

SportsField

MANAGEMENT

September 2025

Vol. 41 No. 9

The Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

Work Ethic **16** | Assembling a Bid **18**

Irrigation Improvements **22** | Insights from an Internship **30**

ONE MAN SHOW

Peer-proclaimed "lone wolf," Brett Barker, earns
S&P Softball FOY for Ben Lomond HS Softball Field



SPORTS FIELD
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



SWEEPING **INTO FALL.**



With cutting-edge machines like the TRILO S3, TrenchIt Fairway, and GKB Combibool, preparing for the Fall season has never been more efficient and effortless. Compact and powerful, the TRILO S3 Vacuum Sweeper works to rid your open areas of litter, leaves, and grass clippings. For drainage and irrigation with minimal clean up time, the TrenchIt Fairway is an essential tool. The GKB Combibool a skilled, effective multi-tool for aerating, grooming, brushing, slitting and rolling. Sweep into the Fall at STEC Equipment, where we are committed to help you find the most innovative, efficient equipment.

THE GOLD STANDARD IN PERFORMANCE & VERSATILITY



Utilizing a proprietary blend of surfactant components, Vivax Oro offers superior performance with the additional benefit of delayed watering-in without loss of efficacy.

Vivax Oro Benefits Include:

- Promotes uniform water distribution throughout the rootzone
- Excellent rewetting and drought recovery
- Formulated for use across multiple soil and turf types
- Allows for delayed watering after application



Learn more at [AquatrolsCompany.com](https://www.AquatrolsCompany.com)

Contents

SEPTEMBER 2025
VOL. 41, NO. 9



18

28

Professional Development

References: An important, but often overlooked, component of the job search

30

Perspectives

Insights from an Internship

44

Profile

Texas Turfgrass Association
Executive Director Katie Flowers



30

10

Field of the Year Schools and Parks Softball

Ben Lomond High School Softball
Field, Ogden, Utah

18

Facility Construction

Have a Project to Bid Out?
Start Here

22

Irrigation and Water Management

Irrigation Improvements: Save big
money and use less water



22

DEPARTMENTS

6

Editor's Note

7

President's Message

8

SFMA In Action

16

More than Grass with Alpha Jones

17

John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

34

From the Feeds

38

Twenty for 2025

46

Beyond the Field

48

Calendar

49

SFMA Chapter Contacts

49

Marketplace

50

Q&A

Legendary Fields With Game-Changing Machines.



Topdressing

On game day, a high-quality field gives your team the competitive edge. Achieve perfect topdressing with Turfco. From the CR-8 to the top-selling WideSpin™ 1550 and the eco-friendly Mete-R-Matic®, Turfco offers the most comprehensive topdressing solutions on the market. Whether it's topdressing, compost, crumb rubber, or calcined clay, we've got you covered. Call us to talk pro to pro.



Spreading & Spraying

The Turfco T5000 Spreader Sprayer is the ultimate MVP for sports field managers, delivering unrivaled power and productivity. Dominate field maintenance by spraying up to 300,000 sq ft per fill and utilizing the 325-lb granular capacity to get more done quickly. With precision steering and a boomless, 10 foot wide spray, you'll weave through tight corners and dodge obstacles like a pro.

Debris Clean-Up

Debris-clearing before the game is faster than ever with the new Torrent™ 4 Turbine Blower, the most productive blower available. Its one-click nozzle rotation and MagnaPoint™ Technology provide precise, preset angles for effortless operation, eliminating guesswork for operators. Combined with its unprecedented power, the Torrent 4 makes getting your field game-ready quicker and easier than ever.



Achieve Dream Turf With Championship Machines
Schedule your demo today at www.turfco.com or call 800.679.8201



Editor's Note



John Kmitta

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

I don't typically delve into equipment-related discussions in this space. However, in this issue we share the winners of the *OPE+* Twenty for 2025 New Product Awards. The awards program is run by our sister publication, *OPE+*, which covers the outdoor power equipment dealer and professional landscape markets. And although the winning products are geared toward landscape industry professionals, there is plenty of crossover interest to users in the sports field management industry.

This year's slate of 20 winners featured a healthy dose of mowers, hand-held *OPE* and earth-moving equipment. As former editor of both *Landscape and Irrigation* magazine and *OPE* magazine, I helped launch the "Twenty for..." awards program more than a decade ago.

To look back at the program — and equipment trends over the years — I recently sat down with *OPE+* Editor Glenn Hansen for a retrospective on winners over the past decade and related observations based on the stats.

Over that time, mowers were far and away the most recognized innovations. Since 2015, 49 of the award winners have been ride-on/zero-turn mowers, another 16 were stand-on mowers and six were walk-behind mowers. The next closest categories of winners were loaders/skid-steers with 18, blowers with 14, UTVs with 10, irrigation components with nine, and excavators with eight.

Glenn and I also delved into the winning companies to get a feel for which

brands had the most awarded innovations over the years. As expected, the awards have been led by major equipment brands that invest a lot in R&D and equipment innovation. Since 2015, Kubota and Toro lead the way with nine wins each. That is followed by Stihl with eight; Bobcat, Exmark and Scag with seven each; Cub Cadet, Ferris, John Deere and Hustler with six each; and Caterpillar, Mean Green, Ditch Witch, Belgard and Kioti with five each.

Looking back at trends throughout the years, it is interesting to note that we had two pieces of battery-powered *OPE* win awards in 2015, and our first robotic equipment win was in 2016. For comparison, 10 of this year's "Twenty for 2025" award winners were battery or autonomous technologies.

Husqvarna has been consistent with its robotic technology through the years — winning in 2019 for the Automower 550, in 2020 for the Automower 525 AWD, in 2022 for the CEORA, and now in 2025 for the Automower 525 AWD EPOS. In addition to Husqvarna, other companies being recognized for their autonomous innovations this year include Exmark, John Deere and Mean Green.

For more information about the *OPE+* Twenty for 2025, visit ope-plus.com and check out both the *OPE Insider* podcast and the *OPE People* podcast. **SFM**

SportsField MANAGEMENT

EPG Brand Acceleration

7760 France Ave. South, Suite 810, Bloomington, MN 55435

Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

ADVERTISING SALES

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

EDITORIAL

Sr VP Sales/Group Publisher | David Voll
Associate Publisher/Editorial Brand Director | John Kmitta
Technical Editor | Chase Straw, Ph.D.
Art Director | Lindsay Zigan Peterson

AD MATERIALS AND QUESTIONS

ads@epgacceleration.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

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

REPRINTS

Visit www.epgacceleration.com/marketing-services/ and contact us today or email us at info@epgacceleration.com.

DIRECT MAIL LIST SALES

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

Publisher's Notice: We Assume No Responsibility For The Validity Of Claims In Connection With Items Appearing In SportsField Management.

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

Postmaster: Send address changes to *SportsField Management*, PO Box 96, Port Jervis, NY 12771-0096. For subscription information and requests, call Subscription Services at (763) 383-4492. Subscription rates: 1 year, \$52 US & Poss.; All subscriptions are payable in advance in US funds.

Send payments to *SportsField Management*, PO Box 96, Port Jervis, NY 12771-0096. Phone: (763) 383-4492. Fax: (763) 383-4499. Single copies or back issues, \$12 each US. Periodicals postage paid at Port Jervis, NY and additional mailing offices. COPYRIGHT 2025 SportsField Management. Material may not be reproduced or photocopied in any form without the written permission of the publisher.



**BRAND
ACCELERATION**

President's Message



SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS

President:

Adam Thoms, Ph.D.

Immediate Past President:

Sun Roesslein, CSFM

President Elect:

Alpha Jones, CSFM

Secretary-Treasurer:

Casey Carrick, CSFM

Vice President Commercial:

Erin Wilder

Directors

Academic:

Chase Straw, Ph.D.

At-Large (elected):

Weston Floyd, CSFM

At-Large (appointed):

Lee Van Meeteren

Commercial:

Matthew Duncan, CSFM

Higher Education:

Jason DeMink, CSFM

Parks and Recreation:

Zack Holm, CSFM

Professional Facilities:

Mitch Hooten

Schools K-12:

Jake Mays

SFMA OFFICE

P.O. Box 1673

Lawrence, KS 66044

Phone: 800-323-3875

Email: SFMALInfo@SportsFieldManagement.org

www.sportsfieldmanagement.org

SFMA EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Chair: Joe Churchill

Vice Chair: Brad Thedens, CSFM

Board Liaison: Chase Straw, Ph.D.

Members: C.J. Buck; Paul Hollis; Rebecca Knapp, CSFM; Eric Roberts, CSFM; Jack Stelter; and Aaron Tipton



Adam Thoms, Ph.D.

SFMA President

athoms@iastate.edu

It's hard to realize that fall is already here. It seems like summer just began. For me, it is a time when the students come back after their internships from throughout the country and they share all the exciting — and not-so-exciting — tasks they completed during the summer.

It is also a time when I ask them to reflect on what they learned over the summer. Did they see things they didn't expect; or perhaps did they take part in a job that they didn't understand why it was being done?

I always follow up by asking them to dig deeper to find out why they did that job. Learning why a task is carried out is very important so that you know the reason you're doing that task — especially if you are newer to the workforce.

But this goes beyond just the newest members of the workforce. Sports field managers who ask questions and reach out to their own networks tend to have the best plans. Being prepared for what might happen often results in the best outcomes.

Other sports field managers have probably been there and seen what is new to you, so use them to understand what you are doing. Asking questions and

bouncing ideas off of more experienced sports field managers is a great way to gain experience without having to go through it first.

I encourage all of you to grow your networks this upcoming year. Talk to a new face at a workshop or sit at a new table of people at the SFMA Annual Conference and Exhibition. A strong local and national network is key to success of most sports field managers.

I'm no exception; this past year I have enjoyed meeting so many of you and learning how each of you manage your fields and crews. SFMA's commercial members also have a ton of experience, so don't forget them as excellent resources. I have been able to grow my network locally, regionally, nationally; and I have truly enjoyed that.

This fall and winter, as continuing education in classrooms and at trade-shows resumes, don't be a stranger and introduce yourself to others. Then stay in touch with those people after the event, and don't be afraid to reach out to ask their opinions on various management topics. **SFM**

— Adam Thoms, Ph.D.

SFMA Turfgrass Science Certification approved as Ohio industry-recognized credential

The Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) announced that its Turfgrass Science Certification, delivered through the iCEV platform, has been officially approved by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce as an industry-recognized credential for the 2026–2027 school year.

Following a review process conducted in collaboration with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, the SFMA Turfgrass Science Certification was recommended for inclusion on Ohio's industry-recognized credential list. Beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, students who earn the certification will receive six graduation points in the Agriculture career field.

The approval process evaluated each credential's alignment with Ohio's Career Field Technical Content Standards, relevance to the state's Top Jobs list, and feedback from industry professionals. This recognition underscores SFMA's commitment to strengthening the pipeline of skilled professionals in the turfgrass and sports field management industry.

The SFMA Turfgrass Science Certification is designed to prepare learners at all stages — from high school students to adults — for meaningful careers in sports field management. The credential validates essential knowledge and skills for maintaining athletic surfaces across a variety of venues, including:

- K–12 school districts
- Parks and recreation facilities
- Golf courses
- Colleges and universities
- Professional sports stadiums and complexes

With an estimated 300,000–750,000 sports fields in the United States, the demand for qualified turfgrass professionals remains high. The certification helps employers connect with candidates who have demonstrated fundamental competencies in turfgrass anatomy, environmental management, cultural practices, and playing surface preparation.

The certification exam, administered via iCEV, consists of 100 questions covering key industry topics:

- Benefits of Turfgrass (5%)
- Turfgrass Anatomy, Identification & Adaptations (20%)
- Turfgrass Environment (25%)

- Turfgrass Cultural Practices (30%)
- Playing Surface Preparation (20%)

By meeting these rigorous standards, candidates demonstrate they are ready to contribute to the safety, quality and playability of sports fields nationwide.

Project Evergreen Volunteer Field Rebuild event date shifted

Project EverGreen announced that the date has been moved for its Volunteer Field Rebuild. The event, which is typically held during the SFMA Conference and Exhibition, will be shifted to December 8, 2025. The change will allow Project Evergreen to complete the project during a time that is more suitable for field renovation work.

The Texas Chapter of SFMA is stepping up to support this year's rebuild. Their partnership will be instrumental in ensuring another successful transformation. Their contributions, and those of other volunteers, will be highlighted during the 2026 SFMA Conference.

While the rebuild will take place prior to the conference this year, SFMA is hoping members will consider joining it again in December for what promises to be another meaningful project.

More details about the project site, dates and volunteer opportunities will be shared soon. In the meantime, please save the date for December 8, 2025, in the Fort Worth area.

SFMA Board of Directors accepting interest forms for 2026

SFMA is now accepting interest forms from those interested in serving on the 2026 SFMA Board of Directors.

Board members play a critical governance role — ensuring SFMA remains aligned with its mission, maintains financial health, and continues to elevate the profession of sports field management.

2026 board positions open for election:

- Commercial Vice President
- Secretary/Treasurer
- Parks and Recreation Director
- Higher Education Director
- Academic Director
- At-Large Elected Director (may come from any voting membership category)

The SFMA Nominating Committee invites all interested voting members to complete a brief interest form. The selection process is guided by SFMA's By-laws and Standard Operating Procedures to ensure fairness, transparency, and a broad representation of the membership.

Applications are evaluated using a well-defined metric that considers:

- Prior service to SFMA and the industry
- Regional representation
- Membership category
- Leadership experience
- Commitment to the mission and values of SFMA

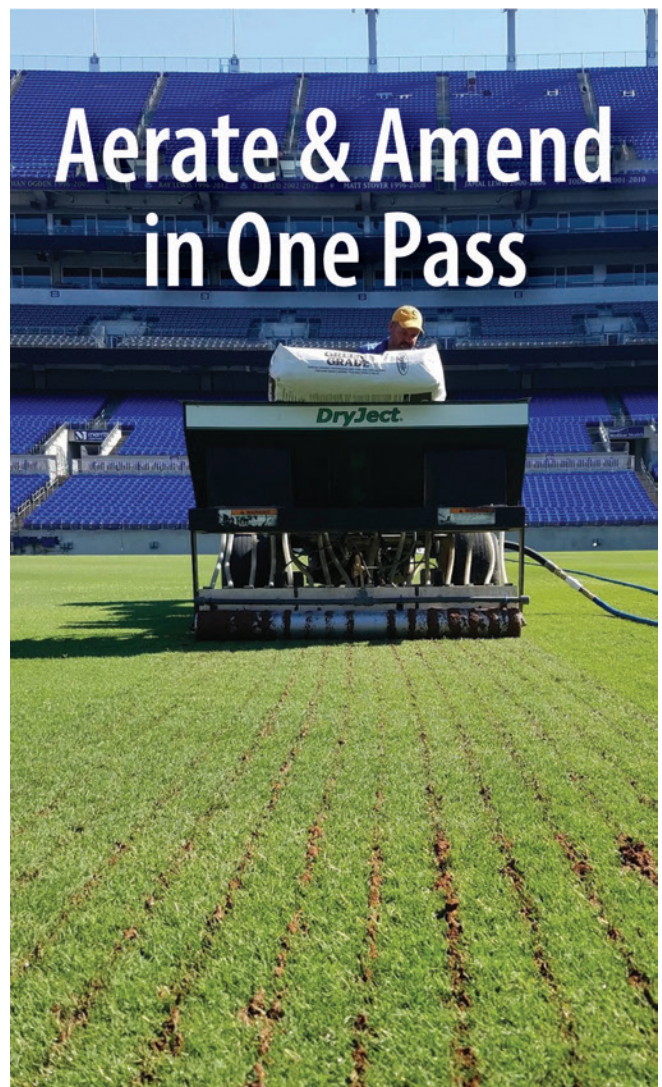
The Committee, comprised of representatives from across all membership segments, develops a recommended slate of candidates. This slate is presented to the membership for an electronic vote in November. Elected board members will be introduced and officially take office during the 2026 SFMA Conference in January.

Expectations of SFMA board members:

- Serve as an active and informed ambassador for the association.
- Promote the profession and the importance of qualified Sports Field Managers in field safety, performance, and quality.
- Actively participate in board meetings, strategic planning, and implementation efforts.
- Attend the annual SFMA Conference and volunteer to assist as needed.
- Review board materials in advance and engage in thoughtful, respectful discussions.
- Support and attend chapter and/or committee meetings of which you are a member.
- Encourage your staff to become involved in SFMA programs and committees.
- Recruit new members and advocate for professional development within the industry.

If you're interested in being considered for the 2026 SFMA Board of Directors, submit your interest form today at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PQ3M6VG>

If you have questions about the nomination process or board service, contact SFMA at SFMAinfo@sportsfieldmanagement.org. **SFM**



SIMPLY AMAZING!

Aerate for Compaction Relief Amend Soil for Lasting Effects



The DryJect Effect

See the uniform sand inject in the soil profile? Compaction is shattered, soil amended in the blink of an eye.

Used by top university and NFL sports turf managers for grass fields, now you can afford the best for your fields too! Compaction relief, improved drainage, healthier turf, plus happier athletes and parents.

Call your authorized DryJect Service Center today for a free demonstration.



DryJect.com 800-270-8873

BEN LOMOND

HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL FIELD

OGDEN, UTAH



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.



WE RECEIVED REGULAR FEEDBACK from our school, visiting coaches and people from out of state who come to play on our field that this is one of the best softball fields in the state or one of the best they have ever played on. I think that is a testament of the hard work that I have put into maintaining the field. I know I have not reached my potential yet, and feel I will only continue to get better and put out better results every year. Having no staff becomes very challenging — bouncing from school to school to keep all the fields up to

par. This becomes more difficult in the spring when our high school and junior high baseball, softball and soccer seasons start. Spring is a very wet season in northern Utah, so to get our fields ready to play three to five home games on the same day when it has just rained or snowed becomes a great challenge. Having a limited budget that is constantly changing makes it difficult as well.

— Brett Barker, head athletic facilities groundskeeper

Level and category of submission:

Schools and Parks Softball

Field manager: Brett Barker

Title: Head athletic facilities groundskeeper

Education: High School diploma and sports turf management certificate

Experience: I began working in sports field management almost four years ago when our school district decided to create this new position. I currently have 10 natural grass fields and four synthetic turf fields that I oversee districtwide. I am in charge of mowing, fertilizing, spraying herbicides, irrigation, game day prep and any field maintenance repairs. I do not have any assistants on my staff. We do have a district lawn crew that will mow the junior high fields for me, but they stay off the varsity fields. I consider myself very new to the sports field management world with a lot still to learn. But I have come a long way since being hired.

Original facility construction: 2020

Turfgrass: 22% Renegade DT tall fescue, 14.84% Zigzag tall fescue, 13.15% Metolius perennial ryegrass, 12.14% Tribute II tall fescue, 9.87% Line drive II perennial ryegrass, 9.22% Molalla perennial ryegrass, 6.12% Shining Star perennial ryegrass, 4.97% Ashland Kentucky bluegrass, and 4.96% Shamrock Kentucky bluegrass.

Overseed: I overseed after each season due to usage on the field to help repair the worn out areas in the outfield as well as the lip transitions at shortstop and between first and second base.

Rootzone: Clay loam



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

Brett Barker: I think the thing that I am most proud of winning this prestigious award is being able to represent the State of Utah, Ogden School District and Ben Lomond High School. I believe Utah has some of the best sports fields in America with some of the top groundskeepers around. Looking at the history of this award across all levels — Professional, College and University, and Schools and Parks — I believe only two individuals from Utah have ever received it: Dan Farnes from Real Salt Lake and now myself. To have achieved this honor in just four short years in the sports field management industry is truly incredible and such a privilege.



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

Barker: The biggest challenges I've faced with maintaining the winning field have been dealing with infield skin drainage issues and working within our athletic budget. We are a small school district, and our athletic budget is far from the largest. When the field was originally installed, it wasn't done correctly — it lacked proper grading, and the installed field drains were back graded, making them essentially useless. This made water management a significant issue. To address the challenge, I added a slight grade to the infield skin to help shed water away from the surface, which has been very effective. My approach to challenges is rooted in understanding that difficult situations will arise daily. Adapting, finding solutions, and staying consistent are key.

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?

Barker: My overall management approach centers on consistency, hard work and a commitment to always leaving the field better than





I found it, while continuously finding new ways to improve it. Sticking to mowing schedules, fertility programs and other maintenance routines is crucial. I take great pride in knowing that the softball team feels confident in the playing surface when they come out to practice or play a game. Seeing their trust in the field, thanks to the work that's been done, is incredibly rewarding and allows them to focus on improving their game.

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?

Barker: I wish I could talk about my crew, but I don't have one. At the SFMA awards banquet, some even referred to me as the "lone wolf." For me, that's what makes winning this prestigious award even more special. I managed to achieve it without a crew, all while overseeing 11 other varsity and junior high school fields. What truly makes this accomplish-

ment possible is the incredible support team I have at Ogden School District. From my two Supervisors — Jared Cherry and Mitch Arquette — to our Custodial Supervisor, Marc Blanchard, and our Superintendent, Luke Rasmussen — they're all strong advocates for athletics. Having that kind of support from the very top makes my job so much more rewarding. They've always believed in me and the work being done at our schools.

I wouldn't be where I am today without the unwavering support of my family, especially my wife, Rachel. I'm also incredibly grateful to my mentors and friends in the industry, including Cameron Toone and Ryan Hatch from Dura Edge; Daryl Dinkel from Target Specialties; Brandon Haddick from Mile High Turf Grass; and one of my best friends, Matt Bain, a golf course superintendent who encouraged me to apply for this job four years ago and step into the turf industry. The knowledge they've shared with me is unmatched, and I'll forever be grateful for their guidance and support.



SFM: Can you share a bit of insight into what the Field of the Year application process was like for you, as well as any tips you might have for other sports field managers?

Barker: I'd say the application process was a bit nerve wracking for me at first, especially since I've only been in the industry for four years. I questioned whether the work and results I've achieved were good enough, especially after looking up past winners. But overall, the process wasn't bad at all.

When it comes to tips for other sports field managers, it's tough to say because I still have so much to learn myself. However, one tip I'd offer is to stay consistent, work hard and take pride in what you do every single day. Be proud of your efforts and never hesitate to ask for help when you need it. This industry is like one big family, and we all want to see each other succeed.

One of the things that I love about the sports field management industry is the sense of community — everyone is willing to help and share their knowledge. It's that collaborative spirit that has made overcoming challenges much more manageable. **SFM**



Lead From Where You Stand

Leadership isn't always about holding a title. In the green industry, it shows up in everyday moments — like who picks up a rake without being asked, who walks the jobsite to make sure tools are secured, or who speaks up when something doesn't look right, even if it's "not their job." These small actions might seem simple, but they often reveal the roots of real leadership.

The sports field management industry is stretched thin, quality leaders are in short supply, and the demand for capable teams keeps rising. It's no longer enough to promote someone just because they mow and paint the straightest lines. Tomorrow's crew leaders, supervisors and business owners need something more — actual leadership skills. Leadership isn't something you wait to grow into. You start building it now, from wherever you stand.

This article kicks off a series focused on leadership designed specifically for sports field management and the green industry. Over the coming issues, we'll explore what I'm calling the Eight Stolons of Leadership: Work Ethic, Accountability, Communication, Integrity, Adaptability, Empowerment, Emotional Intelligence, and Vision.

Why "stolons"? Because they are the horizontal stems that grow across the surface — producing new growth wherever it touches down. Leadership in this industry spreads through example; it takes root in behavior; and it multiplies through action. The eight stolons aren't fluffy buzzwords — they're practical, proven and powerful when they show up consistently on the job.

Let's start with the first, and most visible, stolon: Work Ethic. Work ethic is where people notice you first. It's what they see before you say a word. Showing up consistently, giving honest effort, and owning the quality of your work sends a clear message: "I take this seriously."

You've seen it before. The team member who checks equipment fluids before anyone else arrives. The veteran crew member who stays behind to sweep the shop because they know a clean space helps everyone. The supervisor who still grabs a shovel without hesitation when things get behind. These are the people others look up to — not because they were told to, but because their work sets a tone.

In our world, work ethic isn't a nice-to-have — it's the baseline. But when it is elevated, it becomes leadership in motion. It sends a message without ever needing to raise your voice: "You can count on me."

Author John Maxwell said, "Leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less." In the sports field management industry, that idea couldn't be more accurate. Leadership here isn't about making motivational speeches or sitting in an office. It's about presence. It's about setting an example every day.

Whether you're a crew leader, a supervisor, or even a director, your actions carry weight. When you dig in with the crew, take the extra step, show up instead of checking out.

And for those in entry-level positions? This is your pathway forward. You don't need a title to start building respect. You just need intentionality. Show up on time. Ask smart questions. Offer help. Keep your eyes open and your ego low. Do the trivial things that others overlook — and do them well. People notice. They always do.

If you're already in a leadership role, understand your crew is watching. They take their cues from you. If you show up late or cut corners, they'll do the same. But if you work with pride, keep your word, and hustle with purpose, they'll mirror that too. Respect your people, yourself and the mission.

Leadership begins when you take ownership of your time, work and mindset. It shows up in how you manage pressure, treat others, and carry yourself each day.

That's why this first stolon — Work Ethic — is foundational. It's what everything else grows from, it's "Where the Game Begins." You can't hold others accountable if you're inconsistent. You can't demand integrity if your own standards are sloppy. You can't expect buy-in if you're not fully bought in yourself.

Lead from where you stand, no matter what your title. Because when you do that, you won't just be seen — you'll be followed. **SFM**



Alpha Jones, CSFM, is an 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

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

PROBLEM:

Uneven new sod

TURFGRASS AREA:

Municipal football and soccer field

LOCATION:

Calaway, Florida

TURFGRASS VARIETY:

TifTuf bermudagrass

Answer on page 33

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International



Years ago, LSU decided to move to Celebration Bermudagrass across their sports facilities. Over the years, the athletic grounds staff has installed Celebration on the soccer, softball, baseball, practice fields and the crown jewel, football's Tiger Stadium. Across the maintenance spectrum for Celebration, the LSU grounds staff have been innovators. They continue to produce a championship product year in and year out.



“

For us at LSU, all our athletic fields that we compete on are all Celebration. So the (football) stadium, softball, soccer, our practice facilities, Alex Box, our baseball stadium, they're all Celebration as well. Celebration for us just works and it's a good fit.”

—TREVOR AUSTIN, LSU SPORTS TURF MANAGER

Scan here to see how Celebration is a gamechanger for the Tigers





Have a Project to Bid Out?

START HERE

By Mary Helen Sprecher

After much debate and discussion, you're ready to add another sports facility. Maybe it's a field. Maybe it's a tennis or pickleball court. Maybe it's a venue to host a trendy new sport like padel, an old favorite like croquet or bocce, or even a different amenity like a dog park. But no matter what it is, you're ready to take that next step to get it built. So, what happens next?

Often, what happens next is confusion and even a case of low-level panic — and that is entirely understandable. If you've never solicited a bid for a project before, the prospect of assembling a bid package can seem daunting. What you need is Bid 101. And for that, you've come to the right place. Here are a few tips to keep in mind before we dive in.

Have a knowledgeable partner. A design professional with sports-facility-specific skills can help you understand what needs to be done, and can work with you to create the best possible document.

"When a prospective client is starting the process of preparing a bid for construction, their first step should be to engage a professional design consultant to assist in the preparation of a bid package," said Jonathan Charwick, RLA, of Activitas Inc. in Dedham, Massachusetts. "It is always a

good recommendation to engage a design consultant who has experience with the type of project the client is looking to implement. An experienced design consultant will often understand what is required to prepare the bid package."

Put in the time now for the best result. Creating a good bid package is a time-consuming process; but the more effort and thought you put into it, the better the overall document will be.

The better your bid package is, the better your chances are of getting consistent bids from multiple vendors, said Charwick.

"It is recommended that the bid package include a bid form, project manual with specifications, and drawings," he said. "The project manual will typically outline the

proposed project, the bid and selection process, and technical specifications that describe the labor and materials required to implement the project. It is recommended that the drawing package include an existing conditions survey along with a series of drawings that indicate the proposed scope of work. Construction details should also be included to guide the contractor in understanding how the proposed improvements should be installed. The more detail you can provide on the drawings, the better a number a bidder can provide.”

Educate yourself on the project itself. “Understand if the project is publicly or privately funded,” Charwick added. “If it is a publicly funded project, most states have specific laws and requirements for bidding.”

And being aware of those requirements is key. “It is important to understand each state’s bid laws prior to putting a project out to bid so that there is no potential for a bid protest,” he said.

Projects may be privately or publicly funded, and this will impact the bidding process.

“If the project is publicly funded, the award typically goes to the lowest responsible bidder,” said Charwick. “This does not always mean the lowest bidder. This means the lowest bidder who also is able to provide all of the necessary bid requirements, bonds, demonstrates the ability to fulfill the requirements of the contract to be executed with the client, and shows financial stability and a good track record. If this is a privately funded project, there are no laws or requirements that need to be followed; however, the design consultant may still use public bid requirements in a private bid and the client may award the bid to however they would like based on their own selection criteria.”

Geotechnical analysis allows for a more complete picture of soil conditions that exist at the site.



*All photos courtesy of HNP
Landscape Architecture*



“When developing a site work bid package, it is often recommended that a geotechnical investigation of the site be performed,” said Charwick. “Since geotechnical investigations can often be expensive, they are not always part of the bid package. However, it is always a strong recommendation to get as much geotechnical information as possible. The more information you have about the site’s subsurface conditions, the better you can design around the soil conditions, which reduces, but does not eliminate, the risk of costly change orders during construction.”

Seek out contractors with sports-specific experience.

“Just as important as it is to engage an experienced design consultant, the bid package should also have experience requirements for the contractor, no matter if it is a public or private project,” added Charwick. “We would recommend that a bidder provide experience requirements with their bid for similar projects over a given number of years. For example, if this is a tennis court project, the bidder should show that they have successfully built five tennis court projects of similar size over the last three years. The bidder should provide references for each project; the client can contact these references to discuss the contractor’s performance to help the client make an informed decision.”

With so much to do, you’re wondering where to start. According to the American Sports Builders Association, some information that should be included in a bid package includes the following.

- Contact information
- Bid due date/submittal

- Timing of project, including start/finish
- Address or location of the proposed facility
- Type of sports facility
- Highest level of play the facility will host
- Scope of project (Is this a multi-field complex or is it just one field? Will it have a running track? Will there be amenities such as bleachers, scoreboards, etc.? Will there be field events? If so, which ones? What about parking, restrooms, Wi-Fi, etc.?)
- Configuration (Indicate how much flexibility you want in design; for example, are you interested in having baseball diamonds that can also host play in lacrosse through the use of movable fences?)
- Is LEED certification necessary?
- Will the project be built all at once or in phases?
- Will this project require accommodations for those with physical challenges that go beyond what is mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act?
- Does the facility need to conform to any specific testing or safety standard? Examples might be ASTM standards.

BIDDING QUALIFICATIONS:

Specify whether you will require the following of any bidders:

- Membership in the American Sports Builders Association (proof of membership required)
- Certified Field Builder/Certified Tennis Court Builder/Certified Track Builder (proof of certification required)
- Licensed Design Professional (Proof of licensure required)
- Insurance certificate (proof of insurance)
- Proof of licensure as a contractor
- Listing of contractors and major suppliers
- Bond/bid security documentation
- References regarding experience in this type of facility

PROJECT DELIVERY METHOD

- Design/bid/build
- Design/build
- Negotiated agreement
- Construction management firm
- Cooperative purchasing contract **SFM**



Mary Helen Sprecher wrote this article on behalf of the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA). Need more information? ASBA's website (www.sportsbuilders.org) has resources to help those planning to build. The Find A Member feature on the site allows for easy lookup of builders, design professionals and suppliers in the industry. Other features, such as a list of technical publications offered and a Bid Info Request form, may also prove helpful.



IRRIGATION IMPROVEMENTS

Save big money and use less water

By John C. Fech and Brad R. Jakubowski

*Taking a close look pays off.
Photo by John C. Fech*

One of the most basic yet most important management practices is the efficient delivery of water to the turf and ornamentals on a sports turf facility. While all systems are less than 100% efficient, implementing various techniques and adjustments will be a significant improvement. In most cases, only a small infusion of cash may be required to reap the rewards of making positive upgrades. An honest look at the system components — from orifices to pump stations to spray patterns — will provide the data to justify the short-term outlay of resources and provide a roadmap to the parts of the system that will produce the greatest return on investment.

SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS

“Significant improvements” and “positive upgrades” can be explained in several ways, the first of which is basic human nature. Since an entire field of green grass is often thought of as the desired appearance — at least for coaches and spectators — the natural tendency is to run an irrigation system long enough to make sure that every part of a field is green, no matter how long it takes. Although that approach makes sense in a perfect world with perfect equipment, it breaks down quickly when imperfect equipment and less-than-perfect maintenance practices are involved.

When irrigation systems are investigated for efficiency, the broken parts are identified. Yes, broken, such as heads that don't rise above the height of cut; bent risers; water thrown onto the track, dugout, shot put ring, bleachers and other non-turf areas; heads that don't turn;

and orifices that are clogged. The big problem comes into play when human nature encourages a sports field manager to run a zone until it produces green grass everywhere.

There are at least three consequences to these inefficiencies:

1. Turf health — Inefficient watering can harm turf by causing some areas to receive too much or too little water. Inadequate irrigation leads to root system retraction, while excessive watering fills soil voids, depletes oxygen, and promotes root decay and diseases such as Pythium root dysfunction and summer patch.

2. Water waste — Overwatered areas, while appearing green in the short term, result in significant waste of resources and contribute to inefficiency.

3. Player safety — Poor footing caused by overly wet areas can lead to player slippage and injuries, creating a serious safety concern.

FIRST STEP: A GOOD “LOOK-SEE”

“Turn it on and watch it run” is a great starting point for improving irrigation systems.

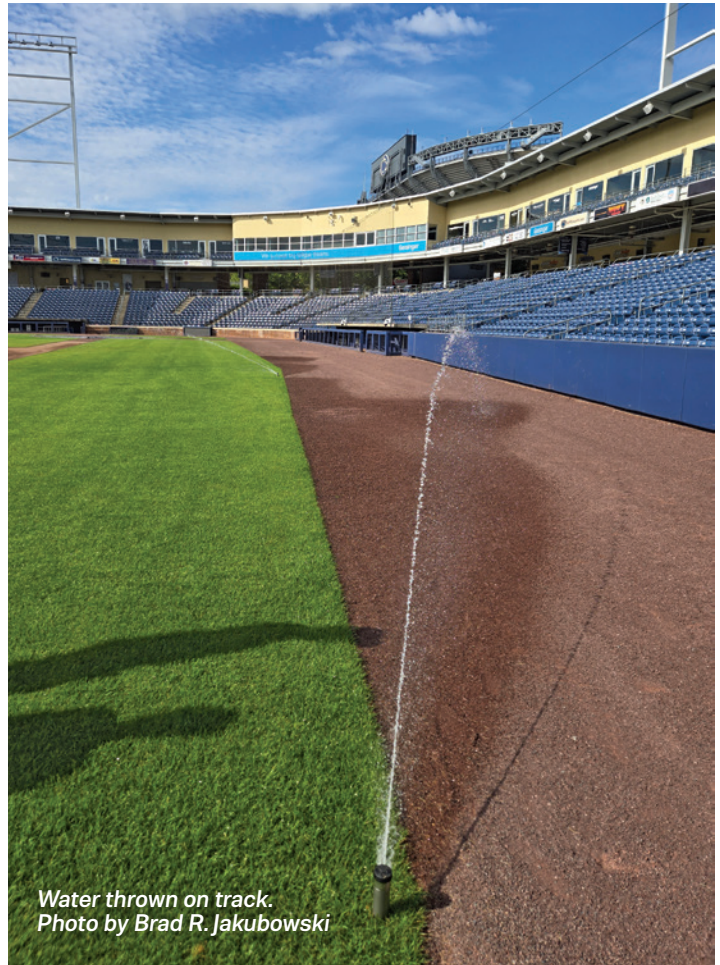
Grab a clipboard, put several sheets of graph paper in the hold-down spring and use a ballpoint pen to make a map of a field, landscaped areas surrounding a field or campus grounds. Draw in hashmarks, goal mouths, dugouts, coaches areas, player warm-up areas, trees, shrubs, groundcovers, fences, concession stands and others features that aren't likely to change.

Turn on each zone for three to five minutes and use flags to mark each head. You'll need to know their exact location later in the process.

In another color ink, draw in each irrigation head and designate it some way, such as a capital letter H with a circle around it.

In another color ink, draw a square next to the head designation. This is where you will record the output of each head after it is run for a length of time. You could also use a separate sheet of paper to write in the amount collected. When a large number of heads are involved, a second sheet usually turns out to be the easier approach.

Run each zone in a particular area and make some general observations or field notes to record the flaws. Another option is to make a quick video with your smartphone to document the flaws. You might need





evidence to show a decisionmaker when it comes time to approve upgrades, and a picture/video is worth a thousand words.

SECOND STEP: MEASURE AND RECORD

This is where the rubber meets the road; where the real output is documented. As with most things in life, you get what you pay for in terms of the inputs for a valuable endeavor. When venturing into this activity, it's worth doing it right by using high-quality water collection equipment. It's readily available and not super expensive. You can buy the essential components for a baseball field for about \$500.

Run each zone for 20 minutes, then record the amounts collected — noting metric system units/ millimeters allows for a much easier comparison and uniformity calculation than using imperial measurements.

Using a straightforward chart like the one below will allow for both mathematical and visual comparisons.

Calculating uniformity: Average depth of lowest 25% of cans: _____ divided by overall average depth of all cans: _____ equals: _____%

Uniformity can be calculated by using the above formula or a simple division of the average depth of all cans. If there are drastic differences in amounts collected — such as 10 mm, 25 mm, 35 mm and 8mm in the same zone or adjacent zones — then it's best to use the method that utilizes the lowest 25% of cans, as well as the overall average. Irrigation systems with lower than 60 percent uniformity should be adjusted for more uniform coverage.

THIRD STEP: FIX THE BIG FLAWS

Perhaps the biggest improvement in efficiency can be realized by identifying and fixing the biggest flaws, similarly to the method of calculating

CALCULATING IRRIGATION SYSTEM UNIFORMITY BY AVERAGE

Can #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Avg. Depth Total/10
Mm in Can											

Can #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Avg. Depth Total/10
Mm in Can											



uniformity that includes the lowest 25%. Why? Fixing big flaws will make the biggest difference in terms of overall performance. Some examples are heads that don't turn, leaking valves, heads that spray only vertically (a.k.a., geysers), and heads that do not rise above the height of cut of the turf.

FOURTH STEP: RE-MEASURE AND LOOK FOR GREATER UNIFORMITY

In order to carefully document the percentage of water savings after retrofitting, another check of the system output is required. The second audit may seem tedious, but is required in order to record the improvement in efficiency. A second audit also provides additional documentation for justifying the expense of the new and replacement parts.

FIFTH STEP: REDUCE BY 10 PERCENT

Trimming the runtime of all zones, or just the zones that are ultra green can be a real cost savings. For example, if you decrease the runtime of a particular zone from 30 to 27 minutes, it is unlikely that there will be a significant difference in turfgrass health, but you'll save 10% on the cost of the water needed to keep the field green.

CALCULATE INPUTS AND PROJECTED SAVINGS

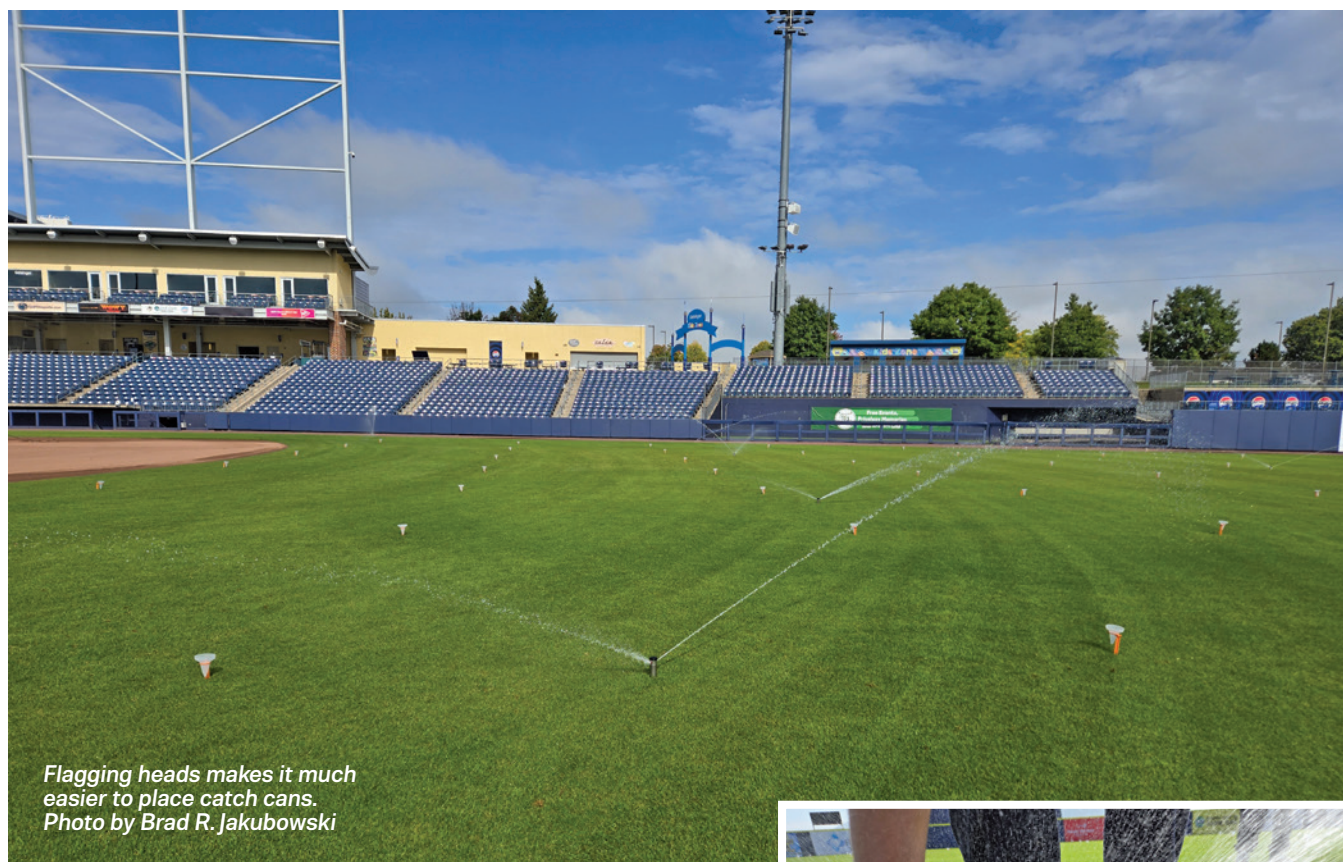
In one column, list all of the equipment and labor hours needed to conduct a proper water audit — items such as the cost of the measurement pieces; the number of hours required to lay out the map, install the flags, collection cups and plastic/steel rings; the time to calculate uniformity; and the time needed to order and assemble the collection equipment.

In an adjacent column, list the time and cost of the water needed to irrigate a field before the audit.

Next, construct a column with a projected 10% savings based on replacement of flawed parts and trimming the runtimes, where feasible.

Finally, a column with the calculated efficiency improvements, noting reduction in applied water, reduced runtimes and lower cost of applied water.





*Flagging heads makes it much easier to place catch cans.
Photo by Brad R. Jakubowski*

LIKELY RESULTS OF AN AUDIT

To gain perspective on how much land is occupied by turf in a typical sports field, the square footage must be calculated. Assuming a football field, with the dimensions of 360 feet by 160 feet, the minimum square footage is 57,600 square feet. Of course, many fields are larger than this, as they include some track and field accommodations, but for consistency, 57,600 will be used. Considering that 1 acre of turf = 43,560 square feet; thus $57,600 \text{ ft}^2 / 43,560 \text{ ft}^2 = 1.32$ acres.

The next important formula is for acre-inch, which is the amount water required to cover an acre of land one inch deep in water, which is 27,154 gallons.

Next, it's important to calculate how much water is required to apply one inch of water to a minimal area football field: 1.32 acres of land. The calculation is 1.32 acres x 27,154 gallons = 35,843 gallons of water.

The natural follow up question is, "How much water would be required to irrigate this field during one week?" If one inch per week is required, then the answer is the same, 35,843 gallons. If rainfall is received, that amount should be subtracted from the required amount; if windy or high evapotranspiration conditions prevail, then additional water is required and should be added to the total.



*Record pressure measurements.
Photo by Brad R. Jakubowski*

Here's where the calculations come alive: 35,843 gallons are required in a given week, and the system is running at 50% efficiency as documented by an irrigation audit, the total applied would have to be double what is desired because the driest areas are receiving half of what the adequately watered areas are receiving. Hence, 2 inches of water or 71,686 gallons would need to be applied for the week. This would obviously result in many areas being grossly overwatered.



When collecting information, keep it simple for ease of comparison from head to head and zone to zone. Photo by Brad R. Jakubowski

If the irrigation efficiency is improved by 25%, from 50% to 75%, we can easily calculate the amount of water saved after upgrades and retrofits have been made. The new irrigation requirement would be 44,803 gallons instead of 71,686, which is a significant reduction. Even a modest improvement of 10% would save 3,584 gallons from the original amount applied.

With just a 10% improvement in efficiency, and a conservative 14 weeks of watering, saving 50,000 gallons could be achieved in a reasonable amount of time: $3,584 \times 14 = 50,176$.

Here's where a second point of enlightenment kicks in, as it is a rare situation where a sports field manager cares for only one football field. Most manage soccer, baseball, softball, lacrosse and many other sports, ranging from three to 20 fields overall. So, at a common municipal rate of \$6 per 1,000 gallons, annual water cost savings for irrigating may be a minimum of \$300 to \$500 per field. This translates to potential savings in the multiple thousands of dollars. When you add up the water and cost savings from implementing various irrigation improvements, the benefits far outweigh the time and effort spent in the process. **SFM**

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

Brad R. Jakubowski is a turfgrass and irrigation instructor with Penn State University. He is a certified irrigation technician with the Irrigation Association and is an author and presenter covering multiple management areas within the turfgrass industry. He focuses his time on teaching best irrigation practices and troubleshooting, weather-based management decisions, soils and plant nutrition.



MACHINERY HELPING TURF CARE EXPERTS ACHIEVE PERFECTION



Campey supply market leading, innovative turf care machinery worldwide, we're continually researching new techniques and refining existing practices.

www.campeyturfcare.com

REFERENCES

An important, but often overlooked, component of the job search

By Erin Wolfram, CPRW

Photo credit © Adobe Stock
Deemerwha studio

When applying for jobs, your resume and network typically help you secure an interview. If all goes well, the interview will confirm the organization's interest in you. But there is one more job search component that often makes or breaks an official offer — reference checks.

References may be requested when you initially apply for a job; however, usually you will not provide references until you have been invited to interview. Either way, it is recommended to always have at least three to five professional references ready to speak well on your behalf. You certainly could have more than five, but when you submit your reference list, it is important to narrow that list to the top five people for the particular job and organization.

WHO SHOULD SERVE AS A REFERENCE?

First, remember that these are professional references; therefore, avoid personal friends, family members, pastors, etc. Instead, focus on a variety of people who know you well in terms of your work ethic, skills, strengths and qualifications. It is best to use people who have worked with you in some capacity within the past 10 years. Also, when possible, have references from at least two different professional experiences to offer varied perspectives.

Here are people in your network to consider.

Current and former:

- Supervisors
- Colleagues and/or supervisees
- Facility board members
- Work-related vendors/sales representatives
- Outside contractors who completed a collaborative project with you
- Committee members
- Regular visitors/members of your facility

YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL REFERENCES, NOW WHAT?

Once you have selected people you would like to serve as references, it is important to ask their permission. When doing this, share the most recent copy of your resume, as well as any jobs for which you plan to apply. If they agree, find out the phone number and email address they prefer you use. Then, as you apply for jobs, keep them updated on the status of your search so they are well prepared if contacted.

Unless they are requested in the initial job application process, references are typically separate from

your resume. When you are invited for an interview, it is customary to print a few copies of your reference sheet to offer at the beginning of the interview. Use the same header, fonts and colors you used on your resume and cover letter so all your documents match and represent a cohesive brand.

For each reference, include the person's name, job title, current facility, phone number and email address. You may also want to include the person's relationship with you.

Here is an example reference sheet:

Mr. Jacob Townsley
Head Grounds Superintendent
Canyon State College
585-555-5622
jtownsley@canyonstate.edu
***Current supervisor

Ms. Marilyn Cook
Former President
City Parks & Recreation Board
766-987-1212
mcook@cprb.org

***Former board president for organization who oversees the YBL Baseball budget

Mr. Bobby Slater
Assistant Field Manager
YBL Baseball
822-632-7444
bslater@ybl.org
***Former supervisee

SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION

Once your job search has ended, don't forget to let your references know the outcome, thank them for their time and willingness, and offer to return the favor. Finally, continue to maintain strong relationships, as you never know when you may need your references again in the future. **SFM**

Erin Wolfram, CPRW, has more than 15 years of experience in career services and owns and operates Career Advantage Golf (<http://careeradvantagegolf.com>), specializing in career services for those in the turf management field. Wolfram has a Bachelor of Science in Secondary English Education, Master of Science in Counseling Psychology, and Master of Science in Educational Technology. She is a Certified Professional Resume Writer (CPRW) and certified professional etiquette consultant. She can be reached at erin@careeradvantagegolf.com.



**RISING
STAR
★ ★**

AWARDS

**SportsField
MANAGEMENT**

**Rising Star
Award winners
to be revealed
in the
OCTOBER
ISSUE
of SportsField
Management**

**THE RISING
STAR AWARDS
ARE PROUDLY
SPONSORED BY**

**STEC
EQUIPMENT**

Insights from an Internship

By Ava Veith

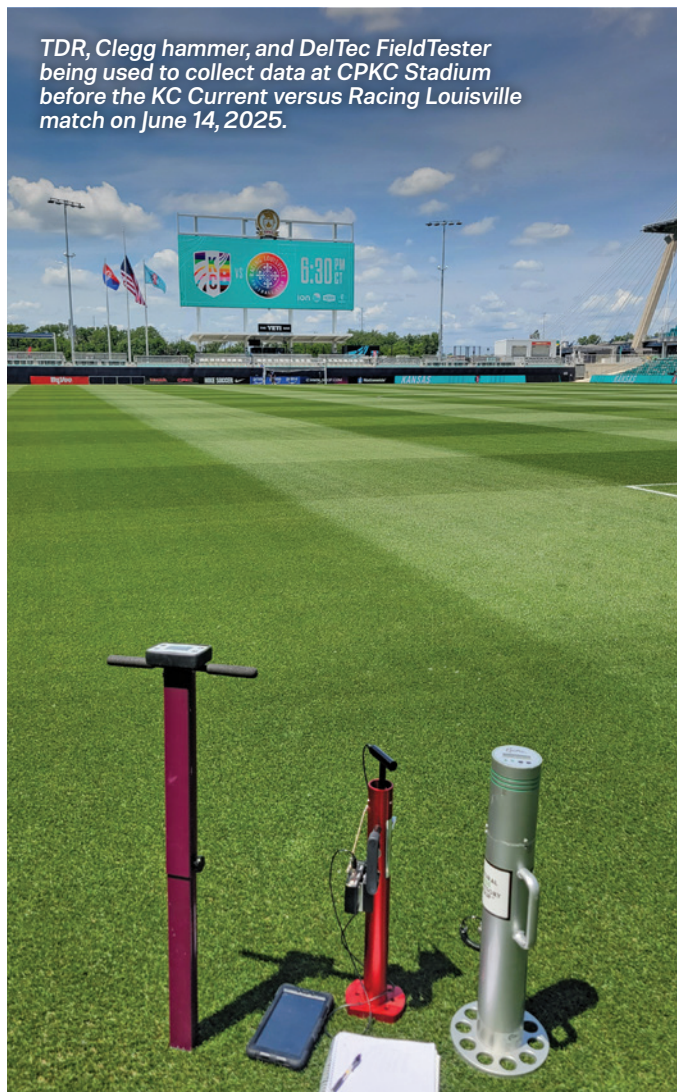
This summer, I had the incredible opportunity to intern with the Kansas City (KC) Current grounds crew as their playing surface data technician. The KC Current is a professional women's soccer team competing in the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL), the highest level of professional women's soccer in the United States. As a former Division I soccer player at Virginia Tech, getting to work with a professional team like this was truly a dream come true.

I am currently a master's student at Virginia Tech under Dr. David McCall, with plans to defend my thesis and graduate in December 2025. I then plan to begin my Ph.D. at Penn State, working with Dr. Chase Straw. My research focuses on athletic field variability and athlete-surface interactions, with the ultimate goal of helping sports field managers make data-driven decisions to create the most consistent, safe and high-performing playing surfaces possible.

It's difficult to put into words how much this experience meant to me. I'm incredibly grateful to Head Groundskeeper Jerad Minnick and Assistant Groundskeeper Mira Emma for believing in me and bringing me on board as an intern this summer. The role was a perfect match for my passion for research, and it showed me how fulfilling it can be to apply what I have learned so far as a graduate student to real-world settings.

Every day felt like an opportunity for a mini research project. I loved being able to use technology and all the testing equipment available to quantify how the playing surface changed before and after events like a major rainfall, athlete traffic from matches or training, and various management practices such as aeration (in-

TDR, Clegg hammer, and DelTec FieldTester being used to collect data at CPKC Stadium before the KC Current versus Racing Louisville match on June 14, 2025.



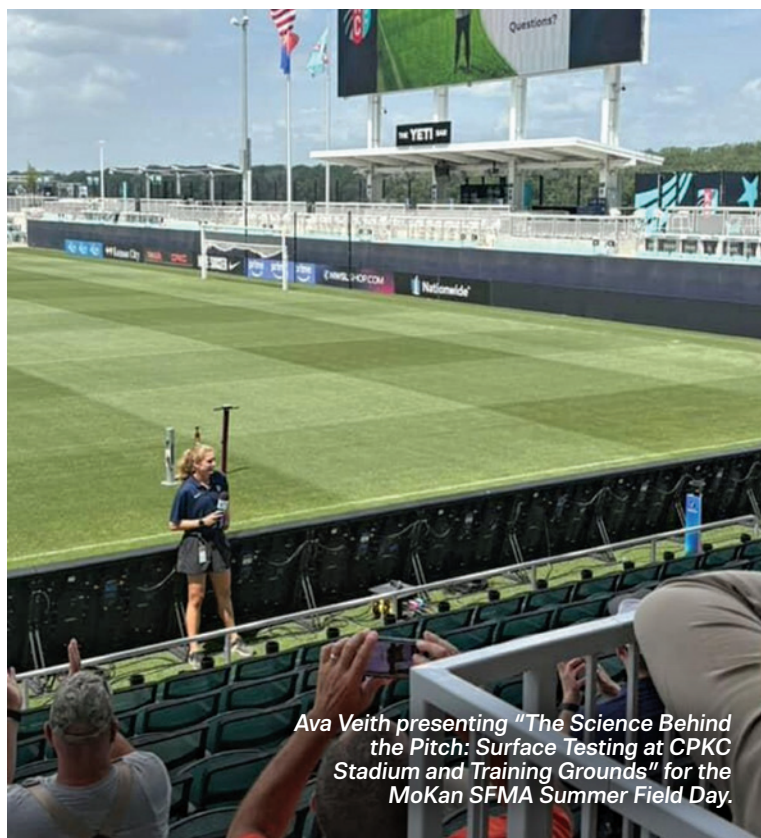
“Every day felt like an opportunity for a mini research project.”

cluding solid tine, deep tine and cross tine methods, as well as different aerating speeds), verticutting, rolling, and much more. These hands-on experiments gave me a much deeper understanding of how various factors affect field performance. I believe this insight is not only valuable for my current graduate studies, but also for my aspiring future career in sports surface research.

“I believe this insight is not only valuable for my current graduate studies, but also for my aspiring future career...”

I collected data at the KC Current stadium (CPKC Stadium) and training fields (The University of Kansas Health System Training Center). I used a variety of tools and technologies such as the time domain reflectometer (or TDR, which measures soil moisture), Clegg hammer (surface hardness), DelTec FieldTester (force reduction, energy restitution and vertical deformation), and DelTec rotational resistance tester (shear strength) to assess surface conditions. I also had the chance to work with tools I hadn't used before, including the POGO (soil moisture), TurfRad (Portable L-band Radiometer that measures soil moisture) and CropCircle (leaf density and nitrogen content). The TurfRad and CropCircle sensors had just arrived when I started this summer, so it was a great learning experience not only getting to use them, but also setting them up and gaining a deeper understanding of how they work. I analyzed the data I collected and shared results with Jerad and Mira, who sometimes used it to inform management decisions, which is an incredibly rewarding experience that reinforced to me the practical value of research.

Specifically, the TurfRad has most commonly been used on golf courses to map soil moisture variability for irrigation efficiency.



We wanted to use the TurfRad in an athletic field setting, where within-field moisture variability can raise playability and safety concerns. Stadium structures presented challenges, as the roof interfered with the radiometer and affected soil moisture readings. Dr. Straw came for a short visit in July, and we collected data to evaluate how the TurfRad's soil moisture readings, when mounted at various angles to minimize roof interference, compared with ground-truth measurements from a TDR, Clegg hammer, NDVI meter, as well as surface temperature readings.

In June, I had the honor of presenting some of the work I had done so far during the Mo-Kan SFMA Summer Field Day, hosted at CPKC Stadium. My 45-minute presentation, titled "The Science Behind the Pitch: Surface Testing at CPKC Stadium and Training Grounds" was displayed on the stadium's video board, which was surreal. Sharing my work with professionals in the sports field management industry was one of the highlights of my summer.

Just when I thought my summer in KC couldn't get any better, KC Current acquired another professional women's soccer team from Denmark called HB Køge. It just so happens that Emma Pelkowski, one of my former teammates (and best friends) from Virginia Tech is on that team. HB Køge spent a week training at the facility and even scrimmaged the KC Current. I was so grateful the KC Current reunited me with a friend I hadn't seen in a while. Experiences like that, and people like her, are why I love being a graduate student and am so passionate about researching athlete-surface interactions.

Overall, my time with the KC Current grounds crew was everything I hoped it would be and more. I'm so thankful for the opportunity to learn from some of the best sports field managers in the industry. From collecting data, mowing, painting, aerating, rolling, spraying and spreading to joking around with the rest of the crew, this summer was one I'll always cherish. **SFM**

Ava Veith is a graduate research assistant at Virginia Tech, and a former Division I soccer player at Virginia Tech.



Ava Veith (left) and Emma Pelkowski, both former teammates on the Virginia Tech Women's Soccer team, reuniting after the HB Køge versus KC Current scrimmage.



KC Current grounds crew members (left to right) Mira Emma, Trina Strayer, Julie Kessler (also a former Hokie) and Ava Veith after the Premier Lacrosse League game on July 4.

ANSWER

From page 17

What can you say about this? This sports complex was completely rebuilt — new drainage, new irrigation system, new lighting, new turfgrass, as well as renovations of existing buildings and the installation of a couple new buildings. The specifications were written properly, and the bid process went as usual. However, some subcontractors were inexperienced with this type of work. The sports field manager had to point out issues every step of the way on this project — from drainage work to irrigation installation to the bermudagrass sod installation. After the final laser grading of the fully renovated sports field surfaces was completed, but before the final surface prep work was finished, the subcontractor slipped in unannounced over a weekend and improperly installed the big roll TifTuf bermudagrass. As shown in the photo, the sod was installed over piles of rocks and debris, as well as on top of this drainage culvert. This was mostly corrected, and due to the experience of the certified sports field manager, they have managed to grow in some genuinely nice athletic fields.

Photo submitted by Tim Legare, CSFM, CPRP, CPSI, director of leisure services for the City of Callaway, Florida.

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International

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



MOST VALUABLE PLAYER
For games that matter.

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

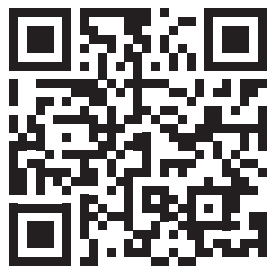
We make the games look better.

WorldClassPaints.com | 1.800.748.9649

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.



@Mike_Kerns



@WooSoxGrounds



@VT_groundscrew



@INDYINDIANSTURF

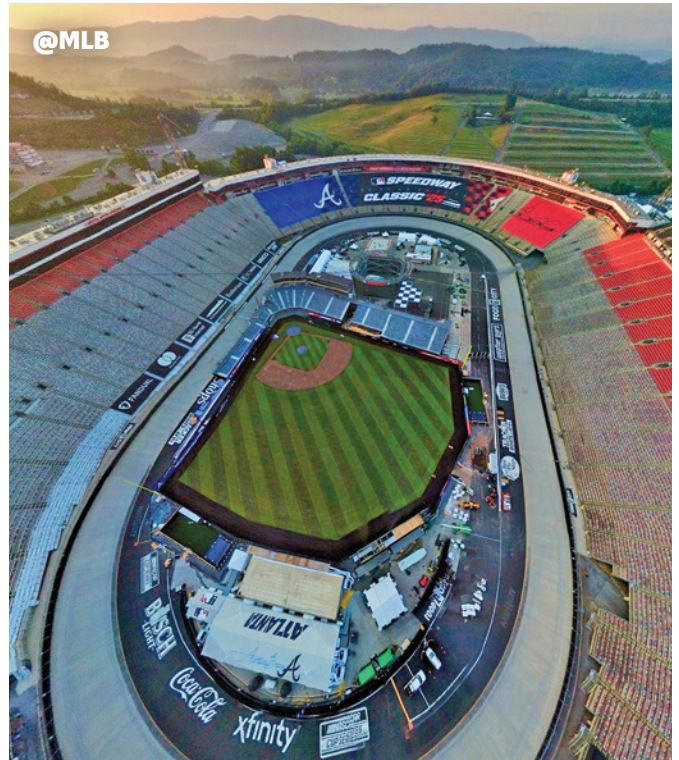
@OhioStma

Great day at OSU Field Day. Weather was excellent and attendance was as well. Lots of knowledge and research shared. #invest

**@womeninturfteam**

The ladies have arrived in Greenville, NC, for the Little League Softball World Series. With four games today, the crew has the field in perfect condition. @ATSSportsTurf @bulldogfe @CarolinaGreenCo

**@BillyMyrehn**



@cookmurray

Proud of our team that made the field shine for the #SpeedwayClassic25 The #ETSU baseball and softball team tarp crew are the MVP. Multiple tarp pulls after several inches of rain. Thank you!



@NPappas23

Invest in Your Future: Join SFMA Today

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



MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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

■ **Sports field manager:** If you are primarily responsible for managing or maintaining sports fields.

■ **Sports field manager associate:** If you are primarily responsible for managing or maintaining a sports field(s) and your organization already has an SFMA sports field manager member employed.

■ **Affiliate:** If you are indirectly or on a part-time basis involved in the maintenance/management of sports fields (coaches, athletic directors, volunteers, etc.).

■ **Academic:** If you are in teaching, extension or research.

■ **Student:** If you are a full-time student.

■ **Commercial:** If you work for a company engaged in a commercial enterprise providing services and/or products to the sports field management profession (consultants, architects, designers, contractors, management companies, distributors and manufacturers, etc.).

■ **Commercial associate:** If you are the second person (or more) from a commercial company (must first have an SFMA commercial member at their company before this lower-dues category can be selected).

■ **Retired:** If you are retired and no longer seeking full-time employment within the scope of activities of any SFMA membership category, and have been a member for a minimum of five years, you may become a non-voting member of SFMA and are not eligible to hold elective office.

THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT REASONS TO JOIN SFMA

1. **Job security:** SFMA's programs and services proactively enhance your value to your employer.

2. **Career success:** SFMA's education and information help prepare you to take that next step in your career.

3. **Recognition of your professionalism:** In addition to the individual recognition you receive because of your good



work, SFMA's advocacy with groups such as athletic directors, parks and recreation directors, coaches and parents enhances the image of the entire profession.

BENEFITS YOU RECEIVE AS AN SFMA MEMBER

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

For more information, visit:

<https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/why-join-stma/>



OPE+ reveals its Twenty for 2025 Award winners

OPE+, sister publication to *SportsField Management* magazine, announced the winners of its Twenty for 2025 New Product Awards. The OPE+ Twenty for 2025 New Product Awards recognize products for the professional landscape and irrigation markets. Products were judged by OPE+ staff based on innovation, marketability and application within the market.

The OPE+ Twenty for 2025 New Product Awards honor a wide range of manufacturers delivering products that boost efficiency and productivity. Winning products were introduced between June 2, 2024, and June 1, 2025.

More information about the program is available at OPE-Plus.com.

The award winners, in alphabetical order by company name, are as follows:



Belgard Diamond Pro Air

Belgard Diamond Pro Air is a lightweight retaining wall system that is 30% lighter for efficiencies on every level. Due to its lightweight design, easy-fill core, and locator lug system, it reduces handling fatigue, construction time and shipping costs. It is heavy in performance and constructs near-vertical walls up to 12 feet high, reducing excavation and maximizing space. With 44% more wall block per truckload and multiple face and color options, Diamond Pro Air delivers more form and function for retaining walls.



Bobcat MT120

The MT120 mini track loader is Bobcat's most powerful mini track loader, offering operators increased capacity and best-in-class 88-inch lift height and 22-inch reach. Powered by a 1.2-liter, non-diesel particulate filter engine, it also boasts robust breakout forces and a maximum rated operating capacity of 1,200 pounds.

Just under 36 inches wide, it's ideal for confined spaces. With ground pressure of 3.9 psi with optional 11-inch tracks or 4.3 psi with standard 9.1-inch tracks, operators can achieve optimal flotation for greater performance on soft ground and travel over established surfaces with minimal disturbance. With more than 20 compatible attachment categories, operators can use their MT120 for digging, clearing brush, hauling loose and palleted materials, sweeping, pushing and blowing snow, utility installation, trenching and more. Additionally, its operator-focused design includes smooth, precise controls and a ride-on platform that delivers premium comfort.



Case SL27 TR

Case Construction Equipment's SL27 TR small articulated loader is engineered to meet the needs of a variety of landscaping and property maintenance projects. Featuring a telescoping boom, it delivers increased reach and lift height, enabling operators to load or unload trucks, position materials and access tight or elevated areas without sacrificing stability. With a hinge-pin height of 146 inches, the telescoping arm also gives landscapers extended reach and lift height, allowing them to complete a wider range of tasks without repositioning the machine. Powered by a 50-hp.

engine and equipped with a standard two-speed hydrostatic transmission, the 2.6-metric-ton SL27 TR provides strong breakout forces and smooth control. The machine is easy to trailer and designed with a compact footprint, enabling precise movement and a tight turn radius. The SL27 TR is also attachment-friendly, with a skid-steer-style universal coupler that makes it easy to switch between more than 70 attachments.

Diamond Mowers Mini Brush Cutter Pro X

The Mini Brush Cutter Pro X from Diamond Mowers delivers full-size cutting power in a compact, stand-on-ready design. Built for mini skid-steers, this attachment clears brush, mulches 5-inch trees, and grinds stumps with a 42-inch cutting width and a spindle-driven blade system that offers 25% more cutting capacity than standard models, meaning no gearbox, fewer wear parts, and reduced maintenance. Its offset mounting plate improves maneuverability and minimizes track marks in tight spaces. With 25% thicker steel construction, spiral-wrapped hydraulic hose protection, and a fail-safe blade retention system, this attachment is engineered to handle demanding workloads with less downtime. By turning compact machines into multi-tasking land-clearing tools, it eliminates the need for multiple attachments or specialty equipment.



Landscaping professionals can complete jobs faster, safer, and more efficiently, saving time, labor and costs on every site.

Echo DSRM-225 56V

The Echo DSRM-225 is a 56V battery-powered string trimmer designed for users who demand high performance with low maintenance. Equipped with a high-efficiency brushless motor and a durable carbon fiber shaft, the DSRM-225 delivers

up to 56 minutes of runtime with a 5.0Ah battery and a 16-inch cutting swath for maximum productivity. Its LED trigger grip display shows battery charge and speed settings, helping you eliminate guesswork and minimize downtime. Combined with quiet, low-vibration operation and zero emissions, the DSRM-225 offers gas-like performance in a lightweight, eco-conscious package.



Ego Commercial 1,000 CFM leaf blower

The Ego Commercial 1,000 cfm leaf blower delivers air speeds up to 185 mph, and 32N push force in a compact size. This battery-powered handheld blower features a high-performance 1,700W brushless motor with intelligent electronics to deliver power equivalent to a 60cc gas engine. Monitor performance with digital controls including an LCD display and turbo lock. Its commercial-grade construction



is built for five times longer life with UV-resistant composite housing and IPX5-rated weather resistance. When equipped with a 56V, 10.0Ah ARC lithium battery, this leaf blower runs up to 100 minutes on low, 33 minutes on high, and 20 minutes on turbo. This blower is ideal for quick, tough clean-ups without the hassle of strapping on a heavy backpack unit.



Exmark Turf Tracer with XiQ

The 2025 Exmark Turf Tracer with XiQ technology integrates high-precision GNSS and RTK location technologies with ISO-certified radar to detect obstacles and prevent collisions. Advanced mapping technology makes it easy to create property profiles and store them online for easy recall on any autonomous machine in a fleet. The mobile app, available for Android and iOS, enables operators to access maps and manage the autonomous fleet. The integrated safety system offers audible and visual alarms, and a full-color 4.3-inch display provides comprehensive machine status data without the need to open the app. The 60-inch UltraCut Series 4 cutting deck delivers Exmark's signature cut quality, and the proven Turf Tracer chassis enables the mower to be run manually or autonomously. A Kohler Command Pro EFI ECV749 twin-cylinder engine powers the Turf Tracer with XiQ, and an electric ground drive system offers precise mower control.



Grasshopper OutStander SO37

This Grasshopper stand-on mower features a 37-hp. Vanguard electronic fuel injected engine with electronic throttle control. The SO37 has plenty of power to cut through heavy, wet grass while delivering a manicured cut thanks to extra-deep, DuraMax 61- or 72-inch deck options (decks convert to optional mulching). Cutting height ranges from 1.0 to 5.5 inches. The Command Center Tower provides 4.5 inches of vertical adjustment. The anti-slip operator platform's shock-absorbent, coil-spring suspension lets you feel like you're floating on air. Since the operator platform is nestled between the drive tires, the "slingshot" effect is eliminated. These true zero-turn mowers are designed with a low center of gravity for optimal traction and stability. Engine, T-Drive pump and deck easily raise in unison with zero power loss extending drive belt life.

Honda battery-powered, zero-turn-radius mower

Honda designed its zero-turn-radius battery-powered lawn mower to boost worksite performance in the commercial landscape market, improve efficiency, and offer an



eco-conscious solution

with zero emissions and reduced cutting noise. The Honda battery-powered ZTR lawn mower features a MicroCut Twin Blade system with stacked and offset blades. This gives four cutting edges that make multiple cuts on the blades of grass, and re-snips the cut grass into smaller pieces as the blades spin. Using one foot pedal, the operator can raise and lower the deck, hands-free. The driver also can use the cut height dial to choose from among 15 height settings. The Honda lawn mower is the only battery-powered ZTR in its class with full mower suspension, a mechanical suspension seat, front suspension with torsional dampening, and rear trailing arm suspension.



Husqvarna Automower 535 AWD EPOS

Husqvarna Automower 535 AWD EPOS is a robotic mower designed for complex landscapes and golf course environments. Capable of handling medium-sized areas up to 0.9 acres, it features all-wheel drive for traction and can tackle slopes up to 70% (35 degrees) with ease. EPOS (Exact Positioning Operating System) enables wire-free operation, allowing uninterrupted mowing around frequently changing layouts, aeration zones, or temporary obstacles. Automower 535 AWD EPOS includes a 5-blade cutting disc, amber safety lights, and Firmware Over-the-Air updates for optimal performance. With Husq-

varna Fleet Services, users can monitor and manage mowers remotely to maximize uptime and minimize on-site labor. Designed for commercial operations, it supports remote management and continuous operation in areas where traditional mowing is limited or labor intensive.



John Deere autonomous battery electric mower

This fully autonomous, battery-electric mower is designed for commercial landscaping. The mower offers the flexibility of autonomous or manual stand-on operation, giving users control and adaptability for various environments. Its integrated battery design reduces noise and eliminates on-site emissions, while off-board charging provides easy power management. Equipped with a 360-degree camera system, leveraging the same advanced perception technology used in larger autonomous machines from John Deere, the mower offers full environmental awareness, enhancing both safety and productivity. Operators can initiate jobs remotely with the John Deere Operations Center Mobile app, where they can also view live video feeds, adjust settings, monitor performance data and receive real-time alerts. The new commercial mower combines cutting-edge autonomy, zero-emissions operation, and seamless Cloud-based control to address

real-world labor shortages, productivity demands, and environmental goals.

Kioti CS2530C Series

The Kioti CS2530C Series sub-compact tractor is ideal for operators looking to boost productivity while enjoying a comfortable experience. The CS2530C reflects Kioti's commitment to vertical integration, with key components designed, engineered, manufactured and assembled by Kioti. Powered by a 1.2L Kioti diesel engine delivering 24.5 hp. and 70 Nm of class-leading torque, the CS2530C Series tackles demanding tasks with ease. The intuitive lever layout and twin hydrostatic pedals simplify operation, reduce fatigue and enable effortless forward and reverse shifts.



Additional features include mid and rear PTO, an optional quick-connect system for easy attachment use, push-button four-wheel-drive, power steering, an optional rear-view camera and an adjustable steering wheel. The tractor features the industry's first factory-installed climate-controlled cab with both heat and air conditioning to adapt to any weather conditions.

Kress Commercial KAC843 4-port extended charging case

The Kress Commercial KAC843 4-port extended charging case provides rapid charging for four Kress batteries to en-

sure crews have the power they need. The case is the solution for power-intensive tasks — whether prepping the truck or trailer with four 660Wh backpack CyberPacks or powering up 1.5kWh CyberCapsule batteries to power the Kress Commercial CyberLite charger. With four charging ports, it can simultaneously accommodate rapid charging of four backpack or onboard batteries, streamlining the charging process for crews of any size. Crews can rapidly charge as many as four 240Wh or 660Wh CyberPacks from 0-100%, simultaneously, in 14 minutes or less; or up to four 1.5kWh CyberCapsule batteries from 0-100% in 90 minutes or less. The KAC843 is backed by a four-year warranty.



Kubota KX040-5

Putting productivity and operator experience at the forefront, the Kubota KX040-5 introduces key updates including a redesigned hydraulic system, a spacious and quiet cab, and tech features that now come on standard models. Powered by a 40.3-hp. Kubota diesel engine, a digging depth of 11 feet 2.3 inches, and a bucket

breakout force of 9,397 pounds, the KX040-5 can tackle the toughest tasks on the jobsite. “We continue to listen to our customers and learn about their challenges and how our equipment can offer them more solutions, and the next-generation KX040-5 is the latest iteration in that innovation process,” said Bill Holton, Kubota product manager, construction equipment



Massey Ferguson 1M.25 Series

The Massey Ferguson 1M.25 compact tractor is built for landscape and property maintenance professionals who need versatile equipment. Powered by a 24.8-hp. Iseki diesel engine and a 3-range hydrostatic transmission, the MF 1M.25 delivers precise control for loader work, mowing and seasonal tasks. Operators stay productive year-round with the choice of an ergonomic open platform or a premium climate-controlled cab offering heat and air conditioning. Comfort-focused features include an adjustable suspension seat, side-by-side hydrostatic pedals and a tilt-adjustable steering wheel to reduce fatigue during long workdays. A rear lift capacity of 2,205 pounds and a loader lift capacity of 1,520 pounds provide strength for demanding applications. R-14 crossover tires offer traction across turf, concrete, gravel and soil conditions, while an 8.4-foot turning radius improves maneuver-

ability in tight spaces. The MF 1M.25 supports a wide range of implements to enhance efficiency across landscaping projects.



Mean Green Vanquish Autonomous

The Mean Green Vanquish Autonomous is the industry's first commercial-electric stand-on autonomous mower with a 60-inch mulching rear discharge deck and 22kWh battery that can mow continuously for up to eight hours. It features Greenzie self-driving technology with camera-based obstacle detection, live performance tracking, and a call-back feature to return the mower to its starting position. The Mean Green Vanquish Autonomous has the flexibility to switch between autonomous and manual operation.

Milwaukee M18 six bay daisy chain rapid charger

The M18 six bay daisy chain rapid charger is a versatile shop-to-mobile charging solution. It features dual charge modes for optimized rapid daytime or overnight charging. For bulk M18 battery charging, 10 chargers can be daisy chained together to recharge 60 M18 packs overnight, all on a single 15A circuit. For daytime charging, rapid mode charges M18 batteries at a 2X faster rate than standard chargers and will charge two



batteries simultaneously. Spend less time swapping batteries on the jobsite by managing six batteries in a consolidated portable charging experience. This M18 battery charger is optimized for transportation and designed for charging on the go. The M18 device is Packout compatible and can be integrated into shop or mobile spaces using the Packout Wall Plates or transported to sites on a stack or with the convenient carry handle.



Scag Jackal

The Scag Jackal features a powerful and efficient industrial-grade diesel engine. Boasting a lifting capacity of 1,125 pounds, an ultra-strong 34- or 40-inch bucket is included with the unit. The Jackal's standard universal-type mounting interface will also accept a variety of other attachments, including the full lineup by Metalcraft of Mayville. Easy-change capability between narrow (7-in.) and wide (9-in.) track options for versatility. The machine was designed from the ground-up with the user experience in mind. Ergonomic hand

controls, operator comfort cushions and an isolated foot platform make the Jackal smooth and comfortable to operate. Maintenance-free undercarriage components and lift arm pivots provide worry-free operation, day after day. Easy access to all maintenance areas and hydraulic connections ensure that servicing the Jackal is convenient.

Stihl RMA 756 V

The Stihl RMA 756 V battery mower delivers professional-grade cutting power with the convenience of advanced 72V battery technology. Featuring a 4-in-1 mulch and mow system, a highly efficient brushless motor, and adjustable speed settings, it provides fast, efficient mowing with zero exhaust emissions and low noise. It delivers consistent full-speed mowing until the battery is completely depleted — eliminating the gradual drop-off in performance. The mono-comfort handlebar ensures quick access to the grass bag and effortless height adjustments, while the intuitive HMI display keeps you informed on battery status. Built for tough jobs, the RMA 756 V offers a durable aluminum housing and wheels designed for traction and maneuverability. The combination of a protective bumper skirt, stable front bumper, and inner polymer housing allows landscapers to operate at the same high standard as traditional gas-powered models, but with none of the emissions or fuel costs.



Yanmar CE ViO35-7

Yanmar Compact Equipment's ViO35-7 mini excavator features significant improvements to the operator experience and productivity. This 3.5-ton mini excavator sports a 3-pump flow-sharing hydraulic system powered by its dependable 24.4-hp. Yanmar engine. The true zero tail swing excavator includes leading 360-degree visibility, a 25-percent increase in travel speed under load and a 7-percent improvement in excavating efficiency. The ViO35-7 is backed by one of the industry's best mini excavator warranties: 4-years/4,000-hours. The ViO35-7 includes multiple configuration options to adapt to varying working styles, including the ability to add a second auxiliary circuit for attachments that provide multiple functions. Straight and angle blade options are also available. **SFM**




SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

SportsField
MANAGEMENT

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

Texas Turfgrass Association

Executive Director

Katie Flowers

For nearly 80 years, the Texas Turfgrass Association (TTA) has provided education and research to turfgrass professionals across Texas. Since 2018, Executive Director Katie Flowers has been at the heart of this effort, focused on building connections and increasing the association's value to members.

By Cecilia Johnson

FINDING A PLACE IN TURFGRASS

Before joining the TTA, Flowers spent 15 years in student housing, working in training and writing company handbooks. Her husband, Seth Flowers, who works in commercial landscaping and irrigation, introduced her to the industry and the TTA.

"Seth is one of the smartest people in turfgrass I know," she said. "Through him, I started meeting TTA members and saw what a hub it was for networking and education. I saw the challenges members faced in getting commercial business. I also realized just how many people are connected to turfgrass. That made me passionate about promoting my husband's career and others in the industry."

When Flowers first interviewed for the executive director position, she faced a panel of turfgrass professionals who outlined the role's responsibilities. She didn't have a turf background but knew she could organize and promote.

"I'm a people person," she said. "I knew this was an association we had to keep going — not just because it educates, but because it's a networking hub that's invaluable."

She got the job and quickly saw opportunities to improve the association's financial standing. "It was going to be a challenge," she said. "But I was ready."

STEPPING INTO LEADERSHIP

"My first year, we coined the phrase 'peeling the onion together,'" she said. "The past Executive Director, Shirley Duple, had done a fantastic job running TTA for

almost 30 years. It was a big responsibility to harness what she built, protect it and evolve alongside things like social media."

Flowers credits Patrick Pankratz and Mike Chandler, TTA presidents when she started, for helping her navigate the transition. "They, along with the board, were instrumental in figuring out what worked, what didn't and how we could move forward," she said. "It was trial and error, but over the past few years, we've seen real growth. People want to come back to our shows — not just for CEUs but because they know the value of our events."

The TTA's Executive Board includes a past president, current president and first and second vice president who handle key decisions. There are also 14 regional directors who represent different industry sectors — sod production, sports turf, lawn care, landscape and commercial — across eastern and western Texas.

"I've learned to talk to so many different professionals — golf course superintendents, sports field managers, parks and rec teams, cemetery maintenance crews and more. Turfgrass touches everything."

BUILDING MEANINGFUL EVENTS

Flowers helps plan TTA's conferences to provide education and networking. "We try to put on events that pique members' interest but also meet our educational mission," she said. "We also raise money for education and contribute to Texas A&M's Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, which provides scholarships for turfgrass students."

"Our summer conference is always at a resort to encourage members to bring their families and enjoy some

vacation time,” she said. “A few years ago at Horseshoe Bay, we added a putt-putt event so members, vendors and their families could all interact. At our winter conference, we started a cornhole tournament, which has also been a big hit.”

Flowers plans to expand these events to strengthen connections. Though conference planning is demanding, meeting attendees reminds her why the work matters.

STRENGTHENING TTA'S VALUE

“There are so many ways for industry members to earn CEUs and education,” she said. “We have to figure out why some choose TTA over others. Having a great show is key — if we make an impact, they’ll remember it when they plan their budgets and advocate to come back.”

“Keeping members engaged strengthens vendor support and attendance,” she said. “None of this would be possible without the support of our sponsors and industry partners.”

LOOKING AHEAD

“If we can continue growing education tracks and presenting golf, sports, commercial law and landscape topics in new ways, we’ll keep strengthening the association,” said Flowers.

TTA relies on advisors from Texas A&M, Texas Tech and statewide turf programs to help members navigate environmental and regulatory challenges. “We also survey members to understand their biggest concerns and our board of advisors determines speakers and content based on real-world issues they face,” she added.

WOMEN IN TURF

While turfgrass has traditionally been a male-heavy industry, Flowers encourages other women to get involved and find a position where they can make an impact.

“There are so many wonderful professionals in this industry,” she said. “You’ll make lifelong friends and connect with people you never would have met otherwise. A woman’s perspective is different and this industry needs diverse voices and ideas. These guys will listen and they listen with open arms.”

Flowers also believes that increasing diversity within the TTA strengthens the industry. “We learn so much from new board members or first-time attendees. Getting different people in the room means we’re all educating each other.”



Katie Flowers

A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

Flowers’ work with TTA has given her children — ages 16, 15 and 9 — a glimpse into the industry. “Now, I want my older kids to start coming to shows to learn the value of networking. Shaking hands, looking people in the eye — that’s a skill that will help them in whatever career they choose.”

Reflecting on her time with the TTA, she credits her husband of 18 years again for leading her into the industry and sees her role as a way to give back.

“He got me into this, and I see how much work turfgrass professionals do,” she said. “I don’t think most people realize it. If I can help promote that, I’ve done my job.” **SFM**

Cecilia Johnson is media and content manager at Sod Solutions. Based in Charleston, S.C., Sod Solutions has spent more than 30 years developing and releasing leading turfgrass varieties. For more information, visit sodsolutions.com.

Case Study: The Iowa Cubs' Playbook for a Stage Move Across New Field

By Kris Koberg, CEO of DICA

As the Iowa Cubs, the AAA affiliate of the Chicago Cubs, prepared to host their Spring into Summer concert series in May, a major question loomed for the team's operations crew — how to deliver the concert's stage, loaded aboard an 18-wheel semi, across the team's playing surface.

Complicating any plans were the renovations that Principal Park, the home of the Iowa Cubs, had undergone last fall. Following the conclusion of the 2024 season, the Cubs had replaced their field.

"Whether it's new or old, we would still want to protect it to the fullest extent that we possibly could," said Iowa Cubs President and General Manager Sam Bernabe. "But it was even more important to protect it because it's a young field — it hadn't matured much yet at that point, by virtue of only being really grown in over a couple of months. So, it was even more vulnerable."

With a 27-ton load set to travel from the park's center field entrance to the third base line, Bernabe and the staff at



Bobby Baker Entertainment, the event management company coordinating operations for the concert series, sought out ground protection solutions that could keep the new playing field in the best condition possible. Following the concert series, regular baseball action was set to resume just several days later.

"At first, they were talking about doubling up 3/4-inch plywood, but there's a cost to that," said Jason Brown, owner and event producer of Bobby Baker Entertainment. "Not just financially — the plywood is going to degrade, it's going to splinter, and as it does that, it's going to start taking gouges out of the grass underneath and leaving debris."

When one of Brown's employees came across a demo of a DICA ground protection product online and sent it to him, Brown called DICA, provided the details of their situation, and was recommended MaxiTrack Interlocking Mats. While a layer of plywood under the MaxiTrack remained a part of their plans as the haul approached (out of an abundance of caution), Brown said that once he saw how the MaxiTrack was performing, the crew on site pivoted their approach.

"I mean, this is turf that is literally turning green for the first time, it hasn't even had a full year of compaction, we're going to have a very cautious approach," said Brown. "But we got to a point where we eliminated the plywood entirely and were running the truck and trailer on nothing but the MaxiTrack and seeing even better results."

With 100 mats on hand, the on-site crew made up of Iowa Cubs grounds crew and summer interns along with Brown's staff put MaxiTrack to work in a leapfrogging assembly line of sorts. As the truck drove across the field, the



crew assembled a roadway in front of the truck as it disassembled the path behind it, a process made possible by MaxiTrack's blend of strength and easy-to-handle build.

As the haul unfolded, Bernabe monitored how the field held up. With no visual indication of the stage having crossed the field at all, he said that he and his team are more likely to hold similar events in the future.

"Any event we do that's not baseball related, there's always a decision that's hard to make, and it's how much damage the field is going to take," said Bernabe. "If we can prevent that damage and excess cost from happening, then it makes the viability of a non-game day event even more prevalent.

"The next time we do it, will definitely use MaxiTrack, as well as adjusting some of the other precautions that we took," he added.

[Editor's Note: Article provided by DICA]

USA Shade named official partner of USA Pickleball

USA Shade, a leader in architecturally designed shade structures, announced a new partnership with USA Pickleball, the sport's national governing body in the United States. As an official partner of USA Pickleball, USA Shade will bring its expertise to the fastest-growing sport in the U.S., delivering custom-engineered solutions to help create safer, cooler and more comfortable outdoor playing environments.

"As pickleball continues its explosive growth, facility owners are increasingly focused on upgrades that enhance player safety and elevate the overall experience," said Jay Rivera, senior vice president of Sales at Shade Structures. "Our partnership with USA Pickleball is a strategic step forward, positioning USA Shade as a preferred shade partner for court



builders, municipalities and racquet clubs responding to the surge in demand for modern, high-quality pickleball facilities."

With more than 30 years of experience, USA Shade offers turn-key services across the entire project lifecycle — from design and engineering to manufacturing, project management and installation.

According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, pickleball participation has skyrocketed in recent years, with a 51.8% increase from 2022 to 2023. This rapid growth spans every age group, but older adults, who account for 85% of all pickleball-related injuries, face increased risks when exposed to high temperatures.

Strategic shade implementation is a proactive solution to help minimize those risks and support long-term player safety. USA Shade's structures can reduce court temperatures by up to 25 degrees, helping protect players and spectators from harmful UV rays and excessive heat, conditions that can lead to dehydration, fatigue and heat-related injuries.

"This partnership reflects our shared commitment to elevating the pickleball experience, both in terms of performance and safety, for players of all ages," said Christian Portaro, senior director of partnerships at USA Pickleball. "By ensuring all pickleball courts are protected with high-quality measures, we're setting the stage for more people to be involved in pickleball and to be safe while doing so." **SFM**

FOR MORE "BEYOND THE FIELD" CONTENT,
subscribe to the "Beyond the Field" newsletter at
<https://sportsfieldmanagementonline.com/subscribe/>



2025

SEPTEMBER 16-18

2025 NRPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Orlando, Florida

www.conference.nrpa.org

OCTOBER 13-15

SYNTHETIC TURF COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

www.syntheticurfCouncil.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

NOVEMBER 12-13

SALTEx 2025

Birmingham, UK

www.saltex.org.uk

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



2026

JANUARY 18-22

SFMA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Fort Worth, Texas

www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/conference

FEBRUARY 16-19

**TPI 2026 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
CONFERENCE AND FIELD DAY**

Tucson, Arizona

www.turfgrasssod.org/event/tpi-2026-international-education-conference/

JUNE 23-25

**NATIONAL SPORTS SAFETY AND SECURITY
CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION**

Palm Desert, California

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

SFMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

Arizona SFMA: www.azsfma.org

Colorado SFMA: www.csfma.org

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

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

Florida #3 (Central Florida STMA):
www.CFSTMA.org or CentralFloridaSTMA@gmail.com

Gateway STMA: <https://gatewaysfma.com/> or
info@gatewaystma.com

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

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

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

Intermountain Chapter STMA: Dan Farnes
(dan@rafttriversod.com)

Iowa SFMA: www.iowastma.org

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

Mid-Atlantic SFMA: www.masfma.org

Michigan SFMA: www.misfma.org

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

Mo-Kan STMA: <https://mokansfma.org/>

Nebraska SFMA:
<https://nebraskaturfgrass.com/about-nesfma>

New England STMA: www.nestma.org

North Carolina SFMA: <https://ncsfma.org/>

Northern California SFMA: www.norcalstma.org

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation: www.ohioturfgrass.org

Oklahoma STMA: oksfmasecretary@gmail.com

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

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

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

Southern California SFMA: www.socalsfma.com

South Carolina SFMA: www.scsfma.org

Tennessee Valley SFMA: www.tvstma.org

Texas SFMA: www.txstma.org

Virginia SFMA: www.vsfma.org

Wisconsin STMA: www.wstma.org

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

greenjacket
SPORT
TURF COVERS



Base & Infield Area Covers:

- 10mil string reinforced (not woven)
- True Impermeable Cover
- Custom sizes available
- Double Folded & Lock Stitched Edges
- Cost effective
- Made to last

Field Covers:

- GreenJacket **PERMEABLE Grow-In Covers** dramatically increase the sun's ability to germinate and GROW healthier turf while allowing the underlying turf and soil to breathe.
- Patented **IMPERMEABLE Reinforced Cover** to protect your turf from cold-weather damage.

Whatever the sport, Whatever the turf
Count on GreenJacket to make a difference

www.GreenJacket.com
888-786-2683

turf-tec International

TOOLS FOR MEASURING
PLAYABILITY AND SAFETY



Turf-Tec International



800-258-7477

www.turf-tec.com



BEAM CLAY®
THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE!

- ◆ Infield mixes, mound clays, and red warning tracks for every state from regional plants nation-wide
- ◆ Over 10,000 sportfield products for **ALL SPORTS!**
- ◆ **SPECIAL CO-OP PRICING FOR ALL 50 STATES!**



BEAM CLAY® INFIELD MIXES

Available Nationwide from the:
Northeast, Midwest, South & West

800-247-BEAM (2326)

sales@beamclay.com | www.BeamClay.com

TURFTIME
EQUIPMENT

Great **Turf** in less **Time**
with the right **Equipment**



ADVANTAGE
Topdressers



HEAVY DUTY
DUMP TRAILERS



THATCH MASTER

The classic
Dethatcher/
verticutter

www.TurfTimeEq.com

800-201-1031

Mow, Mow, Mow

Q: With all the heat and rain we have had this summer, we've struggled to keep up with the mowing. We've raised the mowing height to two and a half inches to reduce scalping. We typically mowed our fields once a week during the summer since the school fields are not used after spring graduation until practices start in late summer. With only once-a-week mowing, the grass grows so tall that our mower struggles to get through it, and I'm left with piles of clippings on top of the field. Is there anything I can do other than mowing it multiple times a week?

– Concerned coach and part-time turfgrass manager

A: This summer has been unusually hot, accompanied by frequent rainfall — conditions that bermudagrass has thrived in. With the addition of nitrogen fertilizer, growth has been so vigorous that one could almost watch the bermudagrass grow in real time. These conditions have been ideal for those renovating or replacing fields. However, for those managing established turf, the rapid growth has posed significant maintenance challenges. One way to manage this rapid growth is by mowing more frequently. Alternatively, you can use a plant growth regulator (PGR) to suppress turfgrass growth.

PGRs are chemical products that can be applied to turfgrass to inhibit vertical growth and significantly reduce mowing frequency for several weeks. Trinexapac-ethyl has been shown to reduce common and hybrid bermudagrass clipping weights by 50 percent. This effect is typically observed within seven days of application. Depending upon application rates, it usually provides suppression for about four weeks. The slowed growth will also dramatically reduce the chance of scalping. This can be a significant management advantage during periods of high rainfall that can result in missed mowing cycles.

PGRs have been used for more than 50 years, originally on roadsides and utility turfgrass to reduce mowing fre-

quency. The early PGRs resulted in brown turfgrass and reduced stand density. While such damage was tolerable on roadsides, it was unacceptable for high-quality turfgrass. After trinexapac-ethyl (Primo MAXX) was introduced in the 1990s, the interest in PGR use went to an entirely new level, with greater acceptance on highly maintained turfgrasses such as those found on golf courses and athletic fields.

Adoption of PGRs in some segments of the turfgrass industry has been slow, partially due to product costs. Today, several affordable PGR options are available, including generic formulations of trinexapac-ethyl. The generic products have reduced the application price to less than \$25 per acre (depending on product and application rate). So, most sports turf fields could be treated for less than \$50. There are also granular PGR products now for those who do not have a sprayer.

PGRs not only reduce mowing frequency but also maintain turfgrass quality with fewer mowing cycles. There will be a decrease in clipping volumes, as well as reduced labor, fuel and equipment wear. Few products offer the dual benefit of saving time and money while also enhancing turfgrass quality. While the quality improvements from using PGRs can be impressive, their use does not eliminate the need for other cultural practices.

Most importantly for you, PGRs can keep you from needing to mow several times a week while maintaining lower mowing heights. For field managers struggling with excessive growth, PGRs offer a practical and cost-effective solution worth considering. **SFM**



Grady Miller, Ph.D.

Professor and Extension Turf Specialist
North Carolina State University

Questions?

Send them to Grady Miller at North Carolina State University, Box 7620, Raleigh, NC 27695 or e-mail grady_miller@ncsu.edu

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

TOUGH UNDER PRESSURE



HGT® (Healthy Grass Technology) is the smart investment for unmatched turf endurance. With species-defining aggressiveness, this technology allows HGT Sod to withstand intense traffic and boasts rapid recovery. It's time to up your turf game with HGT Sod from Barenbrug.

Scan the code to learn more about
HGT Sod • barusa.com/turf/products/hgt-sod





STATIC REDUCTION FOR IMPROVED PLAYABILITY

Keep infill in place,
not on your players.

Generative image for illustrative purposes only.

XStatic Benefits Include:

- Reduce static buildup on synthetic or artificial turf athletic fields
- Diminish off field migration of crumb rubber, cork and other infill mixes
- Improve field aesthetics and playability
- Protect your investment



Learn more at [AquatrolsCompany.com](https://www.AquatrolsCompany.com)