

SportsField

MANAGEMENT

April 2026

Vol. 42 No. 4

The Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

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Editor's Note



John Kmitta

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I had the pleasure of attending the Reinders 27th biennial Turf Conference March 11-12 at the Waukesha Expo Center in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

The event welcomed approximately 600 attendees from the sports turf, golf, grounds, lawn care and landscaping industries. Reinders treated attendees to donuts and refreshments in the morning, as well as a buffet lunch catered by Machine Shed restaurant. The tradeshow portion of the event featured more than 45 industry exhibitors.

"Every Turf Conference is unique, but this year it felt even more special," said Dave Berg, turf business manager at Reinders. "As we move into the future, we are reminded of our goal to be more than a green industry supplier. We strive to be a reliable partner to our customers in the Midwest and beyond."

More than 30 seminars featured a robust lineup of speakers including SFMA President Alpha Jones, CSFM; Ben McGraw, Ph.D.; Thomas Nikolai, Ph.D.; Jim Kerns, Ph.D.; Ed Nangle, Ph.D.; Paul Koch, Ph.D.; Kelly Meemkenz; Amanda Latham; Gary Gleichman; Jared Hoyle, Ph.D.; Brad Jakubowski; Chuck McKenna; Dave Louttit; Leah Weaver, Ph.D.; Wayne Horman; Gabriel Lopez; Eric Piffer; Mike Skopik; Jim Cassidy; Rob Cunningham; Andrew Collier; Dave

Wilbur; Manuel Jordan; Larry Collins; Phil Dwyer, Ph.D.; Chris Lettau; Carla Pipping; Matt Duncan, CSFM; Joe Holt; Nick Hongisto; Matt Kurth; Jason Eberhard, Ph.D.; Riley Stenzel; Jon Healy; Sonny Johns; Ben Boeding, CSFM; and Paul Miskimen.

The education sessions and networking opportunities were top notch, and I really enjoyed the atmosphere, camaraderie and information sharing. My thanks to everyone at Reinders for their hospitality.

Reinders founded the Turf Conference in 1973 to serve as a platform for expert education and to facilitate direct communication between suppliers and customers.

"We received a lot of positive feedback this year," said Jackson Orin, Reinders marketing manager. "We work hard to plan this conference, so it's incredibly rewarding to hear that people have been coming for 20 years and that each one is better than the last."

Less than a week after the Reinders Turf Conference it was announced that SiteOne Landscape Supply acquired Reinders. More on that in our Industry News section (see page 42). However, Reinders already announced that its 28th Turf Conference will be held in March of 2028, continuing the tradition. **SFM**

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President's Message



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Alpha Jones, CSFM

SFMA President

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Spring is here, and it's the busiest season for sports field managers. I recently had the opportunity to speak with professionals from parks and recreation departments, and it was a powerful reminder of how much work happens quietly. These managers arrive early, prepare fields with care, and leave long before anyone steps onto the surfaces they maintain. Their work is often unseen — but the impact is clear: safe, playable fields that support athletes and communities alike.

This season also brings high-profile opportunities where sports field management shines on national and global stages — from professional soccer and baseball to college and local tournaments. The standards and habits that make a World Cup pitch playable are the same practices that keep your local parks field safe and resilient. Excellence, no matter the level, starts with the foundation of consistent care.

During these busy weeks, planning and preparation are key. Inspect fields for drainage issues, turf health, and high-use areas. Stay on schedule with mowing, aeration and fertilization to encourage healthy growth and prevent early-season wear. Keep equipment ready, from sharpened mower blades to functional irrigation sys-

tems, so nothing slows progress. And don't overlook staff communication; clarity around priorities and standards ensures safe and efficient work across every field.

For communities or organizations looking to maximize safety, playability and aesthetics, consider partnering with a professional sports field manager. Their expertise ensures fields are prepared consistently, reducing risk and enhancing the experience for athletes and spectators alike.

Resources like the Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) website and maintenance checklists can provide guidance and reference for planning and safety standards, whether you're managing a neighborhood park or a high-profile venue.

Even when spring weather delays or long schedules make days feel overwhelming, every moment spent on proactive maintenance builds the foundation for a successful season. The work you do carries purpose, professionalism and pride.

Take a moment to recognize the difference you make. Every field prepared thoughtfully, every decision to act ahead of a problem, and every standard you uphold contributes to safer play, stronger communities and a profession that continues to grow in visibility and respect. **SFM**

— Alpha Jones, CSFM

SFMA Online Learning Educational Offerings

STEP 1: TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT 101 COURSE HOSTED THROUGH CANVAS

https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/knowledge_center/turfgrass-science-curriculum/

Learning objectives: The course is set up to provide basic knowledge in the core areas of turfgrass science. The curriculum offers comprehensive training in 5 Units:

■ **Unit 1 – Introduction to Turfgrass Science:** Students will learn about the economic, environmental, and community benefits turfgrass surfaces provide. Students will also learn about the various careers available in the green industry.

■ **Unit 2 – Turfgrass Growth & Development, Anatomy, and Identification:** Students will learn about turfgrass germination and growth, different anatomical features and how to use those features to identify turfgrass plants. Adaptations and use of turfgrass species are also covered.

■ **Unit 3 – Turfgrass Soils:** Students will learn about the importance of soil properties in a turfgrass system. Soil texture, compaction, and drainage and how they influence turfgrass health is the focus.

■ **Unit 4 – Turfgrass Cultural Practices:** Students will learn about the cultural practices essential for maintaining healthy turfgrass. Mowing, fertility, irrigation, aeration and topdressing, and integrated pest management are discussed in detail.

■ **Unit 5 – Turfgrass Establishment:** The final unit utilizes all of the information presented in the course to give students a broader picture of the requirements to manage turfgrass from start to finish. Successful establishment cannot take place without a firm understanding of turfgrass species and adaptations, soil requirements, and essential cultural practices.



**CERTIFIED
SPORTS FIELD
MANAGER**

STEP 2: TURFGRASS SCIENCE CERTIFICATION – INTRODUCTION TO THE INDUSTRY ICEV COURSE

<https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/turfgrass-science-certification/>

This entry-level certification is designed to build a pipeline of skilled turfgrass industry professionals. The certification can be earned by learners in all stages of their education and careers, and verifies that individuals are prepared to pursue a career in the field of turfgrass science. The certification exam, tested on the ICEV platform, consists of 100 questions and assesses knowledge and skills for the following weighted industry standards:

- **Benefits of Turfgrass:** 5%
- **Turfgrass Anatomy, Identification and Adaptations:** 20%
- **Turfgrass Environment:** 25%
- **Turfgrass Cultural Practices:** 30%
- **Playing Surface Preparation:** 20%

STEP 3: CSFM CERTIFICATION

Attaining Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) status means you will be looked upon as a leader in the industry. It will give you a sense of pride and accomplishment, and it can even improve your current or future employment prospects. Becoming a CSFM is meant to challenge your knowledge of managing sports fields and to draw upon all aspects of your background in education and experience to prove that you are one of the best in the industry. Meeting the challenge can contribute to your professional advancement in sports field management. The CSFM Information and Application Packet includes CSFM Credentialing Information, CSFM Competency Outline and CSFM Detailed Competency List.

NEXT STEPS: ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS/RESOURCES

- **Interpersonal Skills**
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
- **Dynamic Meetings**
- **Mentorship Program**
- **Turfgrass Math Resource Center:** Build confidence in one

of the most essential skills in sports field management — math. This practical, easy-to-follow course is designed to help turf professionals and students apply mathematical concepts to real-world field management tasks. From accurate field layout to precise applications of fertilizers and pesticides, a strong foundation in turfgrass math leads to better decision-making, improved efficiency, and cost savings. This course breaks down key concepts into manageable modules, including area and volume calculations, dry fertilizer applications, liquid fertilizer applications and pesticide calculations.

■ **Online course: Field Painting Resource Center** (coming soon!)

■ **Online course: Synthetic Turf Management 101** (coming soon!)

For more information concerning SFMA educational offerings, contact Jennifer McLendon at jmclendon@sportsfieldmanagement.org

Post-conference Virtual Education Now Available

SFMA's post-conference virtual education sessions are now available, offering continued learning across key topics in sports field management:

■ **Importance of the Right Foundation: Principles of Athletic Field Rootzone Design and Maintenance.** Presented by Joshua Marden, CSFM

■ **Water Quality and Lack Thereof.** Presented by Marco Schiavon, Ph.D.

■ **What is Nanotechnology and How Can it Help My Sports Fields?** Presented by Geoff Rinehart, MS

■ **Soil Health of Sports Fields: Are Pesticides and Fertilizers Killing our Soils?** Presented by Bryan Hopkins, Ph.D.

■ **Cool-Season Turfgrasses for Reduced-Input Grounds and Sports Fields;** presented by Brad Park

■ **Relationship Goals: How to Improve the Success of Your Sports Field by Communication.** Presented by Keith Fisher

■ **Budgeting Fundamentals: Knowing What Goes Where and How.** Presented by Brad Jakubowski, MS, CIT

■ **How to Plan Athletic Field Management for an Effective Integrated Pest Management Plan.** Presented by Amanda Folck, MS

Access sessions at <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/2026-sfma-conference-education/>

Upcoming Spring Chapter Events

Several SFMA Chapters announced upcoming events:

■ **Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) Spring Field Day.** April 15, 2026. Ginty Field, Morris Township, New Jersey. <https://sfmanj.starchapter.com/meetinginfo.php>

■ **Colorado SFMA (CSFMA) 2026 Continuing Core Credits Webinar.** April 22, 2026. 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. (virtual) https://cstma.starchapter.com/meetinginfo.php?p_or_f=f

■ **Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) Rutgers Turfgrass Research Golf Classic.** May 4, 2026. Fiddler's Elbow Country Club, Bedminster, New Jersey. <https://njta.wildapricot.org/>

■ **Virginia Sports Field Management Association (VSFMA) Field & Demo Day.** May 14, 2026. CarMax Park, Richmond, Virginia. <https://vsfma.starchapter.com/meetinginfo.php> **SFM**





ALEX BOX STADIUM *at* SKIP BERTMAN FIELD

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Field of the Year Awards program is made possible by the support of sponsors
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Student managers for LSU Baseball. From left to right: Jonathan Schmidt, Chris Angel, Jacob Calderera, Jacob Adams, Blaine Nicholson, Ryan Lovato and Micheal Coogan. (Not pictured: Paul Loup).

ALEX BOX STADIUM AT SKIP BERTMAN FIELD

is one of the most heavily used and abused fields in baseball. We just about have some form of play, camps, practice, events, etc., seven days a week. This gives us a unique challenge in fitting in our maintenance when we can. We must be creative and think outside the box to accomplish our goals. We would love to have a more timed approach to our maintenance, but that is just not feasible with the traffic we get on the field. Our crew works relentlessly day in and out to get it back into shape for the next day, then start the process over again. I truly believe we have the staff of champions at LSU, and the work shows it. Whatever the challenge is, we accept it and find a way to get the job done on time and efficiently.

– Jordan Billingsley, assistant sports turf manager



Challenges include the team warming up and conducting drills in cleats.



Level and category of submission:
College and University Baseball

Field manager:
Jordan Billingsley

Title:
Assistant Sports Turf Manager

Education:
Bachelor's degree in Agronomy with emphasis
on golf and sports turfgrass management

Original facility construction:
2009

Turfgrass:
Celebration bermuda

Overseed:
Ewing Empro perennial rye blend
(34.82% Aspire perennial rye, 34.37% Hancock
perennial rye, 29.13% Zoom 2 perennial rye,
0.24% other crop seeds, 1.44% inert matter)

Rootzone:
Sand

Soil Amendments:
Carbon Pro G

Drainage:
Underdrainage network/vertical drainage
system – perforated pipes wrapped in cloth
in gravel-filled trenches



*We also face some dirt runoff challenges
if we get a heavy rain. We have to scoop it
back into place, nail drag the dirt and roll it
with a huge roller.*

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

Jordan Billingsley: I am most proud of getting to see the whole thing come together, from start to finish. We came up with a game plan, trusted it and adjusted as necessary when needed. Getting to see the field progress throughout the year, keeping the playability at a high standard, and seeing it handle everything makes me the most happy.

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

Billingsley: The biggest challenge that were faced, hands down, was the amount of play we get on the field daily. We had some form of play on the field just about every day of the year. From LSU games to practices, individual workouts, camps and tournaments, something was happening every day, and we had to constantly adjust our game plan and maintenance to ensure we were still able to produce a high-quality playing surface. If we had something pop up at the last minute that wasn't on our schedule, then we had to get creative to find time to get out there when we had a window of opportunity. We



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worked with the baseball staff in these instances, and they were absolutely fantastic working with us to achieve our goals. It was all about teamwork from top to bottom.

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?

Billingsley: Our overall approach was to sit down, write a year-long maintenance plan that included any possible scenario we could think might happen. We write down the fertility plan, maintenance/cultural practices, when we think we would have the best opportunity to get it done, how long recovery might take, etc. The end goal was always to provide the absolute best product we could. The most important aspect to me is that you have to believe in what you are doing; trust yourself, trust your plan, trust your team, and go with

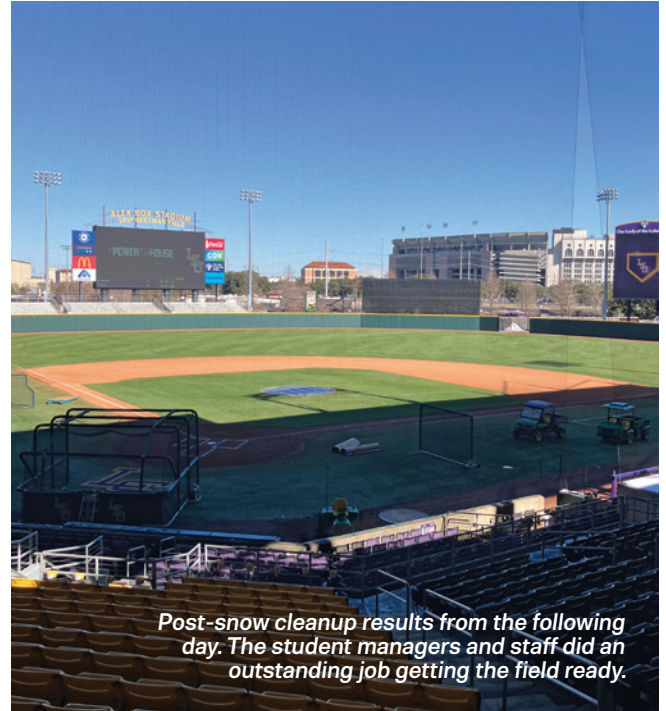
it. Take the unforeseen circumstances as they come, don't sweat the things out of your control, and just do the absolute best of your ability to make it happen. Everything after that will work itself out.

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?

Billingsley: I spent the majority of my time at the baseball facility because it was a very demanding position that required a lot of attention. I had two day-shift students to help prepare during the mornings and afternoons and another assistant would come and help as much as he could during the fall and summer. During the spring season, I had a handful of game day student workers, as well as an assistant who would help manage those student workers, maintenance practices, game flow, and tarp pulls. During fall, when football



We got a few inches of snow in January right before the first official day of practice. The student managers, other staff members and I had to clear the field for the team for the following day.



Post-snow cleanup results from the following day. The student managers and staff did an outstanding job getting the field ready.

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"Guys will walk around barefoot before practice starts. And I think that's one of the biggest compliments you can have."
—BRENDAN SEAYER, Director of Field Operations - Columbus Clingstones



Every comeback starts from the ground up.



The final home Series against Arkansas before regionals and super regionals. Altogether the field took a lot of beatings, but held up well.

was going strong, I would have to get baseball prepared during the morning, then help the other crew at Tiger Stadium to prepare for the upcoming game that week. It was a very busy schedule, but it always kept things interesting.

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?

Billingsley: I personally found the application process enjoyable. It was so interesting to have to sit down and look at everything you have to do during the year to prepare for

your season. It really puts things into perspective regarding how much it actually takes to maintain a high-priority facility. Sometimes you can get caught up just trying to get through the year and not realize how many hours you have put into your facility. I think it helped me realize that better changes can be made, and it was a great way to get started. The biggest tip I can give other sports field managers is the same thing I said earlier: make your plan, think of any possible scenario, and go enact your plan. Trust yourself, trust your plan, and trust your team. When everyone buys in, it makes it so much more fun and enjoyable. **SFM**

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

PROBLEM:

Many lines on field

TURFGRASS AREA:

Multipurpose municipal field

LOCATION:

Northwestern United States

TURFGRASS VARIETY:

Ryegrass/bluegrass mix

Answer on page 31

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International



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The Evolution of Field Lighting Systems

By Mary Helen Sprecher



Photo courtesy of
LAND3 Studio, LLC

The first generation of LED sports lighting hit the market shortly after the first decade of the new millennium. Manufacturers peg the window as being anywhere between 2010 and 2014.

One thing that can't be disputed is the big milestone: The first NFL game to be played under LED lighting took place at what is now State Farm Stadium in Phoenix in 2015 — and that was Super Bowl XLIX. And that, by all accounts, was a remarkable first impression.

Early adopters were impressed by the multiple advantages LED field lighting offered: truer color rendition, an absence of glare, better ability to be directed (thus eliminating light trespass), a lack of sky glow and, of course, the enhanced energy efficiency.

But, as with all technologies, LED has undergone improvement over the years.

"In many cases, first-generation LED products could not be repaired or upgraded," said Bruce Frasure of Frasure Reps. "This led to costly replacements."

Systems on the market today, he noted, have become future proof.

"In response, lighting manufacturers are moving toward more sustainable designs," said Frasure. "Key components include interchangeable LED arrays, smart drivers, and modular designs for long-term value. This approach moves beyond disposable fixtures and reduces electronic waste."

A BETTER CLASS OF LIGHTING

New and improved LED systems offer the ability to be controlled by a mobile app that allows fixtures to be dimmed when not in use, as well as to hit full power if motion on the field trips them, something that can enhance security and deter unauthorized entry.

The quality of the light itself also has improved in ways original adopters might never have envisioned.

"Recent advancements have pushed LED lighting beyond basic white illumination," said Jordan Davila of Sportsbeams. "Innovations now include precision optics to reduce glare,



Photo courtesy
of CHA Sports

durable aluminum housings for thermal management, and integrated color-changing (RGBA) and high-quality broadcast-white capabilities that allow facilities to support events and community engagement without sacrificing performance.”

Manufacturers say there is every reason to assume that progress will continue to be made.

“LED performance just continues to improve,” said Jordan Barker of StressCrete Group. “That means efficacy improves along with optical performance. The IoT is also something that is much more compatible with LED, so the options for new technology to be bolted on continues to improve/evolve. It’s the difference between an emerging/growing technology and the mature technology we saw in HID [high-tensity discharge] lighting.”

TECHNOLOGY DRIVING ADVANCED LED ADOPTION

Unlike fields of generations past, today’s sports facilities may routinely have livestreaming and athlete analysis technology,

two things that were barely a blip on the radar when LED was first adopted. As a result, fields now require higher levels of lighting to support recordings and make them worthwhile to those watching them.

Streaming and analysis technology, in conjunction with better lighting, create a more marketable facility, meaning one that is more in demand for tournaments, player showcases, meets, championships, combines and other events where athletes at the youth level might be seen by prospective college coaches or pro scouts.

FIELD INFRASTRUCTURE REUSE

Early on, a selling point for LED was the ability of field managers to save money by reusing existing poles around the facility. But according to contractors, taking that course should only be done after a professional performs a review of the infrastructure.

“The main thing owners have to consider is the structural integrity of their existing poles to ensure they are good



Photo courtesy of
Verde Design, Inc.

candidates for new fixtures, and also to consider how they attach to the poles,” said Todd Dettor of Fast-Dry Courts and Tweener Lighting Systems. “New mounting brackets may be needed as well.”

However, said Nick Schultz, also from Fast-Dry and Tweener, the restrictions of the site may be a hindrance to the upgrade.

“Often, it isn’t possible to install footers for recommended light pole locations due to infrastructure or landscaping surrounding facilities,” said Schultz. “Also, more and more environmental restrictions are being enforced every year, which are making it increasingly difficult to meet light height and spillage requirements, dark sky ordinances, etc., while also lighting the facility properly.”

CHOOSE LIGHTING VENDORS CAREFULLY

The market continues to evolve; however, at the same time, there are forces that threaten its progress. One place this is evident is on the internet, where pop-up ads show inexpensive lighting systems.

“Facility owners should be cautious of low-cost, white-labeled LED products commonly found online,” said Davila.

“These fixtures often use lower-quality components, such as plastic lenses, which can yellow or degrade over time, similar to automotive headlights. This results in reduced output and inconsistent performance. Purpose-built fixtures use durable materials to help ensure long-term reliability.”

Prior to purchasing a lighting system, owners should research the vendors in the marketplace and the options offered and consider the importance of selecting a system that is manufactured, tested and backed by a reputable company.

Keep in mind that inexpensive equipment, such as that purchased online without an onsite sales representative who can make an in-person visit to the facility, also may have limited functionality. This may lead to a need to replace the whole system sooner rather than later.

Additionally, many inexpensive systems are manufactured outside of the country and may not offer the buyer any customer support once the product arrives. The wiser investment is made by purchasing a domestically manufactured sports-specific system that is backed by a reputable company with references from users who can speak about the customer service experience before, during and after installation.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Something else that has evolved right along with LED itself is the discussion around the adoption of any outdoor lighting system, and sports fields are no exception.

As more communities build outdoor sports facilities in land-locked areas, the impact of lighting on the surrounding environment is an increasing concern.

In fact, uncontrolled light can be just as much a source of ill will with neighbors as can increased traffic and parking congestion caused by sports facilities, all factors that can and should be addressed in the planning process.

In addition to these problems, uncontrolled light has a negative effect on local wildlife and plants

According to the DesignLights Consortium (DLC), the following recommendations are made in order to lower environmental impact:

- Use outdoor lighting that is dimmable and control-ready
- Consult with local experts on wildlife to ascertain any potential threats and how to mitigate them
- Communicate with neighbors in the area to understand their concerns and to discuss the way lighting will be controlled so as not to become a nuisance
- Use the right amount of light
- Control lighting to reduce energy use and light pollution
- Control lighting to respond to seasonal changes in the environment.
- Control the distribution of light.
- Minimize blue-violet light (exposure to this form of light has been linked to retina damage that could lead to Age-Related Macular Degeneration, which can cause irreversible vision loss).

Keeping field lighting updated and in peak condition means not only employing the newest technologies but staying on a regular schedule of maintenance. **SFM**

Mary Helen Sprecher wrote this article on behalf of the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA). For more information, see ASBA's Sports Fields: Construction and Maintenance Manual, available in both PDF and hard copy at www.sportsbuilders.org.



Photo
courtesy of
LAND3 Studio, LLC



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THE SPORTSFIELD MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW: Andy Gossel and Ty Gossel

Andy Gossel is director of field operations for the Lehigh Valley IronPigs, Triple-A affiliate of the Philadelphia Phillies. His son Ty is manager of grounds at the Maryland SoccerPlex in Boyds, Maryland. I recently visited with both to discuss their career journeys, the father-son dynamic, lessons learned, and Ty's decision to follow in his father's footsteps.

"I've taken the least traveled path to Triple-A baseball ever," said Andy. "I was in education for 24 years. I started out teaching and ended up coaching, but I had some green industry background in my past."

Andy had worked for his father's excavation business, and then for his older brother's landscaping business.

"When I started coaching, the fields were awful; so I just tried to jump in and start making the fields better," he said.

Andy taught and was boys athletic director at Arlington Baptist School in Baltimore for six years, then taught, coached and served as athletic director at Covenant Christian High School in Indianapolis for 18 years. While still teaching and coaching, he spent 12 years working as member of the game day grounds crew for the Indianapolis Indians, Triple-A affiliate of the Pittsburgh Pirates. That led to the opportunity with the IronPigs, and, in 2021, Andy decided to become a full-time professional sports field manager.

As director of field operations at Lehigh Valley, Andy and his full-time year-round assistant are in charge of the playing surface and seating hill, and recently added a full-time seasonal member to their team.

Andy served on the STMA Field of the Year Committee for several years, and also served on the STMA Board of Directors for two years. More recently, he has been involved with the Professional Baseball Sports Turf Managers Symposium.

"I've tried to help build a network across the minor leagues and get MLB on board to encourage attendance at SFMA Conference," he said. "It's important to use the symposium to continue to push for better compensation, networking, etc. I've spent a lot of time the last two years collecting data on salaries to improve where we are and keep quality groundskeepers in Minor League Baseball."

While Ty was younger, Andy was doing sports field management work on the side, as well as coaching and working on the fields on which his sons played. Ty got to see firsthand the work his father performed.

Said Ty, "I sort of grew up working for dad, and hated every second of it. As a 13-year-old, being told to spend my afternoon working for free wasn't my favorite thing in the world."

So Ty initially went to college as an Exercise Science major, with the goal of being a strength and conditioning coach.

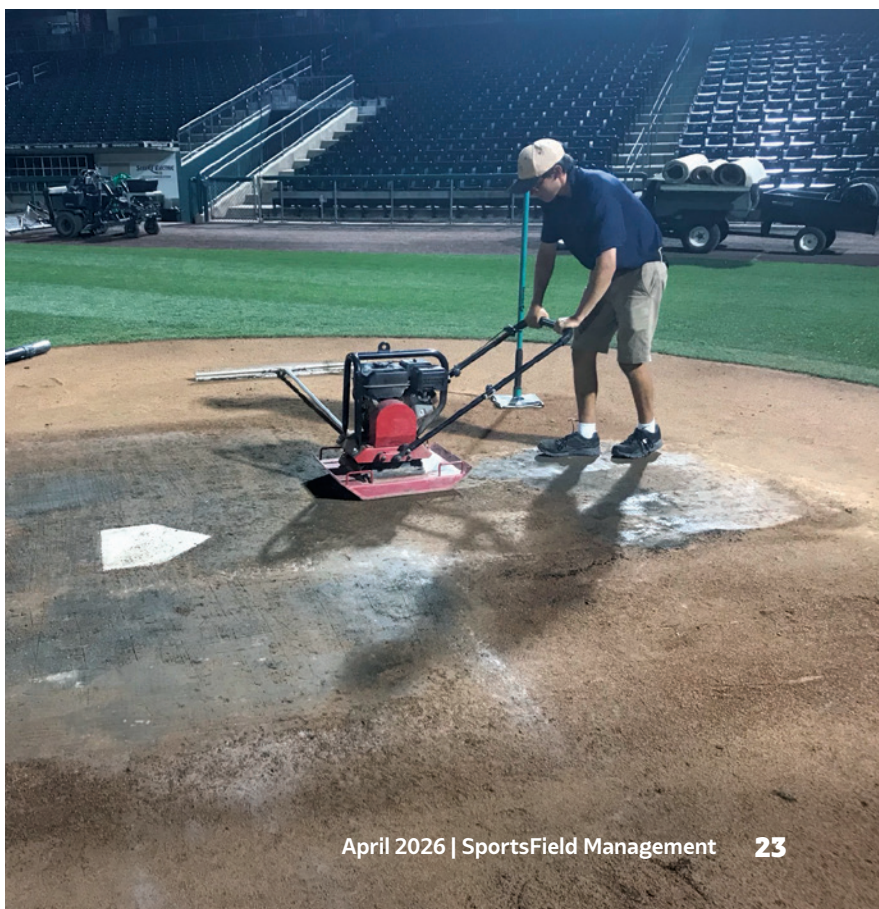
"The summer I started college was the summer my dad got the job in Lehigh Valley with the IronPigs," said Ty. "So, near the end of my freshman year, he needed an intern, and I didn't have a summer job."

Ty ended up loving the work and came back the following summer. At that point, Andy told Ty, "If you decide to pursue this, you need to go intern for somebody else in 2024. Get somebody else's name on your resume other than dad."

So, after interning with the IronPigs in 2023, Ty transferred to Delaware Valley University to major in sports turf management.



The Gossel family. Left to right: Jacob, Ty, Andy, Elyssa and Laura with their dog, Scherzer.





"After junior year I interned with the Baltimore Ravens for the summer and fall, and I got to be there during football season," said Ty. "I finished out school and that last summer I interned for the Philadelphia Phillies."

Ty graduated from Delaware Valley in December of 2025 with a degree in sports turf management, and began working at the Maryland SoccerPlex in January of 2026.

According to Ty, when he was 13, he wasn't that interested in sports field management, but by the time he was 18 or 19, he realized the value and importance of the work.

"He was definitely supportive of it," Ty said of the conversations with his father about pursuing a career in this industry. "Having worked with him for a while, he knew that I was willing to spend the time that was necessary to be good at it. Minor League Baseball is a grind, so I knew that if I if I can get through that, I can get through pretty much anything."

Ty also consulted with his then girlfriend — now wife — about the career change.

"I spoke with her about it, and made sure she was aware of the hours and the commitment that the job would be before I made a life decision like that," he added.

Said Andy, "I knew he was getting to be good at it, doing the clay work and really taking an interest in it, asking a lot of really good questions. And that just continued to grow once he transferred."

According to Ty, beyond the tasks related to the job, working with Andy showed him how hard his father works. Meanwhile, his internships with the Ravens and Phillies showed him the different approaches to the job and the attention to detail.

Ty added that he has received plenty of great advice from his father, but the biggest part was watching him in action.

"I loved being there at work with my dad," said Ty. "But even before I worked with him, I saw how hard he worked to make it to our Little League games; and how much pride he took in being able to deliver as best as he possibly could

— everything that was demanded of him, and even above and beyond. He put the same amount of energy and effort into a high school field, because he works at everything as hard as he can.”

Now, as manager of grounds at the Maryland SoccerPlex, Ty works for Larson Storer. They have two assistant managers and seven other employees managing 21 natural grass fields and three artificial turf fields.

“Eleven are bermuda, three are hybrid and the rest are Kentucky bluegrass,” said Ty. “So, between the number of fields and the different species of grasses we have, there is a lot of room to try a lot of different things and experiment with different ideas.”

Of Ty’s journey, Andy added, “He did his own work building his resume and interviewing well. I tried to stay out of that as much as I could; just give him advice and let him do his thing. He has plowed his own road, and I think he has done really well.”

According to Andy, his biggest piece of advice to Ty was to focus on his relationship with his wife and the work-life balance required.

“My wife and I have a wonderful marriage, and it’s worked more or less by the grace of God and the patience of my wife,” said Andy. “But I encouraged him to find ways to prioritize his family while also still being able to do what he enjoys doing and pursue opportunities in the industry.”

Andy added that he is most proud of the fact that Ty asks a lot of good questions, wants to know why something worked or why it didn’t, and why certain things are done rather than just doing them.

“Whether it’s family related or industry related, asking questions has served him well,” said Andy. “He’s somebody who takes that advice and really weighs it out. A lot of it is being able to ask questions and be a lifelong learner. He’s interested in bettering himself.”

According to Ty, the best part of the job is seeing a project come to fruition and achieving the desired quality throughout the season despite heavy traffic. His advice to other young people entering the sports field management profession is to be willing to listen, take advice and work as hard as you can.

“Make your mistakes quickly, and don’t make the same mistake twice,” he added.

Of his own journey in the industry, Andy said the best part is not only seeing his son’s success, but seeing



other interns and assistants go on to find their own success — whether they stay in the industry or not.

“I just try and help them learn and grow and maximize where they can be as they move forward in their career and in life,” he added.

Andy also enjoys that his son Jacob pursued a career as a sports information director with the goal of being an athletic director someday. Jacob is director of athletic communications and marketing at Cairn University.

“I have one son who followed me into sports turf and one who is following my former path of being an athletic director,” he said. “That makes me smile a little bit, and gives me that proud dad moment that they’ve seen the enjoyment and the pleasure I get from doing my job and the relationships that I’ve been able to build with former coaches, former athletes and on the grounds side of things. They are finding their own path, but are still staying connected to sports.” **SFM**

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A CONCRETE SOLUTION

Parks department and local cricket club partner on a low-maintenance option to add cricket to an existing parks complex

Cricket has grown in popularity in Iowa, and with that increased demand has come the need for solutions to accommodate user groups.

The City of Marion, Iowa, was approached by a local cricket club that was seeking a space for practices and games. According to Brent Neighbor, CSFM, deputy director, parks & recreation for the City of Marion, the cricket club had previously utilized an area of their employer's green space. However, after losing access to that space, the group turned to the City of Marion as a partner.

Cricket play centers around a narrow rectangular "pitch" that takes the brunt of traffic. Bowlers, batters and fielders

all focus their movement through this area, which is roughly 10 feet wide and more than 60 feet long. Traditionally, the pitch area of a cricket field is grass kept hard and smooth by rolling with a 3-ton roller.

However, Neighbor knew his department did not have the resources and staffing to maintain a grass pitch. The local cricket club suggested pouring a concrete slab for the cricket pitch.

At that point, the City of Marion Parks & Recreation department identified Lowe Park, its Pee Wee baseball complex, as a possible fit for the cricket pitch. The facility hosts baseball, flag football, special events, and now cricket.

"It has four skinned infields on the corners and the green space is all located in the center," said Neighbor. "So we took aerial photos, looked at the imagery and how we use the fields, and how we could accommodate this. We run flag football in the fall and can run them at different angles on those Pee Wee diamonds. If we centered up that the concrete pitch in the middle of the fields and ran it north and south, we would still be able to run flag football."

According to Neighbor, the Pee Wee fields don't have outfield fencing, and the 6 to 8 year olds who use the fields typically don't even get the ball out of the infield. So the concrete slab for the cricket pitch was able to be placed in the area where the outfields of the baseball fields meet, and the park could still accommodate everything it had in the past.

Seth Staashelm, CPRP, CPSI, director of parks and recreation for the City of Marion, pointed out that cricket is a culturally significant sport, and the city is pleased to be able to host cricket among its many sports and programs.

"Multiple sports are able to coexist at our facilities," Staashelm added. "This isn't replacing anything; it's expanding access within the same footprint."

According to Staashelm, the community impact of such partnerships with user groups is essential for the City of Marion, and sets an example for other agencies throughout the country.

According to the cricket club that uses the facility, the biggest driver for the popularity of cricket in Iowa is the technology industry within the state, which attracts many engineers and other professionals from traditional cricket-playing countries such as India, Pakistan, England and Australia. The main employer for the club that utilizes Lowe Park is Collins Aerospace, but people in the club also travel to play at other facilities.

The club was up front with the Marion Parks & Recreation Department that the center pitch area would receive the most wear and tear. From the onset of discussions, they requested the concrete slab as part of the facility. According to Neighbor, the city provided the space and manpower to install the concrete pitch, while the cricket club provided the funds for pouring the concrete, and also donates its time and knowledge to run a cricket program for local youth.

"It's a very specific skill set to manage that that run-way on a cricket field," said Neighbor. "It requires a lot of watering and rolling because they want it very fast





but they need just a little bit of green. I don't think there was the expectation from the group that we do that level of maintenance."

The concrete slab for the center cricket pitch was topped with an outdoor carpet that is glued directly to the concrete. The carpet is just basic outdoor carpeting that can be purchased at a local home improvement center or carpet store.

For other sports field managers and parks and recreation professionals who are interested in adding cricket to their facilities, Neighbor said that the center pitch is the main consideration; but beyond that, the wear is very well distributed throughout the cricket field.

Other considerations, however, include having a shaded area for the "dugout" areas, as well as electrical for the scoreboard.

"Our cricket association provides its own scoreboard, but it is portable," he said. "They're able to set it up, but they do need electricity for that. The other thing we did recently

was to pour another pad for a batting cage for their practices. That batting cage area is outside of the play area. I would also look at replacing the carpet on the center cricket pitch slab every four years or so on average."

According to Neighbor, the key is how the field plays for all user groups.

"While we cannot control use or moisture, we focus on what we can control, such as how the surface plays," he stated. "We do this by implementing the basics: regular mowing (observing the 1/3 rule), regular aeration, overseeding, and proper fertility.

"It's a challenge as a sports field manager, but one that continues to deepen our appreciation for the partnerships that we have built and provides opportunities for all residents to participate in the sports they enjoy." **SFM**

Content and photos provided by Brent Neighbor, CSFM. John Kmitta contributed to this report.

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ

ANSWER

From page 17

The myriad of lines on this municipal multipurpose field were not painted for a special event; they are actually an attempt to paint a football field by a "newer" employee. The person first measured the outside dimensions of the field properly and painted the outline of the field. From there, it seems to have all gone wrong as the employee decided to just "walk off" the remainder of the field for the five-yard lines. Once he viewed the painted field, he decided it was not correct and tried to fix it. This photo shows the final version. Luckily, it was painted for a practice and not an actual game. After getting a good laugh over the painting attempt, the employee also learned a valuable lesson about measuring a field before painting. Despite being off measurement, you have to admit that the lines are pretty straight.

Photo submitted by Mike Hebrard, owner of Athletic Field Design in Oregon.

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 at john@turf-tec.com. If your photograph is selected, you will receive full credit. All photos become property of SportsField Management magazine and the Sports Field Management Association.



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RIDING MOWERS

BOBCAT ZT7000 ZERO-TURN MOWER

The Bobcat ZT7000 zero-turn mower is designed for commercial crews prioritizing speed and durability. A heavy-duty drive system and engine options up to 38.5 hp. support demanding workloads, while transport speeds up to 19 mph and mowing speeds up to 13 mph allow operators to cover large properties efficiently. Its AirFX cutting deck, offered in 61- or 72-inch widths, uses dual-layer 10-gauge-steel construction and a deep bullnose profile to increase airflow and lift for a uniform finish. An air-gap baffle design promotes efficient clipping dispersion in dense grass. A 15-gallon fuel tank, two-speed hydrostatic drive and operator-focused control layout are intended to reduce downtime and support consistent commercial productivity.

EGO 52-INCH ZERO-TURN

Ego's new 52-inch zero-turn mower will make quick, quiet work of maintaining sports fields. The innovations of this mower include a noise reduction gearbox and fabricated deck, as well as an increased IPX 5 rating that will protect it against rain. Powered by six 10ah batteries, this mower delivers 27 horsepower to the tri-blade cutting system, ensuring a quality cut of up to three acres. This 52-inch mower, with its electric motors and no belts, guarantees more time cutting, less time spent on maintenance. For extended runtime you can easily hot swap the batteries on the fly. This ZTR comes with an 800-watt charger for quick recharge; or you can use the PGX charging system, sold separately, to charge up to 70 batteries on a single 15 a circuit.



*Bobcat ZT7000
zero-turn mower*



*Ego 52-inch
zero-turn mower*

EXMARK LAZER Z S-SERIES WITH SUSPENDED OPERATOR PLATFORM

The Exmark Lazer Z S-Series commercial zero-turn mower returns with an available suspended operator platform designed to reduce vibration and fatigue during long shifts. The platform uses three coil-over hydraulic dampers, and can be adjusted without tools to match operator weight or ride preference. Exmark's Iso-Mount seat isolation system adds controlled lateral and vertical movement to improve comfort. Equipped with a 60-inch Ultra-Cut Series 4 deck and a Kawasaki FX801V engine, the mower is designed for high-output commercial mowing. Maintenance demands are reduced with four annual grease points and sealed bearing spindle assemblies intended to limit in-season service. The configuration focuses on productivity and operator comfort while supporting efficient operation on large properties.



Exmark Lazer Z
S-Series commercial
zero-turn mower

FERRIS Z3

The Ferris Z3 stand-on mower is available with a Vanguard Big Block EFI-ETC 40-hp. engine, increasing power and productivity for demanding commercial workloads. Offered in 52-, 60- and 72-inch deck sizes, the Z3 is built to cover large areas efficiently while maintaining consistent cut quality. The Ferris iCD+ cutting system is designed to maximize vacuum and clipping discharge for an even finish across varied turf conditions. Operator comfort is supported by a suspension platform system with coil-over shocks that reduces vibration during extended use. A pivoting front axle improves traction and control on uneven terrain and moderate inclines. The mower reaches ground speeds up to 12 mph and features Vanguard's Oil Guard system, extending oil change intervals to 500 hours to reduce maintenance downtime. The Z3 is backed by a four-year, 500-hour limited warranty with no hour limit during the first two years.



Ferris Z3
stand-on mower

GRASSHOPPER SO34.5KW OUTSTANDER

The Grasshopper SO34.5KW OutStander stand-on mower is built for users requiring high power and stability in difficult mowing conditions. It is powered by a 34.5-hp. Kawasaki electronic fuel injected engine with electronic throttle control, delivering the torque needed to handle heavy or wet grass. A 61-inch DuraMax deck, 5.5 inches deep, is designed to produce a manicured finish and can be converted for optional mulching, with cutting heights adjustable from 1 to 5.5 inches. Operator comfort features include a Command Center Tower with 4.5 inches of vertical adjustment and a coil-spring suspension platform that helps reduce fatigue. Positioning the operator between the drive tires improves stability and eliminates the slingshot effect.



Grasshopper
SO34.5KW
Outstander
stand-on mower

common in some stand-on designs. A low center of gravity supports traction on varied terrain, while a 13.5-gallon fuel tank reduces refueling stops during long workdays.

GRAVELY PRO-TURN 200

Gravely is reintroducing the Pro-Turn 200 commercial zero-turn mower to address demand for a durable fleet machine positioned at a key commercial price point. Available in 52- and 60-inch deck widths, the mower is designed to balance productivity and operator comfort for professional mowing operations. It features Gravely's X-Factor 2 cutting deck engineered for consistent clipping dispersion and uniform cut quality across varied turf conditions. Power options include Kawasaki FX850 and FX921 engines paired with Hydro-Gear ZT-5400 transaxles supporting ground speeds up to 13 mph. A tubular steel frame is built for heavy commercial use, while a 13.4-gallon fuel tank supports longer runtimes. Optional accessories such as mulching and bagging systems allow crews to adapt the mower to different job needs.

GREENWORKS 82V MAXIMUS

The Greenworks 82V 60-inch Maximus zero-turn mower is designed for commercial crews seeking battery-powered productivity on large properties. A 60-inch deck and constant 17,000 foot-per-minute blade tip speed are engineered to maintain consistent cut quality across demanding turf. The mower is powered by six high-capacity batteries and a 1.5 kW charger, providing coverage of up to two acres per charge with an approximate three-hour recharge time. Drive speeds reach up to 8 mph. By eliminating fuel and routine engine maintenance, the battery system reduces downtime while supporting quieter operation and lower vibration for daily commercial mowing.

HONDA PROZISION BATTERY-POWERED ZTR MOWERS

Honda's ProZision battery-powered zero-turn lineup introduces the HZ54SXB and HZ60SXB, designed for commercial crews seeking quiet operation and zero emissions. Produced in North Carolina, the models represent Honda's first commercial riding mowers. Both feature stacked MicroCut twin blades engineered to produce fine clippings without a separate mulching kit, with deck options of 54 or 60 inches. Power is supplied by six 48-volt lithium-ion batteries delivering 19.2 kWh and driving five brushless electric motors. Depending on conditions, the mowers can cover up to 14 to 15 acres per charge. A built-in charging system supports 120- or 240-volt input, with full recharge available in approximately 6.5 hours at higher voltage. Full suspension, adjustable controls and multiple drive modes are designed to reduce fatigue while supporting daily commercial use.



*Gravely Pro-Turn 200
commercial zero-turn mower*



*Greenworks 82V
60-inch Maximus
zero-turn mower*



*Honda ProZision
battery-powered
zero-turn lineup*

HUSQVARNA Z560XS

The Husqvarna Z560XS leads the brand's Z500 Series and is built for commercial crews that demand maximum productivity, durability and operator comfort. Powered by a 38.5-hp. electronically fuel injected Kawasaki FX Series V Twin engine, this workhorse delivers strong, consistent performance across demanding turf conditions. The 60-inch, 7-gauge fabricated deck with 10-inch cast-iron spindles is engineered for maximum durability, while the 6-inch-deep deck and high-performance design ensure premium cut quality and even dispersal. New steel-belted radial rear tires provide a flatter contact patch for better traction and feature a gel coating to help eliminate flats. Dual Hydro Gear ZT 5400 commercial transmissions deliver smooth, responsive control with ground speeds up to 12 mph. Operators benefit from a premium suspension seat, ergonomic controls, and automotive-style LED fuel gauges. Built with industrial-strength components, the Z560XS delivers the durability, speed, and cut quality required for top tier commercial performance.



Husqvarna
Z560XS

JACOBSEN SLF1 ELITE LITHIUM MOWER

Jacobsen's five-gang SLF1 ELiTE lithium mower, powered by Samsung SDI technology, offers Jake's signature quality of cut with operator and owner benefits. Lithium power provides silent cutting with minimal vibration, which reduces operator fatigue and increases productivity and runtime. Users get at least 5.5 hours of operation per charge with the 500-amp-hour Samsung SDI lithium battery. The machine offers convenient onboard, overnight charging that fits with existing universal electrical infrastructure, making it as simple as plugging it in at the end of the day to ensure it is ready for the next. The SLF1 ELiTE also features hydraulic-free design to reduce maintenance needs and operating costs, and eliminate the potential for turf damage due to fluid leaks. The control center, located on an adjustable swing-out console arm, features lockable speed controls and Jacobsen's trusted frequency-of-clip control, to guarantee a consistent and exceptional finish every time.



Jacobsen SLF1 ELITE
lithium mower

JOHN DEERE DIESEL ZTRAK ZERO-TURN MOWERS

The John Deere lineup of ZTrak zero-turn mowers welcomes three models, including the debut of the Z998R. In addition, the existing Z997R model received a full design upgrade and is now available in two trim levels, including the Z997R and Z997M. The Z998R can operate as a traditional 100" zero-turn mower or adapt on the fly with the touch of a button. Thanks to its independently controlled E-Cut wing decks and electric drive motors, operators can raise or lower each wing deck to navigate around trees, fences, gates and other obstacles without interrupting mowing. What truly sets the



John Deere diesel ZTrak
zero-turn mowers

Z998R apart is its ability to keep mowing with the center deck while adjusting the wing decks. You can even mow with just one wing deck down, giving you flexible cutting widths of 60, 80, or 100 inches to suit the job at hand.

KIOTI ZXD SERIES

The ZXD Series is Kioti's first-ever diesel-powered mower line, delivering commercial-grade durability for landscape and turf care professionals. Available with 61- and 72-inch deck sizes, the ZXD61 and ZXD72 are powered by a 1.2L Kioti diesel engine with direct drive transaxles, which eliminate the need for drive belts. A heavy-duty frame, reinforced seven-gauge fabricated steel deck, and semi-pneumatic front casters help the machines handle challenging terrain while maintaining top-tier cut quality. The ZXD Series also features premium, rubber-isolated three-inch suspension seats and an articulating front axle for a smoother ride across uneven ground, enhancing operator comfort. With easy access to key components that simplify routine maintenance, along with dual fuel tanks with a combined 17-gallon capacity, and top speeds of 11 mph, the ZXD Series is built for efficiency.

KUBOTA ZD1611

The Kubota ZD1611 zero-turn mower is part of Kubota's ZD Series of commercial zero-turn mowers. Equipped with a 30.8-hp. Kubota Common Rail System (CRS) diesel engine, it provides exceptional power, torque and reliable performance. Available in three deck configurations — a 72-inch side-discharge, 60- and 72-inch rear-discharge mowers — the ZD1611 adapts to diverse field conditions and cutting preferences. Operator comfort is prioritized through an air-ride suspension seat with adjustable reclining and lumbar support, helping operators stay comfortable during extended workdays. A 12V power outlet conveniently placed in the cup holder allows for device charging, and front axle tie-down points allow for easy and secure trailering. The ZD1611 combines professional-quality cutting performance with durability and reliability.

SCAG TIGER CAT II ZERO-TURN RIDER

The Scag Tiger Cat II is positioned as a mid-sized zero-turn rider built for speed and maneuverability in a compact footprint. Designed to handle open turf while navigating tight areas, the mower reaches ground speeds up to 12 mph. A heavy-duty tubular steel frame and Velocity Plus cutting



*Kioti ZXD61
diesel-powered mower*



*Kubota ZD1611
zero-turn mower*

deck are engineered for durability and consistent cut quality. Engine options reach up to 36 hp. and are paired with a high-output drive system and a 9.5-gallon fuel tank. Operator comfort is supported by an adjustable four-point iso-mounted suspension seat that reduces fatigue during long work periods. For 2026, select models are available with the Rehlko Command Pro 888 engine, backed by a five-year or 2,000-hour limited engine warranty. The mower is also covered by Scag's commercial warranty and a limited cutter deck and spindle warranty.

TORO GRANDSTAND MULTI FORCE EVO

The Toro GrandStand Multi Force EVO is engineered for professionals who need a stand-on mower that delivers power, versatility and durability in demanding conditions. Built on Toro's Multi Force platform, the updated model is designed to support productivity while improving long-term return on investment. It is powered by a 34.5-hp. Kawasaki EVO 822cc engine that provides the strength needed for heavy cutting and consistent performance across large properties. A redesigned front end with larger casters helps protect turf, especially in wet conditions, while contributing to a smoother ride and improved maneuverability. The mower retains Toro's Turbo Force cutting deck, known for delivering a clean, professional finish. Compatibility with a wide range of attachments supports year-round versatility, allowing contractors to expand services beyond mowing. The result is a machine built to operate across seasons while helping crews work efficiently.

WRIGHT ZTS

The Wright ZTS serves as an entry point into the company's mid-mount zero-turn lineup, offering commercial users a balance of comfort, durability and professional performance. Designed around everyday jobsite demands, the mower combines the familiarity of a ride-on platform with the efficiency Wright equipment is known for. Its independent swing-arm front suspension provides a smoother ride while allowing all four wheels to follow ground contours, helping maintain a consistent cut and reduce operator fatigue. Power comes from a Kawasaki FT730 engine paired with Hydro-Gear ZT-3400 transmissions engineered for long service life and simplified maintenance. The ZTS is available with 52- or 61-inch Aero-Core flat-back decks designed for reliable cut quality and improved discharge. Intended for crews expanding a fleet or replacing aging equipment, the mower emphasizes operator comfort and steady productivity while supporting a clean, professional finish. **SFM**



*Scag Tiger Cat II
zero-turn rider*



*Toro GrandStand
Multi Force EVO
stand-on mower*



Wright ZTS



FIFA World Cup incoming, a World Champion will be crowned here in just under 5 months time...



@TPIturfTalk

We're taking a look back at some of the sights from the TPI 2026 International Education Conference & Field Day. Attendees picked up top tips from experts in the pre-conference master classes on topics such as pricing, HR and succession, and networked with peers. #TPI2026Tucson



@RMSFields



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@Mike_Kerns_



@hartmanboy7

Amazing trip to Japan assisting with the WBC. Huge thanks to BrightView Group for allowing me to be a part of the experience!



@sofoturf

What a great experience for our upper level, turf pathway students. We traveled to Athens to visit with the professionals at both @UGAGolfCourse and @UGA_Sports_Turf at Sanford Stadium @SouthForsythHS @fscpathways



@BrightView

The World Baseball Classic is underway, bringing together elite talent from around the globe. We're proud to help set the stage for world-class competition.



@NFedewaturf

Thanks to the board of the @ThePFFMA for putting together an amazing meeting in LA. We pulled together something special and look forward to doing it again next year. Being president of this board allows me to work with some amazingly talented people. Thank you for all you do!



@NPappas23



@NFSFMA

Great day of learning and connecting at the North Florida SFMA chapter meeting hosted at VyStar Ballpark!

PFFMA inducts Dick Ericson into its Ring of Honor

The Professional Football Field Managers Alliance (PFFMA) inducted Dick Ericson into its prestigious Ring of Honor, recognizing a lifetime of leadership, innovation and service to the sports field management profession.

Ericson is widely regarded as one of the foundational figures in modern sports field management. He served as head groundskeeper at Metropolitan Stadium, home to the Minnesota Twins and Minnesota Vikings, and continued his leadership through the organizations' transition to the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome from 1961 to 1981. During a transformative era in professional sports facilities, Ericson ensured that playing surfaces met the highest standards of safety, performance, and playability.

A visionary beyond the field, Ericson was a founding leader and the first president of the Sports Turf Managers Association (1981–1982). His leadership helped unify sports turf professionals nationwide, establishing a collaborative platform for education, research, and the development of industry-wide best practices that continue to shape the profession today.

Throughout his career, Ericson was known not only for his technical expertise and commitment to excellence, but also for his dedication to mentoring the next generation of turf managers. His willingness to share knowledge, elevate standards, and advocate for professionalism strengthened the field management community across the country.

"Dick Ericson's legacy is woven into the very fabric of our profession," said PFFMA leader Ken Mrock. "His contributions helped define what excellence in sports field management looks like, and his influence continues to be felt throughout the industry."

The PFFMA Ring of Honor celebrates individuals whose careers have made a lasting impact on professional football field management. Dick Ericson's induction recognizes decades of service, innovation, and leadership that have advanced the profession and inspired generations.



SiteOne Landscape Supply acquires Reinders

SiteOne Landscape Supply acquired Reinders, a family-owned distributor of irrigation, agronomics, holiday and landscape lighting, and landscape supplies with 12 locations across Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas and Minnesota.

With more than 150 years of industry leadership, Reinders is known for its technical expertise, rapid on-site diagnostics, tailored product recommendations and industry-leading service from a team of highly trained professionals.

Together, the companies will build on Reinders' trusted advisor role with customers, while expanding inventory depth, operational support, and resources designed to help green industry professionals succeed.

"As a very successful fifth-generation, family-owned company, Reinders is well known and respected in the green industry for quality and reliability, a commitment to exceptional customer service and for helping their customers succeed — values we share at SiteOne," said Doug Black, chairman and CEO of SiteOne. "This acquisition expands our ability to offer the full line of landscape supplies to our combined customers, enhances our presence in the market, and provides an avenue for further expansion in the growing Midwest market. We're excited to welcome Ann Reinders and the talented Reinders team to the SiteOne family and look forward to working together to serve landscape professionals throughout the Midwest and beyond."



Reinders evaluated multiple options for its future before choosing to partner with SiteOne, citing shared values, a focus on the green industry, strong resources and capabilities, and a commitment to preserving its legacy. Reinders will continue operating under its established name, maintaining the customer relationships and service model that have defined the company for generations, while leveraging the full resources and capabilities of SiteOne.

“For more than 150 years, we have built a name, a brand and a legacy in the green industry,” said Ann Reinders, vice president of operations at Reinders, who will remain with the business following the acquisition. “While the Reinders family has led the company for five generations, it’s our incredible people who have built the brand. SiteOne is the best partner to continue to further the service excellence and quality products the green industry deserves. I look forward to leading Reinders into our next phase, strengthened by the infrastructure, leadership and people-focused approach SiteOne provides.”

“Joining SiteOne allows Reinders to leverage the strengths of both organizations to provide superior customer service well into the future,” said Craig Reinders, CEO of Reinders, who will move on to lead Spartan Turf Products, the Reinders family Toro distribution business. “The alignment between the core values of SiteOne and Reinders creates a powerful foundation, uniquely positioning Reinders to elevate the level of service and support its customers rely on — now and in the years ahead.”

Customers should continue working with their local Reinders teams as usual while the companies thoughtfully integrate over time.

Golden Valley FFA students get firsthand look at turfgrass careers

The Golden Valley (Calif.) FFA Turf Program recently returned from a trip that gave students a firsthand look at careers in the turfgrass industry. Alongside Atwater High School, students participated in this unique experience led by instructors Kevin Magill of Golden Valley HS and Dave Gossman of Atwater HS.

Throughout the trip, students visited top-tier facilities and connected with professional grounds crew members from organizations including the USC athletic facilities, Arizona State University, and Major League Baseball teams such as the Cleveland Guardians, Los Angeles Dodgers,



Chicago White Sox, Texas Rangers, Kansas City Royals, Seattle Mariners, and San Diego Padres. Students also had the valuable opportunity to meet with a golf course superintendent from Sun City, gaining insight into the management and maintenance of high-level golf facilities.

“This experience provided students with real-world exposure to the skills, expectations, and dedication required in the turf industry,” Magill stated. “By interacting directly with professionals, students were able to ask questions, observe advanced techniques, and explore potential career pathways within turf and sports field management.”

Campey Turf Care Systems celebrates 40 Years

Campey Turf Care Systems is celebrating 40 years in 2026, marking the milestone with a special “Open Day,” July 9. Since its inception in 1986, Campey has evolved from a small family business into a respected provider of professional turf care equipment and expertise, trusted by sports venues, contractors, and grounds professionals in the UK and around the world.

Established by Richard Campey, the company’s foundation is built on offering practical, inventive solutions tailored to the real needs of turf professionals.

Reflecting on the company’s journey, Richard commented, “When we launched in 1986, I started off in the northwest of England carrying out contracting work. Over time, customers started asking me if they could buy the machines. The initial machine that I brought to market was the Greenline Coremaster. Four decades on, our drive for innovation and partnership with the industry is as strong as ever. The Open Day will be a fantastic occasion to share this milestone with everyone who has contributed along the way, and our way of saying thank you with the people who have helped make it possible.”

The 40th Anniversary Open Day will highlight the company’s heritage and its continued commitment to developing machinery and practices that support the future of sports turf management.

For more information, or to register to attend the event, visit www.campey40.com **SFM**



2026

APRIL 10

KENTUCKY SFMA FIELD CLEANUP DAY

New Haven Community Park

Contact: Marcus Elswick (859-806-7842)

APRIL 14

CLEMSON SPRING TURFGRASS FIELD DAY

Pee Dee Research Center in Florence, South Carolina

<https://scsfma.org/>

JUNE 23-25

NATIONAL SPORTS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

Palm Desert, California

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

SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 1

2026 NRPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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

OCTOBER 20-23

EQUIP EXPO

Louisville, Kentucky

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

NOVEMBER 8-11

ELEVATE (NALP)

Tampa, Florida

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

NOVEMBER 8-11

TRANSFORM, THE PGMS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Tampa, Florida

<https://pgms.org/>

NOVEMBER 11-12

SALTEX 2026

Birmingham, UK

www.saltex.org.uk

DECEMBER 1-4

AMERICAN SPORTS BUILDERS ASSOCIATION TECHNICAL MEETING

Tampa, Florida

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

DECEMBER 7-10

IRRIGATION SHOW AND EDUCATION WEEK

Las Vegas, Nevada

<https://irrigation.org/IA>



2027

FEBRUARY 1-4

SFMA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Tampa, Florida

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

FEBRUARY 15-18

TPI 2027 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE AND FIELD DAY

Amelia Island, Fernandina Beach, Florida

<https://turfgrasssod.org/event/tpi-2027-international-education-conference/> **SFM**

SFMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

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Colorado SFMA: www.csfma.org

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Kentucky Sports Field Management Association:
www.kysfma.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

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Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey:
www.sfmnj.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/>

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Vision

(Author's note: This is the final article in the series "Lead From Where You Stand: The 8 Stolons of Leadership," closing the loop on the journey we've taken together and pointing toward the growth still ahead.)

Great leaders don't wait for clarity before they move. They create clarity through movement. In sports field management, vision isn't a slogan or a poster; it's a working tool. Vision reaches beyond what you can see, stretching your leadership to new ground, and creating fresh growth points for your team, your operation and your future.

Vision is more than forecasting or pointing toward a destination. It's the ability to help people see possibility when the present feels foggy, frustrating or overwhelming. Most teams don't struggle because they lack effort — they struggle because they lack a picture of what their effort is building toward. Vision gives that picture shape. It gives the work meaning. It gives the team direction.

Vision may begin in the leader's mind, but it can't be fueled by ego or authority. Real vision is grounded in awareness of reality, belief in potential, and conviction about the path ahead. You can't lead people into a future you don't believe in. Your team reads authenticity faster than they read a schedule. When your vision is honest about the work and bold about the possibility, people lean in. They begin to see themselves in that future. Vision isn't about telling people what to do, it's about giving them a reason to care about where they're going.

Vision lives in the daily movements of leadership: the standard you protect, the effort you model, the way you talk about challenges, and the consistency behind your decisions. Anyone can give a "vision speech," but when a leader says, "Here's where we're aiming, and here's how today connects," people buy in. Vision in sports field management is in how you plan your week, how you teach a new employee to mow a straight line, and how you talk about tomorrow when today is chaotic.

For vision to matter it needs three things: a purpose that explains why the work matters, a picture that shows what the future looks like, and a path that outlines how you'll get there. Without all three, vision collapses under its own weight. With them, it becomes a force that pulls people forward.

Vision also requires courage, especially when not everyone buys in. Every leader meets resistance from someone who prefers the comfort of last year. Vision disrupts habits, challenges norms, and threatens the familiar. Courage shows up in how you respond when negativity circulates, when old habits push back, when progress feels slow, or when the team can't yet see what you see. Having vision doesn't mean ignoring those voices, it means hearing them without surrendering direction.

Leaders sharpen vision by reflecting on what's working, studying what's possible, learning from peers, asking better questions, and experimenting with small changes. You don't learn vision by waiting for inspiration. You learn it by staying curious and paying attention. Vision grows from exposure to ideas, people and challenges. The more you practice, the clearer your foresight becomes.

You can feel the difference in a team that has vision. They anticipate instead of react, they understand what success looks like, they trust each other, they feel less burned out because they see the bigger picture, and they bring ideas instead of complaints. Vision doesn't remove the stress of the job, but it organizes it and turns chaos into direction. It gives meaning to routine. People don't burn out from working hard; they burn out from working without meaning.

Stolons stretch outward, testing new ground and creating new nodes of growth wherever conditions allow. Vision does the same for your leadership. When you think beyond today, imagine a future that challenges your limits. Help others see it too so new skills take root, confidence grows, and opportunities appear.

That's why vision sits at the end of the stolon series. It's the reach that pulls everything forward and a reminder that leadership is always expanding, always stretching, always searching for the next place growth can take hold. You're not done growing. This series was about the people behind the work and how we grow as leaders.

Please take a minute to share your perspective at <https://forms.gle/JciZSZ6FJKmciEYE8>. **SFM**



Alpha Jones, CSFM, is athletic field specialist at Duke University. He is also president of the Sports Field Management Association. He can be reached via email at morthangrass@gmail.com

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