

SportsField

MANAGEMENT

June 2025

Vol. 41 No. 6

The Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

Beginner Budget **16** | Spring Training and Beyond at Goodyear Ballpark **18**
Pickleball Design Solutions **22** | Dog Parks **26**

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The Fields at Countryside, Surprise, Arizona



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Editor's Note



John Kmitta

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In this issue we not only highlight the Schools and Parks Soccer Field of the Year, but we also delve into one of the fastest growing parks and recreation trends — dog parks. The article, provided by ASBA, examines dog park construction considerations, and provides tips for dog park maintenance.

Speaking of dogs and parks, the TurfMutt Foundation (<https://www.turfmutt.com/>) recently commissioned research by The Harris Poll regarding public parks. The research revealed that 89 percent of Americans consider a good public park system a top community amenity. According to the research, 96 percent of Americans utilize public green spaces, like public parks, for recreation. And 89 percent feel communities should prioritize providing these spaces for community health and wellbeing.

Additional poll findings include:

- 92 percent of Americans want more or better-maintained public green space, such as public parks, school yards, dog parks, sports fields, etc., in their community.

- 75 percent would prioritize public green space when looking for a new home.

- 67 percent would be willing to pay more to live in a community with public green space over one without it.

- 74 percent find public green spaces more valuable than other community amenities, such as an

indoor pool, indoor fitness center or indoor recreation center.

- Top public green space types that Americans want to see more of/better maintained in their communities include parks (56 percent), running/walking trails (55 percent), and picnicking facilities (43 percent).

As we highlight the importance of parks and those who maintain them, this is also a good time to remind you that July will be Park and Recreation Month. In fact, this July represents the 40th anniversary of Park and Recreation Month.

Launched in 1985, Park and Recreation Month celebrates park and recreation professionals and how they improve the lives of tens of millions of people. According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), park and recreation programs are essential to community health and well-being and help cultivate lifelong friendships, memories and family bonds.

This year's Park and Recreation Month theme, "Build Together, Play Together," is a reminder of the contributions of more than 160,000 full-time park and recreation professionals, along with hundreds of thousands of part-time and seasonal workers and volunteers, who maintain our country's parks.

For the NRPA Park and Recreation Month toolkit, visit <https://www.nrpa.org/events/july/toolkit/> **SFM**

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President's Message



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Adam Thoms, Ph.D.

SFMA President

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As I write this article, it is graduation day here at Iowa State University. If you are a graduate, or if you have family members who are graduating, congratulations!

It is also the official start of summer for my students. That brings with it the summer slide, which is a common term used in education, and is often a major concern for educators. For those who are not familiar with the summer slide, it is when students are not in the classroom during the summer months, and they experience a loss of learning and skills. This can happen at all ages if we stop pushing ourselves to learn new things, or when we feel we have mastered everything in a certain area and no longer attend any continuing education.

Summer is a very busy time for all of us with active field usage and the growing season. However, we still need to find time to support our local chapters or spend some time online with the resources.

Avoid the summer slide — even if it means slipping away from your daily job for part of a workshop or to look at learning resources during rain delays or on an off day. If you feel you have mastered all of the content being taught, please speak up and help guide those who are

planning and creating the resources by suggesting new topics.

Continuing education can also come in the form of picking up the phone and calling others in the industry to see what they are doing and hear how they work through management problems. I remember listening to my mentors pick up the phone and call other field managers or an academic to discuss and learn more about a management problem they were fighting. Sometimes that other opinion can really help.

The last few weeks have been very exciting with the number of SFMA committee calls happening and participation in those calls. Many of those calls will continue during the summer, so don't let those important duties slide down your priority list. Continue to fill out the polls, respond to emails and stay engaged. If you missed a call, please read the outcomes. This is your organization — your input matters and can help shape our future.

I encourage you all to fight the summer slide and continue to learn and participate in the SFMA — even during the busiest of times. **SFM**

— Adam Thoms, Ph.D.



Summer 2025 SFMA Chapter Events

Throughout the country, Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) chapters are gearing up for an action-packed summer of professional development, networking and hands-on learning. From field days and equipment demonstrations to golf tournaments and partner showcases, these events offer members the opportunity to connect, share best practices, and explore the latest innovations in sports field management. Whether you're looking to sharpen your skills, build new relationships, or simply spend a day surrounded by fellow turf professionals, there's something for everyone this season.

VSFMA

Event: Regional Field Day — Southside

Date: June 4, 2025

Location: William & Mary's Plumeri Park, Williamsburg, Virginia

Description: Presentations will include "Basic Soil Health 101," "Evolution of Robotics for the Green Industry" and "Athletic Field Audits: Purpose & Process."

MID-ATLANTIC SPORTS FIELD MANAGERS ASSOCIATION (MASFMA)

Event: Field Day

Date: June 12, 2025

Location: St. Paul's School, Brooklandville, Maryland

Description: Featuring equipment and product demonstrations, as well as hands-on educational sessions.

KEYSTONE ATHLETIC FIELD MANAGERS ORGANIZATION (KAFMO) — PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER

Event: Western PA Field Day

Date: June 17, 2025

Location: Cranberry Township Parks, Pennsylvania

Description: Featuring presentations by Dr. Chase Straw (Penn State) and Jimmy Simpson, CSFM (Town of Cary, NC).

MICHIGAN SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (MISFMA)

Event: Summer Field Day

Date: June 18, 2025

Location: West Ottawa HS, Holland, Michigan

Description: Visit the incredible athletic facility of West Ottawa HS.

COLORADO SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (CSFMA)

Event: Lawn Mower Open

Date: July 7, 2025

Location: The Pinery Country Club, Parker, Colorado

Description: An annual golf tournament supporting scholarships for students in the sports turf industry.

NEW ENGLAND SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (NESFMA)

Event: DeWolf Memorial Golf Tournament

Date: July 10, 2025

Location: Brookmeadow Country Club, Canton, Massachusetts

Description: A fundraising event supporting scholarships and benevolent funds.



TENNESSEE VALLEY SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (TVSFMA)

Event: Summer Meeting

Date: July 23, 2025

Location: University of Tennessee's Center for Athletic Field Safety

Description: The latest research the UT turfgrass team is conducting, including their FIFA work. Tour available athletic facilities, including the new Covenant Health Park in downtown Knoxville.

SPORTS FIELD MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY (SFMANJ)

Event: Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Day

Date: July 30, 2025

Location: Rutgers Adelphia Research Farm, Freehold, New Jersey

Description: Lawn, landscape and sports turf. Includes SFMANJ-sponsored trade show and equipment demos.

Several chapters have already kicked off the season with successful spring field days, drawing strong attendance and positive energy. From hands-on demonstrations to expert-led sessions, these events offered valuable takeaways and a chance to reconnect with peers.

Supporting the Future of Sports Field Management

The SAFE Foundation, the charitable arm of the Sports Field Management Association (SFMA), continues its commitment to fostering professional growth and supporting the future of the sports field management industry through three impactful grant programs. Each grant reflects the legacy and values of industry leaders and provides vital support to both emerging and established professionals in the field.

LEO GOERTZ MEMBERSHIP GRANT

Established in memory of Leo Goertz — longtime SFMA member and dedicated SAFE Board of Trustees member — this grant recognizes individuals who demonstrate a strong commitment to the profession but have not recently been members of SFMA.

Funded by a generous 10-year donation from Pioneer Athletics, the Leo Goertz Membership Grant provides up to \$1,500 annually to cover new, two-year SFMA memberships.

Eligibility:

- Nominees must be sports field managers or part of a crew managing sports fields.
- Must not have held SFMA membership within the last 5 years.

■ Can be nominated by SFMA national/chapter members, fellow employees, or self-nominate.

Leo Goertz was a beloved figure in the industry, known for his unwavering support and dedication. Through this grant, his spirit of mentorship and service lives on.

GARY VANDEN BERG INTERNSHIP GRANT

The Gary Vanden Berg Internship Grant was created to honor the commitment of Gary Vanden Berg, CSFM — former director of grounds for the Milwaukee Brewers — to providing transformative internship experiences. This \$1,000 grant helps SFMA student members offset the costs of completing a sports turf internship. It also includes full registration and three nights of lodging for the recipient to attend the SFMA National Conference and Exhibition.

Eligibility:

- Must be an SFMA Student Member in good standing.
- Must be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours during or prior to the internship period.
- Recent graduates who completed an internship post-graduation are eligible.

Since 2011, this grant has celebrated the achievements of outstanding interns across the country and helped launch their careers in sports field management.

TERRY MELLOR CONTINUING EDUCATION GRANT

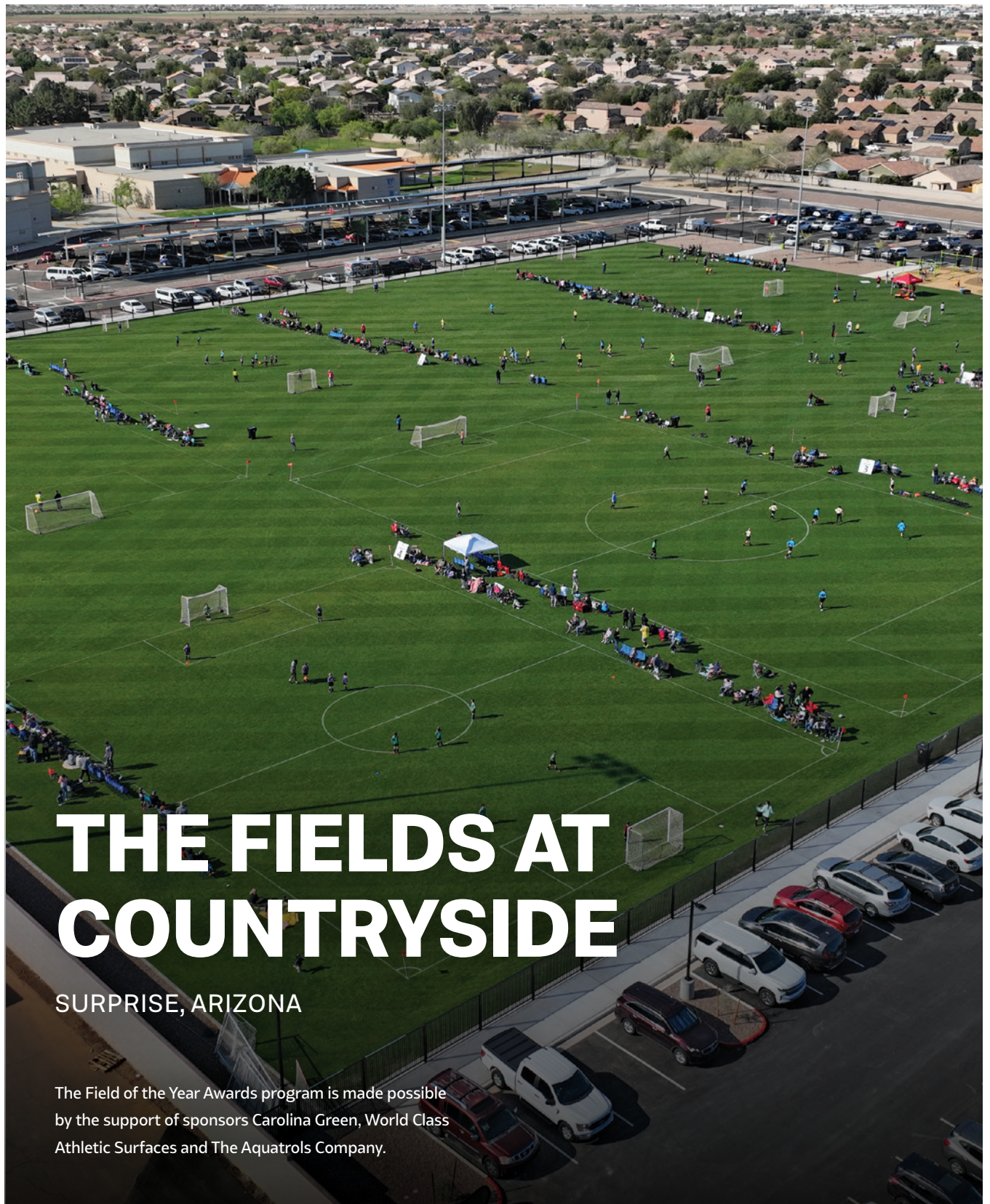
Sponsored by Turface Athletics, the Terry Mellor Continuing Education Grant helps SFMA members pursue continued learning through conference participation. Awarded annually, this \$1,000 grant supports travel and lodging for the SFMA Conference.

Eligibility:

- Open to all SFMA or affiliated chapter members.
- Requires a nomination letter from a National SFMA Member.

Selected by the SFMA Scholarship Committee, the recipient will be honored at the annual SFMA Awards Banquet.

Visit <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/safe-grants/> for more information. **SFM**



THE FIELDS AT COUNTRYSIDE

SURPRISE, ARIZONA

The Field of the Year Awards program is made possible by the support of sponsors Carolina Green, World Class Athletic Surfaces and The Aquatrols Company.

HERE IN SURPRISE, we have a rich history with SFMA that dates back to Joe Kennedy. His legacy continues to inspire us to restore and uphold the reputation set decades ago, with the spring training complex winning multiple awards.

I vividly remember working AAA baseball in Nashville and seeing the cover of *SportsTurf* in May 2005, thinking, “Wow, this is amazing!” The fields and the White Tank Mountains in the background were stunning.

After moving to Arizona in 2008, I witnessed Roger Bossard frequently calling Joe to discuss field maintenance — highlighting the immense respect that the famous “Sodfather” had for Joe and his contributions to the industry.

When I returned to pro ball in Peoria, Arizona (where Joe started), and later moved to Surprise, inside my desk I found an old Field of the Year application that Joe made for the 2005 submission. This history is the cornerstone of what our parks maintenance team strives for — especially as we built this sports field, the first new park here in almost 20 years.

With the unwavering support of our leadership team, including Holly Osborn, Shannon Gaul, and Ian Campbell, we embraced the mission to achieve the best field in the “country-side.” I reached out to Scott Heren of Providence Catholic, Keith Fisher of Central Regional High, and Daniel Prince of Pace Academy for insights. Their willingness to help us understand the submission process was invaluable.

I meticulously gathered all the required data and documented everything, knowing that thorough documentation is crucial. As someone who takes numerous photos, I ensured we had extensive visual records, capturing both the good and the areas for improvement. The leadership team wanted a semi-pro-level field for our citizens and youth to use for multiple sports, and the city council gave us the means to accomplish this. Having that support staff and knowledge within our team, I believe, sets us apart.

— Steve Hamilton, CSFM, parks maintenance supervisor





Level and category of submission: Schools and Parks Soccer

Field manager: Steve Hamilton, CSFM

Title: Parks maintenance supervisor

Education: Horticulture with Agricultural Science certificate, Jackson State Community College, Jackson, Tennessee

Experience: Assistant groundskeeper at Greer Stadium in Nashville. Head groundskeeper for the Birmingham Barons. Participated in building the new spring training home for the Chicago White Sox and L.A. Dodgers in Glendale, Arizona, overseeing the stadium for four years. Part-time for the Arizona D-Backs from 2009-2015. Lead groundskeeper at Scottsdale Stadium for 3 years. I switched to parks and recreation for the city of Peoria, Arizona, until returning to pro baseball in the same city 1-1/2 years later. Currently, I'm a parks maintenance supervisor for the city of Surprise, Arizona.

Original construction: 2023

Turfgrass: 419 bermuda from West Coast Turf

Overseed: Perennial ryegrass

Rootzone: Sand



SportsField Management (SFM): Congratulations on the Field of the Year win. What are you most proud of with this win?

Steve Hamilton, CSFM: I'm most proud of our team — from top to bottom. We haven't built a new park here in Surprise, Arizona, in nearly 20 years; so to see that old gravel lot transform into a vibrant green field was truly a dream come true. This project brought our team closer together, building trust along the way, as we worked hand-in-hand to bring it to life. Our management was incredibly supportive and listened to every concern we had, which made all the difference. Honestly, receiving this award was a complete surprise to us, and it brings so much joy to know that youth sports — including games for my own kids — now have these fields to play on.

After receiving the award, I drove back and went straight to coaching that evening on the fields for which we had just won an award. It's moments like those that remind me how blessed and privileged we are.

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

Hamilton: Some of the biggest challenges we've faced with the winning field are certainly tied to the unique conditions here in the desert of Arizona. The extreme weather fluctuations — from 30 to 115 degrees — along with ongoing drought conditions create constant pressure on maintaining the turf to a high standard. The challenge even becomes more complex when balancing the high standard of turf, along with the turf wear patterns due to the youth sports practices and games running six days a week. In addition, we leave the field open for residents to use during non-programming times.

One of our biggest challenges is learning how to manage the layout for both of our primary sports (soccer and flag football) to mitigate as much wear and tear as possible. This is done by moving fields every two weeks by offsetting the fields when we start to see the wear patterns becoming prevalent. We rotate the middle of the football fields and the goal mouths for soccer to manage wear and tear, but it requires a lot of coordination (see sidebar).

Another challenge is ensuring the field is properly maintained for the changing seasons. During the seasons we are topdressing, fertilizing and painting weekly, which requires us to plan months in advance to accomplish our goals to provide a high-quality playing field.

DUAL-SPORT MAINTENANCE

Although it won in the S&P Soccer category, the Fields at Countryside host both soccer and flag football. Steve Hamilton, CSFM, shared insight into maintaining optimal field conditions for dual-sport fields.

“For soccer, one of the key insights we gained after the first season was the importance of effective communication with our youth sports department,” said Hamilton. “We provide detailed guidelines on how practices should be conducted to minimize wear and tear on the field. This includes a map indicating where goals should be placed to alleviate wear at the goalmouths, suggestions for conducting cone drills off the center of the field, and alternating bench spots daily.”

A PowerPoint presentation is shared with coaches to educate them on maintaining the best possible playing surface. This proactive approach has been crucial, as practices occur five days a week with games on weekends and occasional weekdays.

“To further enhance our field management, we utilize a robotic painter,” Hamilton added. “By shifting the field markings weekly by one inch to a few feet, we reduce wear and are able to focus on other maintenance tasks. This has significantly saved time and minimized field damage from continuous use.

“For flag football, we realized the importance of customizing the field to include different markings, such as no-run zones. This flexibility allows us to not only shift fields but also completely rearrange the layout if necessary due to wear and tear. The intense back-to-back games and practices often take a toll between the hashes, making turf coverage maintenance a challenge. However, we inform coaches about cultural practices to manage expectations and field conditions.”

According to Hamilton, the sports staff also conducts sweeps of the fields, which helps reduce the potential for mower damage due to foreign object.

“Additionally, we allow the use of portable canopies but prohibit stakes to prevent field damage,” he said. “The sports staff ensures all equipment is removed before sundown on game day.” **SFM**



Our management team truly listens to us. They're always receptive to our concerns, especially when it comes to field closures for maintenance.

SFM: Can you share a little about your overall management approach to the winning field and what you feel have been the most important aspects to getting this field to an award-winning level?

Hamilton: I'd like to take a moment to brag about one thing: Our management team truly listens to us. They're always receptive to our concerns, especially when it comes to field closures for maintenance. To maintain the high level of play we receive and continue providing a world-class surface, they understand that downtime for turf TLC is essential.

Beyond that, our approach is simple but effective. We focus on foliar applications for fast results and always aim to keep the grass "hungry" and thriving. We're fortunate to have some great tools that help us achieve this. We utilize our fertigation system to ensure a steady supply of nutrients, allowing us to feed the turf in a controlled and cost-efficient way. Our John Deere 7200A reel mower provides an incredibly precise, scissor-like cut that gives us that pool-table-quality turf. And the Swozi auto painter is a game-changer, allowing us to quickly move wear and tear to different areas of the field as needed by painting a new field just feet from the original field. It's the anti-resod machine that saves time and money for multiple areas in our park's sports field.





SFM: Please tell us about your crew, and anything else you would like us to know about your organization and the fields/facilities that you manage?

Hamilton: Our crew is like a Swiss Army knife — we have people from diverse backgrounds that help us stay well-rounded. Some of our team members have experience in MLB spring training, golf courses, landscaping, Hollywood and farming, which brings a unique blend of skills and perspectives to the table. Our management team is truly one of a kind, and I feel for others who mention their struggles with upper management. While we certainly face challenges, we're incredibly fortunate to have a team that cares for us and supports us.

I've been part of two World Series teams, and the camaraderie and sense of being part of something bigger than ourselves that we have here in Surprise is very similar.

We're entrusted with more than 200 acres of combined open spaces, sports fields and parks; and most days it feels like working with the funniest team in all of sports, parks and recreation combined.

I manage two larger parks on the west side of town, as well as the Fields at Countryside. We have a rich history of award-winning fields, so this recognition was on my bucket list. When we received the call that we won, it felt like Christmas morning as a kid.

To quote the great Ted Lasso, "Success is not about the wins and losses. It's about helping these young fellas be the best versions of themselves, on and off the field." That's my motto when I come to work every day, because I wouldn't be answering these questions if it weren't for the incredible team we have here in Surprise, Arizona. **SFM**

Watch the Wallet: Beginner Budget

For most young sports field managers, the word “budget” feels like a far-off concept. It’s the thing the boss stresses about in the office. It’s the reason your fertilizer rate got cut, or why your request for a new mower was met with a “Maybe next year.”

If you’re serious about becoming a leader in this industry, budgeting isn’t just your boss’s problem; it’s your warm-up. Budgeting in sports field management is more than just numbers on a spreadsheet. If you’re not paying attention to what things cost, then you’re missing half of the field management playbook.

In this profession — and in life — you don’t rise to the occasion; you fall to your level of preparation. If you want to be trusted with more responsibility, you need to show that you’re already paying attention, especially when it comes to dollars and cents.

During my first stint in Minor League Baseball, I noticed what was being bought and how often. I started asking questions like “How much did that cost?” and “How many times do we order that each year?” It became a mental exercise for me. Multiply the number of purchases by the cost, and suddenly I had a rough idea of what we were spending annually. I started doing this with anything we used regularly. I wasn’t managing the money, but I was learning its habits. And when the time came years later for me to take on a budget of my own, I wasn’t starting from scratch.

You don’t have to manage the budget to monitor the budget. Start with curiosity. Ask questions like:

- What does this product cost per acre?
- Is this a contracted service or internal labor?
- Are we on a monthly, quarterly or annual budget cycle?
- What’s the cost difference between this material and the one we used last year?

These questions won’t just make you smarter — they’ll help you become a trusted voice in your department. Supervisors remember people who show interest in the big picture.

Even something as simple as asking to see the invoice for the paint you’re using every week can change your perspective. It’s one thing to spray white lines; it’s another to know each can costs \$7.95 and you’re using six cans per field per week. That’s \$47.70 per field, per week — multiply that by the number of fields and the season length, and you’ve just uncovered a major line item.

If your department uses contractors, take note of how the contract is structured. Is it per service or per month? What are the deliverables? Is there a penalty for missed days? What’s the term length? Who inspects their work? If you don’t know, ask to sit in on one of the vendor walkthroughs or contract reviews. You’ll learn how decisions are made, what red flags to look for, and how to hold partners accountable.

This type of observation can build trust with leadership. When you’re already aware of what’s happening behind the curtain, it’s a much easier transition when it’s your turn to step behind the curtain.

Here’s a tip: leaders don’t just ask for money — they justify it. Need a new topdresser? Do not just say, “We need this machine.” Instead, try something like “We spent \$2,000 on renting this unit three times last year. Purchasing it for \$9,000 pays off in less than three seasons and gives us more flexibility in timing applications.”

That is budget language; and it starts with knowing what things cost and where they show up in the annual plan. Ask to review the current operating budget with your supervisor. They might not show you every detail, but they likely will walk you through the structure and help you understand what goes where. You don’t need full access to the budget. You need full interest.

A good budget is a tool that supports your standards, empowers your team, and helps you plan for growth. But if you don’t know how to use that tool, then you’re going to be stuck waiting for someone else to decide your limits.

Leadership isn’t about a title — it’s about alignment. Align your decisions with department goals; align your actions with your future responsibilities; and align your eyes with the money trail. Because someday, sooner than you think,

the budget will be yours. And when it is, you’ll want to be the person who didn’t just watch how the game was played, but learned how to call the plays yourself. **SFM**



Alpha Jones, CSFM, is athletic field specialist at Duke University. He also serves on the SFMA Board of Directors as President-Elect. He can be reached at morthangrass@gmail.com

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

PROBLEM:

Fence laying on field

TURFGRASS AREA:

School sports field

LOCATION:

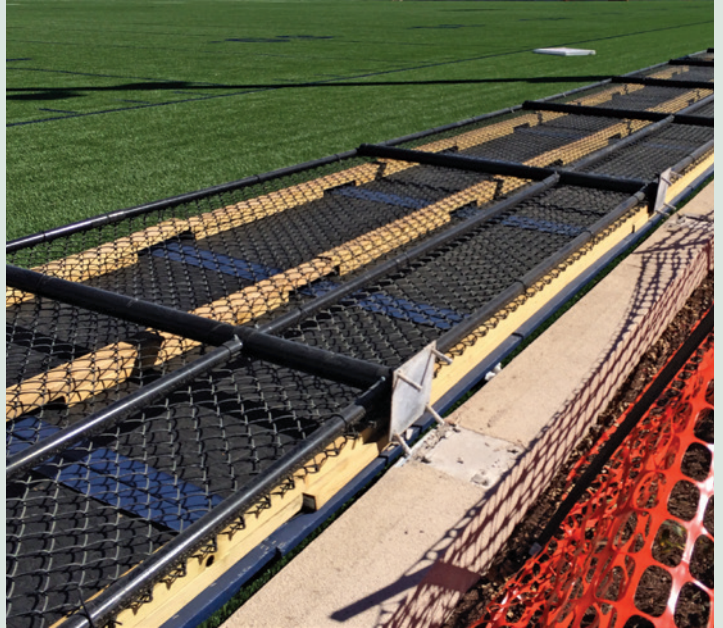
South central United States

TURFGRASS VARIETY:

Synthetic turf

Answer on page 33

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International



TRIMAX PROCUT/S5

Min. PTO Output: From 35hp

Cut Widths: 5' 8 1/2" | 6' 9" | 7' 7" | 9' 6"

Cut Heights: 3/8" - 4 1/2"

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MORE THAN SPRING TRAINING

Behind the scenes at the year-round operation that is Goodyear Ballpark

All photos provided by Goodyear Ballpark



Goodyear Ballpark (Goodyear, Arizona) was the result of a \$108 million dollar construction project that was completed in 2009. The state-of-the-art training facilities and 10,000-seat stadium helped attract the Cleveland Guardians and Cincinnati Reds to relocate to Arizona from Florida. In addition to being the spring training home for both MLB teams, the fields are used by the City of Goodyear for tournaments, Little League games and more. In fact, local, regional and national tournaments account for more than 1,500 baseball games played at the ballpark and team complex fields each year. For a behind-the-scenes look at how the operation is managed 365 days per year, *SportsField Management* recently spoke with Goodyear Ballpark Superintendent Scott Dobbins, CSFM, and Supervisor Andrew Donovan.

SportsField Management (SFM): Can you tell us about Goodyear Ballpark, the complex and fields there, and the overall scope of your duties?

Scott Dobbins, CSFM: We have the Guardians and the Reds here; so we have two separate complexes, but one stadium that is shared between the two teams. So, during spring training, we will have 30 straight games at the stadium — 15 Reds games and 15 Guardians games — which is a little bit of a challenge. Then, each complex has eight fields (the Reds have 8 fields and the Guardians have 8 fields), so we have 17 fields total. We have a supervisor at each location, and I'm the superintendent overseeing the operation. Andrew is the supervisor of the Guardians complex, and Patrick Mejia is the supervisor at the Reds complex. They each have seven full-time groundskeepers. We also have a foreman at the stadium, Tristin Litherland, as well as a mechanic and an irrigation technician. Overall, we have 23 full-time staff to take care of the place; then we supplement quite a bit with part-time help.

SFM: Outside of spring training, what does the rest of the year look like for you in terms of your event loads and what you are hosting?

Andrew Donovan: By January 1 we're pretty much spring training ready. We're dialing stuff in at that point, but guys are showing up. Major league players work out here year round. In April, there are rehab players here working out; then, a couple of days later, extended spring training starts. The major league teams take off, all minor league affiliates take off, and you're left with a group of 30 to 40 guys plus rehab guys. Some guys

are from the Dominican Republic, where each team has an academy, and they are here to work out.

Then, after that, it's another three months of Arizona Complex League rookie ball, and those are night games in May, June and July. August is extended Complex League, so another month of baseball action, then it's right into fall instructionals for August and September.

There will be camps mixed into that rotation for the team. They're working out, and they have hitting and pitching camps going on November and December. There are only a couple weeks per year where the teams are off, typically around Thanksgiving and then Christmas to New Year, and that's it.

Around mid-April they transition to using half the complex because the other half of the complex is utilized for youth tournaments. We have a contract for 14U through 18U tournaments; so, we have youth baseball pretty much Friday through Monday every weekend from Memorial Day through the beginning of October.

There's also a bit of men's senior baseball, state playoffs, and community use like Little League mixed in as well. So we're pretty jam packed from May through the beginning of November with team use, tournaments and community use.

SFM: How many fields do you have operating at any one time?

Donovan: We do three games per day per field for tournaments. For some tournaments there are four games, but we try to limit it to three to save wear and tear on the fields. In the summer, when it's 110 degrees plus, four games per day on a field eats away at it pretty good. So that's 24 games per day, just on the minor side. But then all the team activities are happening at the same time; so, we're not just taking care of the fields for the tournament — we also have to take care of the team needs, and they use at least three fields each daily. We also host graduations for high schools, we have food truck festivals, Halloween events, and other stuff happening at the stadium.

SFM: How do you balance those schedules and coordinate everything to make sure that everything runs smoothly across such a large operation?

Dobbins: Our GM has been here for quite a while, so we work really closely with him. He's the main driver, and then there is a stadium ops coordinator who takes the calls from the tournament users. They get the schedule put together and then they run it by us to make sure we are good with our staffing, the field usage and whether fields need time off. Our general



approach has to be a patient approach, and communicating to get our GM fully involved to understand the big picture. We have a shared calendar that has been really beneficial. You can quickly jump on that calendar, see the events, and sometimes take a deeper dive into specific dates.

SFM: What are the biggest challenges that you face?

Donovan: Trying to grow two types of grass throughout the year is a big challenge with almost year-round use. We have to maneuver around teams, so we overseed in stages. We start in mid-October, and then the last overseed we put down on the fields is almost late November. So there's a pretty big difference in temperature for us. A sweet spot has been the third week in October; but we start getting into middle of November or the end of November, and it's a lot colder, so it takes a lot longer to get germination going. We're always ready for spring, but sometimes it's a little tight. You just want to be set and ready. The teams have been great; they want a good complex too, so they're pretty flexible.



SFM: How is communication with the big league clubs handled?

Donovan: Most of that goes through us. Some of the things outside of field usage that are out of our hands will go through the GM and stadium operations. But, for the most part, I talk to all the coaches. It's pretty much non-stop communication — morning meetings and calls throughout the day — so I feel like we have a really good communication stream. People sometimes don't realize that we are city employees. They think we are part of the team. So, that's a good indication of how entwined we are with them, and how things are going.

SFM: How long have you been at the facility, and what has been your career path to get where you are?

Dobbins: I started in Minor League Baseball in 1997, worked in Michigan for a couple years, worked in New York, and then came to Arizona — right into

spring training. I worked with the Brewers for nine years and then this is our sixteenth year at Goodyear. Andrew and I both came over during construction and helped when we were building the place. So, I have done 26 Cactus League seasons.

Donovan: I started in 2002, and was at Peoria Sports Complex for the Mariners and Padres for almost five years, and then I went over to Tempe with the Angels for a year. I'm from this side of town, and I knew this place was being built; so, as soon as they had some openings, I put in for it.

SFM: You obviously like it there. What is the best part of the job?

Donovan: I think working for a city has a lot of benefits. We all work hard here, but at the same time, our city really promotes work/life balance. Spring training is a grind — it's a couple months of just working. But we have the ability to do what we do best, what we love to do, and then still have good benefits and work/life balance. It's pretty rewarding to be in that situation.

Dobbins: I tell minor league stories to help guys understand how good we have it here. When you are working a 12-game homestand in the minor leagues, and you have three people on your staff total, and you have tarp pulls at 10:00 at night, it's just a grind. I think you age two years at a time in the minor leagues. Here, we see our families every night and we share the workload across our staff. If we have night events, we split that up and we work different shifts. Working for the city has had some really good benefits over the long haul. We have a pretty nice retirement setup, and some benefits that maybe we wouldn't have if we were working directly for the teams. But we're all here because of baseball and working spring training.



SFM: Whenever you are renovating a field, how does that impact your overall schedule and workload?

Dobbins: We rarely ever just shut down. So, we do a couple of fields per year with renovations, and then games are played on the other fields. It affects our tournament load a little bit where they might only have six fields available for a tournament instead of eight.

SFM: I know there's no such thing as typical, but what does a typical day look like for you?

Donovan: During spring training it kind of turns into Groundhog Day. It's just the same thing, but it takes a little while because we get a lot of new part-time staff jumping on board right before spring training. The first few weeks are always dialing things in with the new hires and getting them on board. We have a big safety program and a lot of SOPs. But once you get stuff dialed in, it's just well-oiled machine. I get the schedules the day before from both the minor league and major league guys, and we all meet in the morning to go over the schedules. I divide my crew in half — half to the minor league side, half to the major league side — and float some guys around wherever needed. Sometimes there are six BP setups at one time, so we are rotating around, running around, getting stuff set up. We also work with the coaches — we're raking during drills, dragging, setting up if they have minor league games on the same fields. Then, at the end of the day, we're putting everything to bed, fixing everything, getting stuff prepared for the next day, and getting water going if we have to fertilize. We mow mornings, midday afternoons and where we can fit the mowing schedule in — mowing half the complex every day, so we're rotating. We do some edging and maintenance, and if we know there will be downtime on a field, we might do some aeration. It's pick a task and do it.

SFM: Is there anything else you would like to add or anything our readers should know?

Dobbins: Major league teams have their major league stadiums, and minor league teams have their minor league stadiums. There's no real category for spring training complexes, but we are held to major league standards. We kind of get forgotten; we are in this gray zone.

Donovan: One of the big questions we get is what we do outside of spring training. For me, it feels busier outside of spring training. For spring training, we're dialed in, and we're just taking care of the team. Everybody's on the same page. Outside of that, we have tournaments going on throughout the day. We have three different shifts per day — early shift, midday shift and night shift — so it starts getting more challenging with scheduling. You have more users on the complex because you have different clients — the team, tournaments, etc.; so, outside of spring training it feels a little bit busier. Many people have no idea what happens at these complexes outside of spring training, because they're labeled as a spring training complex. I like to educate people and let them know what we do year round. **SFM**

PICKLEBALL DESIGN SOLUTIONS

By Michael Moonan, RLA, LEED AP

All photos provided by CHA Consulting, Inc.

For municipal leaders and recreation professionals, the demand for pickleball courts is outpacing supply — creating both a challenge and an opportunity. Sports designers and landscape architects play a key role in addressing these demands with strategic planning and site selection. The following are smart design solutions to help communities meet the pickleball boom head-on.

PICKLEBALL POPULARITY

The sport has experienced exponential growth, with USA Pickleball (USAP) reporting a membership increase from 4,000 in 2013 to nearly 78,000 as of January 2024. The number of known pickleball courts in North America has also risen dramatically. The USAP court location database, Pickleheads, now includes 68,458 courts, with 18,455 new courts added in 2024. This growth is attributed to the sport's appeal across various age groups and adaptability to different playing environments.

PLANNING PHASE CONSIDERATIONS

When planning a pickleball facility, it is crucial to assemble a diverse team that includes design professionals, court builders, local players and municipal leaders, if applicable. This team can provide valuable insights into the needs of different user groups, such as adults, seniors

and children. Additionally, ensuring compliance with zoning, permitting and ADA requirements is essential to meet all legal standards.

It's important to ask critical questions during the planning phase:

- Will the courts be used primarily by adults or seniors?
- Will children also use the courts?
- Will there be spectators, tournament play or other uses?
- Do you have enough users to justify dedicated courts?
- Should the courts be covered with a canopy?

Different groups of users will have varying desires, needs and requirements. By addressing these questions and considering the diverse needs of potential users, you can create a facility that serves the community effectively and inclusively.

OVERALL PLAYING AREA

The court area is a 20-foot-wide by 44-foot-long rectangle for both doubles and singles matches. The American Sports Builders Association (ASBA) and USAP recommend the following overall sizes for playing areas:

- **Recreational play:** Minimum total recreation/drop-in play area is 30 feet by 60 feet.
- **Competitive play:** Recommended total playing area for competitive/ tournament play and new construction is 34 feet by 64 feet.
- **Wheelchair play:** Recommended total playing area for wheelchair play is 44 feet by 74 feet.
- **Stadium play:** Recommended total playing area for a stadium court is 50 feet by 80 feet.

During the design input process, we found that players preferred the competitive-sized court, given their increased movement and the ability of players. Some players feel the standard recreation size is too small, with insufficient overrun at the sides and backcourt for playability and safety. In several of our recent projects, the community requested the competition size since they had been playing on the standard recreation size and found it insufficient.

COURT BUILDING TRENDS

In recent years, the landscape of court building has seen exciting and innovative trends, especially in pickleball. New facilities are emerging in non-traditional locations, transforming unexpected spaces into vibrant pickleball hubs. Existing hard courts are being converted to pickleball courts, maximizing available space and resources. Where space allows, adding bays of pickleball courts to existing tennis locations helps avoid conflicts with tennis players.

Multi-court facilities, which include basketball, tennis and pickleball courts with shared social areas, are also gaining traction. These versatile complexes cater to various sports enthusiasts and foster community engagement. Additionally, older indoor gyms are being repurposed for pickleball, providing weather-proof environments for year-round play.

These trends reflect the dynamic nature of court building, driven by the growing popularity of pickleball and the desire to create inclusive, multi-functional recreational spaces.

SITING PICKLEBALL COURTS

Siting pickleball courts involves careful planning to ensure optimal playability, safety and visibility. A flat, level surface — preferably asphalt or concrete — is crucial. The court should be oriented north-south to minimize sun glare. Adequate surrounding space is also essential.

For the surface, choose a hard surface such as asphalt, concrete or synthetic. The official court size is 44 feet long by 20 feet wide. Consider adding extra space around the court for player movement and spectators. A minimum total play area of 30 by 60 feet is recommended by USA Pickleball, with a 10-foot surrounding margin ideal.

Other things to consider when locating pickleball courts include, but are not limited to:

- Existing facilities and constraints
- Reuse of existing courts (most sustainable process)



- Location in the community
- Accessibility — ADA and general access/distance to available or proposed parking
- The need for additional walkways to the courts for players and spectators
- The need for additional parking
- Noise concerns
- Proximity to abutters
- Potential conversion or ease of implementation
- Surface and subsurface considerations
- Need for landscaping or buffer areas
- Wind considerations
- Available utilities or new infrastructure
- Access for construction vehicles
- Number of courts that will fit on the site

As mentioned previously, reusing existing underused courts or incorporating pickleball courts into an existing facility where other athletic venues exist can be the most cost-effective and sustainable solution for adding pickleball courts. When courts are added to existing facilities, there may be a potential need for added infrastructure such as parking, pathways, support buildings, shade shelters or other amenities. However, if these elements are not already available, it could also present an opportunity to add much-needed support features to an existing park. Creating a new facility would require adding some or all of these elements to the project. As with development practices, using an already disturbed site where pavement and buildings exist is also sustainable and beneficial. It may require added cost for building demolition and site preparation; however, it is an environmental win

anytime you can use an abandoned or converted developed site rather than taking away farmland or woodland.

SOUND CONSIDERATIONS

Sound considerations are among the most critical aspects when planning and locating pickleball courts. Throughout the United States, there have been several instances where courts were placed too close to residences, leading to serious complaints and, in some cases, closure of the courts. Pickleball can be noisier than tennis due to the ball's higher pitch and the game's social nature.

To mitigate sound issues, several strategies can be employed:

- **Distance:** The most effective mitigation strategy is maintaining sufficient distance. Courts should be kept at a safe distance from residences, offices, schools, daycare facilities and similar locations.

- **Existing elements:** Natural and built elements such as woodlands, walls, terrain and buildings can provide sound buffering and should be considered when siting the courts.

- **Acoustical barriers:** Installing barriers such as Acoustifence or FenceScreen can reduce noise by up to 50 percent.

- **Quiet equipment:** Requiring or recommending the use of quieter paddles and balls can help achieve acceptable sound levels in residential areas; however, it is difficult to enforce this with public courts.

- **Community engagement:** It is important to confirm that the adjacent property owners are well aware of the project and its impact.

The latest ASBA and USAP recommendations suggest that pickleball courts should not be allowed within 100 feet of residential buildings. Within 350 feet,

noise abatement measures should be installed; within 600 feet, an acoustic review should be conducted. At 400 feet away, pickleball noise is generally 58 dBA, comparable to the noise level of tennis.

A *Model Noise Ordinance for Pickleball*, prepared by the Noise Pollution Clearinghouse using the U.S. EPA Model Noise Ordinance as a basis, provides valuable guidance. It states:

"While the model language provides a number of tools to regulate pickleball noise, from decibel levels to plainly audible to time-of-day requirements, the primary and easiest method to protect the health and well-being of neighbors is to adopt a setback from dwellings of 800 feet."

Too often, communities replace existing tennis courts with pickleball courts immediately adjacent to residences without adequate planning or consideration, causing serious conflicts and concerns within the community.

CONVERTING EXISTING COURTS

The most sustainable and cost-effective solution to meet the growing demand for pickleball courts is to convert existing tennis courts to pickleball courts. This approach not only maximizes the use of available space, but also minimizes the need for new construction. Conversion can be done in several ways:

- **One pickleball court per tennis court:** Center the markings on the net and court, and lower the tennis net to 34 inches in the center.

- **Two pickleball courts per tennis court:** Utilize temporary nets (or permanent with new post footings) to fit two courts within the standard tennis court dimensions.



Multi-court/facility recreation complex schematic design perspective rendering illustrating how multiple courts can share support amenities.

■ Four pickleball courts per tennis court

court: Four pickleball courts conveniently fit in one standard-size tennis court (60 feet by 120 feet). Divide a standard-size tennis court into four smaller courts, often requiring the squaring off of diagonal corners if present.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

When budgeting for pickleball courts, consider factors such as fencing, sound attenuation, lighting, walkways, seating, access, parking and compliance with ADA requirements. Additionally, the delivery method (design-bid-build, design-build, direct hire or self-perform) can impact the overall cost and timeline of the project.

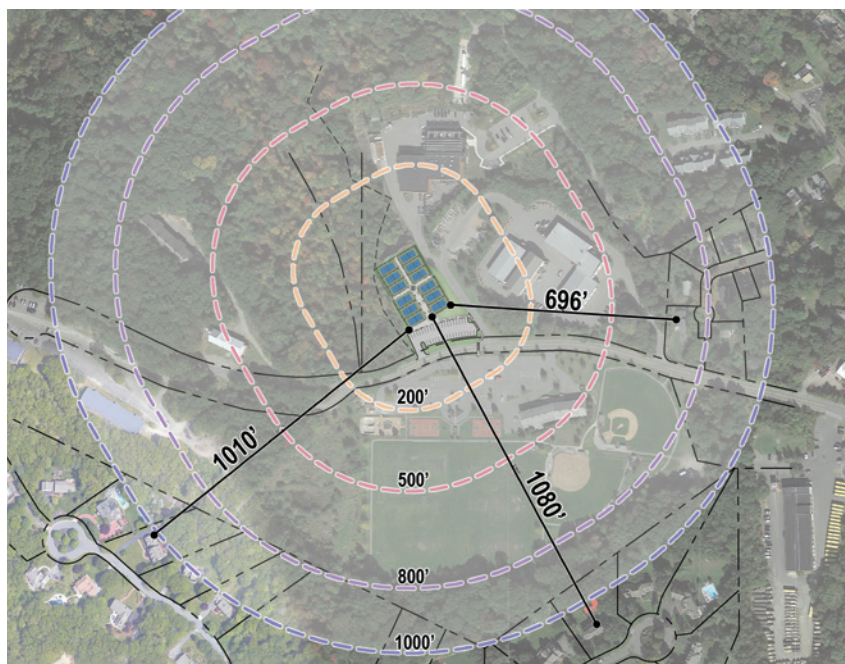
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

When planning a pickleball facility, several factors must be considered for functionality and compliance. Decide on installing or replacing a perimeter fence; determine height requirements; and consider the need for wind screens, as wind can affect playability. Ensure access for construction vehicles and walkways for players and spectators. Compliance with ADA and other relevant requirements is essential.

Consider seating for spectators and players waiting to play, and plan for lighting on the courts and surrounding areas. Consider amenities such as picnic areas, shade shelters and water stations. Landscaping or buffer areas can enhance the environment, and sound walls may be necessary if the facility is near residences.

Finally, choose the appropriate delivery method — design, bid, build, design-build, direct hire, self-perform or a combination — to ensure successful project execution.

By addressing these considerations, planners can create a welcoming and well-rounded pickleball facility.



Proposed pickleball courts in Hingham, Massachusetts. Siting was key, as the town did not want the courts to be close to residences.

As the popularity of pickleball continues to rise, innovative court design solutions are essential to meet the growing demand. By considering various court types, conversion strategies, sound mitigation and budget factors, communities can create accessible and enjoyable pickleball facilities for all players. **SFM**

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Planning a dog park? Start here

By Mary Helen
Sprecher

Photo credit © Adobe Stock - trongnguyen

Several decades ago, the gotta-have amenity for housing developments, community associations and apartment and condominium complexes was the swimming pool.

Fast forward to today, and priorities have shifted. Now, dog parks are in demand. According to the Trust for Public Land, since 2009 there was a whopping 40 percent increase in the number of dog parks being built nationwide.

Just as with sports fields, dog park construction has changed in the intervening years, and nowhere has it changed more than in the surfaces used.

If constructing a dog park with a natural grass surface, discuss the varieties that work best given the geographic area, soil type, climate and the amount of use expected. In general, the more resilient and durable the surface, the better off you're going to be. Bermudagrass, Kentucky bluegrass, Zoysia and fescue grass are all options because of their resilience to foot traffic. If the park is large enough, the grass may stay in good condition despite regular use; smaller parks, however, may need to be rested in order to let the surface rebound.

According to Lee Narozanick of American Athletic Track and Turf, although regular maintenance of the surface, including mowing (2- to 4-inch cut height), will keep it in good repair, "the grass should not be cut too short because it gets trampled and dies and then the area becomes muddy. Letting the grass grow longer than you are accustomed to, at least in terms of a sports field, will actually allow it to stand up to everyday activity much better."

Additional landscaping within a dog park will depend upon the size of the park and the amount of usage. We're seeing some with trails — generally covered with mulch or crusher run. Higher grasses — such as native grasses and prairie grasses — have a nice aesthetic if they are placed on the outskirts of the park, but high grasses where dogs will constantly run and roll can carry a risk for ticks.

Although natural grass has been the norm, there are synthetic turf systems available that are designed specifically for dog park use, but there are important considerations associated with using synthetic.

"While all infills can be deemed 'sterile' by nature, typical sand/rubber infills aren't ideal because of the frequent

bathroom breaks by animals, which means the cleanup would be messy,” said Chris Franks of SCG Fields.

In general, the synthetic systems designed for use in dog parks are non-infill, high density and short pile; and they are generally resistant to bacteria and odors. According to Franks, dog parks with a synthetic surface should have a drainage base and a below-ground way to remove water from the surface (3 to 4 inches of stone over filter fabric over a compacted sub-grade). This not only keeps the surface dry from rain but, more importantly, allows for clean up by washing and/or scrubbing with a non-abrasive cleaner. Most dog parks also include water features and/or water fountains, so drainage could be an overlooked but very important part of the construction process, Franks added.

Part of the regular maintenance of synthetic turf surfaces is hose-cleaning them to rinse away urine and other excrement. This will be particularly important in areas where there is little or no natural rainfall. Note that synthetic turf will require daily maintenance, or even twice daily in places where there are lots of dogs, as dogs do carry illnesses.

Other options used in dog park surfacing include the following:

- **Skinned surfaces:** The advantage is that there is no mowing involved; the disadvantage is that the park will be muddy and slippery after a rain.

- **Skinned surfaces covered with mulch, crusher run or other materials:** These are fairly inexpensive options that can be changed out or replenished each year (or more often, depending upon the need).

Regular maintenance is key to keeping any surface in shape, and that includes the level of care being exercised by pet owners. If users regularly clean up after their dogs, it goes a long way toward making the surroundings pleasant.

The height of fencing around dog parks is a subject of debate; however, higher fencing (at least five feet at the top rail and often even higher) is generally preferred. Footings should



Photo by Tatiana Rodriguez on Unsplash



Photo by Rui Alves on Unsplash

be buried at least one foot down, and fence panels should be buried to a depth of six inches at all locations, except at access points, in order to deter dogs from trying to dig their way out.

And just as with sports facilities, it is amenities that will make a dog park stand out:

- **Access points** should be double gated to keep dogs from escaping while being brought in and out of the enclosure.

- **Dividing the park** into two sections (with a fence running between) can allow for one area to be used by large and giant breeds, and the other by small to medium size dogs. This is actually recognized as one of the most important safety measures.

- **Waste disposal** bags and an adequate number of trash cans should be provided. Many bag dispensers and waste containers are on the same post assembly; these are then permanently installed at various points throughout the park, making for easy use and disposal.



Photo by Judy Beth Morris on Unsplash



Photo by Matthias Zomer on pexels.com

■ Adequate parking for all users will be essential to the success of the dog park; if not enough parking spaces are available, users may wind up parking illegally (leading to ticketing and complaints) and/or parking in nearby neighborhoods — much to residents' annoyance. Keep in mind that there will be times of enormous demand, such as after work hours on weekday evenings, and on weekends during the day.

■ Dog-park-specific water fountains are another user-friendly fixture; such fountains have an upper bowl or faucet where people can drink (or fill water bottles) and a lower bowl for dogs to use. Most times, the dog bowl is plumbed to drain slowly enough to allow dogs to drink, but quickly enough to remain clean despite multiple uses throughout the day.

■ Shaded areas with benches where owners can sit and watch their dogs are amenities that will be appreciated.

■ Hooks on fences will be handy for hanging up leashes, harnesses and the like.

■ Boxes of toys for visitors are often provided at dog parks; these may include rope tug toys and tennis balls, along with the plastic tennis ball fetch toys that allow users to pick balls off the ground and hurl them with less effort.

■ A coach's whistle, which can be used to break up fights between dogs; these should be affixed to fences with a chain in various places throughout the park.

■ Play structures for dogs are popular with users. These may be permanently installed or they may be placed there temporarily while the park is hosting an event. Options include ramps, bridges, logs, obstacle courses, tunnels, steps and other structures.

The number and type of amenities will be determined by the space available, the budget, the level of security and other considerations.

Dog parks should have lists of rules posted at the entrances and prominently featured throughout the park. These may include information such as:

■ Hours of the park, including any time(s) it is closed for regular maintenance.

■ Minimum age for users with dogs.

■ Any maximum number of dogs per person at a time.

■ Any requirements regarding vaccines that dogs must have (rabies, etc.) in order to use the park.

■ Any safety requirements (some parks specify that dogs must wear collars or harnesses, which make it easier for an owner to grab his or her dog, if necessary).

■ If there are different areas for large and small dogs, the rules should note this; it may help to have a definition of the size of the dog (weight is generally considered a good measurement).

■ If unaltered (unspayed or unneutered) dogs are not allowed in the park.

■ Owners are responsible for their own animals.

■ Dog owners are responsible for cleaning up after their own dogs.

The first dog park can be a daunting project, but fortunately there are plenty of examples in neighborhoods, community associations and apartment and condo complexes nationwide, and you probably won't have to drive too far to locate a few in your area.

"The best way of evaluating what works (and what doesn't) at dog parks is to do more than just a drive-by



Photo by Sherissa R
on pexels.com



Photo by Lee Narozanick

viewing,” said Narozanick. “Park nearby, sit in the park, make notes, take pictures and visit for a while. Talk to people who are bringing their dogs to the park. What do they like? What would they change?”

Spend some time watching the park itself and the dogs in it. Are there any toys, amenities or structures in particular the dogs seem to enjoy? Are there any they tend to ignore?

Watch the dog owners as well. Do they interact with their dogs or do they come in, turn their dogs loose and then begin talking with friends or looking at their phones, without paying attention? Do owners who have both a large and a small dog turn them loose on the same side of the park, even though it is not made for dogs of that size?

Take a look at the surface. How is it holding up? Can the management give you some insights into what maintenance is like? Does the fence seem to be an appropriate height for the dogs in the park? Are the rules prominently posted?

If a dog park is being planned in your area, there is probably a user group that is giving input. What parks have they visited and what have they noticed? While it is common for user groups to want every amenity they can think of, work to create a realistic scenario.

Work with a designer and/or a builder who has experience with dog parks; the demand for dog parks has created an industry in itself. Those professionals will draw from your knowledge in fields and help you apply it to the park being built to create an amenity that enriches your area for years to come. **SFM**

Mary Helen Sprecher wrote this article on behalf of the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA). For more information, visit www.sportsbuilders.org

CFMoto reveals full cab UForce U10 Pro and Pro XL Highland UTVs

CFMoto USA unveiled the new UForce U10 Pro Highland and UForce U10 XL Pro Highland, an all-weather iteration of the UForce U10 Pro platform. The Highland is designed with a full cab and HVAC.

At the heart of the UForce U10 Pro Highland and UForce U10 XL Pro Highland lies an 88-hp. 998cc three-cylinder engine with Variable Valve Timing (VVT). Engineered for optimal torque and quiet, smooth operation, this powerplant delivers exceptional performance for both work and recreation. Coupled with CFMoto's OmniDrive CVT and an electronic push-button shifting system, gear transitions are seamless, while the electronic parking brake provides peace of mind for riders parking on uneven terrain.

The Highland models are equipped with a suite of upscale features designed for comfort and usability. The 8-inch CFMoto RideSync MMI touchscreen provides Apple CarPlay integration, audio controls, advanced diagnostics, and enhanced user controls. New HVAC controls, featuring heating and air conditioning, ensure year-round comfort, whether



braving the chill or escaping the heat. Additional premium touches include power windows, a rear sliding window, a power tip-out windshield with automotive-spec, tempered, tinted glass, a standard audio system, and an electric/hydraulic tilting cargo box for superior utility.

With 13 inches of ground clearance and a robust suspension system offering 11 inches of travel, the Highland models handle rough terrain effortlessly. Standard 4,500-lb. winch with synthetic rope, Turf Mode, and a 150-amp, high-output charging system add versatility and power for any task. Available colors: Nebula Black, Bordeaux Red, and TrueTimber Camo.





Argo president and investment group acquire Arctic Cat from Textron

Arctic Cat Vice President and current Argo President Brad Darling, along with an investment group that owns a significant stake in Argo/Ontario Gear & Drive Corporation, has purchased Arctic Cat from Textron.

Darling will lead both companies, which will be technically owned and operated separately. Terms of Arctic Cat's purchase have yet to be disclosed. More details will be released later on the purchase and Arctic Cat's 2026 product line.

"The pursuit of the checkered flag is in Arctic Cat's DNA," said Darling. "It's what we were built on. Like anyone who has ever grabbed the throttle, it's a relentless drive that pushes us forward and sparks our passion. Today is the start of a new chapter, one where Arctic Cat returns to the race, but with a powerful understanding: this race is never-ending, and we intend to lead."

Since taking ownership of Arctic Cat in 2017, Textron Specialized Vehicles invested a great deal of time and resources to keep the brand and its technology at the forefront.

"We seek to continue Arctic Cat's investment in its brand, products, people and dealers, extending its positive momentum," said Darling. "As a permanent fixture of Thief River Falls, Minnesota, for over 63 years, this iconic brand has benefited from the passion of not only the employees but also the entire community. We are now able to wipe away any uncertainty and are looking ahead with great excitement."

Darling will continue to lead both companies into the future. While each brand will be owned and operated separately, the brand alignment of Argo alongside Arctic Cat is a perfect match as Arctic Cat's line of machines bring the passion on and off the trail, while the Argo adventure starts where the trail ends.

According to Argo, the purchase was by Darling and his investment group separately. The investors are also a large stakeholder in Argo/Ontario Gear. However, Argo does not have a stake in Arctic Cat and the companies will operate independently.



Polaris CEO gives strategy overview

Polaris recently provided an overview of the powersports industry and the company's long-term strategy.

Said Mike Speetzen, Polaris CEO, "Our teams are focused in the right areas to not only continue our leadership in powersports but also to improve the financial strength of Polaris, which I believe will ultimately lead to creating shareholder value."

Speetzen said the current market environment needs some context and he felt it was a good opportunity to provide an update on market conditions.

"The point of this discussion is to reinforce the strategy and talk more long-term about the setup that we've got going for the company, which we think is strong when we talk about this down cycle that we're in. It's a bit staggering when you look at the number of competitors who are either exiting categories, shutting down completely, or have filed for bankruptcy and gone through that process."

Speetzen said Polaris is the best house in a recovering neighborhood. "We're trying to work on ensuring that this company is positioned incredibly well so that when the recovery comes, we will be positioned better than anybody else to take advantage of that and grow the company."

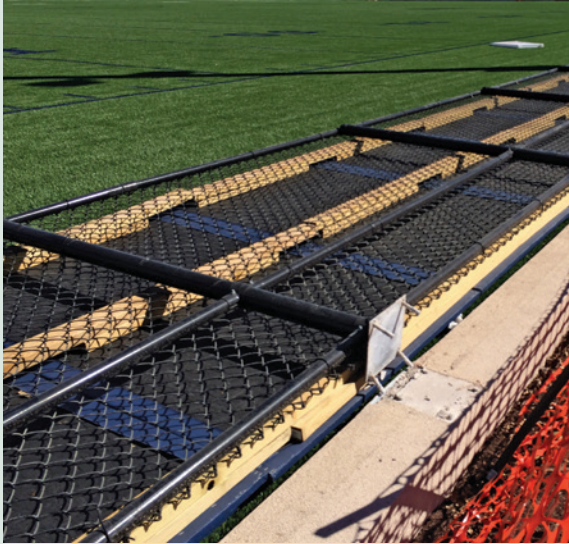
Speetzen said Polaris won't respond to all of the channel's promotional activity and Polaris will not discount its newer technology. "Quite frankly, that's not sustainable share, so we're trying to be as disciplined as we can and make sure that we're pointing promo in the right areas, whether that's targeted offers to specific consumers, broad offer categories getting aggressive around financing, given that interest rates are likely to stay high for longer." **SFM**

– All content for this section provided by PowerSports Business (<https://powersportsbusiness.com/>), sister brand to SportsField Management.

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ

ANSWER

From page 17



This school decided to install fence paddings on one of its synthetic turf fields. For some reason, the fence had been bolted to the cement in place of pouring the cement around the installed poles. Then, when the pads were being installed, instead of attaching the pads directly to the fence, the contractor decided to add a double layer of 2x4s to the area between the fence and the pads. The additional weight of the pads and the 2x4s proved too much weight for the fence's bolts that were secured into the fence foundation cement. The whole fence came down like a series of dominos. No one was injured when this occurred, and the fence had to be reinstalled before the pads could be added. Luckily, the whole thing was not up when the first player made contact with it or they would have had quite a surprise.

Photo from John Mascaro's collection.

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International

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



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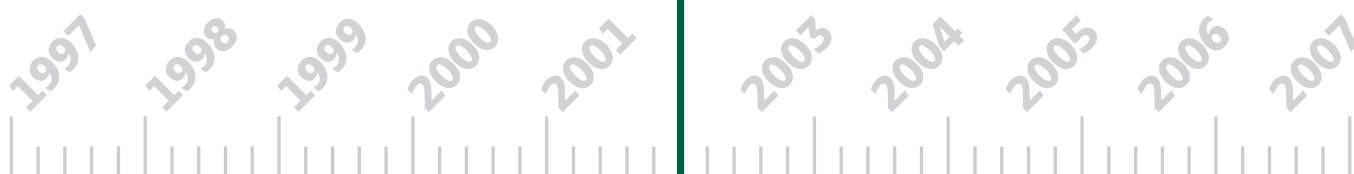


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2002



THIS RETROSPECTIVE DELVES INTO the historic issues of *SportsTurf* magazine, predecessor to *SportsField Management* magazine. For this edition of Accessing the Archives we turn the clock back to 2002.

The January 2002 issue showcased Bank One Ballpark, home of the Arizona Diamondbacks, and how head groundskeeper Grent Trenbeath and his team managed natural grass in a retractable-dome stadium during a season in which the Diamondbacks played into November and ended the season as World Series champions.

“We’d done the preparation, and the year had been our field’s best,” said Trenbeath. “It looked great and played great. So, in the bottom of the ninth, Gonzo drives home the game-winning run. The fans go nuts, and I run out on my field for a huge celebration. It was tremendous.”

Dr. Tony Koski, who was chosen as the *SportsTurf* 2002 Manager of the Year, was also profiled in the January issue. Koski was selected by the previous winners of the award, and was recognized for his leadership in the industry and his willingness to educate others. He also served on the SAFE Foundation Board and was responsible for developing the criteria for research grants.

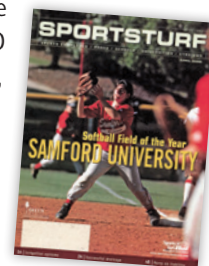
The cover story of the February 2002 issue was the Dell Diamond of Round Rock, Texas, winning Professional Baseball Field

of the Year; but the primary focus of the issue was an STMA member survey. Highlights included that overall satisfaction with STMA services at the time was 92% favorable, and *SportsTurf* magazine received 85% satisfaction. The conference received a 70% favorable and 28% neutral rating among members, but that might be related to first-hand experience, as the favorable rating jumped to 89% among members who had actually attended.



Experts sharing insight into infield maintenance was the focus of the March 2002 cover story, “Mix Masters.” Said then STMA President, Murray Cook, “As a rule of thumb, the average clay/sand/silt ratio is 30 percent clay, 60 percent sand, and 10 percent silt. Pro levels will need more clay, but only 5 or 10 percent more.” Added Mike Boekholder, head groundskeeper, Indianapolis Indians, “Moisture management is the most critical maintenance practice we do to ensure a consistent playing surface.”

Samford Field winning College Softball Field of the Year was the cover story for April. This high-use field gained rave reviews from visiting teams and spectators. Meanwhile, the May issue focused on the City of Carrollton, Texas, McInnish Complex winning School and Parks Softball Field of the Year.

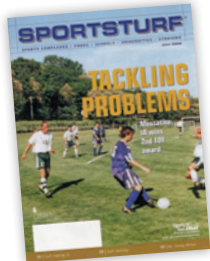




Also in the May issue, Abby McNeal, CSFM, shared insights into field paint. “You need to first make a plan as to how you are going to paint the field,” said McNeal. “It is important to take the time to think about it so you do not track back across painted lines. Gather all of your painting strings, check all of

your equipment, and finalize the method of painting with the crew.”

Darrian Daily, director of grounds for the Columbus Crew, wrote about soccer field maintenance in the June 2002 issue. “The best time-saving practice to use is ‘cheater points,’” Daily wrote. “Our cheater points are plastic anchors we drive into the ground. We have placed two sets of points to mark the corner of a soccer field and a football field. These points allow us to easily find the outer boundaries of each playing area.”



The July issue covered the Schools and Parks Soccer Field of the Year — Muscatine Soccer Complex, analyzing soil- and sand-based fields, the Chicago Bears training camp fields at Olivet Nazarene University, field maintenance checklists, and more.

The “modular makeover of Michigan State” was the cover story for August *SportsTurf*. For the first time in 33 years, college football would be played on a natural grass surface at MSU’s Spartan Stadium. That was thanks to a system of 4,800 GreenTech ITM modules measuring 46 inches square each. Each module weighed 1,300 pounds and was brought into the stadium via forklift. They were then reassembled in the same order in which they were grown over the prior year at the Hancock Turf Research Center so that the edges and seams would fit tightly together.



In the September 2002 issue of *SportsTurf*, legendary Chicago White Sox Groundskeeper, Roger Bossard (aka, “The Sodfather”), shared his insights regarding



sports field projects. “There are two main factors in the success of any sports field project. First is that the right decisions are made during construction. Second, that it is properly cared for and maintained. Building and maintenance is really a partnership. Sports field builder and groundskeeper work hand in hand. Either you both look good or you don’t.”

Bossard added that three considerations for any project are, 1) Never forget the purpose of the field — athletics; 2) Common sense goes a long way in designing a field; and 3) The original design concept must not only keep the construction budget in mind, but the maintenance budget as well.

The expansion Houston Texans; their new home, Reliant Stadium; and their new head groundskeeper, Jon Strantz, were profiled in the October 2002 issue of *SportsTurf*. Reliant Stadium opted for a palletized turf system (StrathAyr). The entire module was only 7-1/2 inches tall including the metal drainage base, which consisted of nine honeycombed drain cell inserts. “After the first scrimmage here, the players liked it a lot. It’s definitely a fast surface,” said Strantz. “It turned out really nice.”

The November 2002 issue previewed the 2003 STMA Conference in Texas, while the December issue wrapped up the year with a story about a high school field going from groundbreaking to game day in 83 days, as well as an article about the turf conditioning system at Gillette Stadium.



Overall, *SportsTurf* magazine in 2002 continued its product tabloid format with a heavy emphasis on equipment and supplies, but also had some great guest contributors and a nice variety of in-depth articles on some interesting projects and topics. **SFM**

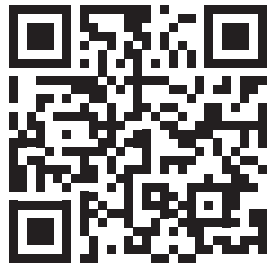


All content for this section is pulled from the *SportsTurf*/SportsField Management archives, an ongoing cooperative project of EPG Media, SFMA and the Michigan State University Libraries. Public access to the archive from 1985 to the present (less two months) is available at <https://sturf.lib.msu.edu/index.html>.

FROM THE FEEDS

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

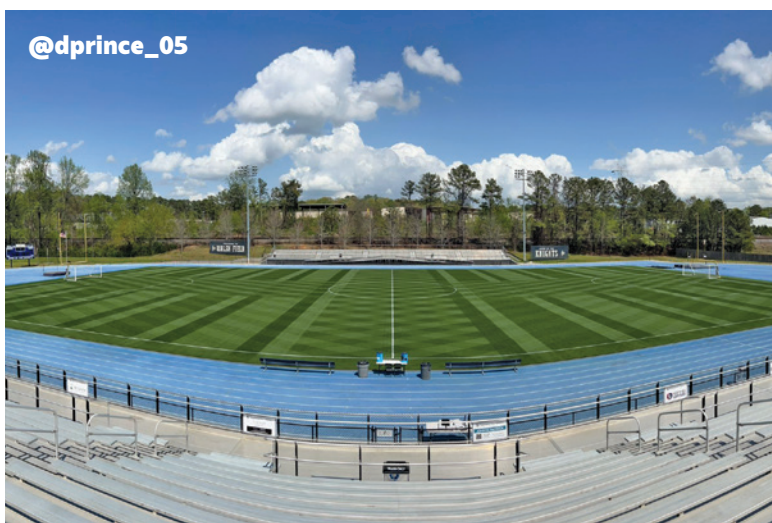
Scan the QR code for links to all of our feeds and connect with us.

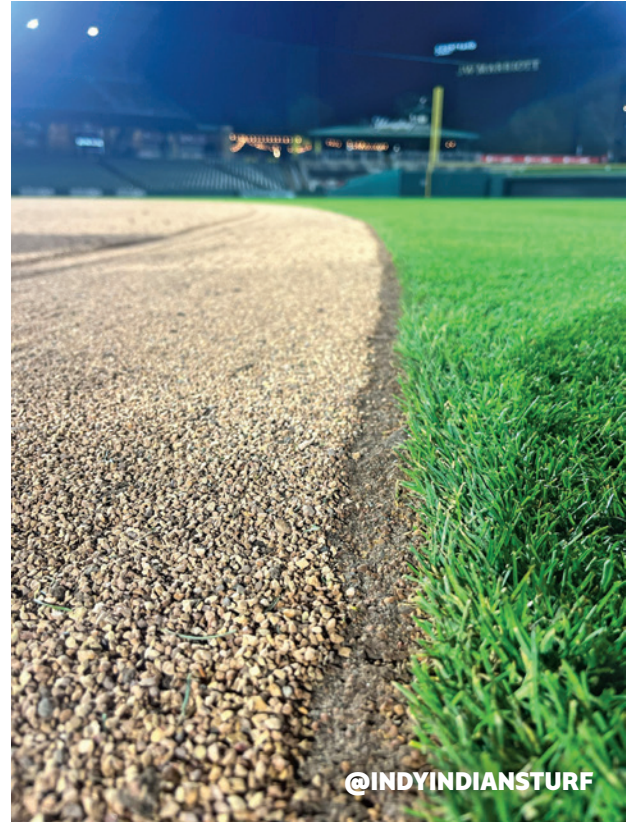




@BusekTim

I would like to introduce everyone to Joshua Boydston, Agricultural Education instructor at @SonoravilleHigh in Calhoun. Starting in the fall he will be adding a Turfgrass/Horticulture Pathway and adding golf equipment specific training to the existing Ag Mechanics Pathway. I was able to get a tour of the current facilities and discuss the numerous ways @GeorgiaGCSA @GCSAA @GeorgiaSFMA can help make sure these programs are a success. I want to thank @JohnDeere @NGTurf @MikeRollinsSIP and Jerry Pate Turf and Irrigation for already getting onboard with potential needs.





@Ryan_Anderson96

A quick 2 month project and we're ready for Saturdays back on grass at Kenan Stadium



@SportsTurfSun

Today marks 20 years at my #BestOffice. Even more mind blowing is the rough number of games and events I've prepped the fields for. Grateful for it all!



@PUSportsTurf



@laturfinstitute

First day at the 97th Iowa FFA Leadership Conference! So exciting meeting all the students and sharing the possibilities turfgrass has to offer. The future is looking bright @iowaffa @iowalawncare @iowa_stma @Gcsalowa



@mitchhooten



@VT_groundscrew

Trays removed for a tower for the Metallica concert.



Murray Cook inducted into Virginia Sports Hall of Fame

Murray Cook, president of BrightView's Sports Turf division, was inducted into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame as part of its Class of 2025 in a ceremony on April 26 in Virginia Beach. A native of Salem, Va., Cook's career in sports field design, construction and management has left an indelible mark on fields worldwide.

"I've been fortunate to work with amazing teams and organizations that have allowed me to build fields in some of the most unique and historic locations," Cook said. "This honor is not just mine, but it also belongs to everyone who has supported my dreams and has worked alongside me throughout my career."

Cook began his journey into sports turf and field management at the age of 13 as a bat boy for the single-A Salem Pirates. He went on to become the head groundskeeper in 1975. In 1991, he was appointed as Major League

Baseball's Official Field Consultant, a role in which he has overseen the development of playing surfaces in more than 60 countries. His expertise has been instrumental in high-profile projects such as the MLB at Field of Dreams games in Iowa, the London Series at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the recent renovations at historic Rickwood Field in Alabama, and the upcoming MLB Speedway Classic in Tennessee.

In recognition of his numerous contributions and astounding work, Cook was inducted into the Salem-Roanoke Baseball Hall of Fame in 2006, and in 2021 the Salem City Council proclaimed every September 27 as "Murray Cook Day." He has also previously been named as the 1991 *SportsTurf* Man of the Year, and served as the president of the Sports Turf Managers Association (now known as the Sports Field Management Association).

"It's truly an honor to be recognized by the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame," said Cook. "Growing up here in the Roanoke Valley, I never imagined shagging baseballs as a kid would take me around the world as it has. I want to thank my family, friends, colleagues and mentors who have helped me throughout my career. Without them, I wouldn't be standing here today. Their support is everything."

The 2025 class also included basketball player and current NBA referee Brandon Adair, broadcaster Dan Bonner, former NFL and Canadian Football League player Ed George, former professional soccer player Ali Krieger, sportswriter Harry Minium Jr., former NBA player Joe Smith, high school football coach Mike Smith, and former MLB player Lou Whitaker.

2025 Bill Rose Scholarship recipients announced

The Bill Rose Foundation — formed in memory and honor of Bill Rose, the founder of Pure Seed, Roselawn and Pure-Seed Testing — is determined to continue innovation in the turfgrass industry through support of students and academic research programs across the United States. The Foundation recently announced its 2025 Travel Scholarship winners.

BRYNNA BRUXELLAS, NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

Brynna Bruxellas grew up in Falls City, Nebraska and earned her B.A. in Geography from Concordia University-Nebraska, with minors in Geospatial Technology and Environmental Studies. She graduated with honors while also playing for the women's basketball team and serving as the Rotaract Club president. Her interests in agriculture and technology, paired with her passion for knowledge led her to N.C. State University in the summer of 2023. Brynna is currently pursuing her master's in Crop Science and is conducting research on the use of artificial intelligence and drones to help measure and characterize turfgrass quality. At NC-State, Brynna has engaged with the academic community, presenting her research at conferences including the 2024 Carolinas Golf Superintendent Association Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC. Brynna will be graduating in the spring of 2025 with a degree in Crop Science, a Data Science Certificate, and GIS Minor.



**MARIAH CASHBAUGH,
PURDUE UNIVERSITY**

Mariah Cashbaugh received their B.S. in Microbiology from West Liberty University before moving on to pursue a Ph.D. in Botany and Plant Pathology at Purdue University. Advised by Dr. Lee Miller, Mariah's research focuses on the transmission of turfgrass pathogens or bioinoculants through the rhizosphere of golf course greens. Further, this research hopes to detect and monitor microbes quantitatively throughout the season to inform application timing and improve fungicide efficacy.


**JUAN ROMERO CUBAS,
VIRGINIA TECH**

Juan developed a passion for agriculture at an early age while growing up on his family's coffee farm in Honduras. In 2023, he joined Askew's lab at Virginia Tech, where his research focuses on innovative organic weed control strategies in turfgrass systems. His work investigates the efficacy and dose response of cutting-edge technologies, such as liquid nitrogen, diode lasers, and radiant heat, offering promising alternatives to traditional methods. This research marks the initial phase of an ambitious project that aims to integrate these innovations with robotics and artificial intelligence. With herbicide-resistant weeds on the rise, synthetic herbicide regulations tightening, and



public demand for non-chemical solutions growing, Juan's efforts are set to redefine sustainable weed management in turfgrass and beyond.

**PARUL MANDAL,
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

Parul Mandal is a Ph.D. student in the Braun Turfgrass Lab at Kansas State University, where she is conducting research on evaluating the effects of seed coatings on the storage, germination and establishment of cool-season turfgrass species. Her innovative work has the potential to revolutionize turfgrass management and seed storage technologies. Parul earned her M.Sc. in Agronomy and Crop Management from Punjab Agricultural University and her B.Sc. in Agriculture from CCS Haryana Agricultural University in India. Parul currently serves as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for the Basic Turfgrass Culture course, where she assists with lab sessions, delivers lectures, and guides students in turfgrass identification and management practices. She is actively engaged in leadership and professional development activities and has received several recognitions, including the prestigious 2024 Gerald O. Mott Award from the Crop Science Society of America, which honors outstanding graduate students in crop science.


**SAPTARSHI MONDAL,
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, GRIFFIN**

"As a citizen of India, where agriculture is the backbone of the economy, I was inspired to pursue my academic career with a BS in Agriculture. Con-

tinuing to explore the mysterious riddles of crop improvement housed inside that double helical structure, DNA, I

joined the MS program at the Punjab Agricultural University, renowned for pioneering work of the Green Revolution in India. Currently, I am pursuing my doctoral studies in understanding the genetics of salt tolerance in Zoysiagrass as a graduate student at the University of Georgia, Griffin campus under the supervision of Dr. David Jespersen. I have developed my research experience both in field- and greenhouse-based experiments. Broadly, my research skills include hybridization followed by selection of plants, screening of bi-parental populations and association panels for QTL mapping, Bulk-segregant RNA sequencing, transcriptomics, and metabolomics. I express my sincere thanks to the Bill Rose Foundation for this award!"


**CLARISSA HUNTER PETERSON,
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY**

Clarissa is in her second year of grad school, and will be earning a master's in Environmental Science from Brigham Young University. Her research focuses on hybrid bermudagrass dormancy management in a cool-season climate. She has given several tours and presentations to various groups in Utah, educating them on the advantages of hybrid bermudagrass.





PH Holdings acquires Turf Pride USA

PH Holdings, the parent company of PH Outdoors and PH Turf, has acquired Turf Pride USA, a leading manufacturer of professional turf maintenance equipment. This acquisition marks a new chapter in innovation and service for turf professionals across the country.

Founded by Don Cotton, Turf Pride USA built a reputation for rugged, reliable solutions that enhance turf health and maintenance efficiency. The company's flagship products — including the Core Collector, deep tine aerators, and the Trion series of lifts — have become staples on golf courses and sports fields nationwide.

"After 23 years of growing Turf Pride, I wanted to ensure the next chapter was in good hands," said Don Cotton. "PH Holdings shares our core values, work ethic, and passion for this industry. I couldn't ask for a better team to continue the mission."

The acquisition strengthens PH Holdings' presence in the turf care market. Its two subsidiaries — PH Turf, a distributor of high-end turf machinery, and PH Outdoors, a pre-

mier name in land management and wildlife habitat equipment — will now be complemented by Turf Pride's U.S.-based manufacturing and engineering expertise.

"Don Cotton is a legend in our industry," said Paul Hollis, CEO of PH Holdings. "Turf Pride's Core Collector and Trion lifts are among the most respected equipment on the market. We're honored to carry that legacy forward and bring these American-built products to even more turf professionals."

International Turfgrass Research Conference

The 15th International Turfgrass Research Conference (ITRC) will be held at the Karuizawa Prince Hotel West in Karuizawa, Nagano, Japan from July 12-16, 2025. This is only the second time that the conference will be held in Japan; it was first hosted in Tokyo in 1989. Karuizawa is a popular summer resort area for the residents of Tokyo, and it has convenient access from central Tokyo.

The combined knowledge of researchers and engineers from Japan and abroad will be brought together at the 2025 ITRC to help solve "exist-

ing issues" and encourage people in industry, government, and academia to work together to create a green and rich living environment that maximizes green space in society.

The event will feature keynote speeches, a practitioner seminar, oral and poster research presentations, a Zoysiagrass symposium, graduate student contest awards, as well as an all-day technical tour visiting Saitama and Nagano.

A graduate student competition will once again take place at the 2025 ITRC. Competitions will be held for oral presentations and entrants will be divided into multiple categories based on their topic of research. The top contestants in each category will receive a complimentary ITS student membership and a modest cash prize. The presenting author of an accepted manuscript must be a graduate student at the time of the 2025 ITRC to be eligible for the competition.

For more information, visit <https://itrc2025.turfsociety.com/> **SFM**



2025

JULY 1-3

NATIONAL SPORTS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

San Antonio, Texas

www.ncs4.usm.edu/events/annual-conference

OCTOBER 13-15

SYNTHETIC TURF COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

www.syntheticturfCouncil.org

OCTOBER 22-24

EQUIP EXPO

Louisville, Kentucky

www.equipexposition.com

OCTOBER 22-24

PGMS SCHOOL OF GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

Louisville, Kentucky

www.pgms.org/page/AnnualConference

NOVEMBER 2-5

ELEVATE (NALP)

Phoenix, Arizona

www.landscapeprofessionals.org/ELEVATE

DECEMBER 1-5

AMERICAN SPORTS BUILDERS ASSOCIATION TECHNICAL MEETING

San Antonio, Texas

www.sportsbuilders.org/page/UpcomingEvents

DECEMBER 8-11

IRRIGATION SHOW AND EDUCATION WEEK

New Orleans, Louisiana

www.irrigation.org/IA



EQUIP EXPO



SFMA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Photo by
Mark Skalny

2026

JANUARY 18-22

SFMA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Fort Worth, Texas

www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/conference **SFM**

Mean Green Vanquish Autonomous stand-on

Mean Green expanded its commercial-grade electric mower lineup with its all-new Vanquish Autonomous commercial-electric stand-on autonomous mower. The manufacturer, owned by Generac Power Systems, said the Vanquish delivers up to eight hours of all-electric runtime with a 60-inch mulching rear discharge deck.

Now available for order at Mean Green dealers nationwide, Vanquish Autonomous features Greenzie self-driving technology for real-world commercial demands. With camera-based obstacle detection, live performance tracking, and a call-back feature to return the mower to its starting position, it's designed to be a smart, safe, and productive machine for a commercial mowing fleet. Users can also indicate keep-out zones to mark areas where the mower should not go.

"With advanced self-driving capabilities and the ability to automatically repeat saved routes, it redefines what productivity looks like," said Brandon DeCoff, vice president of sales and marketing at Generac Chore. "We're proud to lead the charge in commercial electric mowing with the industry's first stand-on autonomous solution."

The Vanquish Autonomous boasts an available 22kWh battery, which can mow continuously for up to eight hours. It also has the flexibility to switch between autonomous and manual operation. The Vanquish Autonomous is capable of speeds up to 11.5 mph, and the patented Heavy-duty Impulse Drive System provides performance and reliability.

The new Vanquish Autonomous mower retails for \$65,000. Mean Green supports the Vanquish Autonomous with a 5-year limited battery warranty and 5-year limited mower warranty.



Envu Tarveta fungicide

Envu expanded its portfolio to include Tarveta fungicide, a tool to prevent soilborne disease such as fairy ring, summer patch and other diseases caused by summer stress. Tarveta is approved for use on athletic fields, golf courses, sod farms and commercial lawns.

Tarveta works on multiple difficult diseases as a combination of two powerful active ingredients, fluoxastrobin and flutriafol. Fluoxastrobin is taken up by the plant quicker than other strobilurins, while flutriafol moves up the xylem to internally control new fungal growth and form a protective barrier. The result — Tarveta is a fast-acting disease-control solution for stressed and weakened turf.

"Diseases can establish quickly when turfgrass is stressed during peak playing times," said James Hempfling, Ph.D. Green Solutions Team, Envu. "Whether managing a sports field or a golf course, disease damage disrupts turfgrass playability. That's why preventive practices are crucial. Tarveta can be applied proactively ahead of stressful periods to protect against infection or curatively to ensure rapid recovery."

Husqvarna 590BTS and 590BFS gas-powered backpack blowers

Husqvarna introduced the 590BTS and 590BFS backpack blowers for professional use. The manufacturer said the all-new backpack blowers boast 56 Newtons of blow force and deliver 1,245 cfm of air volume. Powered by a 79.4cc X-Torq engine, the 590BTS and 590BFS set a new standard in power-to-weight ratio.



The blowers feature an AutoTune-controlled carburetor to adjust air/fuel mixture automatically to optimize performance. The blowers also have a new simplified starting procedure with an easy “start” button that eliminates the need for a manual choke. Simply press the button, purge the engine and pull to start.

To ensure comfort and support for professionals, the Husqvarna 590BTS and 590BFS include benefits such as an ergonomic padded harness with a waist belt, a ventilated back pad and LowVib technology to reduce operator fatigue. The top-mounted adjustable right handle also caters to users of all sizes, while load lifter straps ensure a tailored fit. Additional conveniences include a cruise control feature, a commercial-grade 3-stage air filter and the industry's largest fuel tank for extended runtimes between fill-ups. To accommodate user preference, the 590BTS features a tube-mounted throttle, while the 590BFS comes with a frame-mounted throttle.

Available now, the blowers retail for \$890.

Exmark updates Lazer Z S-series for 2025

Exmark redesigned its Lazer Z S-Series commercial zero-turn riding mower for 2025. The updated S-Series mowers present options for larger cutting decks and more powerful engines than the Lazer Z E-Series. Cutting deck options include 52-, 60- or 72-inch UltraCut Series 4 side-discharge, or 60- or 72-inch UltraCut rear-discharge decks.

Buyers can choose from carbureted Kawasaki or EFI Kohler V-Twin commercial engines. On-board diagnostics give the operator clear visibility of vital functions, including an electronic fuel gauge, battery voltage warning, hour meter and OPC safety switch monitoring. A 12-gallon single fuel tank provides extended runtime between fill-ups.



The new Lazer Z S-Series seating system raises the bar for operator comfort with three inches of suspension travel, and an elastomeric stretch fabric base. Combined with a wider, more contoured seat profile, the new seating system effectively isolates the operator from bumps and vibration.

Echo LM-3022SP 30-inch gas-powered walk-behind

Echo added the LM-3022SP 30-inch self-propelled gas lawn mower to its lineup. With a 223cc engine and 30-inch steel deck, this mower is designed to cover more ground with fewer passes. It uses a twin-blade system with easy-to-adjust cutting height.

“We’ve packed this mower with the same durable features professionals rely on, from its powerful engine to the 3-in-1 discharge system, so users can expect efficiency, precision and lasting performance with every mow,” said Jason Wilk, senior product manager at Echo.

The LM-3022SP is built to handle tough terrain with ease, and its ball-bearing supported wheels offer enhanced traction and stability across uneven ground. The LM-3022SP is the second gas-powered mower Echo has introduced this year, following the launch of the LM-2119SP earlier in 2025.

The mower is available now at more than 6,000 Echo dealers nationwide and online at The Home Depot. It retails for \$1,600 and comes backed by a five-year consumer warranty. **SFM**



New report examines the role of park and recreation professionals in emergency preparedness and response

Eighty-five percent of park and recreation agencies are highly involved with preparing for and responding to natural disasters — particularly those related to severe weather, according to a newly released *Emergency Preparedness and Response in Parks and Recreation* report from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

The *Emergency Preparedness and Response in Parks and Recreation* report examines the role park and recreation agencies play on the front lines in emergency preparedness and response. With the rise of extreme weather events and natural disasters, the role of park and recreation agencies is more critical than ever. To better understand and support this important work, NRPA surveyed park and recreation agencies about their roles in the current landscape of emergency preparedness and response. This report highlights the experiences of, and the challenges and opportunities for, park and recreation professionals in emergency situations.

Key findings:

- Most park and recreation agencies (85%) are highly involved with preparing for, and responding to, natural disasters — particularly those related to severe weather.
- The top three groups park and recreation professionals partner with when preparing for and responding to emergencies are other local government departments within agency jurisdictions, the Red Cross, and local area risk management.
- Seventy-eight percent of agencies primarily fund this work through their operational budgets
- Most agencies (86%) have developed or follow some form of formal emergency plan within their jurisdictions.
- About a third of agencies (32%) face challenges with funding and staff time/capacity for this work.



- More than three-fourths of park and recreation professionals (78%) believe that their role in emergency preparedness and response is highly essential.

“Park and recreation agencies play a vital and often underrecognized role in emergency preparedness and response,” said Dianne Palladino, NRPA director of research and evaluation. “Through strategic partnerships, formal planning and dedicated use of operational resources, these professionals help safeguard communities and strengthen resilience in the face of natural disasters.”

Read NRPA's *Emergency Preparedness and Response* at www.nrpa.org/globalassets/research/2025-nrpa-emergency-report.pdf.

Project EverGreen and ScottsMiracle-Gro revitalize a heat-stressed Phoenix park

Project EverGreen and ScottsMiracle-Gro completed the second phase of a major renovation at Barrios Unidos Park in Phoenix that includes planting of trees, grass and native plants.

This transformative effort, part of Project EverGreen's GreenCare for Communities initiative and funded by ScottsMiracle-Gro, aims to bring cooler green spaces and improved recreational opportunities to one of Phoenix's most heat-stressed neighborhoods. Located near Sky Harbor Airport, the park is in a dense urban heat island with some of the highest summer temperatures in Phoenix. The city of Phoenix and the Arizona Sports Field Management Association partnered on the initiative.

The first phase, completed in fall 2024, involved planting 50 mature shade trees, including Southern Live Oak and Evergreen Elms, and expansion of the irrigation system to maintain the new trees, to help reduce temperatures and provide environmental benefits.

The second phase took place on May 14, 2025, and included revitalizing the park's softball field to make it safe, playable and inviting for community use. Work included grading and grooming the infield, installing bermudagrass sod around the lip of the infield, applying topsoil and conditioner, and replacing bases and pitching components.



The outfield was reseeded with drought-tolerant bermudagrass seed. Eighty native plants were also planted to add more shrubs and color around the walking path within the park. The total project value of both phases is \$150,000 and also relies on donated materials, labor and equipment from green industry professionals and volunteers.

These upgrades enhanced the park as a whole, contributing to the positive environmental footprint of the park. The grass and trees at Barrios Unidos Park sequester more than 250,000 pounds of carbon and produce more than 381,000 thousand yards of clean air for the community, according to Project EverGreen's Clean Air Calculator. That's the equivalent of removing the emissions of about 32 cars from this neighborhood every year.

"Green spaces are far more than an amenity. They are essential infrastructure that promote public health, environmental equity and stronger communities," said Cindy Code, executive director of Project EverGreen. "This project demonstrates what can happen when passionate professionals and partners come together to create something lasting and meaningful for future generations."

John Sass, senior vice president of Lawns for ScottsMiracle-Gro and chief creative officer for its Scotts and other brands, added, "Lawns and green spaces are where real life happens. They provide opportunities for people to gather, make connections and enjoy the outdoors in ways that enhance health and wellbeing. Just as importantly, they bring environmental and climate benefits in both the short and longer term." **SFM**

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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.

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For more information, visit:

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Mid-Atlantic SFMA: www.masfma.org

Michigan SFMA: www.misfma.org

Minnesota Park and Sports Field Management
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Mo-Kan STMA: www.mokanstma.com

Nebraska SFMA:
www.nebraskaturfgrass.com/nestma

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Ohio Turfgrass Foundation: www.ohioturfgrass.org

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Oregon STMA: www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org
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Carrying Capacity of a Sports Field

Q: How many games can a natural grass sports field host each year?

A: The honest answer is that it varies widely — anywhere from 25 to 200 events — depending on the field's construction, maintenance, and usage patterns. That range might sound vague, but it reflects the reality that every field is different, and its carrying capacity hinges on how well it's maintained. For example, football fields typically host 40 to 50 events annually, while high-use soccer fields may see upward of 200. The difference comes down to field type, sport, scheduling and, most importantly, the level of care and investment the field receives.

It's also worth noting that a single game played during heavy rain can destroy an entire season's worth of maintenance. That's why scheduling — based on weather and field conditions — is just as crucial as long-term investment.

Fields without proper investment deteriorate quickly. In contrast, those maintained by skilled turf professionals and backed by a supportive community can host well over 200 events per year. The Sports Turf Managers Association's Field of the Year Awards demonstrate this: top-performing fields result from education, expertise and adequate resources.

At the core of field performance is drainage. Since the 1970s, when sports turf drainage systems became more widespread, field quality has improved significantly, provided those systems are in place. Good drainage reduces cancellations, improves playability, and increases a field's ability to withstand frequent use. Today, dustbowls and mud pits are unacceptable. Players and spectators expect fields that are firm, even, and have full grass cover. Those three benchmarks — firmness, surface evenness and ground cover — are only achievable when fields drain well.

To increase carrying capacity, improving drainage is essential. The most cost-effective way to do this on a native soil field is with a rigorous annual program of aeration, soil cultivation and sand topdressing, potentially combined with sand slit installation every four to five years. This practice can transform a low-performing field into one capable of handling more than 100 events annually. However,

consistency is critical; topdressing must be done yearly to avoid soil layering. For greater impact, some facilities choose to reconstruct the field entirely, using more granular materials or converting to sand-based systems. These options offer improved drainage, firmer playing surfaces, and higher carrying capacities, but require more intensive and ongoing maintenance to perform as intended.

Equally important to drainage is irrigation. Without adequate summer watering, turfgrass cannot grow. Ultimately, water management, through both irrigation and drainage, dictates the success of a field. Beyond water management, several other factors affect a field's carrying capacity:

■ **Skilled maintenance:** Fields managed by trained turfgrass professionals are typically in better condition. These experts understand the timing and methods for mowing, fertilization, irrigation, pest control and renovation.

■ **Community investment:** A turf manager's effectiveness depends on funding and support. Without community advocacy, improvements stall.

■ **Intensity of use:** Fields hosting frequent games without rest or rotation wear down faster. Ideally, practice and game fields rotate to allow turf recovery.

■ **Age of users:** Younger athletes generally cause less wear than older ones.

■ **Field design and limitations:** Permanent structures, such as multi-sport goals set in concrete, hinder renovation efforts in high-wear areas such as goalmouths.

Like any public asset, a sports field requires consistent investment and care. To serve hundreds of athletes and host dozens of events annually, it must be treated as valuable infrastructure. **SFM**



Pamela Sherratt

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The Ohio State University

Questions?

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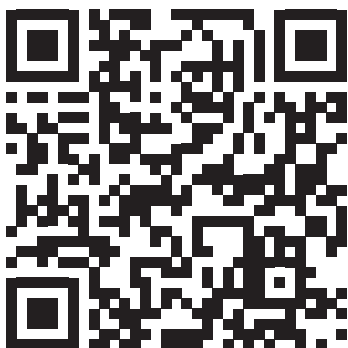
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Beyond the Field will be distributed monthly on the final Friday of the month. The regular *SportsField Management* Insider newsletter will continue to be deployed weekly, and will continue to focus on sports field management news and products, SFMA updates, turfgrass science and research, industry education, grounds management, outdoor power equipment, irrigation, and more.