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MANAGEMENT

January 2024

Vol. 40 No. 1

The Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

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Editor's Note



John Kmita
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In December, I had the pleasure of attending the 2023 American Sports Builders Association (ASBA) Technical Meeting and Trade Show in Houston, Texas.

ASBA represents builders, designers and suppliers for sports facilities, and its goal is to promote the highest standards of design, construction and maintenance.

It was my first time attending the event, and our colleagues at ASBA were gracious hosts. Special thanks to Mary Helen Sprecher, who has long contributed content to *SportsField Management* on behalf of ASBA, and who gave me plenty of great information on site at the technical meeting.

The welcome reception in the exhibit hall allowed me to network with a wide range of people from throughout the sports field and facilities design/construction markets. I was able to learn about products related to our industry and I was amazed at the proliferation of pickleball-related products. From track and field surfaces to pickleball and tennis courts, I was thoroughly educated about sports surfaces in those areas.

While at the technical meeting, I was able to attend the Fields Division meeting, as well as multiple education sessions in the Fields education track, including sessions on irrigation, drainage, ASTM and more.

I particularly enjoyed the session presented by Mike Boekholder of Boekholder & Associates, LLC. Boekholder detailed the impact of the Minor League Baseball PDL on field requirements. The PDL includes very specific design requirements teams must meet on new projects and renovations, especially with regard to field grading. According to Boekholder, at the same time, the PDL does not include specific technical drainage or other performance specifications, nor does it include technical performance requirements for baseball materials such as clays and infield mixes.

"It is definitely going to make maintenance practices more difficult for people, and I think it can have an adverse effect on field performance in the long run," said Boekholder.

The ASBA also honored its Distinguished Sports Facilities winners during the technical meeting. The winners in the Fields division can be found on page 34 of this issue.

The 2024 ASBA Technical Meeting will be held December 2-6, 2024 in Orlando. **SFM**



SportsField MANAGEMENT

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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



Sun Roesslein, CSFM
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Happy 2024! A new year is exciting because there is so much energy around the possibilities being wide open to change anything in the upcoming months.

New Year's resolutions are written on Post-it notes, gyms are crowded and commitments to overall better habits are made. Some are big goals, some are small changes, but either way growth is imminent.

Every year, I get a new weekly calendar to track my work and try to keep myself organized. For the past couple years, I've used one that is part calendar, part journal and part goals/growth tracker. The planner encourages me to reflect on each previous month and recognize the steps I've taken toward my goals. Every week also has a quote or saying to ponder. One recent bit of wisdom was "Be not afraid of growing slowly, be afraid of standing still." — *Chinese proverb*.

What is your growth-focused goal for the new year? No matter the magnitude of your intention, the key to being successful is breaking the main goal down into smaller steps to make the goal achievable. From the association's standpoint, there was a lot of work completed during the past year; taking the smaller steps necessary to be able to provide more resources to you.

This month's big step in helping you meet your 2024 goals is the 35th Annual SFMA Conference and Exhibition, January 22-25, in

Daytona Beach, Fla. There you will learn from industry leaders, problem solve with peers, ask questions of suppliers and meet other field experts. If you take a handful of new ideas back to implement at your facility, that is a great start toward meeting your professional field management goals. Listening to experts discuss their approaches, thought processes and ideas is always inspiring. Every year I'm motivated to figure out how I can adapt those ideas to help make our playing fields a little stronger for our athletes. Reconnecting with friends, meeting new people and celebrating the previous year's successes are also energizing for the year ahead.

Speaking of making things a little better each year, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the SFMA staff, Leah Craig, Nora Dunnaway, Jennifer McLendon and Whitney Webber. Thank you for continuing to work your rock star magic behind the scenes, supporting our members. Laura Simmons, the first year with you as our CEO has been full of opportunities, thank you for guiding us through the small steps toward big goals.

Here's to a wildly successful 2024! See you in Daytona Beach! **SFM**

Sun Roesslein, CSFM

Post-conference Educational Opportunities

SFMA's annual conference takes place in person January 22-25, in Daytona Beach, Florida, and will continue with virtual education each week post conference. The post-conference session dates and featured educators include:

WEEK 1 – JANUARY 30

2-3 P.M. EST

Using NTEP Data to Select Turfgrass Varieties for Sports Fields

Geoffrey Rinehart, lecturer, University of Maryland

This presentation will include an overview of how improved turfgrass varieties are critical to a sound management program, and will include an overview of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP), the process for evaluating turfgrass cultivars and steps on how to use NTEP's website and database to select improved turfgrass varieties for athletic fields.

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

Turfgrass 101: Focusing on the Basics

Greg Munshaw, Ph.D., director of agronomy for PARC Research and Consulting

Sports field managers have a lot going on, but sometimes don't always understand why certain practices are necessary or what happens in the plant or soil when we do certain things. From germination through plant maturity, Greg Munshaw, Ph.D., will discuss what is going on in the plant and will break down seasonal variation in growth habits to identify optimum timing of various maintenance practices. The impact that specific practices such as fertilizing, watering and mowing have on turfgrass will be discussed.

WEEK 2 – FEBRUARY 6

2-3 P.M. EST

Sports Turf Managers and Government Relations

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

This presentation will discuss the process of helping to create the BMP books and the next step of hiring a lobbyist and the continuing work to keep SFM relevant in government relations.

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

Take the Million Gallon Challenge!

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

Water efficiency is important no matter the source or method of use. This seminar challenges turf managers to conserve one million gallons or more throughout the

course of a season by improving irrigation efficiency and by implementing various outdoor and indoor water-saving practices throughout the entire facility. In addition to reducing costs, saving one million gallons promotes environmental stewardship and enhances public relations with a water-conscious public.

WEEK 3 – FEBRUARY 13

2-3 P.M. EST

Fraise Mowing – Uses, Effects and Recovery

Raymond McCauley, Ph.D.

Fraise mowing is an aggressive cultural practice that is not for the faint of heart. This presentation will prime field managers for fraise mowing and will cover fraise mowing's uses, effects and recovery.

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

Data and Decisions: Applying Research in Sports Field Management Practices

Tyler Carr, Ph.D., professor at The Ohio State University

Dan Sandor, Ph.D., professor at Virginia Tech University

Sports field managers are required to produce playing surfaces that maximize field quality, playability and safety in an environmentally sustainable and economically sound manner. To determine which products and practices are right for managing their field, sports field managers must first understand the importance of the scientific method and be able to correctly interpret scientific data and research findings.

WEEK 4 – FEBRUARY 20

2-3 P.M. EST

Regenerative Athletic Field Management

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

The basis of regenerative agriculture is a land management philosophy that improves soil health while building nutrient density and crop resilience. This presentation will focus on how soil health parameters tests can be evaluated to give insights into the health of our turfgrass soils and turfgrass stands.

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

Managing Common Insect Pests in Cool-season Athletic Fields

Geoffrey Rinehart, lecturer, University of Maryland

This presentation will cover the common insect pests of cool-season sports fields in the transition zone and northern zones, including the white grub complex, chinch bugs, billbugs, cutworms, and sod webworm. Rinehart will briefly discuss the life cycles of these insects, the plant and "stand" symptoms associated with them and basic IPM concepts. **SFM**

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SPORTSPLEX STADIUM FIELD MATTHEWS, NORTH CAROLINA

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



For the first time since 2021, we had a full-time tenant at our stadium field. The new tenant, Crown Legacy Football Club, is a member of the MLS Next Pro League and is Charlotte FC's second team. We were given an amazing opportunity to host Crown Legacy FC's inaugural season, so we wanted to provide an excellent and safe playing surface. As we experienced prior to the COVID-19 pandemic – when we were the home site for the USL's Charlotte Independence – a full-season of a professional soccer schedule is challenging.

It required us to be meticulous about the playing surface to ensure it was in the best shape possible each match day. We also decided to become more aggressive with our cultural practices to combat the extra wear we would face throughout the year, which included five aerifications and three vertical mows.

One challenge we had as we entered the year was the transition period from ryegrass back to bermuda. We had to ensure the field would be grown-in after spraying out our ryegrass. If we found winter kill, we don't have the budget to do large sod replacement. Fortunately, with good temperatures early and our cultural preparations, we were grown-in throughout our three-week shutdown period, and fully prepared for the next match.

In addition to Crown Legacy FC, we also hosted the South Atlantic Conference's Lacrosse Conference

Tournaments, multiple high school lacrosse events, Covenant Day Football's playoff game, Big South Soccer Conference Tournament, college rugby, Greystar Company Field Day and Team Mexico training.

In total we hosted 45 games and trainings; the biggest highlight of which was hosting two of Charlotte FC's U.S. Open Cup matches. This was our first opportunity to host a soccer match between two MLS teams, which comes with a lot of expectations.

This challenge is why we do what we do as turf managers; making things happen when high profile events are put in front of us. My team and I set our expectations to start the year knowing that it would take a lot of hard work and dedication to provide a good professional surface each week, which is something that is sometimes overlooked when it comes to parks and recreation facilities. Sometimes the common theme is that "it's just a parks and rec field," but we wanted to change that opinion by providing a surface that meets and exceeds an MLS team's expectations.

It doesn't just stop there. We want to provide that same surface for every event, from youth, all the way to the professionals. I could not be prouder of the product that we produced throughout the year.

— Jonathan Waszak, maintenance and operations supervisor



Level and category of submission: Professional Soccer

Field manager: Jonathan Waszak

Title: Maintenance and operations supervisor

Education: Bachelor's degree in Parks and Recreation Management

Experience: In high school, I worked on a sod farm. I attended Western Carolina University to play baseball and obtained a degree in Parks and Recreation Management. After graduation, I became a Maintenance Technician at Raleigh Country Club. After a year and a half with RCC, I became a maintenance and operations technician at Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation. I was then promoted to maintenance supervisor, where I have been with the Sportsplex for more than six years while also overseeing American Legion Memorial Stadium for the past two years.

Full-time staff: Tony Carpenter, Carl Lambert, Marcos Caballero and Ethan Whitman

Original construction: 2015

Turfgrass: Tifway 419 bermudagrass

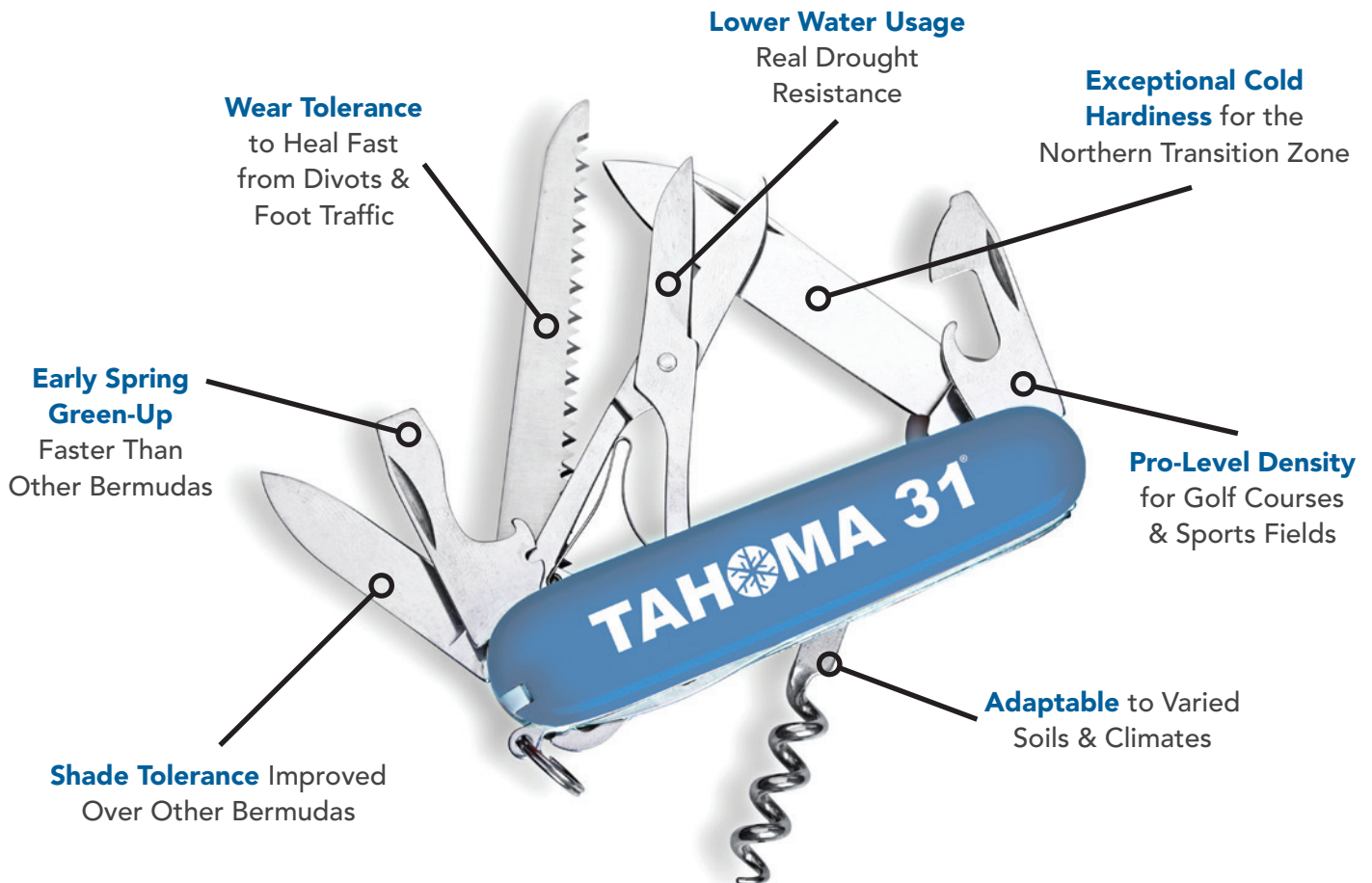
Rootzone: Sandy loam

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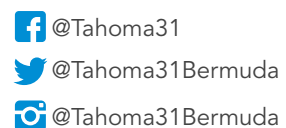
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SportsField Management (SFM): You won the 2022 SFMA Field of the Year Award in the Schools and Parks Soccer category for Sportsplex Stadium Field, and you now take home the win in the Professional Soccer category. Besides the category of entry, what is different about this win?

Jonathan Waszak: It was a much busier year, but it was an awesome year. We got to experience professional soccer again. When the Sportsplex opened, we were home to the Charlotte Independence in the USL, but being part of MLS Next was an exciting opportunity for us, and we are very glad that Crown Legacy Football Club chose us as their home facility

SFM: You hosted 17 Crown Legacy FC home games. What do the day-to-day operations look like when handling a professional soccer schedule?

Waszak: Crown Legacy FC utilized one of our other natural grass fields here at the Sportsplex for training purposes,

and it was one to two games per week at Sportsplex Stadium Field. We had a couple weeks off when they were on the road, but we filled that with two U.S. Open Cup dates and some other events as well. We painted once per week, and we set up once per week. It was a normal schedule and we stayed on top of our cultural practices. Crown Legacy FC worked really well with us on scheduling to allow us to have some breaks for transition purposes or any sod projects we had. For example, we had to replace some creases after a lacrosse event.

SFM: Please tell us about hosting other events at Sportsplex Stadium Field while the Crown Legacy FC season is going on.

Waszak: We hosted a couple college soccer tournaments, some lacrosse events, the two U.S. Open Cup events, the Mexican National Team trained here for a couple weeks, and we had other events in between. The two U.S. Open Cup games for Charlotte



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FC were huge for us, because those were our first true MLS games. For the second round we hosted two MLS teams, which was very exciting.

SFM: Did you change any of your maintenance practices this year?

Waszak: Yes. We were able to purchase a verticutter this past year, so that was a huge addition for us. We were able to thin out some of our ryegrass from last year prior to spraying out, and that really helped with our transition. We had a pretty seamless transition back to bermudagrass, and that was nice since we only had two to three weeks in between Crown's schedule to get back to bermudagrass and have a playable surface for them.

We verticut a few times and did a couple more aerifications, but otherwise our cultural practices pretty much stayed the same. It worked out well for us.

SFM: What were the biggest challenges you faced?

Waszak: It was pretty smooth sailing. The biggest challenge was when we had to replace creases. We had a tight two-day window where we had to cut out two creases in the middle of the field; but it all went seamlessly. I have to commend my team. They always do a great job.



SFM: Speaking of your team, please tell us about your crew.

Waszak: We have three maintenance and operations technicians and one field turf specialist, and they run the show. They run a 150-acre park that has 11 other fields – not including the stadium – and they also handle event cleanup, event prep, painting, etc. We are a park, so we also have soccer tournaments going on at the same time we are hosting a Crown Legacy FC match. It's not just the stadium that is running on a weekend; it could be the other 11 fields as well. So, it's a balancing act of making sure we have the stadium ready to go, but also having everything else ready. They all bring something to the table, and they are always willing to work and help out.

SFM: What are you most proud of with this win?

Waszak: Just the opportunity to win. It's an awesome opportunity SFMA provides, and it's an honor. It shows that my crew does an outstanding job. That's what I am most proud of. It's an awesome feeling for them and for me. **SFM**



JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

PROBLEM:

Green spot in front of monuments across 200 acres

TURFGRASS AREA:

National cemetery

LOCATION:

Arlington, Virginia

TURFGRASS VARIETY:

Tall fescue

Answer on page 33

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International

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Tree Pests – Inside and Out



Getting to know the normal and abnormal appearance of a tree is important. Flaky bark and funny fruits are often concerning, but are really not. Photos by John Fech, UNL

By John C. Fech

Hardwood and coniferous trees provide many benefits to campus and sports field properties, including shade, wildlife enhancement, songbird habitat, color in summer and fall, framing, texture, a sense of place, provision of a ceiling plane and winter color of bark. Unfortunately, these sometimes go unappreciated.

As sports field managers or grounds managers, your duty is not only to keep these trees looking good and their benefits obvious, but to make yourself look good in the process. One of the important steps in doing so is controlling insects and diseases.

Some insects eat leaves, others suck the juice out of stems. These are problematic for sure, but the ones that we're most concerned about are the ones that eat the permanent parts of the tree and the conductive vessels needed for water and nutrient movement. Identifying the insect is always a good start, but considering where they feed and the consequences of that feeding complete the management picture.

Tree pests include pathogens too. As with insects, some are more concerning than others. Diseases that clog the conductive vessels and degrade the integrity of the heartwood are much more troublesome than those that cause ugly spots on the leaves. All are likely to draw questions from coaches, students, players and administrators. But knowing the more invasive ones from the merely aesthetic will help with overall tree management.

LOOKING, LOOKING, LOOKING

You can't control tree pests if you don't know that they're there. As such, it's crucial to set up a scouting program that involves regular inspections for both insects and diseases.

First, scouting early and often is important. Control of tree pests is much easier when they are small or medium sized rather than fully mature.

Second, assigning staff to regularly inspect trees can be formatted to the local routine of the facility. In some locations, getting a few staff members to dedicate a major part of their workweek to this job is a good way to go. These people can be chosen based on their observational skills and their sense of urgency regarding a particular problem. In other situations,



Pathogens such as oak wilt are considered double-whammy pests. In most cases, these pests are highly transferrable to other trees. Photo by John Fech, UNL

instructing all staff members to be on the lookout for tree pests as they go about their traditional duties is best. Having more eyes on a particular set of woody plants can give them the attention that they're due. Regardless of the approach, it's important that it be regular and frequent (i.e., several times per week).

RECORD KEEPING

It's sometimes tedious or even trivial to keep good notes about pest populations, but it's crucial when it comes to controlling them from year to year. Knowing that you had a problem in a particular part of campus or near the bleachers by Field B is helpful when it comes to ordering pest-control products for the upcoming year and paying special attention to that area or those trees when scouting.

Record keeping can be as simple as multicolored dots on a map alongside a key that identifies each pest and each color, or as sophisticated as a GPS system that overlays pest problems with coordinates. Whichever you choose, make sure that it's easy to navigate, or chances are it will never be used.

WHICH PEST IS WHICH?

Is it a borer, beetle or planthopper? A root rot or a wilt? Identifying these maladies as specifically as possible is helpful, as each requires a different set of cultural and chemical control measures. Getting to know these pests requires a bit of effort, but can be as simple as sending staff to a "tree pest problem day" at the local university field day or state arborists conference. A few hours spent at these events will pay big dividends.

In addition to formal and informal training, there are other resources for identification — books, websites and in-person consultants. Two of the all-time standards for print references are "Diseases of Trees and Shrubs" by Johnson and Lyon and "Insects that Feed on Trees and Shrubs" by Wayne Sinclair, Warren Johnson and Howard Lyon. Other great sources of information are "Garden Pests of North America" by Whitney Cranshaw, *Guide to Insect Pests of Woody Plants* (<https://www.uky.edu/Ag/Entomology/treepestguide/treeintro.html>) and *iNaturalist* (<https://www.inaturalist.org/>).

In-person consultants are available in the form of ISA Certified Arborists and university extension faculty

members. Check out <https://www.treesaregood.org/findanarborist/findanarborist> and your local land grant university Department of Forestry, Horticulture, Plant Pathology or Entomology for more information.

PRIORITIZE TREES

Let’s face it. Some trees are just more important than others. Although there are many factors that can be used to prioritize trees on the properties that you manage, the following almost always rise to the top of the list:

■ **Location** — Is it in a parking lot island or in a mulch bed next to bleachers? At the entrance to campus or behind the storage sheds? Leaning over the outfield fences or shading the dugouts? These specifics can really impact whether a particular specimen is a good place. Hard-to-grow spots where the soil is compacted will challenge any plant’s root system — trees included. At the same time, well-sited shade trees that reduce the temperature for spectators but don’t drop lots of debris on the playing fields or shade the turf are a real plus.

■ **Age** — Very young trees or very mature trees can be hard to justify in the sports turf landscape when it comes time to support a pesticide application. If it’s just a couple of years old and it becomes infected or infested with a serious pest, then it’s usually more prudent to simply remove it and move on to another species. Likewise, the amount of product required to treat a borer infestation on a super large tree is not only costly, but also can be difficult to move to the canopy from trunk injections; spraying the entire leaf mass adds a whole other dimension to the worthiness of controlling various pests on a large tree.



*The emerald ash borer is typical of pests that destroy the important conductive vessels of a tree.
Photos by James Kalisch, UNL*



*Regular inspection is critical for effective tree pest management.
Photos by James Kalisch, UNL*

■ **Historical and sentimental value** — Trees that were planted by the founders of the facility or chair of the fundraising group are sometimes easier to prioritize than volunteer trees that sprouted here and there on their own. Likewise, fields or campuses that bear the name of a particular tree species (for example, Hickory Hills), sort of beg for the inclusion of at least one tree of that species.

■ **Uniqueness and diversity** — A sports field landscape that contains a whole bunch of just a few species is prone to being wiped out by a particular insect or pathogen. To expand the genetic resistance and appeal of the grounds near sports fields, planting and retaining a wide variety of species that are recommended by local arboreta is highly encouraged.

PRIORITIZE PESTS

As mentioned, the insects and pathogens that degrade the permanent parts of the tree tend to be the most impactful. As such, we can place a higher value on the pests that damage the trunk, roots, base/bole and

branches over those that affect the leaves and flowers. Certainly, mites and insects that suck the sap out of the leaves make trees look ugly, but in the long-term scheme of things are less worthy of attention.

Unfortunately, some pests affect two, three or all parts of a tree. These are called “double-whammy pests.” Examples of these include oak wilt, Japanese beetles, anthracnose, Dutch elm and thousand cankers diseases. In these situations, they automatically rise to the top of the list in terms of how much attention is paid to them. When added to the priority of the specimen itself and its age, location, uniqueness, etc., prioritization usually becomes much easier.

TARGETS

Targets — or people and pieces of valuable property — help with the prioritization process in addition to the species and pest characteristics. Trees or tree parts that are likely to fall on a target if they were to fail are simply more important than those where no vital features exist.



Leaf diseases such as apple scab of crabapples can be debilitating in the long term, but not particularly harmful in the first season of infection. Photos by James Kalisch, UNL

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Prioritization of trees really helps when it comes to the health of the turf, budget efficiency and liability reduction.
Photos by James Kalisch, UNL

The frequency of occupation, or the amount of time that a particular target is exposed to a potentially troublesome tree is also a factor. For example, a parking lot where constant occupation is the norm — such as a dormitory or library — is more of a concern than lots that are used less frequently.

TREE PESTS THAT AREN'T (A.K.A., LOOK-A-LIKES)

One important benefit of getting to know the very damaging and less damaging pests is also to learn about those that are actually beneficial or simply benign. These are called “mimics” or “look-a-likes.” They range from interesting features such flaky bark and falling needles to predatory insects that look like something that is or could be harmful. Specific examples include older needles of pines that naturally fall off after a few years of growth and exfoliating bark of Kentucky coffeetree — which cause no trouble and are simply interesting — along with ladybird beetles and lacewings that feed on harmful insects.

NATURALLY TROUBLE-FREE PESTS

Some tree species just don't have as many pest problems as others. In terms of control, it makes good sense to choose these whenever possible. Avoiding the cost of applying a fungicide or insecticide is a big benefit in terms of the overall budget. When replacing trees and shrubs, consider native choices and species well adapted to the region. Consult with local arboreta and botanic gardens for assistance; most have an information center and brochures with lists of great plants for the area.

IMPLEMENTING CONTROL MEASURES

If scouting, monitoring, record keeping, prioritization and consideration of targets lead you toward implementing a control measure, consider both cultural and chemical approaches. Good cultural practices — such as watering according to the tree's needs, placement of wood chip mulch over the roots, protection of the bark during establishment and judicious structural pruning — go a long way toward

keeping trees in good condition. When implementing chemical control measures, be sure to keep scouting, monitoring and prevention in mind to guide application timing. Applying a fungicide after trees become infected with pests such as cedar apple rust or anthracnose is of limited value and great expense. Effectiveness and return on investment are critical factors.

GET RID OF SOME

When the negatives outweigh the positives, it's time to remove them from the sports field or campus landscape. Trees that continually require various treatments to keep them healthy and/or that cause problems for sports fields are often ones to identify for elimination. With these specimens, it's time to cut your losses and move on. As mentioned, an ISA Certified Arborist is a great resource for these decisions. Arborists with additional Tree Risk Assessment Qualification training are of extra benefit in situations where targets and obvious defects are present. **SFM**

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



Eastern tent caterpillars are an example of a tree pest that looks alarming, but usually is not. Photo by James Kalisch, UNL



While both cottonwood borer and cottonwood leaf beetle have "cottonwood" in their name, the leaf beetles are far less injurious than the borers. Photos by James Kalisch, UNL



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College and University Turfgrass Programs

Southeast Technical College



All photos provided by Southeast Technical College

The Sports Turf Management associate degree program at Southeast Technical College (STC) in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, teaches students how to work with specialized grounds maintenance equipment, and provides a background in soils, irrigation, fertilization, landscape construction, plant identification, pest management, arboriculture and more.

“The unique thing about the Sports Turf Management program at Southeast Tech is that it’s a two-year associate degree within our Horticulture department,” said Cory Borgen, Sports Turf Management instructor at STC. “So, we’re able to create a curriculum that’s specific toward the career field versus having a Horticulture degree with a couple of classes in turf.”

According to Borgen, the curriculum for first-year students pursuing a Sports Turf Management degree is the same as those pursuing Horticulture.

“It helps some students who don’t know their career path, and it gives them a better understanding of the opportunities within the careers,” said Borgen. “We’ve had several students who have changed from Horticulture to Sports Turf Management. But it gives them the one semester to decide which career direction they want to go.”

According to Borgen, many STC students double major in Horticulture and Sports Turf Management.

“If they come in as a Horticulture student and they decide to double major in Sports Turf Management, it takes about 12 extra credits, and it helps to have some transfer credits in their gen eds to be able to obtain both degrees in four consecutive semesters,” he said.

STC Sports Turf Management students are required to work 400 hours in the field for their internships.

“I let the students decide which direction they want to go for their internships,” said Borgen. “I will work with each

student individually to try to find the best fit for them for which direction they think they want to go. Those 400 hours give them an opportunity to know exactly what they're getting into."

STC students have interned with Major League Baseball, NFL and Minor League Baseball organizations, as well as a wide range of state and local organizations.

Most of the 40 students in STC's Horticulture program are from South Dakota, but some come from bordering states, and there are opportunities for on-campus housing.

According to Borgen, the Sports Turf Management curriculum focuses on hands-on learning.

"We have an on-campus turf lab that consists of a home plate area, a pitching mound and a par-3 golf hole," he said. "In our shop we're set up with up-to-date equipment to help the students do labs on site."

During their first semester, students take an Introduction to Turfgrass course, a Horticulture class, Equipment Operation Maintenance and Pest Management. First-year students do an Establishment and Seeding lab, then transition into fall fertilization, aeration and preparing the turf for winter.

According to Borgen, STC students participate in local and national turf conferences including the SFMA Conference and the GCSAA Conference.

Students also experience field visits to places such as Target Field in Minnesota, the College World Series and various golf courses.

Borgen — now in his twentieth year at Southeast Technical College — added that STC's Sports Turf Management program has had 100-percent job placement during each of the past five years. Graduates are pretty evenly split with approximately one third pursuing sports field management careers, one third entering the golf industry and one third going into landscaping. Some STC students go on to pursue their 4-year degrees.

"The great thing is that I have more than 200 graduates in the field, and they come back to me looking for employees or interns," he said.

According to Borgen, attracting new students is a challenge faced throughout the industry.

STC students get involved in the community with ballfield renovations, which raises the visibility of the program. STC also hosts career camps and attends high school career fairs. Creating relationships with FFA instructors and getting students to tour campus also helps raise awareness of the program.

"It's mostly letting people know that this is a career option," said Borgen. "It's amazing how people wish they knew that sports field management was an option." **SFM**



Ahead of His Time

The impact and innovation of Tom Mascaro



All photos courtesy of John Mascaro and Turf-Tec International

By John Kmitta

Inventor. Innovator. Salesman. Educator. Industry advocate. All of these terms can be used to describe turfgrass industry pioneer Tom Mascaro.

Born near Philadelphia in 1915 to parents who had immigrated from Italy, Mascaro contracted polio at a young age, paralyzing his entire left side. He slowly regained mobility everywhere except his left leg.

Mascaro's parents couldn't afford expensive treatments or procedures. But when Tom was a teenager, they were able to get him into a program at a Temple University hospital that conducted free operations as a way of teaching students in the gallery. Doctors were able to connect tendons and muscle from the front of Tom's leg to those in the back of his leg. The doctors advised exercise as a follow-up to his surgery, so Tom began taking on jobs involving manual labor and physical activities.

Tom's father was involved in the mushroom business at the time. When the Great Depression hit, however, nobody could afford mushrooms, and Tom, who had heard that golf courses used spent mushroom soil for topdressing, went to work shoveling and delivering loads of mushroom soil to golf courses.

"During the Depression, banks closed down and nobody had access to cash. However, when he delivered his first load of mushroom soil to a golf course, he received \$50 cash," said Tom's son John Mascaro, president of Turf-Tec International. "He figured selling soil to golf courses was a pretty good business."

Eventually mushroom soil became scarce as nobody was growing mushrooms during the Depression.

Always innovative, Tom and his brother Tony found that a good way to make compost was to get leaves and mix them with soil and lime. They switched to selling composted topdressing, but were still challenged to get organic matter for the process.

“They decided to make a leaf rake that would rake leaves in large quantities. They gave one to the City of Philadelphia in exchange for their leaves, so that they could have free leaves to make composted soil,” said John.

The brothers, who had started their own company — West Point Products — met with Fred Grau, who was with the U.S. Department of Agriculture at the time. Grau was impressed with their leaf-raking machine and the brothers’ ability to innovate, but told the Mascaros that what he really needed was a piece of equipment that would tear up bluegrass fairways.

“When you tear up bluegrass fairways, it grows back better than it was before. Nobody is sure why; it just does,” said John. “They experimented with different ways to tear up bluegrass, and they came up with the Aerifier. It became an immediate success.”

The original Aerifier had no motor — it was just a unit that could be pulled behind a tractor on fairways and greens. Sports field managers soon found that it was a great way to cultivate the soil. West Point Products received the patent for the Aerifier in 1946 and the word was trademarked (the term has since become generic nomenclature). The Aerifier became such a success that the Mascaros abandoned the topdressing business and switched to producing equipment full time.

The success of West Point Products continued, as did their knack for innovation. In 1955, Tom Mascaro invented the Verti-Cut. Originally designed to vertically mow on a weekly basis, golf course superintendents and sports field managers quickly realized they could set the Verti-Cut low and verticut the dead material out of the greens and sports fields (the term verticut has also become generic terminology in the industry).

“During World War II, golf courses couldn’t get labor, fuel or even tires, so they stopped topdressing,” said John. “After the war, golf greens weren’t bad,

so people assumed they didn’t need to topdress anymore. But over time, thatch developed and built up to thick layers on golf greens.”

When Tom went to sell a Verti-Cut to a golf course, he would have the golf pro putt across the green. Then Tom would Verti-Cut and let the pro putt again, and the ball would roll true as it eliminated ‘grain’ and reduced thatch.

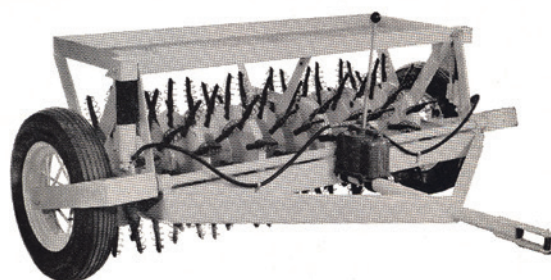
“Golfers did not like the Aerifier because it took the smooth surface on the putting green and made it rough for a time period,” said John.

“The opposite was true with the Verti-Cut; golfers loved that invention.”

Tom — who held a Business degree from Lansdale School of Business, and had also studied organic chemistry at Temple University, inorganic chemistry at Drexel University and turf at Penn State University — was always thinking ahead.



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West Point Products Corporation
West Point, Pa.



For example, in 1968 he developed a battery-powered lawn mower for golf courses and home lawns. The product was a success at the National Hardware Show, and soon other companies were mimicking the concept.

West Point Products, which had grown to a thriving business with more than 100 employees, was eventually acquired as part of a hostile takeover, and later sold to Hahn Inc.

“After the company was sold, we moved to Florida in 1972,” said John. “He was retired for only a few months and started consulting with a sprinkler company called Safe-T-Lawn that developed some of the first home lawn pop-up sprinklers.”

In the mid-1970s, Tom invented a new product called Grass Cel, which was a golf cart path paving system made of plastic honeycombs that allowed people to drive over the soil without compacting it and still grow grass. With the success of Grass Cel, Tom started Turfgrass Products Corporation, which was the predecessor to Turf-Tec International.

John, who started to launch a t-shirt silk screening company after college, also began working with his father.



"He took me to the Florida Turfgrass Show, and I had no clue about the depth of this industry," said John. "I thought it was really cool."

John was also impressed by his father's presence and impact in the industry.

"He knew many of the original founders of GCSAA and all the original founders of SFMA, current and past researchers, and I would just listen to all of these stories," said John. "With his contacts I was able to make a lot of good friends and learn a lot about the industry."

John started visiting golf courses and sports fields, and would take any new inventions to Dale Sandin at the Orange Bowl for testing.

"My father had made a slicing machine called the Verti-Groove with Dale to help drainage," said John. "Dale was quite a critic; but every piece of equipment we had, I would go to the Orange Bowl, and we would try it out. I would then take it to golf courses and try to sell it out of the trunk of my car. The Penetrometer was one of the first things we invented. We had a moisture sensor, pH meter and thermometer, and we started leaning toward diagnostic tools."

Tom and John Mascaro built Turf-Tec as a mail order company, with John typing labels on a typewriter and mailing flyers to golf courses and sports fields.

"We would get a check in the mail with the order form, and we would ship out the product," said John.

John got to work with his father for 12 years, and together the two invented a wide range of products for the turfgrass industry. Tom Mascaro passed away in 1997.

"He loved making things," John recalled. "Art was a hobby; he did clay sculpting, wire sculpting, and just liked to make things with his hands. As a kid, I used to hang around and watch him sculpt or repair things. He could repair or make anything. I learned a lot from him."

According to John, many people don't realize Tom's contributions to the industry. For example, at early turfgrass conferences in the 1940s, Tom would carry a wire recorder, record the proceedings, have the information transcribed and turned into a booklet and then send it to all conference attendees free of charge. His goal was always to educate and advance the profession.

During his career, Tom taught turfgrass courses; lectured at approximately 20 turfgrass conferences per year for more than 50 years; served as an adjunct professor at Florida International University, Biscayne College and Nova Scotia Agricultural College; authored technical articles; developed a turfgrass correspondence course and a handbook for sports field managers and wrote a textbook titled "Diagnostic Turfgrass Management for Golf Greens."

Among his many awards and accolades, Tom Mascaro received the U.S. Golf Association Green Section Award, the Distinguished Service Award from GCSAA, multiple Texas Turfgrass Association Awards, the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council Recognition Award, the Oklahoma Turfgrass Research Foundation Award, Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association award for Lifetime Service, induction into the Oklahoma Turfgrass Hall of Fame and the STMA Lifetime Achievement Award. The Mascaro-Steiniger Turfgrass Museum at Penn State University was also named in his honor (and that of another industry pioneer — golf course superintendent Eb Steiniger).

Said John, "His creative mind was amazing. His inventions were way ahead of their time." **SFM**

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

ASBA Distinguished Sports Facilities



Sparta High School - Sparta Memorial Field. All photos provided by ASBA



West Ottawa High School Stadium

The American Sports Builders Association (ASBA) announced the winners of its annual awards. Awards are presented each year to facilities built by ASBA members, which best exemplify construction excellence.

Awards are presented in various categories: Sports Fields, Tennis Courts, Running Tracks, Pickleball Facilities, Multi-Purpose Facilities and Track & Field Facilities. Within some categories, there are divisions; for example, the Sports Field category recognizes single- and multiple-field facilities.

Winners of awards were announced at ASBA's 2023 Technical Meeting, December 1-4 in Houston, Texas.

"We are proud of the work done by all members of ASBA, but this year's award-winning projects showcase true excellence," said David Clapp, CTCB, chairman of ASBA. "They are not only designed and constructed to exacting standards, as well as being aesthetically beautiful, but they provide an excellent playing experience for the athletes who use them and the spectators who come to watch them."

Projects were scored individually based on considerations such as layout and design, site work, drainage, base construction, surface, amenities, innovation and overall impression.

The top winner in the Sports Fields category for Distinguished Single Field Facilities was **Sparta High School: Sparta Memorial Field**, Sparta, Wisconsin — Rettler Corp. The top winner in the Sports Field category for Distinguished Multi-Field Facilities was **West Ottawa High School Stadium**, Holland, Michigan — GMB Architecture + Engineering.

Other winners in the Sports Fields category were as follows:

DISTINGUISHED SINGLE FIELD FACILITIES



Atwood Stadium at Fryeburg Academy, Fryeburg, Maine
— Activitas Inc.



East Lansing High School Stadium, East Lansing, Michigan
— GMB Architecture + Engineering



Chabot College Baseball Field, Hayward, California
— Carducci & Associates Inc.



Ellis Oval at Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts
— Stantec Sport Group



Cincinnati Country Day School Stadium, Cincinnati, Ohio
— Sportworks Design



Flagler College Lacrosse & Intramurals Facility, St. Augustine, Florida
— SCG Fields LLC



Fort Payne High School Baseball Field, Fort Payne, Alabama — HNP LLC



Town of Arlington: Hurd Field, Arlington, Massachusetts — Stantec Sport Group



Seaside High School Stadium, Seaside, California — Verde Design Inc.



University of Tampa Baseball Field, Tampa, Florida — Advanced Sports Group LLC



Seekonk High School, Seekonk, Massachusetts — Huntress Associates Inc.

DISTINGUISHED MULTI-FIELD FACILITIES



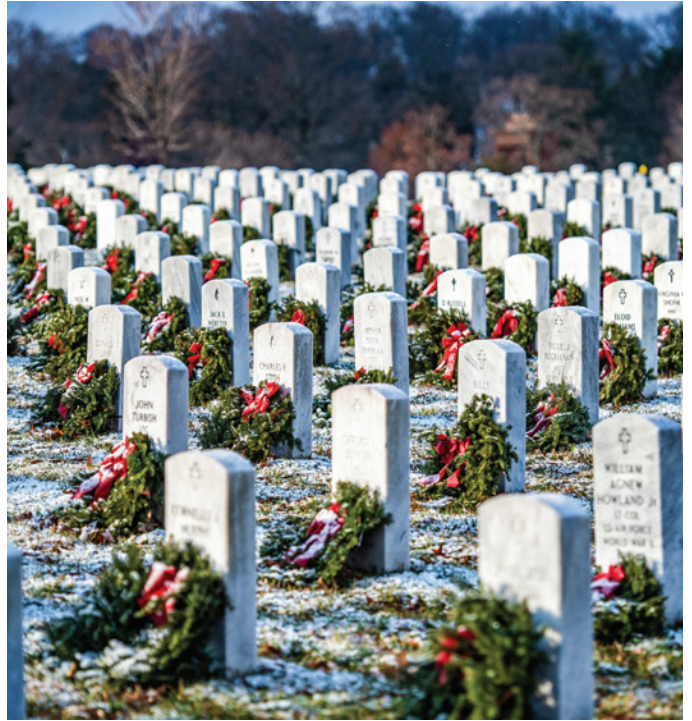
Topaz Park: Finlayson Field, Victoria, BC, Canada — GPM Civil Contracting Incorporated



BB&N Grove Street Athletic Campus, Watertown, Massachusetts — Activitas Inc.

Continued on page 34

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



ANSWER

From page 17

The green spots in front of the monuments across these 200 acres of gravesites are located at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. This cemetery is the final resting place for more than 400,000 active-duty service members, veterans and their families. Each winter, hundreds of volunteers from the "Wreaths Across America" organization spread out across the cemetery and place holiday wreaths. Each wreath is handmade in Maine using domestically grown balsam fir. The wreaths are laid in front of the monuments and remain in place for approximately four weeks, before being collected by volunteers in January. While the wreaths were in place, the area experienced cold weather but never a prolonged hard frost. The greener spots were where the wreaths contacted the turfgrass surface, creating a covering from the coldest temperatures — acting like a field cover and keeping the grass warmer underneath — leaving these green spots.

Main photo submitted by Geoffrey Rinehart, lecturer and advisor and the University of Maryland. Answer photo courtesy of the U.S. Army.

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.

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Continued from page 32



Boston Parks Department: Smith Playground Ballfields,
Boston, Massachusetts – Stantec Sport Group



Cleveland Browns Training Facility at CrossCountry Mortgage Campus, Berea, Ohio — SCG Fields LLC



Colby College, Waterville, Maine – Activitas Inc.



Franklin High School, Stockton, California – Verde Design Inc.



Iowa State University Football Practice Field: Johnny Majors Field, Ames, Iowa — Shive-Hattery Inc.



Norton High School, Norton, Massachusetts — Gale Associates Inc.



Riverton Athletic Complex, Riverton, Illinois — Byrne & Jones Sports Construction



Sanford Sports Complex, Sioux Falls, South Dakota – ISG



Washington University Baseball & Softball Facility, St. Louis, Missouri — Byrne & Jones Sports Construction

Top winners in other categories were:

- Outdoor Pickleball: **Bill Noble Park**, Gardendale, Alabama — Lower Bros. Co. Inc.
- Outdoor Tennis: **Sparta Public Schools High School Tennis Courts**, Sparta, Michigan — GMB Architecture + Engineering
- Residential Tennis Facility: **Root Residence**, Leawood, Kansas — McConnell & Associates Corp.



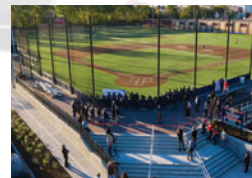
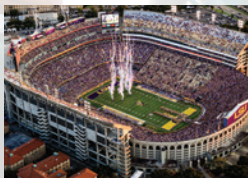
Webster Thomas High School, Webster, New York – LaBella Associates

- Outdoor Running Tracks: **Sun Prairie West High School**, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin — Fisher Tracks Inc.
- Courts & Recreation Multi-Purpose Fitness and Wellness Facility: **Manasquan High School Multi-Purpose Facility**, Manasquan, New Jersey — Suburban Consulting Engineers Inc. **SFM**

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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.

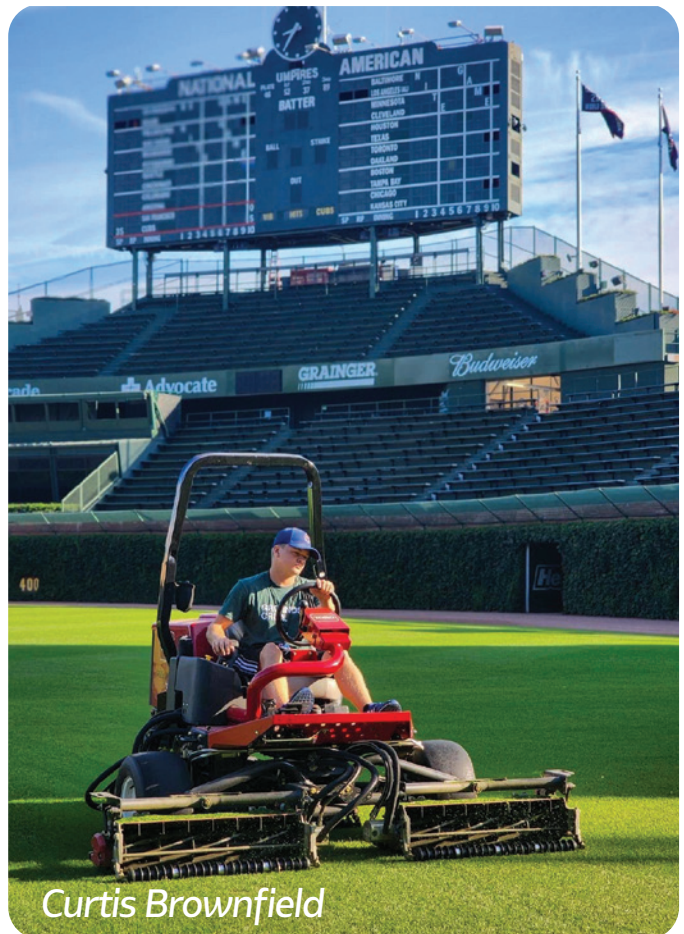


@ironpigsgroundscrew

Sod day! A few snow flurries falling, but the sodding has begun. The sod and the mound ought to be tucked in and completed by the end of the day.



@woosoxgrounds



Curtis Brownfield



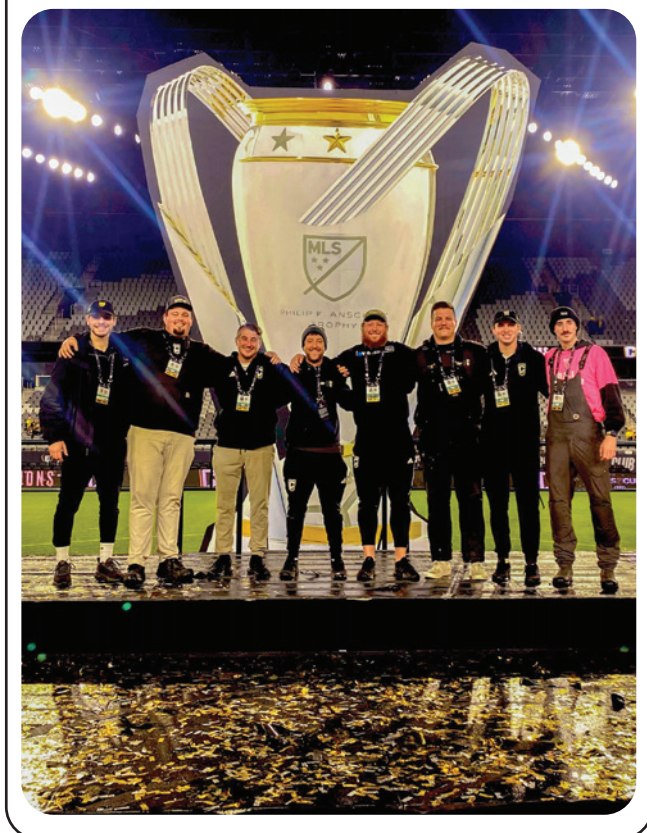
@theugroundscrew

Pam Sherratt

A huge thank you to @FieldExperts President @SportsTurfSun, CSFM, for speaking at @OhioTurfgrass Conference, sharing her knowledge of soccer pitch management & fraise mowing bluegrass. Such a great speaker.



Ben Jackson
 Can not say enough about this group. Worked their tails off from January to December this year to deliver world class results. Lucky to have such a dedicated team and thrilled to experience an MLS Championship with them.



@uagrounds
 Happy holidays from Grounds! We had so much fun celebrating our team today and all the hard work we accomplished this year. We love this Wildcat family!



@jim_rfu

@coloradosfma

Good morning from the 70th Annual Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show (RMRTA).



Aaron Fink

Repairing divots throughout the evening. A mixture of green sand, and @TurfMend Sun; a combination of organic material and perennial ryegrass. Playability for the weekend, recovery for next spring.



Maritza Martinez



@cwalsh0014

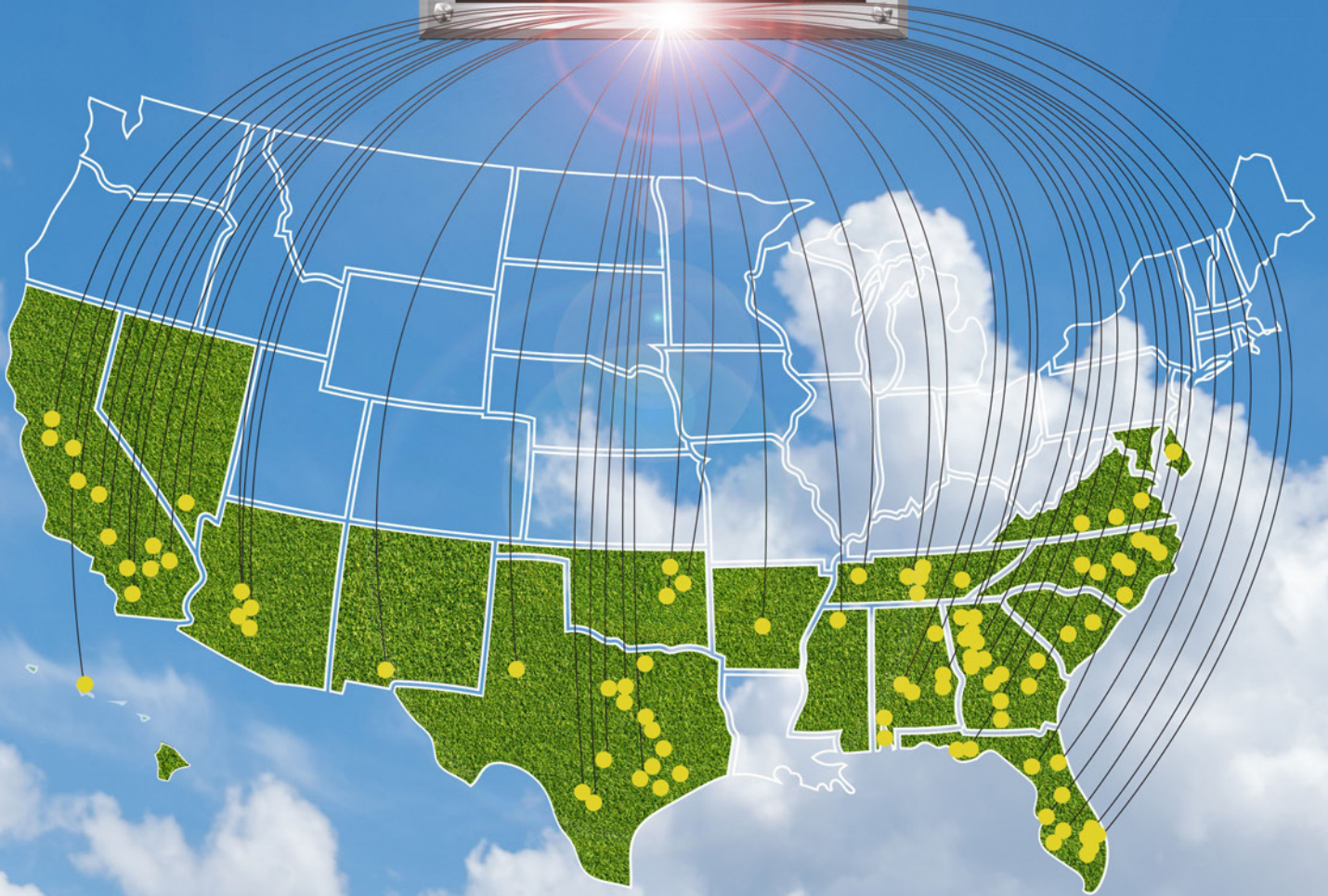


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May 1986



In this retrospective, we examine historic issues of *SportsTurf* magazine, predecessor to *SportsField Management* magazine. This edition of “Accessing the Archives” looks at the May 1986 issue of *SportsTurf*.

As we prepare to head to Daytona Beach for the SFMA Conference and Exhibition, it is fitting that we delve into the May 1986 issue this month, as the cover of that particular issue featured the famous Daytona Speedway.

The cover story — titled “Daytona Speedway Joins the Race For Safe, Quality Turf” — details the storied racetrack and Track Director Dick Hahne, who was responsible for the 500 acres of turf around the track, as well as the all-important four acres inside the track. According to the article, those four acres of turfgrass — Tifway bermudagrass overseeded in the fall with perennial ryegrass — are key to the appearance of the track to spectators, as well as the overall safety of the drivers.

At the time of the article, improvements to the quality of the turf were made possible by a newly installed Toro irrigation system that drew water from a 43-acre lake on the speedway grounds. The irrigation system was also used to control dust during the Supercross season.

Daytona Speedway Joins The Race For Safe, Quality Turf



These four acres are maintained like a golf course fairway, even though few people walk or drive across it.

The irrigation system that makes quality turf possible most of the year was designed mainly to control dust during the Daytona Supercross.

Compaction is not a problem for Dick Hahne. Neither is cleat damage or overuse. Hahne is in charge of some of the most important turf in sports, yet no team or player actually uses his turf—unless he’s in trouble.

Hahne is track superintendent at Daytona Speedway in Daytona Beach, FL. The former golf course superintendent from Ohio still has the same goal he has always had—quality turf year round—but for new reasons. The first is the safety of the drivers of race cars hurtling around the two-and-one-half mile track at 200 mph. The second is the appearance of the overall speedway to millions of television viewers twice a year during the Daytona 500 and the Firecracker 400.

26 sportsTURF

Hahn is only the second track director Daytona Speedway has had in the 30 years since “Red” Pugh built it for the France family. He is responsible for more than 500 acres of turf surrounding the track, but it’s the four acres inside the track that is special. Known as “the football field” by those working at Daytona because it once served that purpose for Bethune-Cookman College, the infield has been converted from a low-maintenance bahiagrass field into a showcase for quality turf.

Today, the football field is Tifway bermudagrass overseeded in the fall with perennial ryegrass just as a golf fairway would be. The vast improvement was made possible by a new Toro automatic irrigation system

drawing water from a 43-acre lake on the Speedway grounds. “There was no way we could maintain quality turf without irrigation,” states Hahne. The four acres are carefully groomed with a Jacobsen five-gang reel lift unit pulled by a Ford Tractor (Ford is the official tractor of Daytona). Hahne’s crew follows a program of broadleaf weed control the same as a golf course.

The most surprising thing is not that the field is maintained solely for appearance and safety. It is that right after the Daytona 500 in February the field is completely destroyed in preparation for the Daytona Supercross, a major televised motocross event. Oddly enough, the irrigation system that makes quality turf possible the re-



mainder of the year was designed by motocross course designer Gary Bailey mainly to control the dust during the Supercross. Each sprinkler head is strategically located to wet down the 1,000 tons of sand, limestone and crushed shells brought in for the event. Bailey designed the system so it could be turned on before, during or after races without interrupting them. He was opposed to water trucks driving across the course in between races.

“Dust is a serious problem for motocross,” says Hahne. “I knew the Toro people from my superintendent days and put them together with Bailey to design the system for Daytona. This way we were able to get a system that could control the dust and

remain useful the rest of the year for the football field.”

“The other aspect of the irrigation system designed specifically for the speedway is each of the 65 heads were installed one-half inch below grade with swing joints so they would not puncture a tire of a car sliding out of control across the infield,” Hahne points out. “And, that’s exactly what happened after the system was installed. A race car veered onto the infield and slid across a sprinkler head without damaging it or the car.”

Following the Supercross, Hahne has three months to get the field back in shape for the Firecracker 400. In April all the limestone is removed from the field and and



Dick Hahne manages some of the most visible turf in sports.

Dick Hahne is in charge of some of the most important turf in sports, yet no team or player actually uses his turf—unless he’s in trouble.

spread on roads and parking lots at the speedway. Then the infield is graded for proper drainage, a seedbed prepared and fertilized and sprigged with Tifway. By July the bermudagrass is a shining green backdrop for the race.

Between July and February, the track is used to test tires and new cars. In preparation for the Daytona 500 held in February, Hahne overseeds the entire infield with a perennial ryegrass tee mix in November. “The infield is the most visible in racing,” Hahne claims. “Quality turf goes along with quality events. John Riddle, the general manager, and the France family clearly want these races and the speedway to represent quality.”

May 1986 27



GMA Industry Awards

More than 300 attendees from throughout the sports turf industry in the United Kingdom gathered for the Grounds Management Association (GMA) celebration at AMT Headingley Stadium.

The awards recognized leadership, innovation and outstanding achievement across every aspect of grounds care, from grassroots pitches to professional stadia, over 17 categories.

Attendees celebrated new talent emerging on the scene, with two female winners in the Young Groundsperson of the Year and Newcomer of the Year award categories, while longtime industry stalwarts were honored with Hall of Fame inductions and GMA Grounds Manager of the Year awards.

The awards ceremony recognized outstanding achievements in public and private sports venues and highlighted the progress of young grounds professionals as well as outstanding performance in environmental practices. Also new to 2023 was a Special Recognition Award which shone a light on a unique and inspiring individual who represents everything that is positive about the industry.

The winners of the GMA Industry Awards 2023 are:

- **Young Groundsperson of the Year** – Bethany Gibbs Wellington School
- **Newcomer of the Year** – Meg Lay Gloucestershire CCC
- **Volunteer Groundsperson or Team of the Year** – Clapton Community F.C.
- **Community Groundsperson or Team of the Year** – Yeovil Recreation Centre
- **Environmental and Sustainability Impact** – Leicester City F.C.
- **Bowls/Croquet Groundsperson or Team of the Year** – Wantage Bowling Club
- **Best Managed Artificial Surface of the Year** – Yeovil Recreation Centre

- **Professional Horse Racing Grounds Team of the Year** – Lingfield Park
- **Professional Cricket Grounds Team of the Year** – Marylebone CC
- **Professional Tennis Courts Grounds Team of the Year** – Devonshire Park
- **Professional Rugby Union Grounds Team of the Year** – Bath Rugby
- **Professional Rugby League Grounds Team of the Year** – Leeds Rhinos
- **Professional Football Grounds Team of the Year** – Stockport County F.C.
- **Professional Football Grounds Team (Elite)** – Leicester City F.C.
- **University/College Grounds Team of the Year** – Loughborough University
- **Independent School Grounds Team of the Year** – Eton College
- **Special Recognition Award** – Zeynu Bedru Harrogate RUFC
- **GMA Grounds Manager of the Year** – Lee Marshallsay Eton College

American Sports Builders Foundation announced

The American Sports Builders Association (ASBA) announced a new philanthropic initiative, the American Sports Builders Foundation.

The first focus of the foundation is to fund and coordinate the building and renovation of sports facilities in communities that lack adequate resources to pay for them. These facilities can include courts, running tracks, sports fields, indoor gym facilities and more. The foundation's goal is to complete at least one facility per year, and if feasible, increase to two per year. The inaugural facility will be in Orlando, the host city of ASBA's Technical Meeting in 2024. In years to come, facilities in locations outside of Technical Meeting host cities may be considered. ASBA members will be encouraged to nominate facilities in need of assistance.



The second goal of the foundation is the support and development of the next generation of leaders in the sports design and construction industry by providing scholarships for students engaged in secondary programs that promote and support this industry. The foundation board's goal is to award scholarships for the fall 2024 school year. Students interested in applying for the scholarships will be able to do so through an online form, which will include a field to identify any ASBA members with whom they are connected.

More information on the work of the ASB Foundation is available at www.sportsbuilders.org/asbf.

AAPRA 2024 National Gold Medal Award Program

The National Gold Medal Award Program, governed and managed by the American Academy for Park & Recreation Administration (AAPRA), announced that applications are now open for the 2024 National Gold Medal Award Program, sponsored by Musco Lighting and offered in partnership with the National Recreation & Park Association.

The National Gold Medal Program seeks to identify agencies who display excellence in the management of their parks, open space, facilities and recreation services. In addition to public agencies, the 2024 National Gold Medal Award is open to armed forces recreation installation programs worldwide. Public agencies apply based upon their population: Class I (population 400,001 and over); Class II (population 150,001 to 400,000); Class III (population 75,001 to 150,000); Class IV (population 30,001 to 75,000) and Class V (population less than 30,000). Armed forces recreation installations programs do not have population categories.

The National Gold Medal Award application asks agencies to identify what they do well in managing their agency and why is that considered the agency's most outstanding effort; the activities undertaken both internally and externally to connect with the community it serves; examples of the results it has achieved; examples of innovation and creativity; and how it addresses the issues of access to all; community health and well-being; and climate-ready parks. Finally, it asks agencies to share challenge(s) it has faced in the last three years; how it has addressed the challenge(s); and the results achieved.

Applicants must complete an online National Gold Medal Award application by March 1, 2024, at which time a panel of five independent Gold Medal Award judges carefully review each application and select four agencies per population category and four armed forces installation programs as National Gold Medal Finalists.

Finalist applicants then submit a 5-minute video showcasing the activities and results noted in their application. The Gold Medal Award judges then select one agency per category to receive the Grand Plaque. Finalist and Grand Plaques will be awarded in Atlanta, Georgia, as part of the 2024 National Recreation and Park Association Conference, October 8-11.

IA New Product Contest winners

The Irrigation Association (IA) celebrated the innovative products and technologies that are shaping the future of water management in announcing the winners of the 2023 New Product Contest. The annual competition showcases the newest premier products in the irrigation industry, underscoring the commitment of industry leaders to sustainable water use and improved irrigation efficiency.

In the landscape irrigation category, for companies with annual revenue less than \$20 million, the winner was the SPVLF Low Flow Commercial Plastic Valve by Superior. Designed for use as a master or zone valve, the SPVLF is a low-flow, high-performance irrigation and landscape valve with no minimum flow requirement, which opens and closes regardless of system flow rate and has reliable low flow operation.

Among companies with annual revenue equal to or greater than \$20 million, the winner is the FG100 Flow Sensor by Rain Bird Corporation. Designed for residential and light commercial applications, the Rain Bird FG100 Flow Sensor reads high and low flow rates reliably and accurately with flexibility in installation locations. **SFM**



Blowers, Sweepers and Vacuums

BILLY GOAT HURRICANE STAND-ON BLOWER

The compact Billy Goat P2000 Hurricane zero-turn stand-on blower with 3,500 cfm and 150-plus-mph air velocity

has a patented Dual Deflector Air Flow System, allowing the operator to change the angle of air flow for deeper more efficient cleaning. And a Directional Air Discharge

Foot Pedal permits the operator to quickly transition air output from the left to the right side when turning.



ECHO BLOWERS

Echo recently introduced several new blowers:

- PB-7910T and PB-7910H – This gas-powered backpack runs on a 79cc two stroke that helps push 835 cfm and has a pleated paper side-mounted air filter. Choose hip-mounted or tube-mounted throttle.

- DPB-5800T – This three-port battery-powered backpack blower delivers up to 795 cfm of air volume with speeds up to 195 mph. Running on two 5 Ah batteries, it will run for 30 minutes. Using three batteries, the runtime is 80 minutes.

- PB-5810T and PB-5810H – Featuring an all-new 59.7cc engine, the PB-5810 blower provides 700 cubic feet of air volume at air speeds of 200 mph.



MILWAUKEE 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 with Quik-Lok.



REDEXIM TURF-TIDY

The Redexim Turf-Tidy allows for dethatching, verticutting, sweeping or flail cutting. The Turf-Tidy's fully floating head follows the ground contours, ensuring accurate cutting and excellent pickup. Wet and dry leaves, pine needles, sweet gum tree balls and even cores are quickly and easily cleaned up. The high-lift hopper can easily be emptied into a trailer or dumpster.



SCAG WINDSTORM

The Scag Windstorm stand-on blower features the Nozzle Direction System (NDS), providing control of the air discharge tilt and rotation. A mechanical lever provides 16-degrees vertical tilt adjustment, while two electric switches allow for automatic left/right horizontal rotation or manual rotation adjustment.

Air output of up to 6,000 effective cfm paired with ground drive speeds up to 10.5 mph deliver optimum productivity.



direction. The blower angle can be preset to operate at the correct angle to handle the specific task at hand such as clearing leaves, grass clippings or aeration cores.



STEC FAIRWAY BRUSH

The STEC Fairway Brush is a multipurpose, tow-behind implement for field grooming and maintenance. This ground-driven rotary brush will help with dethatching, dew removal, working in topdressing, reducing worm castings, multidirectional cutting, and controlling turfgrass diseases. The ability to switch between pre-cut and topdress modes quickly and easily makes this an ideal machine for sports fields and golf courses.



WIEDENMANN TERRA GROOM

The Wiedenmann Terra Groom is a multi-functional groomer used best on athletic fields to brush in sand and any other topdressing materials to achieve even distribution of infill on surfaces without leaving lines and stripes. It can break down cores, disperse dew, and reduce mower maintenance, while promoting healthy grass growth. The working width is 74 inches and is available with a 3-point hitch mounting frame to attach it to a tractor (or any vehicle above 15 hp). **SFM**



TURFCO TORRENT 2

Keep your fields and grounds looking their best with the Turfco Torrent 2 PTO debris blower. The handheld controller allows for rapid, side-to-side changes in nozzle



JANUARY 22-25

**SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION**
Ocean Center Convention Center
Daytona Beach, Florida
www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/conference

JANUARY 23-24

**NATIONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS AND AFTER-
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES SAFETY AND SECURITY FORUM**
Legacy Stadium, Katy ISD
Katy, Texas
<https://ncs4.usm.edu/events/industry-forums/>

JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 1

**GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICA CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW**
Phoenix, Arizona
<https://www.gcsaaconference.com/registration>

FEBRUARY 4-8

**TURFGRASS PRODUCERS INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION CONFERENCE AND FIELD DAY**
Orlando World Center Marriott
Orlando, Florida
<https://turfgrassod.org/>

FEBRUARY 20-21

**NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL SPORTS AND
ENTERTAINMENT SAFETY AND SECURITY FORUM**
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana
<https://ncs4.usm.edu/events/industry-forums/>

FEBRUARY 23-25

**AMERICAN SPORTS BUILDERS ASSOCIATION
WINTER MEETING**
Hyatt Regency Grand Reserve
Puerto Rico
<https://sportsbuilders.org/page/UpcomingEvents>

FEBRUARY 28

MID-ATLANTIC SFMA SPRING EDUCATION EVENT
Oriole Park at Camden Yards
Baltimore, Maryland
<https://masfma.org/>

JULY 9-11

**NATIONAL SPORTS SAFETY AND SECURITY
CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION**
JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge Resort & Spa
Phoenix, Arizona
<https://ncs4.usm.edu/events/annual-conference/>

OCTOBER 8-10

NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Atlanta, Georgia

<https://conference.nrpa.org/>

OCTOBER 15-18

EQUIP EXPOSITION

Kentucky Exposition Center

Louisville, Ky

<https://www.equipexposition.com/>

OCTOBER 15-18

PROFESSIONAL GROUNDS MANAGEMENT SOCIETY SCHOOL OF GROUNDS MANAGEMENT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Louisville, Ky (held in conjunction with Equip Expo)

<https://pgms.org/page/AnnualConference>

OCTOBER 28-30

SYNTHETIC TURF COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Sheraton Downtown Phoenix

Phoenix, Arizona

<https://www.syntheticurfCouncil.org/>

NOVEMBER 3-6

ELEVATE (NALP)

Charlotte, North Carolina

<https://www.landscapeprofessionals.org/ELEVATE>

NOVEMBER 4-8

IRRIGATION SHOW AND EDUCATION WEEK

Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center

Long Beach, California

<https://irrigation.org/IA>

NOVEMBER 20-23

ATHLETIC BUSINESS SHOW

New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center

New Orleans, Louisiana

<https://www.abshow.com/>

DECEMBER 2-6

AMERICAN SPORTS BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

TECHNICAL MEETING

Orlando, Florida

<https://sportsbuilders.org/page/UpcomingEvents> **SFM**



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Michigan SFMA: www.misfma.org

**Minnesota Park and Sports Field Management
Association:** www.mpsfma.org

Mo-Kan STMA: www.mokanstma.com

Nebraska SFMA
www.nebraskaturfgrass.com/nesfma

New England STMA:
www.nestma.org

North Carolina SFMA: www.ncsportsturf.org

Northern California SFMA:
www.norcalstma.org

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation: www.ohioturfgrass.org

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oregonstma@gmail.com

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**Sports Field Managers Association of
New Jersey:** www.sfmanj.org

Southern California SFMA:
www.socalsfma.com

South Carolina SFMA:
<https://scsfma.org/>

Tennessee Valley SFMA: www.tvstma.org

Texas SFMA: www.txstma.org

Virginia SFMA: www.vsfma.org

Wisconsin STMA: www.wstma.org

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JOHN DEERE

Winter Field Work Dos and Don'ts

Q: Now that our fields are dormant for the winter, we have more time to tackle field maintenance and projects that we could not get to during the summer and fall. Is there anything that we should not do now?

A: As I was organizing my thoughts for this question, I found it difficult to come up with a list of things you should not do without also making suggestions of things you should consider doing.

Fields are often wetter in the winter because of less evaporation due to the cooler air and lower transpiration from dormant turfgrass. With wet soils comes the greater chance of causing soil rutting if you put heavy equipment on the field. Also, dormant turfgrass, when disrupted, will not generate new lateral stems and roots to re-tack and recover. These two situations may limit winter construction projects on the field — especially if the field will be used for play before spring green-up.

If you do decide to initiate some construction projects, such as adding drainage or running new irrigation lines, then be sure and cut your dormant sod extra thick to retain existing roots for structure and stability when it is put back into place. Thoroughly tamp around the sod edges to fill any gaps in the existing profile and the new sod. Another tip is to replace bare areas using thick-cut plugs made with a 7-inch hexagon plugger from a non-play area. The hexagon shape eliminates gaps that can occur when using round plugs, so stability is not compromised.

A construction project that you may want to tackle during winter is infield and warning track renovations to baseball and softball fields. Removing lips, edging and regrading infields, plus rebuilding mounds and home plate areas can be easily accomplished without damage to the dormant turfgrass. While you are working down the baselines, you may also give your surrounding fencing and backstop some attention.

In general, dormant turfgrass requires little to no irrigation, mowing or fertilizer. If the winter is very dry, then the bermudagrass may need some irrigation to prevent desiccation damage. Have your staff check the system's operation while running through the zones. Occasional mowing will clean up plant debris that is

on the surface and give the turfgrass a more uniform appearance. This slow time offers a great opportunity to complete annual maintenance needs on mowers and other equipment. Although it is not always considered fertilizer, application of lime (if warranted) over the winter allows plenty of time for it to work its way into the soil — encouraging grass growth the following spring. Just be careful that your lime application equipment does not cause ruts.

Do not dethatch during dormancy as you want to maintain as much dormant stem and leaf tissue on the plant as possible through the winter. Topdressing would be okay at low to moderate rates, but I would generally suggest waiting until the turfgrass is actively growing. Like liming, be careful not to cause rutting with application equipment.

The last two cultural practices to address are aerification and rolling. Implementing these practices in the winter is a bit controversial. Aerification can be beneficial for gas and water exchange in the soil, as well as reduction of compaction. But aerification after the turfgrass is fully dormant can result in the holes remaining open for several weeks. While this seems to be a positive, the downside is that air exchange in these open holes encourages a more rapid and thorough cooling of the soil profile. This increases the potential for winterkill of turfgrass, so proceed with caution. Rolling a field in the winter can be effective at smoothing out surface imperfections since the field is often softer during winter. The trick is to use a roller size and weight that is appropriate for the soil's firmness at that time, and to balance out any negative compaction effects of the rolling with in-season aerification. **SFM**



Grady Miller, Ph.D.

Professor and Extension Turf Specialist
North Carolina State University

Questions?

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

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