

SportsField

MANAGEMENT

February 2025

Vol. 41 No. 2

The Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

Mowing Patterns Contest winner **10** | Professional development **12**

Track and field facilities **26** | Trimmers and edgers **30**

Emphasis on Education

**Adam Thoms, Ph.D., brings academic
perspective to role as SFMA President**



SPORTS FIELD
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



Recognize the Difference Trust the Best

Why rely on multiple suppliers when one trusted resource can cover all your bases? At STEC, we deliver industry-leading turf solutions, combining advanced equipment, expert support, and reliable service. More than just a provider, we're your partner in success, dedicated to helping turf professionals maintain fields with confidence and ease, no matter the challenge. Don't settle for less.

THERE IS NO COMPARISON

stecequipment.com | (888) 325-2532



FULL PERFORMANCE WITH BATTERY-POWERED CONVENIENCE

INTRODUCING THE NEW FIELDLAZER™ ES 100

HIGH-PRESSURE, BATTERY-POWERED FIELD MARKER

Battery-powered simplicity combined with Graco's professional, paint-saving high-pressure technology.

- ▶ **Professional, Bright Lines**
- ▶ **50-75% Paint Savings Over Low Pressure Systems**
- ▶ **Finish the Job 4X Faster**



Delivered complete with two DEWALT® batteries and fast charger for continuous striping.

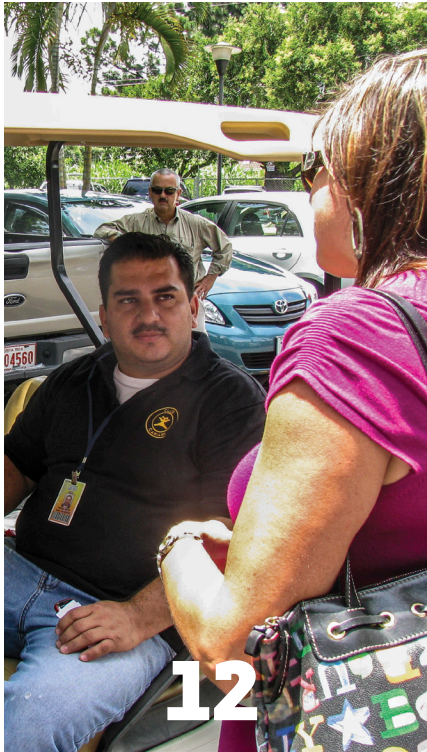


LEARN MORE ABOUT FIELDLAZER AT
[GRACO.COM/FIELDLAZER](https://graco.com/fieldlazer)



Contents

FEBRUARY 2025
VOL. 41, NO. 2



12

10
On-field Artistry
SFMA Mowing Patterns
Contest Winning Design

12
Professional Development
Dust Off Your Elevator Speech:
How to communicate with others
smoothly and succinctly

18

Profile

Emphasis on Education:
Adam Thoms, Ph.D., brings academic
perspective to role as SFMA President

26

Athletic Surfaces

Tracking Trends: The Evolution of
Track and Field Facilities

38

Certification

Insight from current CSFMs



26



18

DEPARTMENTS

6

Editor's Note

7

President's Message

8

SFMA In Action

16

More than Grass with Alpha Jones

17

John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

30

Equipment and Technology Focus

34

From the Feeds

39

Innovations

42

Accessing the Archives

44

Industry News

46

Membership

47

Calendar of Events

48

Marketplace

49

SFMA Chapter Contacts

50

Q&A

365ss

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS BLEND

THE BEST OF WHAT TURF PROFESSIONALS DEMAND

EXCELLENT WEAR
TOLERANCE

HIGH TURF
QUALITY

RAPID
ESTABLISHMENT

SUPERIOR DISEASE
RESISTANCE

“We chose 365ss because of its fast germination and wear tolerance. We have been impressed with how well it has performed for our team and how great it looks.”

Josh Tvrdik | Director of Turf and Grounds | Iowa State Athletics



We Believe in Better | 503.588.7333 | MTVIEWSEEDS.COM

Editor's Note



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

Someone recently pointed out to me that if *Back to the Future* were being made now, Marty would travel back to 1995. That made me wonder if my kids (now teenagers) would feel as fish out of water in 1995 as Marty did making the trip from 1985 to 1955. Perhaps — especially from a technology standpoint.

2025 sounds futuristic to those of us who were around in the '80s and '90s. As a kid, even the year 2000 sounded far away, and yet another quarter century has passed since Y2K. (Side note: Ten-year-old me would be extremely disappointed to find out that I do not yet have a flying car.)

We often start the new year by pondering what the upcoming 12 months will bring. But what about the next 30 years? Where will we be from a technological standpoint in 2055? How will the world around us impact our lives? From a sports field management perspective, how will the profession change in the years to come? How will the evolution of sports (and sports business) impact the industry? These are big questions, yet they are questions the SFMA attempts to strategically plan for.

The position of SFMA president changes every year, yet the president of the association and the board of directors not only work to address the issues and initiatives of the current year but they also plan for the challenges of future generations of sports field managers.

In this issue, we are pleased to introduce to you new SFMA President, Adam Thoms, Ph.D. As Associate Professor, Commercial Turfgrass at Iowa State University, Adam is one of only a few academics to lead the association as president, bringing with him an emphasis on industry education.

I have known Adam since I first took charge of *SportsField Management* magazine at the end of 2019. In addition to his work on the SFMA Board, Adam served as technical editor of the magazine for several years. His insight has been invaluable to shaping the magazine and my understanding of many topics. I am extremely appreciative of his support and guidance.

For many, a key benefit of SFMA is being able to reach out to others in the association. When Adam found out that ISU was on my daughter's short list for college visits, he provided us with information about the university and welcomed us to Ames. When my daughter ultimately chose to attend ISU, she was also lucky enough to work for Adam at the ISU turf research farm.

Adam has always been accessible and responsive, and I look forward to working with him in 2025. He has a lot on his plate in the year to come (which we discuss in the profile article in this issue); but as we look to the future, I am confident that SFMA is in good hands. **SFM**

SportsField MANAGEMENT

EPG Brand Acceleration
7760 France Ave. South, Ste 810
Bloomington, MN 55435

Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

ADVERTISING SALES

Edwin Rosario | Marketing and Engagement Sales Executive
Phone: (763) 383-4495 | erosario@epgacceleration.com

EDITORIAL

Sr VP Sales/Group Publisher | David Voll
Associate Publisher/Editorial Brand Director | John Kmitta
Technical Editor | Chase Straw, Ph.D.
Interactive Content Designer | Reba Zatz

AD MATERIALS AND QUESTIONS

ads@epgacceleration.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

Phone: (763) 383-4492 | customerservice@epgacceleration.com

REPRINTS

Visit <https://epgacceleration.com/marketing-services/>
and contact us today or email us at
info@epgacceleration.com.

DIRECT MAIL LIST SALES

Kris Grauer | NPS Media Group
kgrauer@npsmediagroup.com | (203) 822-7933

Publisher's Notice: We Assume No Responsibility For The Validity Of Claims In Connection With Items Appearing In 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 US. Periodicals postage paid at Port Jervis, NY and additional mailing offices. COPYRIGHT 2025 SportsField Management. Material may not be reproduced or photocopied in any form without the written permission of the publisher.



BRAND
ACCELERATION

President's Message



SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Officers

President:

Adam Thoms, Ph.D.

Immediate Past President:

Sun Roesslein, CSFM

President Elect:

Alpha Jones, CSFM

Secretary-Treasurer:

Casey Carrick, CSFM

Vice President Commercial:

Erin Wilder

Directors

Academic:

Chase Straw, Ph.D.

At-Large (elected):

Weston Floyd, CSFM

At-Large (appointed):

Lee Van Meeteren

Commercial:

Matthew Duncan, CSFM

Higher Education:

Jason DeMink, CSFM

Parks and Recreation:

Zack Holm, CSFM

Professional Facilities:

Dan Farnes

Schools K-12:

Jake Mays

SFMA OFFICE

P.O. Box 1673

Lawrence, KS 66044

Phone: 800-323-3875

Email: SFMALInfo@SportsFieldManagement.org

www.sportsfieldmanagement.org

SFMA EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Chair: Brad Thedens, CSFM

Vice Chair: TJ Brewer, CSFM

Board Liaison: Chase Straw, Ph.D.

Members: Matthew Arms, CSFM; Joe Churchill; Cliff Driver, CSFM; Kate Garassino; Rebecca Knapp, CSFM; and Tony Koski.



Adam Thoms, Ph.D.

SFMA President

athoms@iastate.edu

What an exciting year we have ahead of us for 2025! I'm honored and excited to serve as the president of SFMA for the upcoming year. I have always considered this association to be a major reason I ended up where I have in my career. There are so many great people in this organization that can help you in so many ways.

It is also a little strange for me to be writing an article without mentioning pH or nitrogen rates, but this will be a fun change for me. We have an excellent board of directors for this upcoming year that are also eager to help direct SFMA for the coming years.

This year serves as a transition for SFMA, I must thank Sun Roesslein, CSFM, for her leadership the past two years; I truly appreciate all her time spent on this organization. This year will include selecting a new leader of SFMA, as well as a full year of new software for paying your dues, conference registration and a new online learning platform. These technological upgrades should make a much more pleasant online interaction with SFMA. This will also allow us to offer more educational content online.

We will continue to build our relationship with the FFA as we are preparing to host the FFA Turfgrass Science Invitational Student Competition in 2026, which will bring students from throughout the

country to our conference in Fort Worth to compete and learn more about our industry. We hope this partnership will help more people learn about our industry.

Each of you also plays a significant role in directing the future of SFMA through committee work. Every one of our committees serves as an important function in ensuring the work of the organization is getting done. I encourage each of you to be involved, serve on a committee and help move forward the work of that committee. Do not be afraid to reach out to the committee chairs with ideas.

Also consider becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager (if you are not one already), gaining Environmental Facility Certification, or applying for the Field of the Year awards. We always want more members applying for and obtaining these honors.

2025 offers so many opportunities for SFMA, and we all play a part in making the association successful. Please help us to have a great year, and best of luck to all of you on your fields in the year to come. **SFM**

– Adam Thoms, Ph.D.

Post-conference Virtual Education

Reminder that SFMA post-conference virtual education continues in February. These sessions are available for free to anyone who signed up for a full conference registration. Register on the SFMA website at sportsfieldmanagement.org/conference/.

FEBRUARY 11

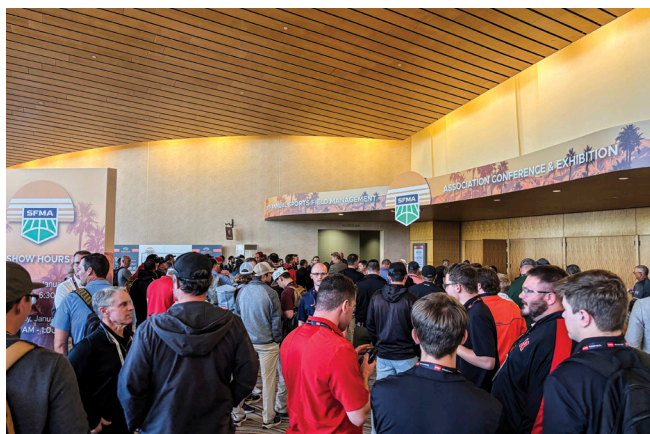
2-3 p.m.: Potential Ways to Reduce Inputs on Athletic Fields, presented by AJ Lindsey, Ph.D., University of Florida

3:15-4:15 p.m.: Toxicity? Are Fertilizers and Pesticides Harming Soil, Plants, Participants, etc.? presented by Bryan G. Hopkins, Ph.D., Brigham Young University

FEBRUARY 18

2-3 p.m.: Leveling the Playing Field: How Pests and Stresses Impact Playability, presented by David McCall, Ph.D., Virginia Tech University, and Ava Veith, graduate student, Virginia Tech University

3:15-4:15 p.m.: Pesticide Potions Class: A Journey into Pesticide Formulations and Mixing, presented by Chrissie A. Segars, Ph.D., PBI Gordon, and Dale Sanson, Ph.D., PBI Gordon



SFMA Volunteer Opportunities

Committees are the lifeblood of SFMA. Each year, nearly 200 members volunteer to serve on the more than 20 SFMA Committees and Task Groups. These volunteers help guide the development of programs and provide member insight and feedback on new initiatives and current services. Committee work helps to advance the mission and strategic plan of SFMA.

Committee service is for one year beginning in March and ending in February. Most committees meet via conference calls several times a year.

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 to 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 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 (Both 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; 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 corn hole; 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 called 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; 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 Facility Certification program. **SFM**

NEW FOR 2025!



TRIMAX
Snake S3
THE TURF SPECIALIST'S SECRET WEAPON.

INDUSTRY LEADING WARRANTY

3
YEAR

INCLUDES SPINDLES & GEARBOXES
EXPERIENCED SERVICE & SUPPORT NETWORK

*T & C's APPLY

NOW WITH:

- ✓ Zero Daily Maintenance!
- ✓ Titan Roller Bearing System
- ✓ 3/8" - 4" Cutting Height
- ✓ Impressive Striping
- ✓ 10' 7" & 13' 1" Cutting Widths
- ✓ Multi-Lift System Available

DISCOVER HOW THE **Snake S3** CAN ELEVATE YOUR SPORTS FIELD MOWING!





trimax
MOWING SYSTEMS

POWERING PERFORMANCE.

f X   in   // [**TRIMAXMOWERS.COM**](https://www.trimaxmowers.com)

SFMA Mowing Patterns Contest Winning Design



Jeff Ross, head groundskeeper of the Great Lakes Loons (High-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Dodgers), won the 2024 SFMA Mowing Patterns Contest with his “Fan Appreciation Pattern.”

Ross credited his assistant groundskeepers, Ryan Wolter and TJ Fairchild, for helping with the design.

“The pattern was mowed with our John Deere 2500B triplex mower in the outfield and a John Deere 260B walk behind greens mower on the infield,” said Ross. “The ‘Fan Appreciation Pattern’ was a poll on our team’s social media where I came up with three patterns and the fans got to choose which one would be on the field for the final home game of the season.”

SportsField Management magazine recently asked Ross about the winning design.

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

Jeff Ross: I have been with the Great Lakes Loons for 10 seasons — four as head groundskeeper. I have two seasonal assistants and a crew of six to eight game day employees. We manage the field and almost one acre of lawn seating inside the stadium.

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

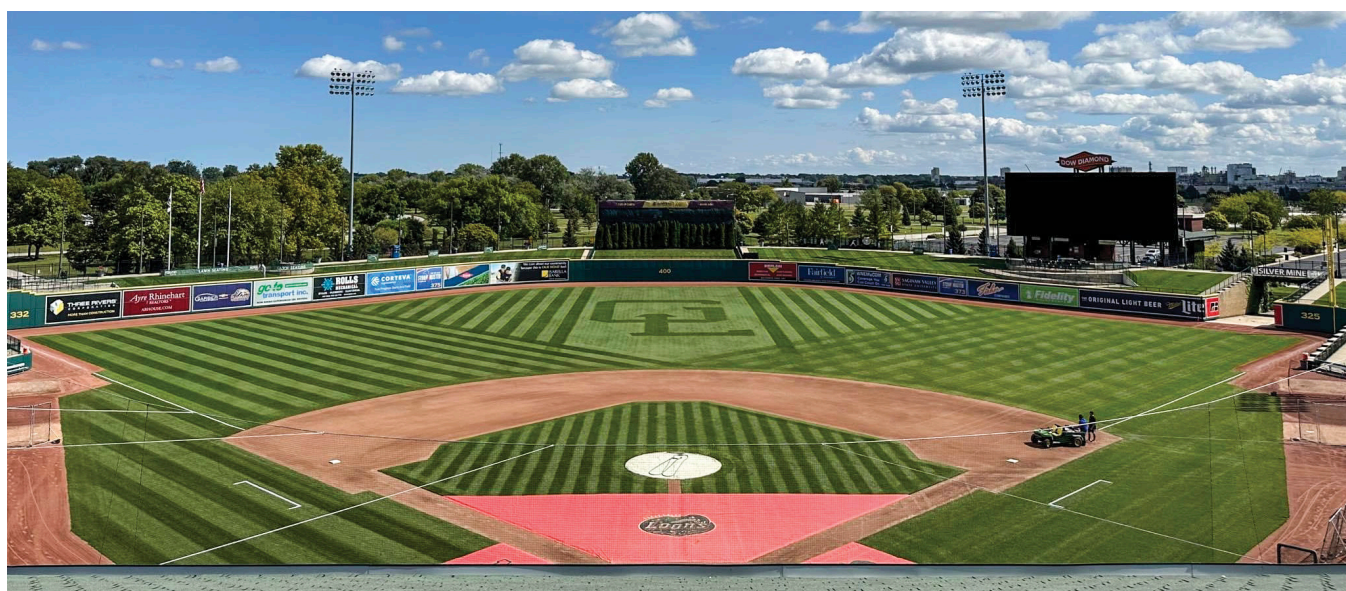
Ross: This winning design has been a favorite of mine for the last couple years. We typically put this pattern out once a year toward the end of the season/when in the playoffs. I love the design because it’s simple with lots of straight lines, with the focal point being the large GL logo in center field.

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?

Ross: When coming up with new mowing patterns I am constantly looking for inspiration from what others have done. I follow many other groundskeepers on social media to see what things we could implement at our stadium. If you want to try something new, just go for it. If you don't like it, you can always mow a different pattern the next day.

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

Ross: Winning the SFMA Mowing Pattern Contest means a lot to me. SFMA is composed of the best groundskeepers in the country; and to win an award brings satisfaction for all the hard work my crew puts in every day. **SFM**



Dust Off Your Elevator Speech

How to communicate with others smoothly and succinctly



All photos by John C. Fech

By John C. Fech

Whether you know it or not, you need a good elevator speech to succeed in the sports field management industry. Whether it's to benefit from short conversations with stakeholders, to open a door with someone you just met, or to have a good answer when asked what you do for a living, a well-constructed elevator speech has a lot of benefits.

Much of what makes a good elevator speech centers around making a good impression. Being able to communicate concisely who you are, who you work for, what you do and why you do it will deliver positive results. Whether it's creating a fresh one for a newly hired worker or dusting off an existing one for a veteran, putting forth a little effort on an elevator speech is well worth the time.

WHAT IS AN ELEVATOR SPEECH?

An elevator speech (ES) can be thought of as a tool, a skill or both. As a tool, it's a ready-to-go, front-of-mind set of phrases and factoids about yourself and your job. As a skill, it's the ability to smoothly and succinctly explain to another person what you do and why you do it.

You never really know who you might meet that could do you a favor or provide you with some guidance, or where a short conversation with a new contact might lead. It could be a dead end, or it could be an introduction to the hiring professional at the facility that you've been salivating over since you graduated. It could be a sales representative who has the inside track on the latest and greatest product that will make your life easier. The bottom line is having one in place when you need it, and you never know when that will be.

The consequences of not having an ES is the communication equivalent to trying to catch a football with greased hands — you can see it, but are not ready to catch it; not only that, but you're also not able to catch it because you haven't prepared adequately. The negativity of not having an ES can even stay with you. For example, it can be difficult to recover from a response such as "Well, I, uh, you know, I like work here." The importance of an ES lies in being ready to engage when an opportunity presents itself — either predictably or spontaneously.

ES OUTLINE

A good ES should be flexible and customizable, but at the very least contain the following four items:

- 1) Your name
- 2) Your company's name
- 3) What you do
- 4) Why you do it

Each of these four pieces should be delivered with KISS (Keep It Short Sweetheart) in mind. A sentence or two on the what and why is ideal. Since an ES is sometimes delivered to a person not entirely familiar with sports field management, avoid jargon by using everyday, commonsense language.

A CENTRAL COMPONENT OF AN ES

Following the outline will help achieve the central component of an ES — to make a good first impression on the person hearing it. The features that most help you present yourself favorably are a good smile, being polite, avoiding interruptions, and being well spoken yet a good listener when a response is made; in short, being present and focused. Eye contact is a must while delivering an ES and non-verbal cues such as tone, body language and timbre are very influential. As odd as it may sound, smelling nice can also help make a great first impression.

ES EXAMPLE

One of the best ways to learn how to make an ES work for you is to look at a basic example:

- Unknown person at a trade show: "Hi. I'm Phil with XYZ Products."
- Sports field manager: Hi Phil. I'm Joe Smith with the Springfield Ducks.
- Phil: Oh yeah, what do you do for them?
- Joe: I get to create a beautiful and durable playing surface for the athletes. It's great to see the coaches and players enjoy their time on the field. The fans love it too.



■ Phil: What do you like best about it?

■ Joe: It's just great working on a natural grass field. There are just so many benefits to the players and the environment from real grass.

ES HELPS AND HINDRANCES

With the basics and this example in mind, it's important to consider the whole communication process that most of us take for granted. In the simplest of conversation exchanges, a message must be created and sent to a listener; the listener then receives it, assigns meaning to it, formulates a response and sends it back to the original sender. All of this happens in a matter of seconds.

Unfortunately, most conversations and elevator speeches are not that simple. As the process moves along in a back-and-forth or circular fashion, the messages get sent through "noisy channels." Even if two people are standing right next to each other, "noises" — better known as message disrupters — reduce the effectiveness of the transmission of the message. Although there are many disrupters, some of the more common ones include monotone delivery, regional accents, poor body language, lack of eye contact, poor choice of clothing, frowns, assumptions, jargon, non-answers, hearing problems and background noises. All of these get in the way of the sender delivering their message and the receiver understanding what it means. On the opposite side of disruption, being clear, purposeful and to the point will enhance the process.

PREPARING FOR YOUR ES

In preparation for delivering an ES, creating message points is a good first step. Simply writing out phrases on a pad of legal paper is a great way to get started.



This way, there's no pressure and it's easy to cross off any words that sound rough and circle words that sound better. Phrases such as "I'm a spray technician" and "I scout for diseases and insects every week" are short, sweet and insightful. As they are created, think also about how attractive or unique they sound. To some listeners of an ES, a spray technician or scout is really interesting in they don't know anyone who sprays or inspects turf for a living. Attractive and/or unique words or descriptors are called "ear candy." In the radio and music business, they're called a "hook," which is something that creates a strong appeal or interest on the part of the listener. Using ear candy and hooks will greatly strengthen the ES. Popular songs such as "YMCA" by the Village People and "Sweet Caroline" by Neil Diamond are played at baseball games because they're easy to sing along to and invite participation by the spectators.

THE BAIT, THE HOOK AND THE BARB

When you break it down further, there's more to it than just the hook; there's the bait, the hook and the barb. Bait is something to capture attention, the hook is that which holds the listener's attention for a little while, and the barb is what keeps them on the hook for a little longer. To illustrate, let's go back to the Birmingham Ducks example:

Bait: Hi Phil. I'm Joe Smith with the Springfield Ducks.

Hook: I get to create a beautiful and durable playing surface for the athletes. It's great to see the coaches and players enjoy their time on the field. The fans love it too.

Barb: It's just great working on a natural grass field. There are just so many benefits to the players and the environment from real grass.

BE READY FOR FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

For the most part, green industry conversation partners tend to be supportive and receptive of an ES message. Their experience and knowledge of turf, plants, soil, pests and cultural practices seems to predispose them as effective

listeners from the start. Non-industry listeners are usually unfamiliar with the specifics of turf care. With each group, follow-up questions should be expected.

Follow-up questions from a non-industry person tend to be things such as "What do you do in the offseason?" and "What are your most common problems?" Questions from people within the industry might be along the lines of "Any new projects on the horizon?" and "Anything work particularly well for you this past year?"

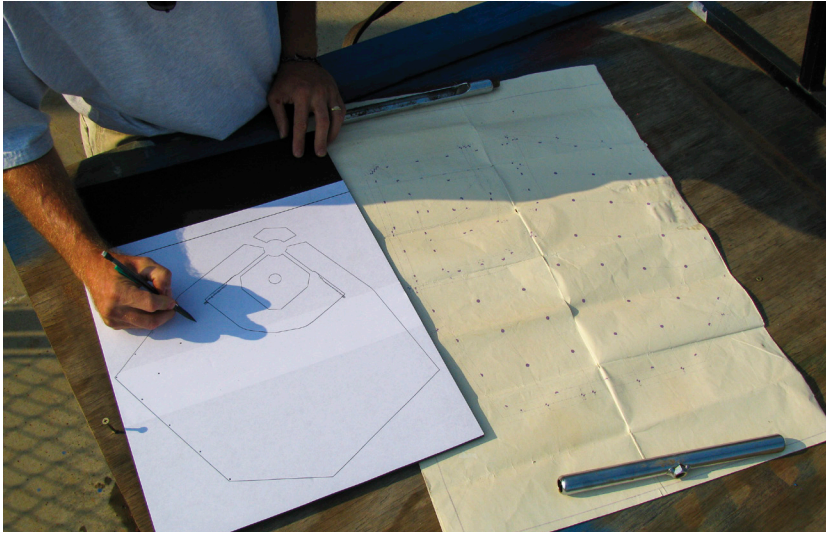
Some non-industry people can ask "gotcha" questions such as "I've heard that sports fields apply lots of water to keep the grass green...isn't that wasteful?" "Doesn't fertilizer cause pollution?" and "Don't you have to spray dangerous pesticides on your job?" Be ready with short, concise replies, such as, "We regularly audit our irrigation system to improve efficiency and are working on converting some areas to non-turf to save water," "We use slow-release nutrient products to limit movement to the groundwater" and "We scout and monitor the turf and trees before applying any pest control agents and actually, often use non-chemical solutions to control pests."

Other short messages, often called "work-ins" can be utilized if called for. Examples of some phrases of turfgrass justification include:

- Turfgrass is important for cooling the air
- Fifty-five square feet of turfgrass produces enough oxygen for one person for a day
- Turfgrass filters the air
- Recharges and filters groundwater supplies
- Reduces stormwater runoff
- Controls soil erosion
- Retains and sequesters carbon
- Restores soil quality

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Delivering a good ES is just like any other skill — it takes time, dedication and



practice. After setting goals, writing out message points and weaving them together into one piece, start practicing by placing a small mirror on a desk along with the ES outline, then run through it from start to finish. Making small mistakes and using excessive pauses is not a problem at this point; in most cases, running through it five or six times will eliminate them.

The next part of practice is to deliver the ES to a friend, introducing yourself and waiting for responses. After you've run through it a couple of times, ask them for their honest feedback. They will most likely notice little things that will be very helpful.

Another piece of guidance is to watch good and bad elevator speeches on platforms such as YouTube. Seeing someone else in this endeavor is also helpful.

ROI AND THE LAW OF DIMINISHING RETURNS

As with many aspects of life, the law of diminishing returns applies. Spending too much time explaining your background, your everyday job duties, your hopes and dreams, your challenges and so on greatly reduces the effectiveness of an ES.

In addition, there are many dos and don'ts that apply to elevator speeches:

DOS

- Keep sentences and phrases short and clear. People trust the clear and mistrust the long and unclear.
- Listen carefully to each response from a communication partner and pause slightly before responding.
- Maintain steady eye contact.
- Wear a shirt with your company/stadium/ball club's logo on it.
- Sit up/stand up straight, smile and relax.
- Hit the four central message points and have one more in mind in case it is needed.
- Be positive.

DON'TS

- Don't interrupt the ES listener when they respond. It's rude and counterproductive.
- Don't use jargon (IPM, wetting agents, topdressing) with non-industry listeners.
- Don't use a lot of gestures — they're distracting.
- Don't avoid the opportunity to deliver an ES. The opportunity may never be available again.
- Don't badmouth your current employer, even if they deserve it.

OTHER APPLICATIONS FOR AN ES

In addition to reaping the obvious benefits of an ES, there are at least two other realms where they can be utilized. In a job interview, there will many questions and a lot of back-and-forth discussion, but at the heart of it all are the core tenets of an ES — your name, who you work for, what you do and why you do it. Of course, chances are good that there may have been several employers and various roles for each, but the basics are the same.

Another application is the promotion and justification of sports turf and the green industry in general. These opportunities can range from television interviews to short presentations to youth sports teams and neighborhood groups. These efforts are much like planting seeds that might or might not grow and yield fruit. If they do, the positive outcome will be directly related to you. **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.

Black History Month: Looking Beyond the Scoreboard

Sports have been heralded as a universal language — a powerful force capable of transcending race, culture and class. In large stadiums and small neighborhood parks, sports unite people through shared passion and collective triumph.

This Black History Month, as we reflect on the progress made and the challenges that remain, it is vital to honor not just the athletes on the field but also the diverse professionals behind the scenes who have played a crucial role in creating the spaces where history is made. Their stories highlight the continuing importance of representation, connecting the struggles of the past with the aspirations of the future.

Black History Month is a time to recognize and celebrate the achievements of African Americans in every aspect of society. In sports, we honor icons such as Jackie Robinson, Althea Gibson and Serena Williams — pioneers who broke barriers and paved the way for future generations. These athletes symbolize the power of representation, demonstrating how visibility can inspire change and expand what people believe is possible.

In sports field management, we honor legends such as Dr. George Washington Carver, John Albert Burr and Gladys Mae West, pioneers whose innovative contributions have improved sports field maintenance.

By championing diversity in every aspect of athletics, including sports field management, we ensure that the unifying power of sports remains strong. Diverse teams bring varied perspectives, which lead to better problem solving and more creative solutions. It is not just about representation; it's about the richness of what can be achieved.

Black History Month is more than a remembrance; it is a call to action. It reminds us to look beyond the obvious and celebrate the contributions of those who might otherwise be overlooked. In sports this means acknowledging the trainers, coaches and other professionals who contribute to the success of athletes and teams. The individual sports field manager who meticulously prepares the field plays a role just as vital as the player who scores the winning goal. Celebrating these contributions enriches our understanding of sports, which thrive on diversity and collaboration.

Representation ties the past to the future by showing that progress is possible and that the struggles of those who came before us were not in vain. It serves as a bridge, connecting the lessons of history with the promise of what lies ahead. Representation challenges stereotypes, broadens perspectives and fosters innovation.

For Black professionals in sports field management, their presence in an industry historically lacking diversity sends a powerful message: excellence knows no bounds. It also highlights the importance of accessible pathways for underrepresented groups to enter and thrive in these fields.

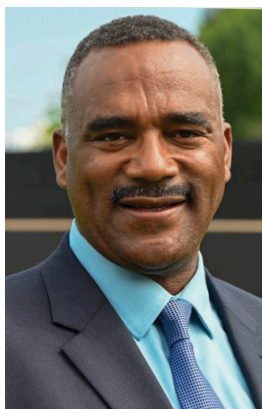
The importance of representation in sports field management also lies in its ability to inspire future generations. When young people see professionals who look like them excelling in roles they might never have considered, it broadens their horizons and expands their aspirations.

The work of promoting diversity and inclusion is not the responsibility of one group, but rather a collective effort. It is about having the comfortable and uncomfortable conversations that can give factual detail that disqualifies stereotypes. It is about having data that promotes seeing the other person for who they are, a human being.

This Black History Month, let us commit to looking beyond the scoreboard and celebrating the contributions of those who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Let us recognize the importance of representation in tying the past to the future, showing

young people what's possible and building a more inclusive tomorrow.

Because when we celebrate diversity, we don't just honor history — we create it. **SFM**



Alpha Jones, CSFM, is athletic field specialist at Duke University. He also serves on the SFMA Board of Directors as President-Elect.

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

PROBLEM:

Lower turf on right side of field

TURFGRASS AREA:

NFL practice field

LOCATION:

Houston, Texas

TURFGRASS VARIETY:

TifTuf bermudagrass

Answer on page 33

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER *For games that matter.*



Ready-to-use Paint Tote System
saves time, money, space,
and reduces waste.

We make the games look better.

WorldClassPaints.com | 1.800.748.9649

Emphasis on Education

*Adam Thoms, Ph.D.,
brings academic perspective
to role as SFMA President*

By John Kmitta

During the 2025 SFMA Annual Meeting in Palm Springs, Adam Thoms, Ph.D., associate professor, commercial turfgrass at Iowa State University, was sworn in as the thirty-first president of the association, becoming one of only a few academic members to serve in the role, and the first since Dr. Michael Goatley in 2012-13.

“I feel honored that the membership, especially all the practitioners, would give me this opportunity as an academic,” said Thoms. “We make up a very small part of the membership; so to run the organization as a president is an exciting opportunity. I don’t take it lightly. I try to put a lot of thought into every decision because I want to see the organization thrive.”

Photo credit: Mark Skalny Photography



Photo credit: Chris Gannon - ISU photographer

According to Thoms, coming from an academic background provides a different perspective of what needs to be accomplished at the association level.

"I have the ability to travel the nation a little bit more, giving talks at regional turf conferences, so I hear a little more about what is going on nationally," he said. "If you're a practitioner and you don't really get to travel, you might not hear as much nationwide."

"So much has changed in the way associations exist from when I got on the board in 2020," Thoms added. "Covid really knocked things back. People don't necessarily realize how much has changed with the association. I'm excited about the challenges ahead for the next year."

Thoms hopes to drive forward many SFMA initiatives — especially with regard to industry education.

"I'm an academic," he said. "We've spent a lot of time creating modules for online learning. We've got a new system now online and it's super easy to access. We have a lot of great material and quizzes that have been developed."

In the years to come, Thoms would like to see SFMA develop even more online events, webinars and online learning modules.

"We are going to have to get members who haven't gone the traditional four-year college or two-year college route," he said. "We are going to have to self-educate."

MIDWESTERN ROOTS

Thoms grew up in the relatively small Midwestern town of Waverly, Iowa. He worked with cows and sheep on his uncle's farm and became involved with 4-H and FFA, which gave him the opportunity to work with plants as well.

Initial thoughts of becoming a veterinarian were dismissed when he realized that he was not fond of the sight of blood. Playing football, however, sparked an interest in sports field management.

"We played a game in the rain, and it tore up the field," he said. "I came to school the next day and the custodian who took care of the field for us was out there fixing divots. I didn't realize people could take care of the field. I talked to my teacher about it, and he told me Iowa State teaches people how to do that. That was the 'aha' moment for me."

Thoms attended Iowa State University (ISU) with the intention of becoming a sports field manager. While at ISU, he worked for Mike Andresen on the ISU athletic fields as part of the student grounds crew; and during his junior year, he competed at the inaugural STMA Student Challenge. It was then that Andresen urged Thoms to pursue an advanced degree. Andresen was friends with Bobby Campbell, the field manager at the University of Tennessee (UT), who arranged for Thoms to meet UT's John Sorochoan, Ph.D.



Photo credit: Mark Skalny Photography

"I was skeptical because I was an Iowa kid and enjoyed Iowa," said Thoms. "But I went down there and had a great visit. That was a really big turning point for me. I'm really thankful to SFMA for the opportunity to put me in that position."

While at UT for his Masters and Ph.D., Thoms was involved with turfgrass research and worked for Campbell on the UT grounds crew. UT also enabled Thoms to travel to regional and national meetings.

"I am extremely thankful to John Sorocharn for introducing me to so many people and allowing me the opportunity to present around the world while working for him at UT," said Thoms. "His research and working for him helped shape who I am."

In 2016, having completed his graduate studies, Thoms embraced the opportunity to return to his roots at Iowa State as assistant professor and Extension specialist.

"I realized when I went the academic route for grad school that there are only so many positions in the state," he said. "I figured I would probably never get back; so, I felt really blessed with the opportunity to get back to Iowa."

Thoms also feels lucky to be able to interact with students, help shape them, and give back to the university that put him in a position to succeed.

"It also was really fun to work with Dr. Christians until he retired, and now getting to work with his replacement, Quincy Law," Thoms added. "It's rewarding to be able to put your own spin on the program from which you graduated."

The Iowa State turfgrass program currently has approximately 50 students. Thoms teaches two classes, and also advises graduate students.

"It's rewarding to work with the students from when they come in and don't necessarily know what they want to do with their life to when they leave and you get to help them with their first job, polishing up the resume or practicing an interview."

Thoms also praised the ISU athletics field management and intramurals crews for their relationship with the turfgrass department and their openness to working with the students.

"I feel confident sending the students down there so that they can get that hands-on experience," he said. "We're only so good at teaching students; they have to have some hands-on experience. The people down there are just amazing to work with. I think that makes our program unique compared to some places maybe where the students don't have those opportunities."

Thoms is also proud to have played a role in ISU's efforts to grow their own sod for the ISU athletic fields. Growing the sod at the ISU horticulture farm to their own specifications has not only saved money, but has allowed students to be involved in the care and management of the sod.

Thoms — who lives in Huxley, Iowa, with wife Rachel and their children George and Greta — also oversees an active Extension program at ISU, and enjoys the relationships made and built during Extension calls and visits throughout Iowa.

"I don't love the fact that if I get called, because it means somebody's probably having a bad day," he said. "But I love going in, laying out like a plan, and helping them with a solution. That has been really rewarding for me. I enjoy meeting people, talking with them, troubleshooting or answering questions. It's the people that really drive me."

GROWTH WITHIN SFMA

The people within the association have also driven Thoms — from competing in the first Student Challenge to serving on committees, then the SFMA Board of Directors and now as president of the association.

"At the very first meeting I was just an undergraduate student, but field managers from established places took the time to shake my hand and listen to me while I introduced myself," said Thoms. "Then I essentially had graduate school set up through one of those meetings and



Photo credit: Chris Gannon - ISU photographer

the people I met there. I wanted to give back in some way. Then I learned so much just from being on committees, just sitting in that room.”

As president, Thoms would like to see SFMA be the leader in education and information on playing surfaces; find recruiting techniques to help with the shortage of labor in the industry; and be a source that the media reaches out to when questions arise.

Thoms feels that SFMA hosting the 2026 National Turfgrass Science Invitational will be a big step toward getting young people involved, and letting them see the industry. SFMA is hoping 20 to 30 teams will attend the event, with more expected in future years.

“Trying to teach people that we exist as an industry or a career is an uphill battle that we’ll always fight while trying to recruit the next generation. Anytime we can get exposure of the industry to younger people who are

looking at careers and thinking about their future — that’s a win-win,” he said. “We also want to prepare members by providing some talking points for when they have the opportunity to meet with somebody who might be interested in the industry. Each of us can be ambassadors.”

With regard to media relations, SFMA is working hard to have well-placed content, especially for major events, such as the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup.

“These are opportunities to point out that the fields are managed by professionals — opportunities we can build upon to show that we exist,” said Thoms. “We have opportunities to speak as well, and hopefully they would call us up first, as an organization, if they have a question about a field.

“We should never turn down an opportunity to do an interview or a tour,” he added. “Our athletic department



Photo credit: Chris Gannon - ISU photographer

probably gets tired of us dragging prospective students or FFA students down there, but if we get one or two kids to show some interest, then it's worth it."

Thoms reiterated that online education is going to be a driver in years to come.

"I'm a realist. Not everybody on the crew is going to attend the national annual conference," he said. "So, providing resources that they can have at home is going to be useful. Continuing to push that and grow that content center is going to be a very big deal. We're excited to have a format where you can get online and easily check that stuff out."

With regard to labor challenges, industry pay scale and work-life balance, Thoms pointed out that pay scales have gone up in recent years, and there is hope that continues; but work-life balance will always be a struggle since athletic events typically occur at night and on weekends.

"I think better pay would help with some of the work-life balance, but more staff would help as well so that the head field manager could get a day off," he said. "We've seen several universities adding full-time staff. Hopefully, that will continue to trickle down and we will see improved pay at those positions as well."

According to Thoms, SFMA also needs to build partnerships with leagues and other organizations to improve the safety of athletic fields.

"I want to see us, as an organization, reach out to a lot of the leagues to talk about how people need non-biased, science-based training," he said. "That's what we offer as an organization. I'd like to work with the leagues to make that important to them. There are a lot of fields out there that would benefit from individuals having some continuing education to help make their field safer. The leagues could help us move that needle a little bit by saying this

is important. We have to reach out and get the ball rolling with these organizations and let them know we exist.”

Thoms would also like to lead a push for more members.

“A lot of people are not well connected, so they don’t even know there’s a national association to support them,” he said. “We have to do a better job of showing what we can bring to the table for them and the resources that they can easily access that make membership a can’t-miss opportunity. With our online learning they can stay up to date on continuing education, attend the conference, read the magazine, etc.”

Thoms realizes that being SFMA President brings with it plenty of challenges. As previously noted, much has changed since he first joined the board in 2020. The 2021 SFMA Conference was switched to a virtual event due to the pandemic; longtime SFMA CEO Kim Heck stepped down from the role in 2022; her replacement, Laura Simmons, lasted just over a year in the role; and SFMA has now gone without a CEO in place for nearly a year.

Despite the challenges and changes, Thoms points to positive strides made in recent years including background changes members might not see, such as upgrades to association management software.



Photo provided by Adam Thoms, Ph.D.



Photo credit: Mark Skalny Photography



Photo provided by Adam Thoms, Ph.D.

“Maybe people get frustrated with the lack of speed that they’ve seen things change the last couple of years on the front side,” he said. “But I think this year, as they registered for conference or to renew their dues, hopefully they’re seeing that new system and that will help us with the ability to communicate with the membership.”

“I think overall the health of the organization is good,” he added. “I’m excited about our new conference locations that we’re going to announce soon. Hopefully, that will drive some good attendance at those events in the coming years as well. But we still have work to do. We have members that we lost during Covid that we have to get back; and, quite frankly, we have to find a new leader or face for SFMA. That is going to be a big priority for us this upcoming year as well.”

When searching for a new executive leader for the association, Thoms said budgetary management will be important, as will finding someone who understands SFMA membership.

“But it also has to be someone who is willing to be a working leader as well,” he said. “That’s going to be important because we don’t have a huge staff. Our headquarters staff does an amazing job, but they’re probably understaffed. This new leader is going to have to step in and work hard as well.”

LEADING THE WAY

Helping guide SFMA through those initiatives in 2025, Thoms feels he brings to the role of president a passion for the industry and the people within it.

“If you’re not passionate about it, you’re not going to care,” he said. “I want to see everybody succeed. If somebody doesn’t know much about the industry, I want to teach them as much as I can.”

According to Thoms, having worked with both cool- and warm-season grasses gives him some unique knowledge and skills, as does having worked on the grounds crews at ISU and UT, as well as working with students, academics and researchers.

"I'm excited about the challenges in the year ahead," he said. "It's going to be a unique year as far as finding a new CEO or director and working with them for orientation into the organization. I'm also excited about visiting with the membership and learning as much as I can as quickly as I can. And I'm most excited about a lot of these back-of-house processes that we've spent the last few years reviewing over proposals or voting on; and now we're finally seeing those come to fruition. It's going to be fun to actually see those get put into place."

According to Thoms, working with SFMA Immediate Past President Sun Roesslein, CSFM, has been vital for getting up to speed on the role of president.

"She really got me involved this past year and included me in many conversations that presidents-elect in the past probably haven't gotten to sit in on. She's been a great role model for me in that position.

"I want to hit the ground running," he added. "We want to get the search rolling and wrapped up, and start looking at the conference model for Fort Worth right away. I'm going to charge the board to bring their thoughts, and we're going to do a deep dive into all the activities that we do as an association to make sure that we're as efficient as we can be."

Thoms hopes to be open and accessible as SFMA President.

"I want to listen to you and what you have to offer because everybody brings good ideas to the table," he said. "We might not be able to act on all of those, but I'm willing to listen and learn from what everybody has to offer."

He also urges members not to lose sight of what brought them to the association.

"Continue to be open with your fellow field managers, willing to communicate with them and help them when they need it," he said. "That sense of family is what I hear when people talk about SFMA, so let's not move away from that feeling. That's what makes this organization so unique and makes people love being a part of it." **SFM**



Photo credit: Chris Gannon - ISU Photographer

Tracking Trends

The evolution of track and field facilities



Photo courtesy of RossTarrant Architects

By Mary Helen Sprecher

Track and field may be one of the oldest sports in the world, but that doesn't mean it's staying static. And although it's no secret that the granular surfaces such as cinder, fired clay and expanded shale have been left in the dust, it's easy to lose sight of what really is new in facilities these days.

According to Sam Fisher of Fisher Tracks in Boone, Iowa, the arms race to have the best and newest sports venues is showing no signs of slowing down — at both the high school and college levels.

"I think one of the biggest trends I am seeing is the desire for a competition track," said Fisher. "This seems to be true regardless of the size of the district. Depending upon the school's conference, this may mean an opportunity to hold a big track meet of some stature only once every six or eight years. At the same time, the thought of building a full competition track seems to be the biggest driver. The difference in cost between a six-lane versus an eight-lane, between one or two runways versus four to six runways, and even multiple high jumps does not seem to faze most."



Photo courtesy of Iowa Sports Turf Management

The better the facility, the more chance it has of attracting the attention of students who want to showcase their skills — and the better the chance of helping cities attract the attention of big-name youth and amateur competitions. Increasingly, communities are becoming interested in using sports facilities as marketing devices to lure events that bring in traveling athletes and their families, who contribute to the local economy.

Need proof? The 2024 USA Track and Field National Junior Olympic Track and Field Championships, held in College Station, Texas, brought in 8,000 of the nation's top young athletes and made a whopping \$10.84 million. The 58th AAU Junior Olympic Games in Greensboro, North Carolina, attracted 15,000 participants — including 12,000 track and field athletes for the games' marquee event. The total: \$67.69 million.

MULTI-COLORED TRACKS

The right track can be a marketing tool for a city, but it can also be a source of pride for the school. According to Fisher, branding is a trend to watch. Whereas fields have long used logos to boost their image, tracks that incorporate school colors are now coming on strong.

“There is a strong desire for colored exchange zones,” he said. “This lends itself to the ‘wow’ factor from the stands for not only track but obviously the other sports as well. Many owners feel like it shows a level of care and cutting-edge construction.”

Accordingly, some track surfacing companies have developed website features, allowing visitors to exercise their creativity, designing onscreen tracks using various colors in not just the track lanes and exchange zones but side zones and jump lanes as well.

However, said Fisher, if schools want to take the route of using their colors on the track, it is essential to make the investment in having the job carried out by a professional track builder. Cutting corners won't improve the look for very long.

“Some owners are having these colors just painted on and, unfortunately, that very quickly leaves a very ragged look and it becomes a maintenance item of some significant cost to keep the facility looking pristine.”



Photo courtesy of Byrne & Jones Sports Construction



Photo courtesy of Huntress Associates, Inc.



Photo courtesy of Gale Associates, Inc.



Photo courtesy of Fisher Tracks, Inc.

FIELD EVENTS

Field events are an aspect essential to a fully appointed competition track. These events are classified as follows:

- Jumps: High jump, pole vault, steeplechase, long jump, and triple jump

- Throws: Hammer throw, shot put, discus, javelin

Although tradition would have as many of the field events as possible located within the track oval, today's school tracks often surround football and multi-sport fields that are constantly in use, making that impractical.

"I am really seeing the desire to have the events inside the oval and the main driver is coming from the coaching staff, who want to have all of their kids within one viewing area," said Fisher. "Obviously, the throwing events are outside and usually on a practice field nearby. A few schools — mainly new schools with a lot of real estate — are tending to put the event areas outside of the oval and within a fence."

Field surface is a key consideration in determining the location of throwing events. UEFA, the European governing body for soccer, has guidelines on synthetic



Photo courtesy of Huntress Associates, Inc.

turf that state that shot put and discus do not cause damage, but that hammer and javelin can. In order to preserve the playing surface, therefore, some events may need to be shifted around during meets and competitions in order to be held on grass.

Facility owners can expect to hear some complaints from spectators who do not want to have to move from their seats; however, outside of facilities designed for extremely high levels of competition, there is little chance of having all events in the same place — and doing so safely.

KEEPING THE TRACK INTACT

One of the most challenging aspects of track ownership is safeguarding the surface from incorrect use. Tracks that are open to the community when athletes are not using them can quickly sustain damage from visitors using incorrect footwear, as well as from parents who come to walk or run on the track and who allow their children to bring tricycles or scooters to play with while they get their exercise.

Equally worrisome, said Fisher, is when the school staff perpetrates the problems.

“I think one of the most distressing things about our business is all of the care that goes into building the track, all of the accuracy required, only to turn around and find that the track is really nothing more than a picture frame for the football program. It is literally abused by UTVs, golf carts, etc., in preparation for the big game.”

Vehicles such as mowers that are used on the field, as well as utility vehicles and other equipment, can damage the track surface beyond repair. Track builders recommend putting down mats on a

track, followed by boards, to create a pathway for vehicles to enter the field to perform maintenance without damaging the track.

“Obviously, the durometer, tensile strength, and return of energy are designed for the track athlete, and not designed for turning and twisting tires against the rubber surface,” said Fisher. “The groomers for synthetic turf also are using the track surface to pivot in some cases, and that causes damage as well.”

Fields that are used for purposes other than sports, including hosting graduations, festivals and other events can also lead to damage of the track surface.

“We have seen more damage this year than any other on tracks from July 4th fireworks celebrations,” said Fisher. “I realize it’s a great place to bring people into a stadium for viewing. Some are actually doing the fireworks in the stadium and, in some cases, it’s the viewers letting off fireworks on their own while waiting for the big show.”

BE PROACTIVE

Track builders recommend that athletic directors, coaches, facility managers and others walk the track on a regular basis in order to keep an eye on its condition. Look for areas where surfacing may be crumbling, cracked or loose; for areas that seem high or low; or places on the track where water collects. Markings on the track that seem worn should also be addressed.

Contact the track builder with concerns like these (or any others) and send photos of what might be problem areas. Remember that catching issues early can mean less extensive repairs — and that can help create a facility that remains safer overall, providing enjoyment for athletes and spectators, year after year. **SFM**

Mary Helen Sprecher wrote this article on behalf of the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA). ASBA publishes Running Tracks: Construction and Maintenance Manual, which contains user-friendly information on running track design, construction, maintenance, renovation and equipment. It is available by visiting the ASBA website at sportsbuilders.org.



Photo courtesy of Fisher Tracks, Inc.

Trimmers and Edgers

EGO COMMERCIAL STRING TRIMMER

Powered by 56V ARC Lithium battery technology, the Ego Commercial 17.5" string trimmer boasts a 1,600W high-performance brushless motor that delivers instant torque for all-day power equivalent to a 35cc gas engine. Designed for heavy-duty professional use, the string trimmer's commercial-grade construction delivers five times longer life with precision-engineered UV-resistant composite housing and IPX5-rated weather resistance for working through the worst weather conditions. Its industrial-strength carbon-fiber shaft stands up to job after job while being lightweight for easy handling along fence lines or around ground obstacles and garden beds. Three-speed digital control optimizes runtime at lower speeds or taps into maximum power to rip through dense grass and thick weeds. Its Rapid Reload head accepts up to 26 feet of .095 to .120-inch professional-grade line and gets you back to work in seconds by lining up the arrows on the head, inserting the line and twisting.



GRASSHOPPER EDGE-EZE EDGER

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

HUSQVARNA 525IECS

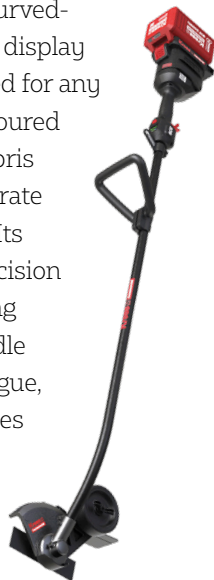
The Husqvarna 525iECS is a robust, high-performance professional battery lawn edger. Lightweight, well-balanced, and as powerful as a 25cc gas engine, it delivers reliable performance in a cordless, eco-friendly design. Featuring a curved shaft, brushless E-Torq motor, and blade speeds up to 8,400 rpm, it ensures fast, precise cutting for clean, crisp edges. The ergonomic loop handle, intuitive keypad with 3-speed mode, and battery status indicator make it easy and efficient to operate, providing the perfect finishing touch for any field or green space.



KRESS COMMERCIAL

KC151.9 CURVED-SHAFT EDGER

The Kress Commercial 60V KC151.9 8" curved-shaft edger with built-in LED "heads-up" display delivers the power and precision required for any landscaping job. Engineered with a contoured blade guard combined with a rubber debris shield, operators can easily achieve accurate edging even in the roughest conditions. Its curved shaft improves sightlines for precision trimming and deflects debris, minimizing cleanup efforts. An adjustable front handle ensures maximum comfort and less fatigue, and height adjustment guide wheel makes edging depth adjustment a breeze. The Kress Commercial curved-shaft edger delivers power equivalent to the 30cc



gas-power range and is IPX4 waterproof rated, allowing smooth and efficient operation even during inclement weather. Fueled by the Kress 8-minute CyberSystem, the Kress Commercial edger is ideal for any professional landscaper, facilities or sports field manager looking to transition from gas to battery.

MILWAUKEE M18 FUEL 16" STRING TRIMMER

The new M18 Fuel 16" string trimmer features a Powerstate brushless motor that delivers 31cc gas power to maintain speed in demanding applications without bogging down. The motor features an advanced air-cooling system to sustain demanding applications for longer, providing more runtime and boosting productivity in application. Designed with user comfort in mind, the M18 Fuel 16" string trimmer features a balanced, lightweight design that reduces fatigue and enhances control. The rear positioning of the motor optimizes both power and maneuverability. With advanced electronics, users can reach full throttle in less than one second, choose from three speed settings, and utilize a variable-speed trigger for maximum control and performance. Milwaukee's Redlink Plus intelligence ensures seamless communication between the tool and battery, providing performance, protection and productivity.



TORO REVOLUTION STRING TRIMMER

The Toro Revolution string trimmer is designed for professionals tackling tough tasks. Its rugged solid shaft withstands heavy use, while a 16-inch cutting width and .095-inch line provide increased capacity to handle larger jobs. The bump-feed, easy-load head simplifies operation by eliminating the hassle of threading, helping users stay productive. Powered by Toro's 60V Flex-Force Power System, the trimmer delivers up to 240 minutes of runtime. A rear-mounted, high-efficiency brushless motor optimizes performance and torque, while variable 2-speed operation — offering 5,300 or 6,400 rpm — allows adjustment based on job demands. Compatibility with the Revolution Backpack and Powerlink Tether extends runtime and enhances versatility. Comfort features like the included shoulder harness reduce strain during extended use, while a 2-year warranty provides added peace of mind.



TURFCO EDGE-R-RITE II

Tackle baseball diamonds, walkways, flowerbeds and landscaping effortlessly with the Turfco Edge-R-Rite II. This lightweight, maneuverable edger eliminates hours of manual labor while delivering clean, professional

edges. Built for durability and performance, the Edge-R-Rite II features:

- Honda 4-horsepower engine for powerful cutting.
- Solid-steel frame and heavy-duty cutting arm for long-term reliability.
- Unique blade action that cuts like a sod cutter without messy debris.
- Grease-less bearings for low maintenance.
- Blades lasting 20x longer than rotary edger blades.



Choose from multiple blade options, including right angle, tree ring, V-trencher, circular and sod cutter. Safer and more efficient than rotary edgers, it's the ultimate tool for precision and productivity.

TURF TEQ POWER EDGER

Turf Teq has a complete line of self-propelled walking forward power edger's. The model 1305SP1 features a Honda commercial-grade GXV390 engine and is the only self-propelled walking forward bed opener on the market. 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 edges. A variety



of trenching blades are also available as an option. All three of these functions can be performed by simply changing the blade and guard for each application. The Power Edger features a fully hydrostatic transmission with forward and reverse. The multi-use capability allows the Power Edger to be converted into a Power Rake, Power Broom, Power Rake, Brush Cutter or Snow Plow for all season use. **SFM**

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



ANSWER

From page 17

At this facility in Houston Texas, an outside contractor was hired to put custom logoed windscreens over the normal windscreen at the practice facility on a very hot July day. The windscreen was rolled out on the turf prior to installation for only about 30 minutes before it was hung up. Since the fabric was black, and the sun was intense, it caused the leaf tips on the field to become burned. The following day, the turf in this area appeared brown. The assistant sports field manager was out doing his daily soil moisture readings on the fields when he came upon this brown area. After inspecting the area and seeing that the damage was leaf tip injury and not disease, he backed up and looked at the area from a distance and knew what caused it. Because the windscreen contained the team logos, which were red, white and blue, these logo areas did not suffer as much leaf injury. This also left behind the team logos on the turf as less damaged areas between the brown areas. Since the damage occurred on bermudagrass in July, the leaf tip injury grew out quickly and no additional inputs were required to facilitate recovery.

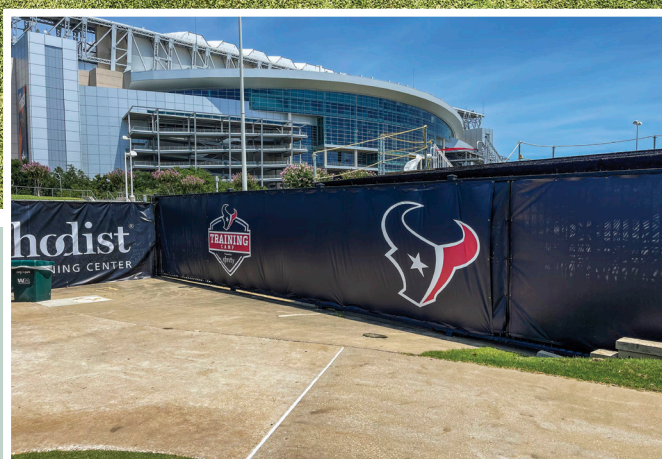


Photo submitted by Jonathan Wolf, assistant sports fields and grounds manager with ASM Global/Houston Texans. Kevin Hansen is the sports fields manager.

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.

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.



@OhioStma

Congratulations to Kenyon College - Mavec Field for being recognized as 2024 OSFMA Field of the Year. Corey Hitchman and the Team!



@leahlou2



@reedag04

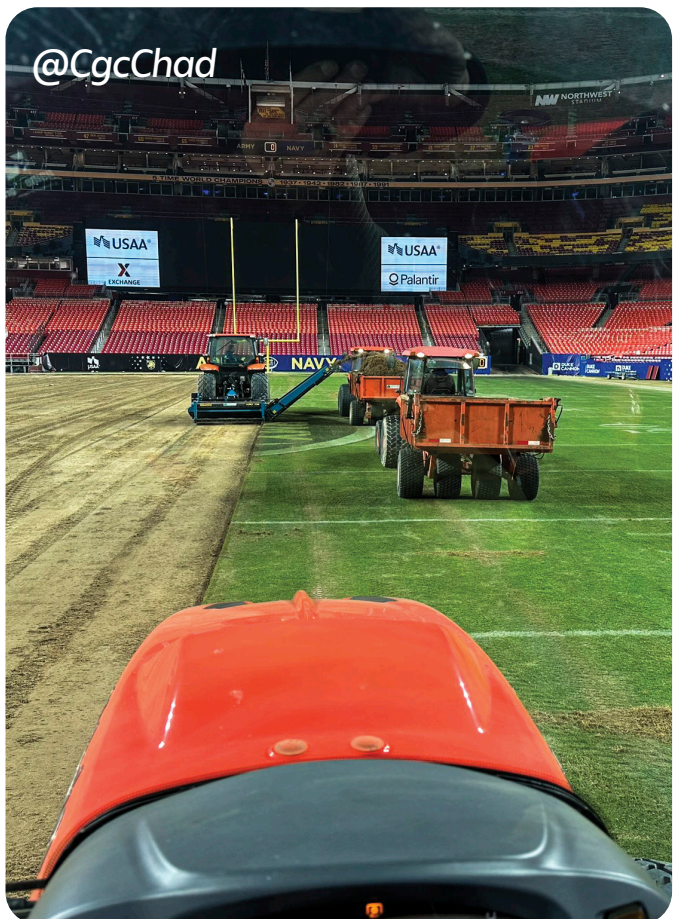
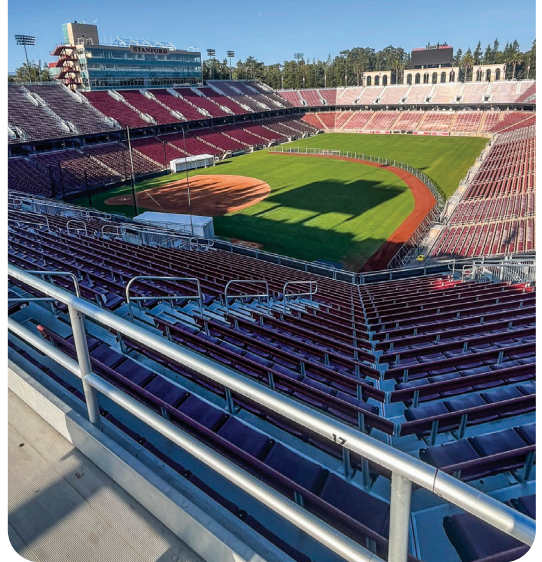


@ZonaGrassGuy

2024 Turf team. Multiple dudes, individually. One tough unit, together. I am lucky to get to work with these guys day in and day out. One of the pros of my job.
#LaFamilia #PullTheRope #GrowTheRoom #TogetherEveryoneAchievesMore

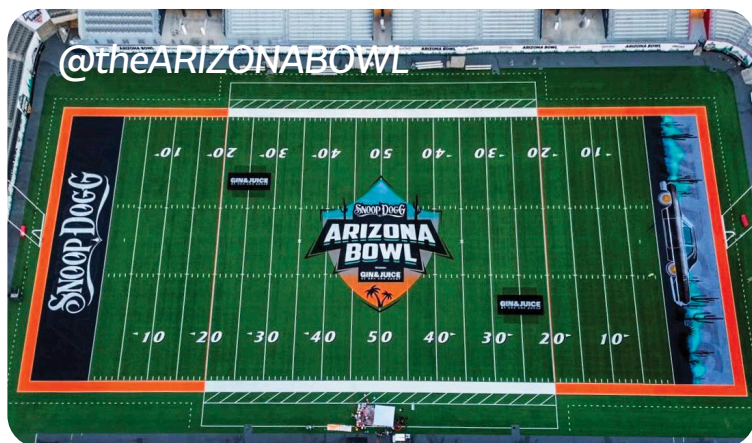


@CodyEC22



@VTTurfTeaching

THAT'S A WRAP!! on the Fall 2024 edition of #Turfgrass Management. @ECAKitchen and I very proud of these @VTSPES students, the majority of whom had little-to-no previous turf-mgt. experience. Now, 15 weeks and 120 Learning Objectives later, they're proud turf-baby parents!



@BlakeMarschand

@ToroGrounds

The @ACCFootball Championship Game was a thriller, and we were thrilled to see the Toro Grounds Academy have the opportunity to help the @Panthers grounds crew prep the field for the big game

**@HSBaseballField****@levineturf**

Insight from current CSFM's

The Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) recognizes the importance of fostering and improving professionalism within the sports field management industry. For that reason, SFMA developed the Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) certification program. Becoming a CSFM is meant to challenge the field manager's knowledge and to draw upon all aspects of their education and experience to prove that they are one of the best in the industry. For more insight into the CSFM program, Brad Finn, CSFM, and Enrico Perruzzi, CSFM, shared the benefits of becoming certified.

SportsField Management (SFM): What sparked your interest in sports field management?

Brad Finn, CSFM: I was at a family party during winter break of my junior year in high school when I heard about turf management. I met a guy who worked at Fenway Park; and, as a huge Red Sox fan, that caught my ear. I also played baseball and worked on the fields, but that's when I knew what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

Enrico Perruzzi, CSFM: I worked seasonally going through college, and loved the aspect of still being involved in athletics after my playing days were over.

SFM: What was the most challenging aspect of the CSFM certification process?

Finn: I am not good at taking standardized tests, so really just being able to focus on the exam was the most challenging part for me.

Perruzzi: Besides accruing the necessary point total, I would have to say was looking over the study guide and trying to focus on items that I was not familiar with.

SFM: How has earning your CSFM impacted your career?

Finn: It's a milestone and an accomplishment. It has helped me validate my knowledge, and I feel more confident in what I do. There is great company with the others who have attained theirs. Rewarding would be the best word to describe it.

Perruzzi: The biggest impact was the amount of credibility I started to gain as a CSFM. It truly puts the finishing touch on cementing that we are professionals not just glorified laborers. With that credibility comes accountability as well, which needs to be upheld at all times.



**CERTIFIED
SPORTS FIELD
MANAGER**

SFM: What personal qualities contribute to being a successful CSFM?

Finn: Asking good questions and learning from industry veterans. I am always trying to hear about experiences they've had. It has helped me with my situational awareness and identifying solutions to problems. Otherwise, having a turfgrass degree helped with much of the basic knowledge.

Perruzzi: Admitting when you're wrong, "owning it," and never acting like you know everything while still continuing to learn along the way.

SFM: How do you stay current with industry advancements?

Finn: I like to stay connected to my local extension experts and SFMA chapter. I always try to attend the conference and local conferences to stay in the loop on the new and exciting advancements.

Perruzzi: Besides attending industry conferences and reading trade magazines, I would say networking with other field managers is one of the biggest assets any field manager can utilize.

SFM: What advice would you give to aspiring CSFM's?

Finn: Study and keep your ears open. Practice makes perfect. I really credit the folks I've learned from over the past 10 years. That's what has allowed me to be successful. You need people to support you, and that comes from being selfless at times.

Perruzzi: Stay the course. Don't let anyone prevent you from gaining knowledge either through certification, education and networking. The greatest characteristic of SFMA is the ability to talk to almost anyone at any level and bounce ideas off each other. In my 22 years as a member, I have had only one person fail to get back to me when I reached out with a question or idea — which I have done a lot of during my time as a member, whether or not I was a CSFM.

For more information about the SFMA CSFM program, visit <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/csfm-program/> **SFM**

ASBA announces Game Changer Award winners

The American Sports Builders Association (ASBA) announced the winners of its Game Changer awards. Winners of awards were announced at the association's 2024 Technical Meeting.

The Game Changer Awards program allowed attendees in the ASBA's Exhibit Hall to learn about new technologies and products on the market. Attendees were able to vote for those products they thought best exemplified excellence and innovation in the industry. Winners were as follows:

COURTS DIVISION

ExtremeScreen80 | Ball Fabrics, Inc.

ExtremeScreen80 is a windscreen that combines the strength and durability of knitted polyethylene with the refined look, stability and texture of premium vinyl-coated windscreens. ExtremeScreen80 has no coating that can crack or peel, ensuring long-lasting performance. It is designed to resist dry rot and, being made from polyethylene, is non-moisture-absorbent and is 100-percent recyclable. This material outperforms both polypropylene and vinyl-coated polyester in longevity.

FIELDS DIVISION

Modular Drink Rail Systems | Sportsfield Specialties, Inc.

Modular Drink Rail Systems offer spectators a comfortable space to enjoy a beverage, a bite to eat, or simply to watch the game and charge their devices. With several standard and customizable features available, this product line is designed to offer all the necessary options to outfit any athletic facility or stadium. Previously, drink rail systems needed to be fabricated onsite, adding labor time and material cost to the project. This option will allow facilities to offer social spaces for their spectators at every level of competition.

INDOOR SPORTS SURFACES DIVISION

Athletic Wood Floor Subfloor System-Dominique Wilkins "Slam Dunk" | Infinity Wood Floors/Aacer Flooring

Named after the legendary basketball player, the Dominique Wilkins Signature Series is a combination of the strength and durability of hardwood with the elegance and style that Wilkins himself exemplified on the court. The DW Slam Dunk subfloor system features overlapping CNC-machined panels with proprietary

grooves that securely hold resilient foam. These panels are anchored using specially designed hat channels to minimize area deflection and optimize ball rebound. With factory-assembled panels, installation is quicker and quality control is enhanced, providing excellent value for both owners and contractors.

TRACK DIVISION

GEZOFLEX eco | GEZOLAN (KRAIBURG), LP

GEZOFLEX eco is sustainable EPDM granules for sports and leisure flooring. The material consists of more than 90 percent sustainable raw materials and is based on a sustainable EPDM rubber. In addition, GEZOFLEX eco uses a renewable filler that is biogenic and biobased. The sustainable raw materials of GEZOFLEX eco are complemented by a premium oil that is 99 percent bio-based and that has a negative CO₂ footprint.

Advanced Turf Solutions and The Aquatrols Company introduce HydroPak Adapt

Advanced Turf Solutions and The Aquatrols Company released their new, co-branded soil surfactant, HydroPak Adapt.

Adapt is an economic infiltration and hydration surfactant designed to help users maximize rainwater and irrigation absorption on their properties while prolonging hydration.

Adapt's advanced formula addresses hydrophobicity and water acceptance in soils during drought periods, helping users conserve water and minimize their labor needs. It allows water to infiltrate fast, reducing the risk of runoff and standing water while creating firmer surfaces.

Adapt is the latest addition to the HydroPak line of soil surfactants created through collaboration by Advanced Turf Solutions and The Aquatrols Company. Advanced Turf Solutions customers can begin placing their orders for Adapt immediately by contacting their sales representative.



New anti-vibration gloves from Milwaukee Tool

Committed to delivering advanced safety innovation to the jobsite, Milwaukee announced two new anti-vibration gloves to join its existing lineup of safety gear. These gloves can be worn for professional applications while protecting

from harmful tool vibrations. The anti-vibration high-dexterity nitrile dipped gloves provide vibration protection while maintaining high dexterity,

“Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) is a permanent medical condition that causes loss of feeling in the fingers, hands, and arms,” said Austin Dorman, senior product manager at Milwaukee Tool. “With 2 million workers exposed to harmful vibrations daily, we set out to address the risks of prolonged exposure to vibrations from tools and machinery by delivering essential proper protection.”

These gloves provide a cut level 4 rating to protect professionals from lacerations and meet safety requirements on the jobsite. With a soft and comfortable liner, the 18-gauge material provides total hand mobility when working with small fasteners. With back-of-hand protection to shield against bumps and scrapes, the long-lasting nitrile dip ensures these hold up to abusive jobsite condition.

For further convenience, these gloves feature breathable material to keep hands cool and dry and are equipped with Smartswipe for a touchscreen-compatible fingertip.



Trimax Snake S3

Trimax Mowing Systems introduced the Snake S3, the latest version of its golf and sports turf mower. The Snake S3 builds on the Snake series with a range of features designed to deliver zero daily maintenance and enhanced ease of use.



These improvements allow turf professionals to focus on delivering exceptional results while simplifying maintenance and operation. The deck and blade design of the Snake S3 optimize airflow through the cutting chamber to cleanly cut and distribute grass.

The Snake S3 eliminates the need for daily greasing thanks to two key design changes: the Trimax Titan roller bearing system and maintenance-free wheel hubs. The Titan roller bearing system is built with advanced multi-layered seals and an ingress channel that effectively prevents debris from entering the bearing, ensuring smooth operation without regular lubrication. The Titan system is fully covered under Trimax’s three-year warranty.

The maintenance-free wheel hubs are a sealed automotive bearing, engineered for durability, further reducing the need for daily maintenance.

In addition to its zero-maintenance advancements, the Snake S3 incorporates several new features designed to enhance ease of use. Removable blade beams allow for easier blade changes and a more practical solution for potential repairs. If damage occurs to the blade system, only the blade beam needs replacing, rather than the entire spindle, helping to minimize downtime and reduce repair costs. Stand-on covers provide safe and convenient access to key areas of the mower and the addition of height adjustment collars allows for fast and precise changes to cutting height.

“The Snake S3 was developed in direct response to customer feedback,” said Michael Sievwright, CEO of Trimax Mowing Systems. “Their input has helped us create a mower that addresses the real-world challenges faced by our customers, reinforcing our focus on delivering practical, effective solutions.”

New work boot offerings from Georgia Boot

Broadening its offerings in two new collections, Georgia Boot expanded its Core 37 Wedge work boots with maximum stability and comfort, and Carbo-Tec FLX western-styled work boots with technologies for maximum comfort in all climates.

“This season we refreshed some of our classic styles with materials and technologies that up the performance and comfort of our boots,” said Libby Hosler, marketing manager at Georgia Boot. “From hardscape to landscape, construction and do-it-yourself projects, we are always looking for new solutions to keep people who work in tough conditions comfortable all day long.”

Georgia Boot updated the Carbo-Tec FLX collection with a new Breeze Mesh lining for a breathable, lightweight and flexible fit ideal for indoor or outdoor job sites. Additionally, the new styles feature proprietary InsulKul technology to keep feet comfortable in all temperatures. InsulKul offers cooling to prevent feet from becoming overheated or chilled, depending on the surface and climate of the jobsite.

“As the name suggests, this boot is extremely flexible, zero break-in time, and has a really nice full-grain leather upper,” said Kasey LaCourse, designer and developer at Georgia Boot.

New styles include two 11-inch pull-on square toe Western work boots — GB00702 (brown/brick, MSRP: \$195) and GB00703 (brown/tan, MSRP: \$195) — as well as an alloy toe version — GB00711 (MSRP: \$205) — and two brown Chelsea work boots — GB00700 (soft toe,

MSRP: \$155) and GB00701 (alloy toe, MSRP: \$160). A lightweight and flexible fit meets hefty work demands, and the Advanced Memory Polyurethane (AMP) insole keeps feet comfortable and supported throughout the day. Additionally, Carbo-Tex FLX boots meet ASTM F2892 electrical hazard classification.

Georgia Boot also expanded the popular Core 37 Wedge collection to include three steel toe options — GB00695, (MSRP: \$155) a six-inch, plain toe, waterproof, lace-up work boot; GB00696 (MSRP \$175) a pull-on plain toe boot; and GB00697 (MSRP: \$150), a six-inch moc toe lace-up. Rounding out this collection is GB00694 (MSRP: \$145), a Chelsea boot style with a soft, plain toe.

“Our wedge boots are great for occupations where you don’t want to track a lot of mud and debris if you are going in and out of houses, or in landscaping where you don’t want to get a bunch of mud caked into the tread,” said LaCourse.

All Core 37 Wedge styles sport an oil-, chemical- and slip-resistant dual-density polyurethane wedge outsole for maximum stability on flat surfaces. The AMP (Advanced Memory Polyurethane) insole is built with a polyurethane layer for maximum cushioning and a memory foam top layer that adjusts for customized cushioning of the entire foot, the heel cup ensures a secure fit and airflow channels provide cool circulation. All styles are ASTM F2413 electrical hazard classification, and steel toe designs also meet ASTM F2413 protective toe classification.

“At Georgia Boot, we are dedicated to creating high-quality work boots that deliver exceptional comfort and durability for hardworking individuals across all industries,” said

Hosler. “Our designs on our tried and true silhouettes while incorporating modern technology ensure you can focus on your work without the worry of discomfort or lack of protection.”



Kubota unveils range of solutions at CES 2025

Kubota North America announced during CES 2025 its vision for the future that includes offering more customer solutions across its entire equipment portfolio, diverse powertrain options, seamless access to data and analytics, improved connectivity, and advanced automation.

“What you need to know about Kubota is that we develop solutions with our customers in an innovation cycle that never ends,” said Todd Stucke, president of

Kubota Tractor Corporation, and senior vice president, Kubota North America. “That all starts with observing and listening to our customers. From there, we design and build solutions to help our customers overcome their challenges.”

Equipment on display included:

■ Agri Concept 2.0 –

An electric tractor concept offering data, AI, automation and electrification as a choice of powertrain for when you want to drive and autonomous when you don’t.

■ **Smart autonomous sprayer** – A fully autonomous chemical sprayer that scouts to identify pests and sprays with precision to lessen spray drift and overuse. The result reduces labor and the use of chemicals in the field.

■ **Flash** – Ultra-detailed images are gathered to detect plant-level health. When coupled with AI, Flash provides recommendations on a dashboard to help make decisions one plant at a time.

■ **KATR** – The Best of Innovation winner in the CES Innovation Awards 2025 program, Industrial Equipment and Machinery product category, was Kubota’s four-wheeled all terrain, multifunctional robot. The KATR maintains a level cargo deck when working on uneven terrain and can work autonomously or remotely to tackle a range of applications.

■ **Smart robotic pruner** – When coupled with AI, and machine learning that classifies buds and canes based on position and fruiting potential, it optimizes production precision and accuracy.

■ **Smart plant imager** – Uses advanced robotics and hyperspectral imaging cameras to capture real-time data and insights.

■ **KX038-4e electric excavator** – A zero-emissions, quiet electric excavator that addresses ventilation, noise and emissions allowing for work at night, in residential areas, or even indoors.

■ **Hydrogen Engine Genset** – Matches the portable power diesel models, but with the benefit of a quiet, clean hydrogen engine, offering a power source choice without sacrificing performance.

■ **Smart autonomous zero-turn mower** – Showcases Kubota’s cooperative technology that facilitates multiple machines working together to complete large tasks and makes it possible to do more with smaller machines, less investment and risk than one industrial-sized machine. **SFM**



1998

In this retrospective, we examine historic issues of *SportsTurf* magazine, predecessor to *SportsField Management*. We journey back to 1998 for this edition of Accessing the Archives.

The January 1998 issue kicked off the year with a profile of the *SportsTurf* Manager of the Year, Mike Schiller, who was “involved in STMA even before it was STMA.” According to the article, “He attended Erik Madisen’s 1980 clinic in Kansas City, where he toured the stadiums with George Toma and first became acquainted with Harry Gill. That led Mike to the 1981 clinic in Chicago. Mike rushed into the room a few minutes late, and Dr. Bill Daniel congratulated Mike on his appointment as vice president of a new organization — STMA.”

Said Schiller, “Harry’s dream was for an organization where information flowed freely between the members, and where it was acknowledged that the need for good, safe playing conditions is as important for very young athletes as it is for pro players. I’m proud of what STMA has accomplished toward that dream.”

The January issue also covered what, at that point, was the first Major League game canceled by a flood, as the Milwaukee Brewers dealt with 3-1/2 feet of water that covered the warning track and outfield and was receding only an inch an hour.

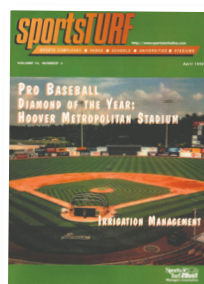


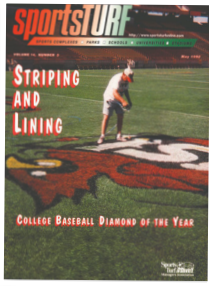
ASTM recommendations for skinned area soils were the focus of the February issue. “These are guidelines, not standard practices,” said Dr. Don Waddington, professor emeritus of soil science at Penn State. “An ASTM practice would give a definitive procedure for performing one or more operations. Guidelines give a series of options or instructions. They do not recommend a specific course of action. Of course, with either guidelines or standards, people have the choice to follow them, or not to follow them.”

Super Bowl XXXII was the cover story in March 1998. The game between the Green Bay Packers and Denver Broncos was played at San Diego’s Qualcomm Stadium. Steve Wightman, stadium turf manager authored the article detailing the field preparation and timeline.

“Super Bowl preparation is a complex interaction of multiple forces all focused on the same goal: a top-notch game played on a top notch field,” he wrote. “The groundcrew of this endeavor is just one piece of the massive puzzle. Our crew knew this was our home field, but they also knew it wasn’t ‘our show.’ We were there to do whatever we could to fill assigned links in the master plan.”

The Birmingham Barons’ Hoover Metropolitan Stadium winning Professional Baseball Diamond of the Year was the lead item for April 1998. For the first time, the same head



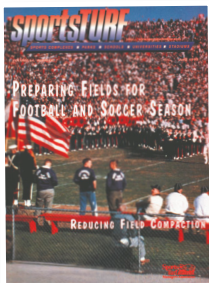


groundskeeper was honored twice for his work at two different facilities and at two different levels of baseball. Steve Horne, the Barons' director of field operations during the award-winning 1997 season, was head groundskeeper/stadium-manager at the University of Mississippi when Swayze Field was selected College

Baseball Diamond of the Year in 1992.

Mike Andresen, athletic turf manager at Iowa State University, wrote the May cover article on striping, lining and logos. "In striping and lining, accuracy is essential," he wrote. "Games are won or lost by inches, and many of those inches are marked by what you've painted, and how precisely you've painted it. After accuracy, your second priority is speed, because crew time is precious."

The June 1998 issue covered the "Municipal Baseball Diamond of the Year," and it also introduced the first-ever SportsTurf Editorial Advisory Board. That inaugural board consisted of STMA President Steve Guise, President-Elect Rich Moffitt, Education Committee Chair Mary Owen, Past-President Mike Schiller, STMA Executive Director Steve Trusty, and Communications Committee Co-Chair Victoria Wallace.

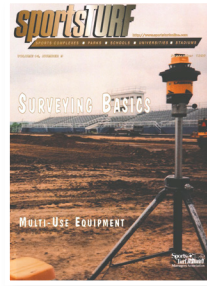
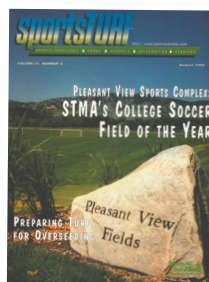


Jim Puhalla, co-author of "Sports Fields — A Manual for Design, Construction and Maintenance" wrote the July cover story on "Preparing Fields for Football and Soccer Season."

"If you haven't already been inspecting your fields regularly, a detailed inspection is a good first

step for fall sports preparation," he wrote. "It must be said that effective preparation for fall sports should begin at the conclusion of the previous year's season. Steps that can be taken now will have some effect on the health of the turfgrass culture, but substantially upgrading a football or soccer field takes months to achieve."

The August 1998 issue highlighted Abby McNeal, who won College Soccer Field of the Year for



Pleasant View Sports Complex. "We focus on excellence, on providing safe, highly playable fields by doing the best with what we have and putting in that extra effort each day," said McNeal.

Puhalla was back with the September cover story, this time on "Surveying Basics." "When starting

to survey a field, establish a benchmark so that all of your elevation measurements will be consistent," he wrote. "This fixed reference point can be anything from a catch basin lid to a curb, or any other stationary structure. Once a benchmark has been established, the surveying instrument can be moved to another location, and it can be removed and reset on another day."

Field repairs were the focus in October 1998, "After damage occurs, the job of providing a

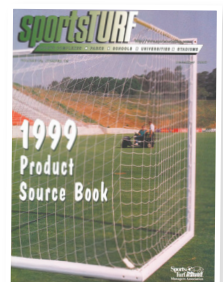
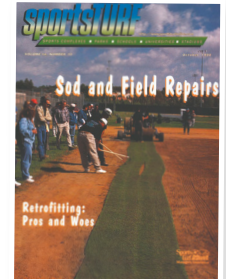
safe, playable surface intensifies. All too often, there is a very short window of opportunity in which to accomplish this task. Sports turf managers need to evaluate the situation, consider all available options, and select the solution that's most effective, least disruptive, and within the budget."



The Chicago Bears' Halas Hall practice facility was detailed in the November issue. The \$20-million, year-round facility in Lake Forest, Illinois, was a 200,000 square foot, 2-1/2-field facility with a 100,000-square-foot building overlooking the field. The article went on to detail the maintenance efforts of Bears Head Groundskeeper Ken Mrock.

SportsTurf magazine wrapped up 1998 with its annual Product Source Book. **SFM**

All content for this section is pulled from the SportsTurf/SportsField Management archives, an ongoing cooperative project of EPG Media, SFMA and the Michigan State University Libraries. Public access to the archive from 1985 to the present (less two months) is available at <https://sturf.lib.msu.edu/index.html>.



SALTEX 2024 recap

Europe's premier grounds management event, SALTEX 2024, the exhibition owned and operated by the Grounds Management Association (GMA), boasted more than 7,300 attendees and a digital reach of 2.8 million.

Networking opportunities, high-caliber visitors, and innovation took center stage. SALTEX 2024 offered attendees the chance to engage with more than 400 leading brands in the grounds management sector. With 19 hours of industry networking, the event served as a hub for collaboration, insight sharing and relationship building.

Education remained a cornerstone of SALTEX 2024 with a Learning LIVE program designed to elevate industry standards. More than 19 hours of educational sessions were delivered by 65 expert speakers, attracting more than 1,000 attendees keen to enhance their skills and knowledge. These sessions covered a wide range of topics, providing actionable insights for professionals managing everything from sports pitches to estate grounds.

As a not-for-profit organization, the Grounds Management Association (GMA) has reinvested SALTEX revenue into grounds management since 1938. With the exhibition's success, this contribution grows each year, demonstrating SALTEX's role in powering progress within the industry.

The GMA uses these funds to subsidize membership fees, offering essential support to grounds professionals, volunteers and organizations. Revenue also helps subsidize GMA's suite of training courses and qualifications, both in person and online.

Since 2009, SALTEX revenue has supported the GMA's Industry Awards, recognizing excellence in grounds care across sectors. It also funds the annual #GroundsWeek awareness campaign, which highlights the vital work of grounds staff and volunteers, celebrating their impact on sports and inspiring new recruits to the industry.

With 78% of attendees having purchasing power, SALTEX continues to attract an audience that drives industry change. This represents a 14% increase compared to the previous year, highlighting the growing influence of the event as a marketplace for innovative products and services.

SALTEX's digital presence reached unprecedented levels this year. Social impressions hit 2.6M (a 105% increase), and social reach climbed to 2.8M (+66.2%). Platforms like TikTok (75K impressions) and Spotify (165K impressions) also helped extend the exhibition's message to a broader, more diverse audience.

From football pitches and cricket grounds to business premises and golf courses, SALTEX 2024 attracted visitors managing all types of grounds. The UK regional breakdown map highlighted strong attendance from across the country, complemented by international visitors, further cementing SALTEX's reputation as a global event.

Looking ahead, SALTEX will return to its traditional November slot next year, taking place November 12-13, 2025. The event will also relocate to Halls 17, 18 and 19 at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) in Birmingham, UK, introducing a refreshed layout designed to enhance the experience for visitors and exhibitors.

Penn State's Turfgrass Science program welcomes new faculty

The Penn State University (PSU) Center for Turfgrass Science and the Department of Plant Science announced two additions to its faculty: Dr. Manoj Chhetri and Dr. Chase Straw. According to PSU, "Their expertise and dedication to advancing the field of turfgrass science through education, research, and industry collaboration will undoubtedly strengthen our program's legacy of excellence."

DR. MANOJ CHHETRI

Chhetri joins the program as assistant teaching professor in turfgrass science. With a deep passion for education and research, Chhetri brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the program.

Chhetri holds a Ph.D. in Horticulture from Kansas State University, where he focused on cultural strategies for zoysiagrass management in the transition zone. His academic journey also includes an M.S. in Horticulture from Oklahoma State University, where he investigated the effects of shade and drought stress on bermudagrass. These research endeavors have equipped him with a strong foundation in managing turfgrass under challenging environmental conditions.

Before joining Penn State, Chhetri served as an Extension field specialist in Horticulture at the University of Missouri. In this role, he delivered science-based education to homeowners, turf managers and service providers, addressing practical challenges and developing solutions for the turfgrass industry.

At Penn State, Chhetri's primary focus is on teaching and mentoring students in turfgrass management. He is also committed to conducting research on sustainable practices that enhance turfgrass resilience under abiotic stress. His approach emphasizes blending academic rigor with real-world applications, ensuring students are well-prepared to tackle industry challenges.

DR. CHASE STRAW

Dr. Chase Straw joins Penn State as assistant professor of turfgrass soils and the director of the Center for Sports Surface Research. With a distinguished background in turfgrass management and physiology, Straw is a valuable addition to the team.

Straw earned his B.S. in Turfgrass Science from the University of Kentucky, followed by M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Georgia. His academic pursuits have been complemented by practical experience, including two years as a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Minnesota. In February 2020, he began his role as an assistant professor of turfgrass management and physiology at Texas A&M University, where he served for nearly five years before joining Penn State in January 2025.

At Penn State, Straw's role includes a 40% research, 40% teaching and 20% Extension appointment. His research focuses on technology-driven strategies to enhance the performance and sustainability of golf courses and sports fields. Additionally, he serves as the Academic Director on the Sports Field Management Association Board of Directors, further solidifying his leadership in the industry.

Straw's vision for the Center for Sports Surface Research includes fostering innovation and collaboration with industry professionals to address the evolving challenges of sports surface management. He is dedicated to equipping students with cutting-edge knowledge and skills, preparing them to make meaningful contributions to the field.

Advanced Turf Solutions acquires assets of Atlantic Golf and Turf

Advanced Turf Solutions, Inc., reached an agreement to acquire substantially all assets of Atlantic Golf and Turf. Advanced Turf Solutions welcomed the entire Atlantic Golf and Turf team of sales and support staff. The Atlantic Golf and Turf name will remain in use for a transitional period of up to three years, ensuring continuity and a seamless experience for customers.

Atlantic Golf and Turf has long been a trusted partner in the turfgrass industry, serving customers throughout the New England region with quality products and technical expertise. While the Atlantic Golf and Turf brand will eventually transition to Advanced Turf Solutions, its philanthropic foundation supporting cancer research, Atlantic Cares, will continue to operate as a legacy of the company's commitment to community support.

"This partnership enhances our ability to deliver exceptional service while maintaining the trusted relationships we've built over the years," said Scott Mackintosh, co-owner of Atlantic Golf and Turf. "As an Advanced Turf Solutions company, our customers will

have access to a broader product offering and the ability to walk in and pick up orders from seven Advanced Turf Solutions stores conveniently located throughout the Northeast. Additionally, my fellow Atlantic Golf and Turf co-owners and I are excited to join Advanced Turf Solutions as shareholders, which underscores our shared commitment to our team and our customers."

"We are thrilled to welcome Atlantic Golf and Turf to the Advanced Turf Solutions team," said Scott Brame, CEO of Advanced Turf Solutions. "This acquisition represents a significant milestone in our company's growth, and we are excited about the opportunities to better serve our customers in the Northeast. We are also proud to honor the legacy of Atlantic Cares and continue to support its cancer research initiatives on a bigger scale."

This acquisition marks Advanced Turf Solutions' second major expansion in the Northeast, following completion of its transaction with Valley Green.

Chapter news: NE-SFMA announces new leaders

The New England Sports Field Management Association (NE-SFMA) introduced its new leaders during its annual meeting. The board of directors and trustees are as follows:

- **President** – Art Goodhind, Town of Natick, Mass.
- **President-Elect** – Ryan Bjorn, Gillette Stadium, Foxboro, Mass.
- **Treasurer** – Andrew Carlisle, CSM, Worcester Technical H.S., Worcester, Mass.
- **Past President** – Chris McGinty, Parks Department, Framingham, Mass.

DIRECTORS

- Tom Barry, CSFM, Greens Farms Academy, Greens Farms, Conn.
- Bryan Conant, Parks and Recreation, Nashua, N.H.
- Brendon Connor, Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass.
- Adam Ferrucci, Read Custom Soil, Wareham, Mass.
- Scott Lagana, Turf Products Corp., Holden, Mass.
- Christopher Lilly, Blackstone Valley Regional Tech Voc H.S., Upton, Mass.
- Michael Malvosio, Park and Forestry, Needham, Mass.
- Scott Vose, Tom Irwin Advisors, Tyngsborough, Mass.

TRUSTEES

- Victoria Wallace, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Conn.
- Michael Lueders, MCA, MCLP, 30 West Street, LLC, Medfield, Mass.
- Edward Olsen, MCA, Parks and Forestry, Needham, Mass. **SFM**

Invest in Your Future: Join SFMA Today



The Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) is the recognized leader in championing the sports field industry and its professionals.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

SFMA has specific membership categories for every professional in the sports field management industry.

- **Sports field manager:** If you are primarily responsible for managing or maintaining sports fields.
- **Sports field manager associate:** If you are primarily responsible for managing or maintaining a sports field(s) and your organization already has an SFMA sports field manager member employed.
- **Affiliate:** If you are indirectly or on a part-time basis involved in the maintenance/management of sports fields (coaches, athletic directors, volunteers, etc.).
- **Academic:** If you are in teaching, extension or research.
- **Student:** If you are a full-time student.
- **Commercial:** If you work for a company engaged in a commercial enterprise providing services and/or products to the sports field management profession (consultants, architects, designers, contractors, management companies, distributors and manufacturers, etc.).
- **Commercial associate:** If you are the second person (or more) from a commercial company (must first have an SFMA commercial member at their company before this lower-dues category can be selected).
- **Retired:** If you are retired and no longer seeking full-time employment within the scope of activities of any SFMA membership category, and have been a member for a minimum of five years, you may become a non-voting member of SFMA and are not eligible to hold elective office.

THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT REASONS TO JOIN SFMA

1. **Job security:** SFMA's programs and services proactively enhance your value to your employer.
2. **Career success:** SFMA's education and information help prepare you to take that next step in your career.
3. **Recognition of your professionalism:** In addition to the individual recognition you receive because of your good work, SFMA's advocacy with groups such as athletic directors, parks and recreation directors, coaches and parents enhances the image of the entire profession.



BENEFITS YOU RECEIVE AS AN SFMA MEMBER

- A network of peers who share their best practices.
- Opportunities for education.
- Quick access to information and resources.
- A monthly electronic newsletter that communicates association and industry information.
- Access to the Member's Only section of *sportsfieldmanagement.org*, which has a real-time membership directory and hundreds of technical educational resources.
- Access to Michigan State's Turfgrass Information File, a resource for up-to-date technical information.
- Ability to enter your field in the nationally recognized Field of the Year awards program.
- Opportunity to become a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) and to have your facility certified as environmentally responsible.
- Significant savings on registration to SFMA's annual and regional conferences, and discounts to other organizations' education.
- Opportunity to participate in volunteer leadership positions.
- Opportunity to join one of SFMA's affiliated chapters for a strong local network. (Each chapter sets its own local dues.)
- Purchase SFMA branded apparel.
- *SportsField Management Magazine* each month.
- The ability to apply for scholarships (students only).
- Discounted exhibitor booth at the annual conference (commercial members only).

For more information, visit <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/why-join-stma/> **SFM**

2025

FEBRUARY 9-13

TURFGRASS PRODUCERS INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE AND FIELD DAY

San Antonio

<https://turfgrasssod.org/>

MARCH 4-6

NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL TURFGRASS FOUNDATION CONFERENCE AND SHOW

Providence, Rhode Island

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

JULY 1-3

NATIONAL SPORTS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

San Antonio

<https://ncs4.usm.edu/events/annual-conference/>

OCTOBER 13-15

SYNTHETIC TURF COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

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

OCTOBER 22-24

EQUIP EXPO

Louisville, Kentucky

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



OCTOBER 22-24

PGMS SCHOOL OF GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

Louisville, Kentucky

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

NOVEMBER 2-5

ELEVATE (NALP)

Phoenix

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

DECEMBER 1-5

AMERICAN SPORTS BUILDERS ASSOCIATION TECHNICAL MEETING

San Antonio

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

DECEMBER 8-11

IRRIGATION SHOW AND EDUCATION WEEK

New Orleans

<https://irrigation.org/IA>

2026

JANUARY 18-22

SFMA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Fort Worth, Texas

<https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/conference/> **SFM**

THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE!

sales@beamclay.com | www.BeamClay.com

800-201-1031

MYVOICEREWARDS.COM

**Now streaming on PodBean, Spotify, Apple Music,
or wherever you listen to podcasts.**



SportsField

MANAGEMENT

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

Online • Print • Mobile • E-Newsletter • Facebook • Twitter
sportsfieldmanagementonline.com/subscribe

SFMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

Arizona SFMA: www.azsfma.org

Colorado SFMA: www.csfma.org

Florida #1 (South Florida STMA):
www.sfstma.com or
 Phil Busey (phil@philbusey.com)

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

Florida #3 (Central Florida STMA):
www.CFSFMA.org or
CentralFloridaSFMA@gmail.com

Gateway STMA:
gatewaystma.squarespace.com or
info@gatewaystma.com

Georgia SFMA: www.georgiastma.org or
georgiasfma@gmail.com

Greater L.A. Basin SFMA:
www.sfmalabasin.com

Illinois STMA: www.ilstma.org or
illinoisstma@gmail.com

Intermountain Chapter STMA:
 Gavin Gough (gavin.gough@utah.edu)

Iowa SFMA: www.iowastma.org

**Keystone Athletic Field Managers Org.
 (KAFMO):** www.kafmo.org

Mid-Atlantic SFMA: www.masfma.org

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/n esfma

New England STMA:
www.nestma.org

North Carolina SFMA: www.ncsportsturf.org

Northern California SFMA:
www.norcalstma.org

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation: www.ohioturfgrass.org

Oklahoma STMA:
oksfmasecretary@gmail.com

Oregon STMA:
www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org or
oregonstma@gmail.com

Ozarks STMA: Derek Edwards (dedwards@cardinals.com)

**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

To find the chapter near you, visit <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/interactive-chapter-map/>

Chapter Sponsors

Hunter®



JOHN DEERE

Soil Testing and Monitoring

Q: I am looking after a new sports field. Should I have the soil tested?

A: Yes. Turfgrass quality depends on the soil in which it grows. Whether your field is on native soil or sand-based, understanding its composition is critical for field health and longevity. This understanding can be achieved through two main types of soil tests: chemical and physical.

Chemical testing analyzes soil nutrients, cation exchange capacity (CEC) and pH levels. These tests typically measure phosphorus (P), potassium (K), magnesium (Mg), calcium (Ca), sulfur (S), micronutrients and pH. However, nitrogen is usually not tested because it exists in various forms in the soil, and its levels fluctuate. Although soil nitrate can be tested, the results provide only a snapshot and do not offer season-long insights into nitrogen availability.

For new or unfamiliar fields, conducting soil tests is strongly recommended. On native soil fields, testing every three to five years is generally sufficient, especially if there are prior test records, no existing problems, and the field follows a strong nutrient program. These fields have a relatively high CEC, which buffers against rapid nutrient changes. Conversely, sand-based fields require annual chemical testing due to their lower CEC, which makes them more susceptible to nutrient shifts. Supplementing these tests with leaf tissue analysis provides more accurate insights into nitrogen usage.

Consistency is key when soil sampling. Samples should always be taken at the same time of year from the same depth (typically 4 to 6 inches). To collect a sample, follow a zigzag pattern across the field, remove plant material and thatch from the top, and mix the soil to create a composite sample. Always adhere to the lab's specific instructions for submitting samples. For regional testing recommendations, contact your local state Extension office. It's crucial to use a turfgrass-specific lab rather than a general agricultural lab since nutrient sufficiency ranges differ for turfgrass. Plan soil tests a couple of months after the last fertilizer application and well before the new season to allow time for necessary amendments — such as lime — to take effect.

Physical testing evaluates properties such as bulk density, percolation, porosity and particle size distribution. This information is particularly relevant for sports fields, such as baseball and softball infields, where particle size distribution affects performance.

In addition to formal testing, field managers can monitor soil conditions through vegetation analysis and other tools. Weeds, for example, often indicate specific soil issues. Prostrate knotweed suggests soil compaction, nutsedge thrives in wet conditions, and clover signals low nitrogen availability. These visual indicators can guide corrective measures.

Soil thermometers are another valuable tool for sports field managers. Monitoring soil temperature helps predict weed germination and emergence, enabling better-timed herbicide applications. For example, crabgrass typically emerges when soil temperatures at a 0-2 inch depth remain above 55 degrees Fahrenheit for five to seven days. Online tools such as Michigan State University's growing degree day tracker (<https://gddtracker.msu.edu/>) can supplement field monitoring.

Regular soil chemical testing helps you build a sound fertilizer program and maintain soil health, while physical testing supports soil amendment planning and tracks improvements over time. Observing weeds and monitoring soil temperatures provide additional insights, enabling sports field managers to make informed decisions about pesticide applications and other management techniques. A combination of reliable lab testing, consistent sampling practices and field monitoring ensures optimal turfgrass health and performance. **SFM**



Pamela Sherratt

Sports turf extension specialist
The Ohio State University

Questions?

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

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

IT'S TIME AGAIN...

We're seeking nominations for the 2025 Rising Star Awards!

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY



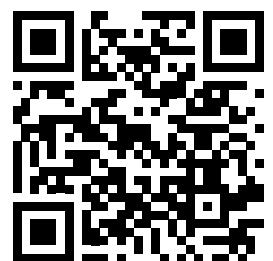
Do you know someone who...

- ★ Is just getting started in the sports field management profession?
- ★ Under the age of 40 or worked in the industry for less than 10 years?
- ★ Has made a huge impact?

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



NOMINATE TODAY!



SCAN for the nomination form



HD Sports 2.0

Superior Performance from **Field to Field to Field**

"I'm proud and grateful to win FOTY again in 2023. My crew here deserves all the credit. Their professionalism, hard work, and attention to detail are what make our field second to none. We also couldn't do it without our amazing vendors. HD Sports 2.0 is the best grass I have ever worked with and I'm excited to keep working with it for years to come."

Dan Farnes, *Director of Fields and Grounds*
America First Field, Real Salt Lake



 **LANDMARK**
SEED COMPANY

Landmarkseed.com
High-Quality, Value-Added Seed