiate athletics, parks and recreation facilities and more.”

Simmons added that the iCEV curriculum will help with these efforts, as it will allow high school students to acquire turfgrass certifications and introduce them to the profession.

“We are confident that once turfgrass education is introduced into more high schools and career education programs, the interest in and pursuit of a career in sports field management will increase,” she said.

Straw added that SFMA has four programs specifically aimed at attracting youth to sports field management industry:

- SFMA 101, a training course offering continuing education opportunities;
- iCEV, a national online turfgrass curriculum providing instructional materials and certification testing for career technical educators;
- Cue Career, an online platform where students learn about careers through direct interaction with professional associations;
- And the chapter ambassador program, designed for chapters to engage middle school and high school students in learning about the industry.



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According to Straw, the SFMA Turfgrass Science Certification, available through iCEV in August 2024, will verify that individuals have acquired foundational knowledge and skills in turfgrass science and management, and are capable of pursuing a career in the turfgrass industry.

"We are collaborating with groups like FFA and the GCSAA to develop joint strategies to attract young people to our industry," he said.

Thoms added that it is important to continue to spread the message that sports field management is a career.

"So many people I run into say they didn't know you could care for athletic fields as a career, or say they wished they knew about this career at a younger age. Reaching out to high schools will be key in the upcoming years to attract youth to our industry.

NATURAL VS. SYNTHETIC

SFMA leaders also weighed in on the often hot-button issue of natural grass fields vs. synthetic turf.

According to Simmons, research and education are important for helping communities determine the best

options for their needs, taking into account the expertise of the sports field manager and the importance of having the proper maintenance plans and professionals in place regardless of what the field is comprised of.

"Again, this is where growing the respect for the expertise a sports field manager can provide is imperative," she said.

Said Straw, "We require more unbiased information about the economic, environmental and social impacts of field type and management. This can be achieved by conducting large-scale research projects that address these key issues, thereby providing decision makers with science-based data to make the best possible decisions for their facilities.

"Unfortunately, funding for sports field research is limited, making such research projects challenging to conduct," Straw added. "Nonetheless, efforts are still being made by numerous turfgrass scientists and key stakeholder groups across the country to address these concerns and provide information."

Continued on page 18

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

PROBLEM:

Loss of power to portion of irrigation system

TURFGRASS AREA:

Regional recreational park

LOCATION:

Laurel, Maryland

TURFGRASS VARIETY:

Fescue/bluegrass/ryegrass (with common bermuda infestation)

Answer on page 33

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International

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Continued from page 16

Thoms echoed Straw's sentiments.

"So little research is actually funded focusing on athletic field safety, and this needs to increase to help give quantifiable data," he said. "Also, the field managers need more say in how the fields are used. They also need to be at the table when improvements are proposed as they can best answer what can be done to improve the field."

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

"I believe that robotic mowers are here to stay, and they will only continue to improve and become more affordable," Straw said of technological innovations that are impacting the industry. "GPS

painters and sprayers are already making a significant impact in terms of labor savings and efficiency. I am particularly excited about the role that artificial intelligence will play in our industry in the coming years.”

According to Straw, these newer technologies — in conjunction with data collection devices such as weather and soil moisture sensors — will become integrated to form a more robust, data-driven decision and action platform.

“This integration is likely to lead to a reduction in management inputs and result in fields that are safer and more playable,” he said.

Thoms is excited to see what is learned from the FIFA World Cup Research with the 2026 World Cup rapidly approaching.

“This will have implications for many years down the road on how to incorporate technology, cultivar performance under athletic field stress, and new maintenance techniques into the athletic field industry,” he said. “Attending presentations on this research will be exciting over the next couple of years and should be on everyone’s radar.”

SUSTAINABILITY

With regard to sustainability initiatives, Straw said continued education and outreach — within and outside of the industry — are essential.

“Sports field management often faces criticism for various reasons, such as concerns over water, fertilizer and pesticide use for natural turfgrass, and issues like heat, PFAS or microplastics for synthetic turf,” said Straw. “The more science-based information we can provide to managers, decision makers and the public, the clearer it will become that our industry

is striving to manage fields in the most sustainable way possible — balancing economic, environmental and social responsibilities.”

SUPPORTING THE INDUSTRY

“The team in the board room is dedicated to working toward elevating our profession, supporting all segments of membership, offering more resources and setting SFMA up for future growth,” said Roesslein. “This group of volunteer board members, alongside our small-but-mighty staff and more than 200 committee volunteers have a lot of opportunity ahead of us in order to achieve our strategic goals and effect positive impact for the roughly 2,300 members of our association. In turn, that will benefit

the millions of athletes that play on our fields every day.

“While the road map of our strategic plan is in place, we still need creative ideas and solutions, as well as diverse experiences in order to continue to evolve,” she added. “I encourage you to jump in and sign up for a committee that aligns with your passion for our profession. The old adage, ‘a rising tide lifts all ships,’ rings true in that as we elevate our offerings and resources, we will also elevate our profession; and as we elevate our profession, we elevate our members.” **SFM**

John Kmitta is associate publisher and editorial brand director of SportsField Management magazine.



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SFMA Launches New Mentorship Program



By John Kmitta

The Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) launched a new mentorship program, developed and implemented by the SFMA Learning Initiatives Committee.

According to SFMA Education Manager Jennifer McLendon, M.Ed., an SFMA mentorship program has been discussed and desired for many years, and the 2023 Learning Initiatives Committee collaborated to make it a reality.

"We are excited for this program to launch," said McLendon. "To grow the industry and the turfgrass profession, several factors were discussed. The common theme that continued to resurface was the need for individuals to feel supported and encouraged to grow professionally and individually."

McLendon added that there are many individuals within SFMA willing to serve as mentors, and now that the program has launched the hope is that many will see the value in becoming a mentee and will apply to the program.

According to the Learning Initiatives Committee, the program will enhance knowledge and skill transfer among members, boost career development and advancement, develop meaningful and collaborative relationships within the industry, increase confidence and motivation for the mentee and bring awareness and solutions to difficult topics and situations that sports field managers encounter.

Learning Initiatives Committee Chair Alpha Jones, CSFM, said the mentorship program provides a recognized, board-approved mechanism to connect SFMA members who have qualifications and subject matter expertise that closely match the needs of the mentee.



“The energy that drove the creation of the program was primarily the knowledge that members were asking for mentors and to be mentors,” said Jones. “The buzz about the need grew louder after a presentation at the 2023 SFMA Conference about a mentoring relationship.”

“Mentor is defined by most dictionaries as (noun) an experienced and trusted advisor, or (verb) to advise or train someone, especially a younger colleague,” said Learning Initiatives Committee Member Michael Goatley Jr., Ph.D. “John Clintsman and I presented ‘Mentoring for the Sports Field Manager’ at the 2023 SFMA Conference in Salt Lake City, and it elicited some nice discussion with our audience — many of whom attended our presentation to share their mentoring experiences.”

Goatley and Clintsman originally met at SFMA conference eight years ago when Clintsman purchased a copy of “Sports Field Management: Design, Construction and Maintenance” (a book co-authored by Goatley) and asked Goatley to sign it.

“You never know how, when or where a mentoring relationship might develop,” said Goatley. “For John and me, that was the beginning of a professional relationship that we have maintained and expanded as the years passed. As our mentoring relationship evolved, it became one of John’s goals for us to present together at conference — and the topic he wished to partner on was mentorship.”

According to Goatley, a lot of research went into the creation of the presentation, as did a survey of SFMA members. That data — along with feedback from colleagues and information from various business leaders — helped Goatley and Clintsman create an outline of the characteristics of a good mentor. That list included the

willingness to share, demonstrating a positive attitude and acting as a positive role model, taking mentoring seriously, enthusiasm for the field, continued learning/growth, the respect of colleagues, the ability to set and meet professional goals, motivating others and valuing the opinions of others.

Jones added that he feels selflessness is the number-one trait that makes someone a good mentor. “A willingness and commitment to sharing yourself with others,” he added. “Empathy is another trait of a good mentor — the ability to walk in another’s shoes, to hear their story to better guide their mentee through challenges and successes.”

According to SFMA, the mentorship program cycle begins in spring and concludes at each SFMA conference. Participants should be willing to commit one to two hours per month to the program, and mentors may have up to five mentees. Each mentor must be a current member of SFMA, be willing to commit time to the program, have significant and relevant experience in the sports field management industry and must submit an online application. Each mentee must also be a current member of SFMA willing to commit time to the program, and is required to submit the online application.

According to Jones, the first step to becoming a mentor is to ask yourself if you want to mentor someone and then evaluate what you have to offer a mentee.

Jones added that any SFMA member, new or seasoned, who desires to have guidance toward professional and personal development should apply to be a mentee.





Following the application process, mentor and mentee applicants are evaluated and matched. According to Goatley, SFMA will do its best to try to match people with similar interests based on survey responses. Both parties will then formally indicate a commitment on their part as an informal “contract” to be part of the program. There will be multiple possibilities in identifying what will become successful mentor/mentee relationships, with the ultimate goal being that both parties will grow professionally their roles.

As part of the mentorship program, SFMA will provide mentor training to equip mentors with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively guide and support their mentees. Training will cover active listening, effective communication, goal setting and providing constructive feedback. A roadmap to success will be provided to each participant to highlight monthly goals. Resources will also be provided each month to align with the roadmap.

SFMA will conduct regular check-ins with mentors and mentees to ensure that the program is running smoothly. The Learning Initiatives Committee will offer resources, guidance and support to mentors and mentees as needed. Mentorship program participants will also be recognized and rewarded. Mentorship program achievements will be highlighted in the monthly SFMA News Online, service points will be offered to participants, and participants will be acknowledged during the SFMA Conference and will be able to take part in a mentor/mentee meet and greet at the conference.

“Not every mentor/mentee relationship is going to succeed,” said Goatley. “It truly is a two-way street for which personalities must also match. Both parties have something to gain. Mentors usually will transfer knowledge to a younger generation, and have the satisfaction of knowing that they can help someone else succeed. Mentees who are

receptive to that knowledge and grow their relationship with their mentors will grow professionally and one day assume a similar role for others.”

According to Goatley, when asked for descriptors of what makes for successful mentor/mentee relationships, the leading words submitted by survey respondents were patience, supportive, leadership, believe, truthful, trust, care, teachable, respectful and responsible.

“There was nothing surprising about any of these,” he said. “In reviewing the complete answers by our survey respondents, we felt there was one best answer that applies to either mentor or mentee — just be who you are!”

As SFMA embarks on its own formal mentoring program, it offers a unique professional opportunity for members to serve their peers and industry as mentors and mentees.

“There no doubt will be some tweaking to the program as time passes,” said Goatley. “But all committee members felt very strongly that this program was a great opportunity for our membership to grow professionally and personally in roles as either mentor or mentee. We encourage you to consider participating by completing the survey. If our membership benefits from these relationships, then the association and those we serve will benefit as well.”

Added Jones, “The ultimate benefit of the mentorship program is the creation of long-lasting relationships that — through committed effort — build the individual members involved, weaving a closer connection and strengthening SFMA and the industry well into the future.” **SFM**

John Kmita is associate publisher and editorial brand director of SportsField Management magazine.



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College and University Turfgrass Programs

Michigan State University



Michigan State University (MSU) offers a wide range of options for students interested in careers in turfgrass management, including a BS degree concentration within the Crop and Soil Science major, a Sports and Commercial Turf Management certificate program, and a certificate program in Turfgrass Management with a Golf Course emphasis.

"The Turfgrass Management program at Michigan State University has long prided itself on providing education at multiple levels," said John "Trey" Rogers III, Ph.D., professor of Turfgrass Research in the Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences (PSM) at MSU.

MSU's BS program features a Turfgrass Management concentration in the Crop and Soil Science curriculum within PSM. According to MSU, the Crop and Soil Sciences major is based upon the continuously expanding knowledge base of the biological and physical sciences and the utilization of those sciences. Crop and soil scientists utilize the principles of genetics, plant breeding, crop physiology, weed science, turfgrass science, soil physics, soil fertility, soil genesis and classification and soil chemistry.

According to Rogers, the certificate program in Turfgrass Management with a Golf Course emphasis prepares students for careers in the golf industry. The program consists of both on-campus learning and hands-on experiences through a professional internship.

"This 54-credit, 18-month program (i.e., 2-year program) within PSM is administered through Institute of Agricultural Technology and focuses on Golf Turf Management," said Rogers. "The program started in 1966 and has more than 2,000 graduates."

According to Rogers, MSU added the Sports and Commercial Turf Management program in 1990. "It is also a 54-credit, 18-month program, with students focusing primarily on athletic field turf," he said.

Following graduation, students in the Sports and Commercial Turf Management program earn an MSU IAT certificate.

According to Rogers, students from all of MSU's Turfgrass programs are taught in the same classroom with collegiate academic rigor. "They follow the same academic calendar, and 2-year students are fully integrated into campus life," he said.

A wealth of turfgrass-specific classes are available to MSU students, including Engine and Equipment Technology, Spanish for the Agricultural Industry, Turf and Landscape Analytical Practices, Introduction to Weed Management, Operations Budgeting for Golf Course Managers, Turfgrass Irrigation, Pesticide and Fertilizer Application Technology, Fundamentals of Soil Science, Weed Science Laboratory, Turfgrass Management, Turfgrass Management Seminar, Golf Course Design and Construction Techniques, Performance Turf Design and Construction, Turfgrass Strategies: Integration and Synthesis, Turfgrass Soil Fertility, Turfgrass Physiology, Turfgrass Entomology and Turf Pathology.

In addition, students in the 2-year program can matriculate to the BS program if they complete the 54 credits with a 3.0 or greater and transfer in freshman-level Math and English from another institution.

According to Rogers, there are currently 40 students total in the 2-year programs, and 45 students in the BS program, with 95% of students pursuing careers in golf turf management.

"All students must complete a five-month internship at a facility of their choosing, and are encouraged to



‘spread their wings’ and get out of their comfort zone,” said Rogers. “BS students can perform multiple internships.”

According to MSU, its students have interned with the Detroit Lions, Detroit Tigers, Lansing Lugnuts, West Michigan Whitecaps, Baltimore Orioles, Boston Red Sox, Los Angeles Dodgers, Texas Rangers, Baltimore Ravens, Green Bay Packers and more. Rogers added that several MSU students have also interned at thoroughbred horseracing turf tracks.

According to Rogers, students are also encouraged to work for faculty conducting research, and there is a 56-acre fully irrigated research farm — Hancock Turfgrass Research Center — at the south end of the MSU campus.

“Started in 1980, it has been a hub of activity for decades, with scores of projects from researchers and students alike,” said Rogers.

In addition, the MSU Turf club has been active since 1970. The club is for all turf students and participates in social events on campus, such as the homecoming parade and other activities. “The club raises funds annually to attend SFMA and GCSAA conferences, and participates in respective student quiz bowl challenges,” Rogers added.

According to Rogers, most MSU Turfgrass students come into the program after having worked at a golf course or sports facility. With more than 800 golf courses in the state of Michigan, there are ample opportunities for work experience before entering the program.

“Beginning in summer/fall 2024, all 2-year students will pay the freshman-level tuition for classes, regardless of residency,” Rogers noted. “This is significant, as prior out of state tuition was 2.5 times that of in-state tuition.”

For more information about the MSU BS Turfgrass Management concentration, visit https://www.canr.msu.edu/psm/degree_certificate_programs/undergraduate_programs/turfgrass_management

For more information about the 2-year Sports and Commercial Turf Management certificate program, visit https://www.canr.msu.edu/iat/sports_commercial_turf_management

And for more information about the 2-year certificate program in Turfgrass Management with a Golf Course emphasis, visit https://www.canr.msu.edu/iat/turfgrass_management_golf_course **SFM**



Ice on the Diamond

T-Mobile Park, home of the Seattle Mariners, hosts NHL Winter Classic



Photo courtesy of the Seattle Kraken.

By Robert Augsdorfer

Sports field managers often have to adapt to events on their field that are not the primary sport for which the field is typically utilized. This winter in the Pacific Northwest, in the same spot the Seattle Mariners would normally turn two or slide into second base at T-Mobile Park, the puck dropped for the 2024 NHL Winter Classic between the hometown Seattle Kraken and the defending Stanley Cup Champion Vegas Golden Knights.

For Kevin Dvorak, director of grounds for the Seattle Mariners, and Ryan Nagy, assistant groundskeeper, it was just another gameday — minus mowing and dragging the field.

“The NHL sent in an ice crew, and we were there if they had any questions for us,” said Dvorak. “We did have

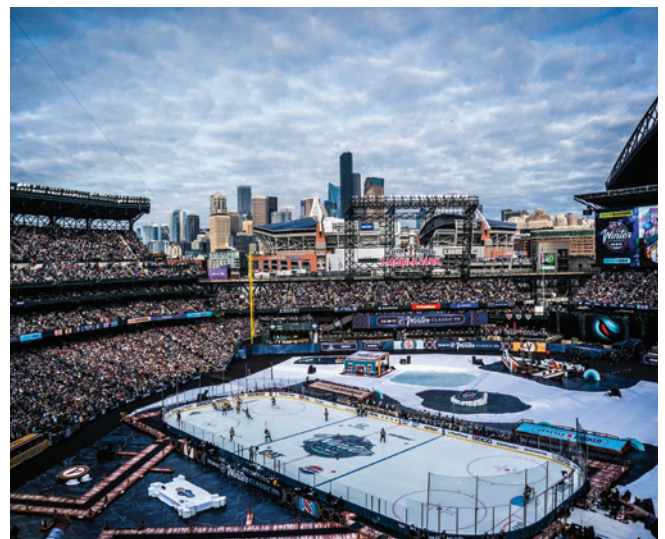


Photo courtesy of T-Mobile Park.



Photo courtesy of the Seattle Kraken.

to decide whether or not the roof would be open. It turned out to be a beautiful day and the roof was open for the game. The NHL crew was a class act.”

Dvorak, who joined the Mariners organization in 2008, just finished his first full year as director of grounds. Nagy has been with the club for four years.

“Our crew is what helps us shine,” said Dvorak. “We’ve got guys on our crew that have been with us for more than 20 years and know this ballpark inside and out.”

According to Dvorak, preparations started one year prior at the 2023 Winter Classic at historic Fenway Park in Boston — the second time the ballpark hosted the outdoor game.

“We flew out to Boston to see how they prepared for it,” Dvorak said. “We took notes and came back with a better understanding of what hosting a Winter Classic would entail.”

Added Nagy, “The best thing about hosting events like this is that there are plenty of people in the industry that we can go to for advice.”

Just the day after the 2023 Winter Classic between the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Boston Bruins, the NHL publicly announced the 2024 game would be in Seattle. T-Mobile Park was the ninth MLB ballpark to host the Winter Classic (joining Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, Citizens Bank Park, Nationals Park, Busch Stadium, Citi Field and Target Field). It was also the second time the Seattle area hosted an outdoor hockey game, as Avista Stadium (home of the Spokane Indians, MiLB affiliate of the Colorado Rockies) hosted a game between the Spokane Chiefs and the Kootenay Ice of the Western Hockey League (a junior hockey league based in western Canada) in 2011.

The staff at T-Mobile Park are no stranger to hosting big events beyond the scope of Mariners games. Just five months prior to the Winter Classic, T-Mobile Park hosted the MLB All-Star Game.



Just five months prior to hosting the Winter Classic, T-Mobile Park hosted the MLB All-Star Game. Photo courtesy of the Seattle Mariners.

“2023 was a crazy year with the All-Star Game,” said Nagy. “But after that week it was pretty normal for the rest of the season. We almost hosted postseason games, but were just one game short in the standings. It’s a lot of fun working those big events. You can learn a lot and plug those experiences into other events — whether it’s a concert or a graduation that we get to host.

“The field kind of took a little bit of a beating at the All-Star Game,” Nagy added. “It wasn’t just a normal baseball game; it was all the other events and the pageantry around it.”

For the Winter Classic, the field was completely covered. The outfield was designed to look like a frozen ocean with a Kraken breaking through and attacking a boat that was used as a stage in center field. The walkways that connected the hockey rink to the dugouts (over the infield) were designed to look like piers found in Puget Sound. Dvorak, Nagy and the rest of the field crew didn’t worry about field damage from the players’ skates or any other personnel on field level.

“Really the biggest challenge this past year with all the events we hosted is that we’re in the middle of a transition period in management,” said Dvorak. “Ryan and I co-managed the grounds crew and it went as smooth as it could have gone.”

Dvorak and Nagy will be busy again in 2024. In addition to 81 Mariners home games, T-Mobile Park will host concerts throughout the summer – including Billy Joel, Chris Stapleton, Seattle’s own Foo Fighters, Green Day, Def Leppard and Journey.

“My best advice is to stay flexible and don’t get your hopes up,” Dvorak said of hosting non-baseball events. “They do a number on the field, so you have to be ready for the challenge after the event to get the field ready for baseball.” **SFM**

Robert Augsdorfer is the assistant editor of SportsField Management magazine.

Painting Temporary Logos on Synthetic Fields

By Mike Hebrard

With constant branding, rebranding and social media, the need for adding or changing logos on athletic fields is a revolving door. Technology has come a long way from chalking lines and designs on the old mat-style synthetic fields by adding yellow iron oxide to white chalk and simply washing it off with a hose or pressure washer.

With the advent of infill fields, a better application and removal was needed so as not to build up the chalk layer. The Seattle Seahawks, for example, had an all-green field and were using regular grass paint to paint lines, numbers and logos, and then would power wash it off to convert to soccer. But the constant wet weather in the Pacific Northwest and the buildup of paint didn't make for a very clean product.

A local stain company, Eco Chemical, was asked to assist, as they dealt with resins and had developed a paint that would re-liquefy with the application of a nontoxic remover solution. Through experimentation, lab testing and on-field application with the Seahawks,

a paint was created to be applied and removed by adding the remover that would soften the paint and be allowed to scrub and washed through the draining system. Then a highly specialized machine was used to extract the paint particles and vacuum the surface. With the design of the paint, water and rain would not wash out the paint — making it last for several events.

There are currently several NFL fields that are all-green turf, while others have endzones and midfield logo areas that are painted and removed in a weekly or game-scheduled fashion.

When Oregon State University (OSU) decided to replace its field, OSU had not yet released its new branding. I painted the endzones with the old font and the Angry Beaver logo in the

CAMO BEAHEAD COLORS





center of the field. Due to the wear on the middle of the field, a temporary tent was brought in to protect from wet conditions and re-paint the logo. Once the new branding was done, the next year permanent paint was applied for the endzone lettering, but the new midfield logo was painted with a temporary paint until a new inlaid logo was made.

Then OSU marketing requested a red, white and blue design be painted in the new beaver logo to recognize our military for Veterans Day. They sold more than 5,000 t-shirts that week with the patriotic logo I had painted.

With the great success of the patriotic logo, OSU requested designs for other events. Keeping with the military tradition, OSU decided on a digi-camo effect on the orange portion of the logo, requiring me to freehand the pattern (the shapes were actually renditions of the counties in Oregon). For Breast Cancer Awareness week, I outlined the endzone letters in pink. Wanting to bring back some past history, OSU brought back Retro Bennie, a lovable character that had to go through some dismal years of Oregon State football. Fans loved the seasonal addition of Bennie — usually for homecoming week. The Bennie logo is a bit narrower than the new beaver logo and a bit higher, so a removable turf green paint is added to the exposed inlaid logo.

There is a very limited color selection of removable paint in aerosol cans, so liquid paint needed to be used for custom colors. Bennie has black, white, orange and turf green as the required colors, but a custom liquid brown is needed for the main portion of the logo. If weather and time permit, a clear base can be added to the turf in both liquid and aerosol form to ease removal and keep paint from getting too deep in the fibers.

It is harder to keep paint on for an extended time if the field is new, as it usually has a UV coating to add to the

wear. When a field gets older, paint tends to stack on the fibers better, but is usually harder to remove. It usually takes three to five hours to paint a midfield logo or three to four hours overall with a couple helpers.

I typically head back the following week to remove the painted logo by spraying the remover on the painted portion of the logo, scrubbing with a deck brush, and lightly pressure washing the paint into the drain system. It is a lot of work by hand, but I don't do enough painting of temporary lines and logos to warrant purchasing a remover machine.

With the help of my friend, Perry Petraquin, on the machine I use for laser grading, we installed an engine with pressure washer and scrub brushes that are powered by the hydraulic PTO (and we added nozzles in front and behind the brushes). I can also add pressure to the brushes with the up-and-down front control lever. We added a 20-gallon tank to the back of the machine. Not getting the flow of water needed to charge the pressure washer pump, we added a ShURflo pump to keep the system charged. I sometimes add buffer pads on the bottom of the scrub brushes to apply the remover more effectively. This machine works great for removing lines, as the combination of the two brushes is only about 15 inches.

With the amount of bowl games and related sponsors, more college teams are turning to temporary logos. Some NFL fields are completely green with everything you see being painted, even the lines. Some fields have blank endzones and middle of the field so they can paint logos for special games and other events. In some cases, there will be a game on Saturday, with paint removed at night and then the field repainted for the Sunday game.

Technology has come a long way from power washing chalk and paint markings from non-infilled turf. The turnaround is amazing, but does require a lot of planning and additional labor. For an outdoor stadium, tents are usually needed to keep the turf dry and to allow the paint to dry as well. Blowers and heaters can help with the drying process, but be sure to protect the turf from the heated blower by placing blowers on plywood to prevent them from melting the turf. **SFM**

Mike Hebrard is the owner/operator of Athletic Field Design, a leader in athletic field design, maintenance and customized graphics. He is an industry consultant and a frequent public speaker at industry events. For more information, visit www.athleticfield.com.

Social Media Trends



By Glenn Hansen

In this second-annual social media trends report, I took the work of Minneapolis-based social media expert Arik Hanson, added insight from marketing leader and author Mark Schaefer, tossed in our own wisdom as social media users and insiders and boiled it all down into a few recommendations. Let's get to it.

FOCUS TO CREATE COMMUNITY

Every business and organization faces increasingly complex marketing choices today. A 2023 study by research and consulting firm Forrester shows that marketers manage twice the number of marketing channels today compared to 2021, and they use three times as many marketing technology tools. According to Hanson, that is unsustainable. "We are starting to see brands cutting out some social media platforms," he said.

Find the channels your followers prioritize, and cut out the rest. Some have moved away from Twitter in its transition to X, and found the discontinuation caused little, if any, negative impact.

Your focus should be on creating community wherever your community exists — even if that's a non-traditional social platform.

"It may be time for dark social media," said Hanson. Dark social platforms are those private forums whose traffic can't be measured by traditional analytics tools (not the dark web; that's a different beast). Private groups such

as Discord, What's App, Facebook Messenger and even email can be considered "dark" platforms. What's App is the third-most-used media platform in the world, ahead of Instagram and TikTok.

People want to belong to a community, and they use specific social platforms to do that. Find that place where you can activate your community.

"Social media is not a strategy," said Schaefer. "It's the beginning of a process that leads to community. Those who can bring people together in community can create a deep and lasting emotional connection."

BE AUTHENTIC TO BUILD TRUST

The idea of "authenticity" in social media has been alive for a few years now, with user-generated content (UGC) often at the forefront. Today, artificial intelligence, even in its infancy, will create a stronger need for authenticity across the internet. This goes beyond UGC and opens up a world of realism and personal expression that can succeed as opposition to machine-generated content. Consider two areas of focus.

1) Post what you can without worrying about high-production editing and design details. Think of social media more as conversation and less as marketing. You'll be able to post more frequently, and your audience will appreciate the simplicity and honesty.

2) Post with more personality. Hanson points to a trend he's witnessed on LinkedIn where professionals are delivering more personal messages more frequently. According to Hanson, LinkedIn is the new office break room. But it also signals a shift to more transparency on social media in general. You don't have to appear perfect on Instagram, or ultra-professional on LinkedIn. Be you, wherever you post.

Schaefer presents this idea a bit differently. "Creators are the media," said Schaefer in his social media trends post. He points to a report published by the Interactive Advertising Bureau, a trade association for digital marketing, stating that 39% of consumers are watching more creator content than a year ago.

"Can you imagine any other media property getting a 39% boost in one year?" asked Schaefer. "The impact, reach, and influence of creators is exploding, and yet an influence strategy is not even on the radar yet for most companies."

And it's exploding on TikTok, YouTube, Instagram and other social media platforms. That means anyone can be a creator and tap into this community-building wave.

SET YOUR SIGHTS ON SEARCH, NOT LIKES

We have built our social media measurement habits around likes, follows and views — all under the umbrella of “engagement.” Hanson points out that engagement rates for nearly all social platforms keep dropping. The average engagement rate for a Facebook post (organic, not paid) is around 1 percent. Plus, Hanson's own research shows that people don't click on links in social media. Look at the referral traffic on your own website through your analytics tools.

What should you do? Stop posting and measuring for declining, and often meaningless, engagement. Start using social media for the search tool it is increasingly becoming. Larger numbers of Gen Z use TikTok, Instagram and even YouTube to search for products and discover brands.

Stated Schaefer, “Everyone seems to be focused on how AI will change the game for search. But nobody seems to be noticing a much more significant and non-obvious trend. According to information from Statista, Gen Z is now conducting almost as many product searches on social media as Google.”

This trend is way beyond the world of celebrity influencers. Sure, lifestyle brands with loads of money will still use athletes and movie stars for pitching. But more brands today collaborate with micro-influencers — people whose followers measure in the thousands, not the millions — and niche users.

This is not limited to Gen Z. Schaefer points to a study by international consumer research company GWI, which reports a 57-percent rise in Baby Boomers using TikTok since Q2 2021.

Schaefer also predicts social media platforms, in 2024, will “continue to become popular shopping outlets for consumers.” He points to a HubSpot survey showing 22 percent of social media users purchased a product directly from Instagram, followed by 21 percent of consumers who bought directly on Facebook.

He added that by 2026, global social commerce sales will reach a whopping \$6 trillion, with the U.S. having approximately 108 million social buyers by 2025. Schaefer also points to an ecommerce trend that has begun to blossom in Asia called “live commerce.” It combines influencer, livestreaming, and impulse buying — and he expects the rest of the world to join in.



Social media expert Arik Hanson. Photo by Glenn Hansen.

ENTERTAIN, THEN EDUCATE

“Entertain, then educate,” said Hanson. “Or just entertain.” Here he repeats his own study saying that link sharing is ineffective on social media. Have fun and be funny, he stated. Whether for a B2C or a B2B audience, social media use is less about education and more about entertainment. Savvy marketers can combine the two. That's why you see so many landscape professionals sharing eye-catching videos of their customers' properties. It's entertainment with a little bit of education.

Random social media thoughts for 2024

■ Nothing will replace Twitter, said Hanson. Threads is close, but it's not the same. Reserve any brand handles you can on Twitter competitors like Threads and Bluesky.

■ YouTube Shorts is a good place for repurposing existing content, said Hanson. But be realistic; impressions and views might not be huge.

■ Influence is everything, said Schaefer. The marketing world is in a state of massive transition. Brands will increasingly spend money on influences. A product placement with Mr. Beast might have bigger reach than an ad during the Super Bowl. **SFM**

Glenn Hansen is editor of OPE Business magazine, sister publication to SportsField Management. For more information on this topic, visit <https://businessesgrow.com/> and <https://arikhanson.com/>.

The Skill of Empathy – Know Someone's Story

By Alpha Jones, CSFM

The green industry is full of people with a great work ethic, a “can do” attitude and who can problem solve just as quickly as any corporate strategist. Many of us have backgrounds that include training outside of the industry and even postgraduate degrees.

We can discuss the importance of natural grass fields versus artificial surfaces, cool-season versus warm-season grasses and so forth. As great as we are at talking technical, I often hear there is a need to increase awareness of the non-technical abilities known as “soft” or “essential” skills. One essential soft skill is empathy — defined simply as the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes.

Every one of us has a story that is defined by our experiences and how they impact us. Empathy is practiced by walking in the other person's shoes. It is often said that the best way to not hate somebody is to know their story. One example of this is a story my father shared with me that may have unknowingly influenced my career path.

In the Deep South during the 1950s, tension between people based on the color of their skin and misinformed beliefs was prevalent wherever you turned. In 1959, my paternal grandparents were able to purchase land, and my grandfather, a skilled carpenter, built what became the central hub of the Jones family in the hot and humid state of Mississippi. The house was a corner lot with plenty of yard space and frontage on both streets. It was noteworthy in those days for a Black family to own a house with a yard. My grandparents wanted grass in front of the house, and they tried several times to establish a lawn, but were unsuccessful.

Before technology changed the way business is done, it was customary practice for your insurance agent to come to your house to collect payment on your policy. When my grandmother's agent came to collect, the conversation was typically about the account balance, when the next payment was due, etc. However, one visit included a comment of frustration by my grandmother about not having a lawn. The agent collected his payment and left.

On his next visit, the insurance agent brought with him what he called “runners,” and handed them to my grandmother with an explanation of how to plant them. The

runners were from his yard at home and, given time, would establish and fill in. Those runners were bermudagrass or some other warm-season spreading-type grass.

I remember as a young boy visiting my grandmother's house — many years after the encounter with the agent — and playing baseball and football with my cousins in the same yard grown from those runners. The thick canopy of grass provided a soft landing when we tackled each other or slid into home plate.

Years later, that same yard provided runners to my dad, who brought them home. The bermudagrass took in our yard in Pittsburgh, but grew slow and thin. My father took more runners and now has a lawn that covers his entire back yard in North Carolina.

I left an important part of this story out; the initial exchange of runners took place between a Black woman and a white male insurance agent. In those days, mistrust between races was common and sometimes meant the difference between life and death. In that moment, however, the agent put himself in my grandmother's shoes and understood how important a front lawn was to her. His empathy moved him to bring runners from his yard to help her situation.

In the same way, each of us as leaders and future leaders in this industry can utilize the skill of empathy to better understand the people around us. Their story provides a roadmap to understanding what's important to them. It is a method of communication that connects us with them and their source of inspiration. Knowledge like this can change your perspective and

improve decision making. It's impossible to hate someone if you know their story. If you know their story, it's possible to effectively lead them. Go learn some stories! **SFM**



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

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ

ANSWER

From page 17

This field had just been decompacted with a rotating linear slicer down to a depth of about four inches when a portion of this irrigation system failed to come on due to loss of power. The recreation and maintenance coordinator had restricted the depth of the slicing to four inches deep as he had some well-founded concerns about irrigation system depth. After the system lost partial power, they called out an irrigation repair and installation contractor to help troubleshoot the issue with a wire locator. As it turned out, they found a 24-30-volt 2-wire irrigation power line buried about two inches deep. The initial 15- to 20-year-old field build that was delineated on the as-built has changed over the years as far as wire paths and box locations. The municipality's one-man in-house irrigation tech had performed all the "repairs" and "upgrades" to this system, sometimes leaving behind some head scratchers like the one shown in this photo. To repair the issue, a new wire was spliced into the area for now, with plans to either abandon components of the system and go with a full new install at some point or re-trench and bury this entire line, while hoping it's the only one that is this shallow.

Photo submitted by Shawn Beaumont, CPRP, recreation/maintenance coordinator at Prince George's County in Hyattsville, Maryland.

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. 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.



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!



1987

In this retrospective, we examine historic issues of *SportsTurf* magazine, predecessor to *SportsField Management* magazine. Although we began “Accessing the Archives” by looking at each individual issue of 1985 and 1986, we have changed the format to recap entire years in the magazine’s history within each edition of this retrospective. This month, we look at the 1987 issues of *SportsTurf*.

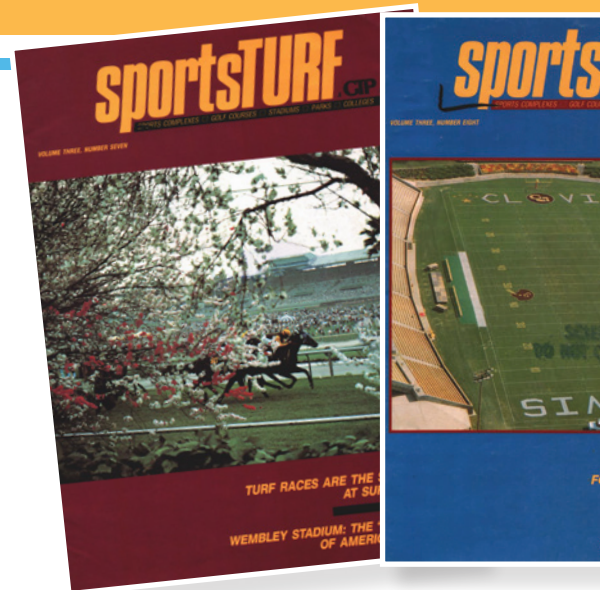
As mentioned in previous installments, *SportsTurf* covered both sports field management and golf course management during its early years. That was clearly the case in 1987, as five of the 12 covers that year were devoted to golf. In fact, the January 1987 issue was primarily geared toward the GCSAA Conference. Interestingly enough, there was also a cover feature on turfgrass horse racing tracks and another cover dedicated to lawn bowling.

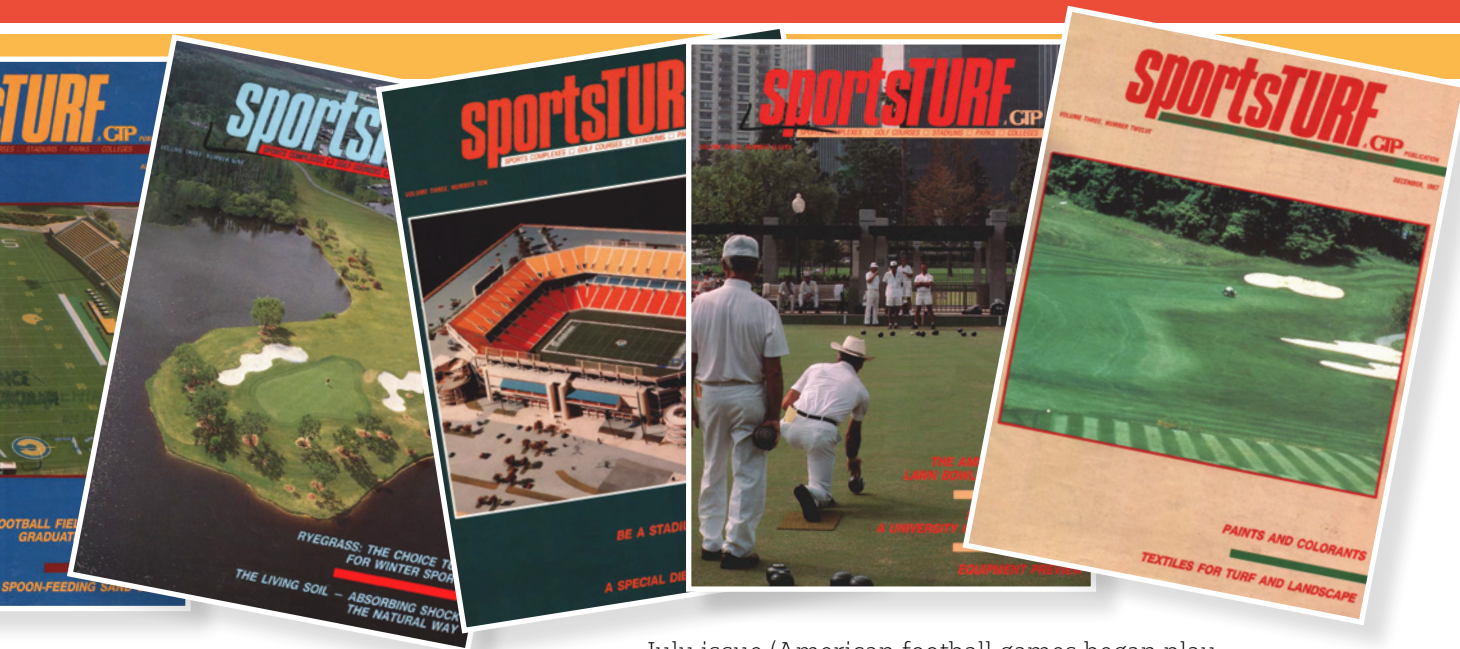
Highlights from various issues in 1987 include the following:

The February issue featured a behind-the-scenes look at the preparation for Super Bowl XXI, which saw the New York Giants

and Denver Broncos face off at the Rose Bowl. For the article, then editor Bruce Shank was on site to report on the field preparations by Head Groundskeeper Richard Gonzales, as well as George Toma, Chip Toma and others involved.

The March issue focused on a new soccer field in St. Louis, while the April issue delved into baseball field maintenance. Also in the April 1987 issue was a report on field safety being a key topic during the NFLPA





meeting, which devoted two of its sessions to field conditions in the NFL and their potential impact on players' careers.

The May issue included information on fungicides, as well as a report on a new field for the Atlanta Braves, while the June 1987 issue focused heavily on irrigation with one article on irrigation system efficiency and another on irrigation valves.

The then relatively short history of American football at England's Wembley Stadium was the focus of the

July issue (American football games began play at the historic stadium in 1984). One of my favorite quotes from the piece: "Interest in exhibition games has exploded," said William Granholm, assistant to the president of the National Football Conference. "We could put on sell-outs in Germany, France and Italy tomorrow. We have offers from Israel, Sweden, Finland and even Singapore, Malasia. Still, we are five to 10 years away from anything that might resemble a foreign game schedule."

The August and September 1987 issues were straightforward with content on football field preparation and soil health, respectively. The October issue, meanwhile, delved into what it took to build Dolphin Stadium, home of the Miami Dolphins, the first prescription athletic turf field in the NFL.

The November 1987 issue detailed what it called, "The Americanization of Lawn Bowling and Croquet," and the December issue wrapped up the year with a focus on field paint.

Overall, most of the sports field management content in the 1987 issues of *SportsTurf* magazine centered on new field/stadium builds. Otherwise, the issues were fairly heavy on golf course management content. It would not be until 1992 that SportsTurf would become the official publication of STMA and begin shifting away from the golf-heavy focus. **SFM**

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



Hilltip SnowStriker VTR snowplows

Hilltip SnowStriker VTR snowplows are designed for compact tractors and loaders featuring a heavy-duty box construction to withstand harsh winter conditions.

Available in six models ranging from 5.5 to 8.6 feet wide, VTR snowplows have a curved, powder-coated snow blade to create an optimal snow-rolling effect. The blades are made of high-strength steel, helping to make the plows light, yet durable.

An adjustable, two-segment cutting edge with trip springs offers plow protection. Additionally, the plow provides superior coverage because the segments compress independently when obstacles are hit. The cutting edges are available in polyurethane or high-strength steel.

VTR snowplows also have an adjustable attack angle that allows operators to adapt to different plowing surfaces and weather conditions. Additionally, the blade tilts and oscillates up to six degrees when plowing on uneven ground, producing a cleaner scrape.

A variety of custom mounts are available, including a three-point hitch, multi-car/multi-mobile plate or custom mounting plate with hooks. The v-plows are equipped with double-acting hydraulic cylinders for added versatility.

Options include LED edge markers, a poly snow deflector, plow shoe kits and electric valve. The plows come standard in the color gray, but are also available in orange for improved visibility.



Z Turf Equipment Z-Aerate 50 aerator

Z Turf Equipment introduced the new Z-Aerate 50 stand-on aerator. With the ability to aerate up to four acres per hour while simultaneously applying granular material, the Z-Aerate 50 improves productivity.

Z Turf Equipment Product Manager Jonathan Guarneri said the Z-Aerate 50 is a larger, more powerful version of the company's earlier Z-Aerate 40 model.

"Our customers had extremely positive feedback about the performance and durability of our Z-Aerate 40," Guarneri said. "For the Z-Aerate 50 we kept the great things customers loved but added more power and a 10-inch wider aeration width to maximize productivity on virtually any property."

The 50-inch, 12-row tine head uses positive down pressure and a full-floating design to pull plugs with a consistent core depth of up to 3.5-inches. A precision depth adjustment system enables core depth to be adjusted in .25-inch increments. Plus, the split-reel design enables the Z-Aerate 50 to easily maneuver around trees, flowerbeds and other landscape features with the tines in the ground.

The Z-Aerate 50 is powered by a twin-cylinder 25-hp. Kohler Command Pro engine. The intuitive controls and zero-turn maneuverability offer increased efficiency, while the independent high-torque pumps and wheel motors deliver ground speeds of up to 10 mph forward, 5 mph reverse. An 8-gallon fuel cell provides increased runtime between fill-ups.



The Z-Aerate 50 can perform two jobs at once with its integrated broadcast spreader and 150-pound capacity hopper. In addition, a wide range of accessories are available to further increase productivity and versatility. Choose from a 30-gallon sprayer, 36-inch slicer seeder, 46-inch dethatch rake, or a 40-inch spike-style aeration head. The ability to perform multiple jobs in each pass dramatically increases profit potential.

Milwaukee M18 Fuel Quik-Lok attachment system

Milwaukee Tool expanded the M18 Fuel Quik-Lok attachment system. Now consisting of more than 10 attachments and offering year-round application versatility, the power head is compatible with a new cultivator, reciprocator, bed redefiner, hedge trimmer and blower. Utilizing the M18 Fuel Power Head with Quik-Lok, users can quickly and easily switch between any of the attachments when needed.

M18 FUEL QUIK-LOK CULTIVATOR ATTACHMENT

The M18 Fuel Quik-Lok cultivator attachment breaks up hard ground during bed creation and maintenance. Increasing durability against drops and storage elements, the attachment utilizes 9" steel tines optimized for longer life and a protective shaft. M18 Fuel technology combined with optimized gearing manages the rpm output specifically for cultivating applications to increase operator productivity.



M18 FUEL QUIK-LOK

RECIPROCATOR ATTACHMENT

The M18 Fuel Quik-Lok reciprocator attachment minimizes thrown debris and prevents marring during close-proximity cutting. To provide the ability to quickly clear thick brush, the attachment utilizes dual 9" blades and maintains a 1/2" cut capacity. It features protective drive shafts for increased durability while also utilizing technology and optimized gearing to manage the cordless M18 Fuel rpm output specifically for reciprocating applications.



M18 FUEL QUIK-LOK BED REDEFINER ATTACHMENT

Milwaukee's M18 Fuel Quik-Lok bed redefiner attachment allows users to quickly redefine and reestablish bed edges by reaching speeds of 2,000 rpm. The attachment creates angled edges up to 2-3/4" deep and 3" wide, while integrated mud flaps and blade guards prevent debris kickback, allowing for material containment during use.

M18 FUEL QUIK-LOK HEDGE TRIMMER ATTACHMENT

The new M18 Fuel Quik-Lok hedge trimmer attachment maintains the capability to clear more branches up 3/4" in a single pass during seasonal pruning and shaping applications. Featuring a tip guard to prevent damage to blades and the surrounding work area, the hedge trimmer attachment increases operator productivity and decreases maintenance time. This split-boom hedge trimmer attachment also utilizes M18 Fuel technology and optimized gearing to manage rpm output.

M18 FUEL QUIK-LOK BLOWER ATTACHMENT

The M18 Fuel Quik-Lok blower attachment delivers the ability for quick, routine property and jobsite clean-ups, offering up to 500 cfm and 120 mph in application. Providing operators with added accessibility for extended reach clearing around, under and on top of obstacles, the blower attachment reaches a total length of 66 inches when installed on the M18 Fuel power head w/ Quik-Lok. **SFM**



The following are photos and posts pulled from industry social media feeds during the past month.

Scan the QR code for links to all of our feeds and connect with us.



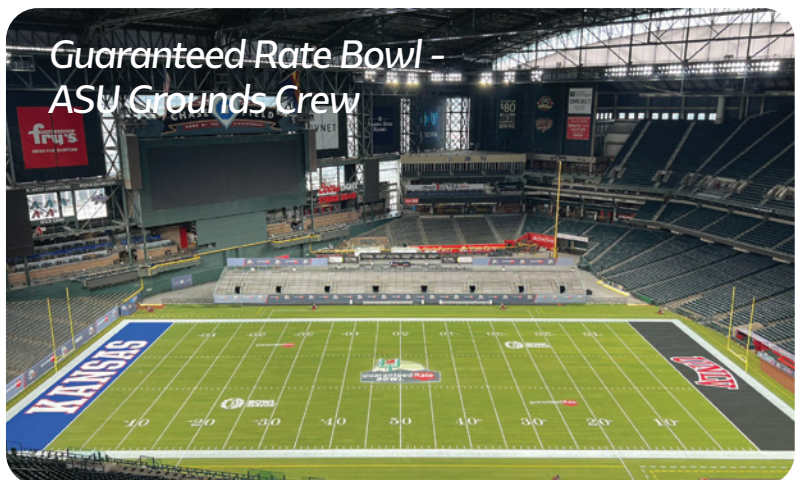
Alec Wickey



FCS Championship - Allen Reed



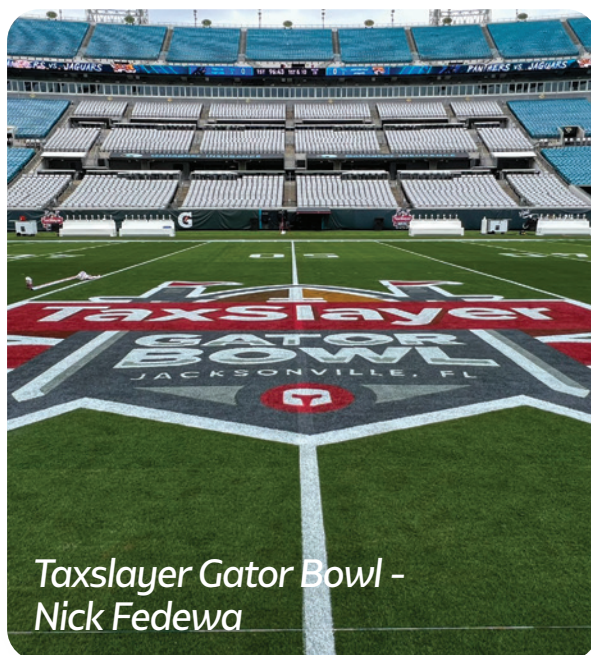
Rose Bowl - @lupold82



Guaranteed Rate Bowl -
ASU Grounds Crew

@NickPappas

Surface prep at Allegiant Stadium for Super Bowl LVIII is officially underway.







Karl Standley

Indianapolis Indians

Grounds crew pulls tarp during a game in 1964.



@NickPappas

Ready for harvest. #SBLVIII #FromTheField



Iron Pigs Grounds Crew

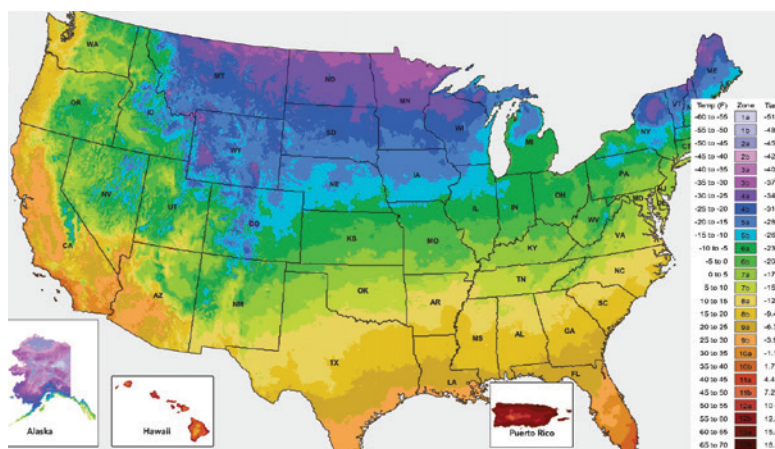
Scherzer's been waiting for two years for a measurable snow to be able to run in at the stadium.



Ohio State Horticulture and Crop Science

We wanted to recognize Pam Sherratt on receiving the @OhioStma President's Award which is given by the outgoing OSFMA president in recognition for service to the #turf industry. @Grassybrit's a turf specialist in our department who teaches both #SportsTurf & plant science classes





USDA unveils updated Plant Hardiness Zone Map

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a new version of its Plant Hardiness Zone Map (PHZM), updating this valuable tool for gardeners and researchers for the first time since 2012. USDA's Plant Hardiness Zone Map is the standard by which gardeners and growers can determine which plants are most likely to thrive at a location. The new map — jointly developed by USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Oregon State University's (OSU) PRISM Climate Group — is more accurate and contains greater detail than prior versions.

It is available online at <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>. In addition to the map updates, the Plant Hardiness Zone Map website was expanded in 2023 to include a "Tips for Growers" section, which provides information about USDA ARS research programs of interest to gardeners and others who grow and breed plants.

The 2023 map is based on 30-year averages of the lowest annual winter temperatures at specific locations, is divided into 10-degree Fahrenheit zones and further divided into 5-degree Fahrenheit half-zones. Like the 2012 map, the 2023 web version offers a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based interactive format and is specifically designed to be user-friendly. Notably, the 2023 map delivers to users several new, significant features and advances. The 2023 map incorporates data from 13,412 weather stations compared to the 7,983 that were used for the 2012 map.

Furthermore, the new map's rendering for Alaska is now at a much more detailed resolution (down from a 6- $\frac{1}{4}$ -square-mile area of detail to a $\frac{1}{4}$ square mile).

"These updates reflect our ongoing commitment to ensuring the Plant Hardiness Zone Map remains a premier source of information that gardeners, growers and researchers alike can use, whether they're located in the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii or Puerto Rico," said ARS Administrator Dr. Simon Liu.

Approximately 80 million American gardeners and growers represent the most frequent users of the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. However, they're not the only ones with a need for this hardiness information. For example, the USDA Risk Management Agency refers

to the map's plant hardiness zone designations to set certain crop insurance standards.

Additionally, scientists incorporate the plant hardiness zones as a data layer in many research models, such as those modeling the spread of exotic weeds and insects.

Plant hardiness zone designations represent what's known as the "average annual extreme minimum temperature" at a given location during a particular time period (30 years, in this instance). Put another way, the designations do not reflect the coldest it has ever been or ever will be at a specific location, but simply the average lowest winter temperature for the location over a specified time. Low temperature during the winter is a crucial factor in the survival of plants at specific locations.

As with the 2012 map, the new version has 13 zones across the United States and its territories. Each zone is broken into half zones, designated as "A" and "B." For example, zone 7 is divided into 7a and 7b half zones. When compared to the 2012 map, the 2023 version reveals that about half of the country shifted to the next warmer half zone, and the other half of the country remained in the same half zone. That shift to the next warmer half zone means those areas warmed somewhere in the range of 0-5 degrees Fahrenheit; however, some locations experienced warming in the range of 0-5 degrees Fahrenheit without moving to another half zone.

These national differences in zonal boundaries are mostly a result of incorporating temperature data from a more recent period. The 2023 map includes data measured at weather stations from 1991 to 2020. Notably, the 2023 map for Alaska is "warmer" than the 2012 version. That's mainly because the new map uses more data representing the state's mountain regions where, during winter, warm air overlies cold air that settles into low-elevation valleys, creating warmer temperatures.

The annual extreme minimum temperature represents the coldest night of the year, which can be highly variable from year to year, depending on local weather patterns. Some changes in zonal boundaries are also the result of using increasingly sophisticated mapping methods and the

inclusion of data from more weather stations.

Temperature updates to plant hardiness zones are not necessarily reflective of global climate change because of the highly variable nature of the extreme minimum temperature of the year, as well as the use of increasingly sophisticated mapping methods and the inclusion of data from more weather stations. Consequently, map developers involved in the project cautioned against attributing temperature updates made to some zones as reliable and accurate indicators of global climate change (which is usually based on trends in overall average temperatures recorded over long time periods).

Although a paper version of the 2023 map will not be available for purchase from the government, anyone may download the new map free of charge and print copies as needed.

NRPA releases report on the economic impact of local parks

A newly released report from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) demonstrates the vast economic impact of our nation's local parks. According to the results of the Economic Impact of Local Parks report, the shared impact of operations and capital spending by U.S. local park and recreation agencies in 2021 resulted in nearly \$201 billion in economic activity and \$196.8 billion in added gross domestic product (GDP) and supported more than 1.1 million jobs that paid salaries, wages and benefits totaling \$63 billion. This is a conservative estimate that does not capture parks' other economic benefits, including: higher real estate values, health and wellness benefits, conservation/resiliency benefits, tourism and other economic development activities.

Park and recreation professionals at the more than 10,000 agencies across the United States positively contribute to their communities in many ways. Not only are parks leading the way in terms of health and wellness, equity, and conservation, but they also drive significant economic activity. Local park and recreation agencies employed nearly 326,000 full-time and part-time employees in 2021, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That translates to more than \$41 billion of operations spending by the nation's more than 10,000 local park and recreation agencies. This spending, combined with capital expenditures, ripples through the national, regional and local economies as park and recreation employees spend their paychecks, park and recreation agency vendors hire workers, and both agencies and their vendors purchase products and services to serve their clients.

The report also includes a state-level analysis that highlights the economic impact of local parks in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The top 10 states with the highest economic impact include:

1. California: \$21 billion
2. Florida: \$15 billion
3. Texas: \$14 billion
4. New York: \$10 billion
5. Illinois: \$8 billion
6. Colorado: \$7 billion
7. Ohio: \$5 billion
8. Washington: \$5 billion
9. Minnesota: \$4 billion
10. North Carolina: \$4 billion

"Not only do park and recreation professionals work tirelessly to provide essential physical and mental health and environmental benefits to their communities, but the agencies in which they serve are also powerful engines of economic activity," said Kristine Stratton, NRPA president and CEO. "This report demonstrates why policymakers and elected officials at all levels of government should prioritize park and recreation funding in communities everywhere now more than ever. The benefits these investments provide are critical to communities nationwide."

Dr. Terry Clower, lead investigator for the study, stated, "Local park and recreation agencies are growing in economic importance, not only as generators of jobs and local business opportunity, but as major contributors to local quality of life."

Clower added that quality of life and the availability of recreation amenities are increasingly important for attracting and retaining workers and employers, which extend the economic impacts of park and recreation spending beyond what is captured in the current study.

NRPA joined forces with the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University in 2015, to conduct the first nationwide study on the economic impact of local park and recreation agencies' operations and capital spending. Since then, NRPA and the Center for Regional Analysis have partnered three times to update that landmark 2015 research: in 2018, 2020 and 2022.

Public support for parks and recreation has never been stronger. According to NRPA's 2023 Engagement With Parks Report, nearly nine in 10 people agree that it is important to fund local parks and recreation agencies to ensure every member of the community has equitable access to amenities, infrastructure and programming. Additionally, 88 percent of people agree that parks and recreation is an important service provided by their local government.

To access the full report, visit www.nrpa.org/EconomicImpact. **SFM**

Trimmers and Edgers

ECHO TRIMMERS AND EDGERS AND POWERHEADS

Echo introduced a range of trimmers, edgers and powerheads:

■ **DPAS-2600:** The DPAS-2600 is an X Series commercial-grade attachment-capable powerhead. Allowing for fast, easy attachment changes and compatible with all 16 attachments in the Echo Pro Attachment Series.

■ **DPE-2600:** This battery-powered stick edger uses an aluminum debris shield, same as the PE-2620 pro stick edger. Its 2:1 gear case converts the high-speed motor to improved cutting power at the lower end.

■ **DPE-2100:** This battery-powered, curved-shaft uses the same gear case, molded debris shield, front handle, and easy height-adjustment wheel as the gas-powered PE-225.



EGO EDX2000 COMMERCIAL STRAIGHT SHAFT EDGER

Ego introduced a commercial straight shaft edger — the EDX2000 — designed to set a new standard for battery-powered sports field maintenance. Powered by 56V ARC lithium battery technology, this edger delivers the power of a 25cc gas motor without the noise, fumes and hassle of gas. Designed for heavy-duty professional use, the edger's commercial-grade construction features a carbon-fiber shaft that is built for demanding high-torque applications. The business end of the tool has an 8-inch blade, adjustable wheel guide and a 3-inch-max cutting



depth. A squeeze of the variable-speed trigger delivers up to 4,500 rpm. The edger also features a precision-engineered, UV-resistant composite housing and IPX5-rated weather resistance. As with all of Ego's 80-plus tools, the EDX2000 can be powered by any one of Ego's 56V ARC lithium batteries, which can be "hot swapped," providing endless runtime. Your investment is protected with a two-year, no-catch warranty.

GRASSHOPPER EDGE-EZE EDGER

Improve productivity, reduce time-consuming hand edging and eliminate the need for two-cycle edgers with Edge-EZE.

Electric and manual models deliver a clean edge up to 2.5 inches deep up to 500 feet/minute along sidewalks, driveways and

roadways; and vertical adjustment up to 12 inches, allowing edging from the sidewalk, turf or curb. An optional electric actuator increases downward pressure in tough conditions and raises the disc to cross sidewalks. By increasing productivity and decreasing labor, Edge-EZE can have significant impact on the bottom line.



HONDA HHT35S TRIMMERS

Honda HHT35S trimmers are available in two configurations: the HHT35SLTAT with a traditional loop handle and the HHT35SUKAT with a U-shaped, bicycle-style handle for increased leverage and precise control. HHT35S trimmers also include the Honda flex shaft system



that provides increased durability and superior shock absorption. Both Honda HHT35S trimmers effectively bridge the weight gap with the two-stroke competition while delivering all of the advantages of a four-stroke engine. Honda HHT35S models are powered by the Honda 360-degree inclinable GX35 mini four-stroke engine known for its low noise level, low vibration level and ease of starting. The engine's oil-immersed timing belt and overhead-cam architecture makes it possible to incorporate the valve train into the oil reservoir, ensuring complete oil distribution throughout the engine. This design configuration reduces the size and weight of HHT35S trimmers, making both models ideal additions to Honda handheld power equipment models.

HUSQVARNA 525I BATTERY SERIES

Husqvarna's 525i battery series features a string trimmer and two dedicated edgers engineered to produce high-precision results. All 525i battery series products are equipped with a Husqvarna E-Torq motor, which supplies



the power needed to meet the performance of 25cc petrol equivalents while exceeding them in torque. A metal skid plate over the gearbox protects from daily wear and tear. Each machine includes ergonomically placed rubber grips for a more comfortable workday. Additionally, the series is IPX4 certified for weather resistance. The 525iLST string trimmer is designed for full-time use, complete with an 18.1-inch cutting diameter. The 525iES straight-shaft edger has an 8-inch standard steel blade and plenty of power to tear through harder dirt and grass without getting bogged down. The 525iECS curved-shaft edger features a faster blade speed that's nearly double the speed of a straight edger, making it an ideal tool for lighter-duty edging.

KRESS COMMERCIAL 60V 16.5-INCH LINE TRIMMER

The Kress battery-powered trimmer offers the maximum power required for trimming and edging without the hassle, cost, exhaust or noise of standard gas trimmers. With just the push of a button, the Kress-built brushless motor engages, delivers as much power as a 30cc, two-stroke, gas-powered trimmer, and longer runtimes than products with standard brushed motors. The Kress 60V line trimmer comes equipped with variable-speed trigger control, as well as Eco mode for extending battery life and for trimming in delicate areas and around permanent fixtures. Its multi-position handle ensures optimal balance, control and comfort, especially in areas with varying slopes and heights. Kress battery-powered trimmers have a quick line-load design with 9m spool capacity, providing instant string reload and less line winding. Additionally, the 60V line trimmer is designed with a grass shield to protect the operator from flying debris.



MILWAUKEE M18 FUEL 17-INCH DUAL BATTERY STRING TRIMMER

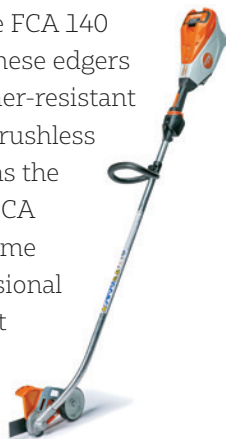
The Milwaukee Tool M18 Fuel 17-inch dual battery string trimmer delivers peak torque when compared to professional gas and battery string trimmers. Leveraging a Powerstate brushless motor, operators are provided with up to 2.5 Nm of torque and 2.4 hp., while being able to maintain rpm in the most demanding applications without bogging down or impacting productivity. Sustaining this power throughout an application, the dual battery string trimmer provides professionals with a fast clearing solution. Redlink Plus intelligence allows the string trimmer to



achieve full throttle in less than one second, increasing control and productivity in application. Eliminating the common frustrations associated with gas string trimmers, this battery-operated string trimmer stands as a full replacement for gas-powered solutions. To meet performance expectations in certain high-demand applications while upholding system compatibility, this string trimmer requires the simultaneous use of two M18 Redlithium batteries.

STIHL FCA 140 AND FCA 135

The Stihl FCA 135 curved-shaft edger and FCA 140 straight-shaft edger are built for extended use in noise-sensitive environments. With the high blade speed of the FCA 135 and the high torque of the FCA 140, these edgers offer commercial-grade power and durability. The FCA 135 offers maneuverability ideal for flower beds or well-maintained edges while the FCA 140 is built for uncut edges or packed soil. These edgers feature durable construction with weather-resistant designs. Assembled in America with a brushless motor and the same shaft and gearbox as the gasoline models; you can count on the FCA 135 and FCA 140 to perform with the same high power and dependability of professional gas-powered products. With their robust design and variable-speed trigger, these edgers are perfect for putting the finishing touches on a job.



taking just 50 minutes to fully charge Toro's largest battery in the six-pod rapid charger. Plus, the batteries are versatile, powering both Revolution Series handheld tools and the Toro 60V Max 21-inch heavy-duty mower.

TURFCO EDGE-R-RITE II

TurfCo's Edge-R-Rite II is the cutting-edge solution for professional field and grounds maintenance. Designed for precision and longevity, the Edge-R-Rite II uses up to six interchangeable oscillating blade options to customize edging for infields, flower beds, sidewalks, tree rings and even eliminating the lip edge that can build up over time. It is truly one machine that manages



multiple edging jobs. Engineered for durability, this edger boasts greaseless bearings; a heavy-duty arm; blades that last 20 times longer; and rugged, commercial-duty construction, ensuring years of consistent performance. Utilizing oscillating blades rather than rotary action, the Edge-R-Rite II has minimal debris dispersion and may be safely operated in high-traffic areas. The Edge-R-Rite II combines lightweight maneuverability and easy cleanup.

TURF TEQ POWER EDGER

Turf Teq has a complete line of self-propelled walking-forward power edgers. The model 1305SP1 features a Honda commercial-grade GXV390 engine. The machine comes standard with an opening blade to create new landscaping beds or redefine existing beds. The model 1305SP1 also offers a bed-grooming blade for manicuring existing bed edges and base fields. A variety of trenching blades are also available as an option. All of these functions can be performed by simply changing the blade and guard for each application. The multi-use capability allows the power edger to be converted into a power rake, power broom, brush cutter or snowplow for all-season use. **SFM**



TORO 60V MAX REVOLUTION SERIES HANDHELD TOOLS

Designed with input from professional landscape contractors, the Toro 60V Max Revolution Series handheld tools were built to perform in demanding work conditions and environments all day long. Powered by Toro's Flex-Force Power System, the line includes a dual-battery backpack that can hold two 10 Ah batteries — which is designed for comfort and available as a

power source for the leaf blower or string and hedge trimmers to keep jobs moving all day. Operators can easily swap batteries out, so when one battery is done, the workday doesn't have to be. Outpacing the charging speed of larger, lower-voltage batteries, the 60V power comes to you fast —



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Winter Annual Weed Control

Editor's Note: This month's Q&A article was written by Dr. David S. Gardner, professor of Turfgrass Science, Dept. of Horticulture and Crop Science, The Ohio State University.

Q: Weeds like speedwell and hairy bittercress are becoming more of a problem on our rec. soccer fields. What herbicides are best for winter annual control?

A: Winter annual weeds germinate in autumn, persist vegetatively over winter, and then grow rapidly and flower/set seed in late spring. They die on their own by early summer. However, control in the spring with postemergence herbicides can be difficult. If you have trouble controlling winter annuals this spring, plan for either a preemergence or postemergence application in the fall, either of which may be more effective for control.

Weeds you can target in spring (but preferably in fall) include winter annual broadleaf weeds. Henbit and chickweed have always been around, while species such as creeping speedwell, hairy bittercress and veronica have become more widespread in the Midwest (possibly because our winters have been milder). Each is highly competitive in thin or dormant turf or in newly seeded areas; so, the best defense is to properly maintain your turfgrass. A concern is that a dense mat of winter annual weeds — after they die in the spring — will open a bare spot in the turf that may be filled in with crabgrass and other summer annuals.

Winter annuals can be controlled preemergence with an early fall application. Note that a fall application will likely degrade and not be effective against crabgrass and other summer annuals the following spring, so a specific preemergence application targeting winter annuals should only be used when you have a severe infestation. Spring is the time to map out infestations so you know where to apply the preemergence herbicide in fall. Pendimethalin, prodiamine, dithiopyr and isoxaben are labelled.

Best control of winter annuals with postemergence herbicides is with applications in late fall to actively growing plants. Postemergence herbicides can be used in the spring; however, this is sometimes not as effective because the weeds have hardened off over winter. You should apply no later than when the weed is flowering, which can be a challenge if temperatures are cool. Combination herbicides containing esters and protox inhibitors may give more con-

sistent results. Florasulam is also effective against winter annual broadleaf weeds and has good activity in cool weather.

Annual bluegrass is opportunistic but technically a winter annual with a primary flush of germination in fall. Effective annual bluegrass control has been elusive, but control with two or three applications of amicarbazone in early spring can be effective (consult the label for specifics). Some also report good success with ethofumesate applied in fall, which has both pre and postemergence activity. Some preemergence herbicides are labeled for annual bluegrass control; however, they may reduce — but usually do not eliminate — annual bluegrass.

A weed to target in early spring is lesser celandine, which is an ephemeral — meaning that the leaves and flowers are only visible in the early spring. Control with herbicides can be difficult. Try manual removal by digging the bulbs. You can also apply glyphosate (non-selective). Some selective control in turfgrass may be achieved if you apply a combination herbicide that contains at least two of the following active ingredients: MCPA, triclopyr and dicamba.

Weeds to target in early spring include wild garlic, wild onion and spring beauty. These are ephemerals that persist vegetatively year over year, but the foliage is only noticeable or a nuisance in late winter/early spring. They green up and grow a few weeks before the turf, and tend to be visible as clumps of foliage up to 12 inches in height in otherwise still dormant turf. They are monocots but they are not grasses. Just as sedges are different than grasses, so too are the *Allium* and *Claytonia* species, which are more closely related to amaryllis and daffodils. If you have a serious problem, you can attempt to treat them with herbicides that contain either 2,4-D or sulfentrazone (or both). Another strategy is to keep them cut short — either by mowing or with hand shears — which weakens the plant and reduces its ability to develop as vigorously the next year.

Winter annual weeds are usually not our most serious weeds in turf, but they can become quite noticeable and problematic. The key is to recognize the uniqueness of the life cycle and target your herbicide application for the right time of year. **SFM**

Questions?

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



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