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VOLUME ELEVEN, NUMBER EIGHT

AUGUST 1995

MAIN EVENTS

10 *The Best Bet for Turf Racetracks and Equestrian Venues*

Horses, like other athletes, can sense the amount of stability in a running surface. Careful planning and proper maintenance techniques can help prevent injuries to horses on turf surfaces. Steve Guise offers a detailed explanation of the considerations involved in a turf surface for horses.

14 *South Texas Racetrack Bets on Zoysia*

Zoysiagrass is frequently overlooked as an athletic surface, but the designers of Retama Park in Texas decided to give zoysia a try as the surface for the turf track at the new facility. Freelance writer Kathy Smith takes a look at the early returns.

16 *Overseeding: Making the Transition*

As the long, hot summer draws to a close, turf managers throughout the southern U.S. are preparing to overseed their athletic fields with cool-season grasses to keep them green and playable through the winter months. Robert Reaves talks with sports turf managers about their overseeding practices, including timing of overseeding, seed selection, weed control, surface preparation and other issues.

24 *Thatch Control: The Key to Turf Management*

Thatch control plays a crucial role in the turf management programs of many head groundskeepers throughout the warm-season zone. Associate Editor Barbara Augsdorfer interviews sports turf managers who share their ideas on thatch management and control practices.

26 *Turf of the Month: Rough Bluegrass*

For years rough bluegrass (*Poa trivialis*) has been lumped into the same category as *Poa annua* — another troublesome weed. However, sports turf managers are taking a hint from golf course superintendents and finding that rough bluegrass can actually be a useful turfgrass. Some even use *Poa trivialis* to choke out *Poa annua*.

28 *G.C. Trivett: The Man Behind M.S. Deal Stadium in Granite Falls, NC*

Some athletic fields are built with tax money. Others are built and maintained with private funds. However, in Granite Falls, NC, the new multi-purpose stadium at the middle school is a real community effort spearheaded by G.C. Trivett, sports turf manager for the stadium. Bob Tracinski interviewed Trivett to find out how he keeps the field in top shape for baseball, softball, football, soccer and other activities.

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On the Cover:

These horses can accelerate out of the turn at Monmouth Park in New Jersey because the turf surface has been chosen and maintained carefully to provide the best possible conditions for horse racing. Photo courtesy: Bill Denver, EQUI-PHOTO.

New Reference Guide for Sports Turf Managers

By Greg Petry



A quick five-minute review of STMA's mission statement and many membership benefits underscores the importance of education. Simply put, STMA strives to continue to educate and promote better and safer sports turf areas.

I am particularly gratified to note the proliferation of educational opportunities within the STMA. Not only is the content of our conference better than ever, but we are about to distribute the third annual collection of

articles dealing with sports turf management, *Sports Turf Topics*, 1994-95. This reference guide was developed through the volunteer efforts of the STMA Public Relations Committee and the generous support of John Deere Co.

Sports Turf Topics, 1994-95 contains more than 30 educational articles that appeared in various turf-related trade publications during the past year. The compendium is divided into five sections: Sports Turf Cultural Management, Sports Turf Pest Management, Special Turf Practices, General Sports Turf Management and STMA Award Winners.

The book will be distributed free to all STMA members. Nonmembers may purchase a copy for \$30 by contacting the STMA at (312) 644-6610.



Get Serious With STMA

Application for Membership

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) is an organization of professionals representing all segments of the sports turf industry. Our members work to combine the science of growing grass and the art of maintaining sports turf to produce playing fields that are both safe and aesthetically pleasing.

STMA provides members with a variety of benefits, including: Education through regional institutes and conferences; support for sports turf research; facilities tours; a national awards program; access to the STMA National Conference and Exhibition; complimentary subscriptions to *Sports Turf Manager* and *sportsTURF Magazine*; and much more.

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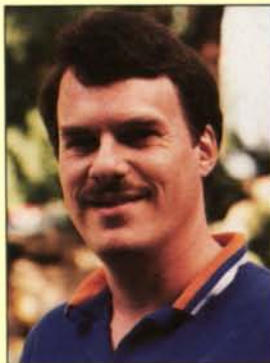
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THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE



Good Apples

One of the perks of being the editor of *sportsTURF* is the experience of getting to know the many different people who are involved in this business. Most of the people I have talked to have been incredibly generous and helpful, both to myself and to nearly everyone else involved in the industry. Never before have I been associated with such a diverse group of individuals who are always ready, willing and, in fact, eager to help each other with any problem, no matter how small.

No matter who I call — whether it's Steve Wightman in San Diego, Mark Razum in Denver, George and Chip Toma in Kansas City, Ed Birch and Murray Cook in Florida, Jim Puhalla in Ohio, Steve Cockerham at UC Riverside, Chris Bunnell in Escondido, Vince Paterozzi in Cleveland, Ed Mangan in Atlanta, Alan Sigwardt in Miami or Mike Williams in Binghamton, NY — sports turf managers all respond in the same way: "How can I help?" Nearly every sports turf manager I've met or talked to has been more than willing to share his or her knowledge with others. While the major players in many other industries zealously guard their secrets in true, cut-throat business fashion, sports turf managers are unique in their spirit of cooperation.

Sadly, this spirit of cooperation does not exist throughout the industry. Some components of the industry have a bitter edge to them. Usually money is a key factor. Surprisingly, in my personal experience at least, the individuals and companies who make the most money also have the worst attitude toward others in the industry. I don't mean to suggest that all the corporate entities in the sports turf industry are Ebenezer Scrooge types who are in dire need of a visit from the Ghost of Christmas-Yet-to-Come. However, my experience has been that when money is not a factor, almost everyone coexists peacefully and even cooperates with each other. Sports turf managers do not make most of the money in this industry — others do.

Fortunately, the positive elements of the STMA and those affiliated with the sports turf industry exceed the negative aspects substantially. People like Wightman, Razum, Mangan and the Tomas are a joy to work with. They give so much to this industry and ask for little, if anything, in return. They are special people, and the abundance of them — and I've mentioned only a few of the best — makes one of my future duties very difficult. Selecting the *sportsTURF* Manager of the Year will be quite a challenge, considering all the well-qualified candidates in the industry. Your nominations and suggestions are welcome as always.

Maybe the sports-turf industry has a few bad apples; but for every bad apple, one can find a whole orchard full of good ones. I look forward to meeting more of the good apples.

Mike Augsdorfer

Mike Augsdorfer

Editor's Notebook

In the June 1995 issue of *sportsTURF* Dan Almond of Randall & Blake, Inc., of Littleton, CO, was inadvertently credited for the turf installation at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City. Almond and RBI were not involved in the Arrowhead project. We apologize for the error.

EVENTS

CALENDAR

August

29 Central New York GCSA *Poa annua* Golf Tournament. Auburn Country Club, Auburn, NY. Contact: Dick Perry, (315) 638-2341.

30 Tournament of Champions golf tournament, sponsored by the California Association of Nurserymen. Torrey Pines Golf Course, La Jolla, CA. Contact: CAN, (916) 567-0200.

31 Turf IPM Scouting Workshop, sponsored by the University of Massachusetts. Eastern Massachusetts Extension Center, Waltham. CEUs available. Fee: \$35. *Registration deadline is August 24.* Contact: Mary Owen, (508) 892-0382.

September

7-8 Southwest Horticultural Trade Show, sponsored by the Arizona Nursery Association. Phoenix Civic Plaza, Phoenix, AZ. Includes "Turf Stress Management," presented by the GCSAA and Sixth Annual Xeriscape Conference. Contact: (602) 966-1610.

9-12 American Society of Irrigation Consultants Annual Conference, "Broadening Our Horizons." Georgia Tech University, Atlanta, including tours of major 1996 Olympic venues. Contact: Wanda Sarsfield, ASIC, (510) 516-1124. Fax: (510) 516-1301.

12-13 University of California Riverside Turfgrass Research Conference and Field Days, UC Riverside campus. Contact Susana Denney, Department of Botany and Plant Sciences, (909) 787-4430.

23-27 Florida Turfgrass Association 43rd Annual Conference and Show. Hyatt Regency Downtown/Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, FL. Contact: Charalyn Cole, (800) 882-6721 or (407) 898-6721.

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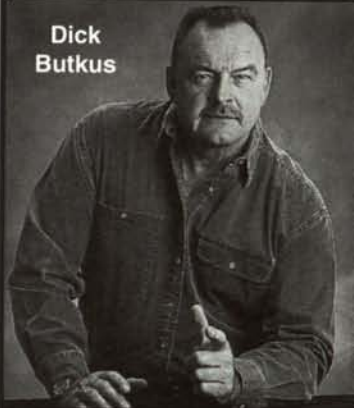
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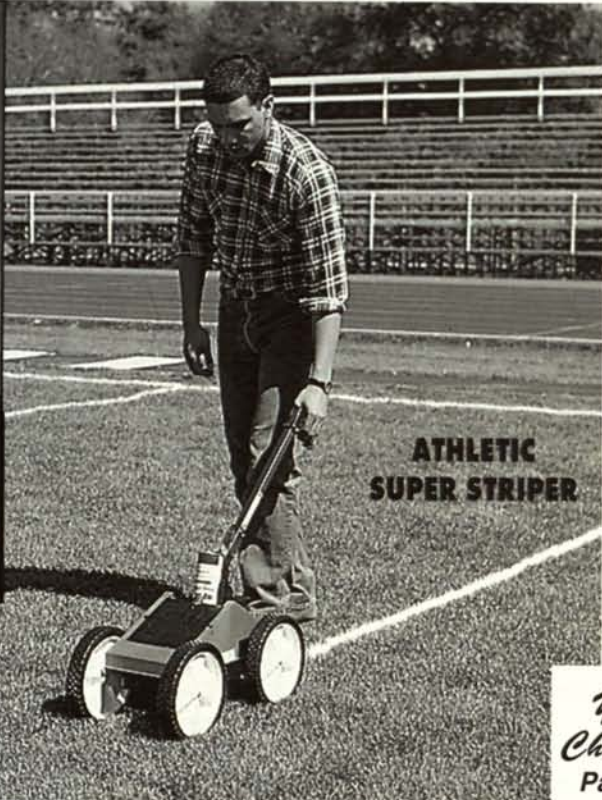
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The Best Bet for Turf Racetracks and Equestrian Venues

By Stephen Guise

Sports turf management is all about providing a safe surface that allows athletes to perform to the best of their abilities. Ideally, the site conditions should give each competitor an equal opportunity.

These goals are no different when the athlete is a horse. Though these thousand-pound competitors may look sturdy, they have vulnerable stress points, particularly in the legs. The weight of a horse is borne by four slender legs each ending in a three-inch hoof. A competitive surface should not be so hard that the hooves leave no impact when they strike it. The horse requires some degree of give in the surface both to help absorb some of the stress and to provide a stable base from which to push off with the movement of the fetlock (the ankle of a horse) that leads into the next stride.

A turf track can be soft and still be safe if it is not overly soft and the degree of softness is consistent everywhere. However, when conditions vary from soft to hard within the competitive area, injuries can occur.

Award-winning jockeys report that horses “feel” the stability in a consistent track and go full out. When stability is erratic, the horses sense the danger and react accordingly.

The track or arena must retain uniformity and consistency throughout any weather conditions. That does not mean that a track must be maintained at one, pre-set degree of moisture content and firmness, but that whatever the condi-



Jockeys report that horses can feel the stability in a consistent track and go full out. Photos courtesy: Netlon Limited.

This turf track at Happy Valley in Hong Kong is subject to tropical monsoon and typhoon rainfall, as well as the normal wear of the turf.

tions, they must be the same throughout the competitive area. Revenues depend on the number of races that can be run on a track each day, the wearability factor, and on the track being safe and usable, even during rainy weather.

Soil Requirements

The soil profile plays a major role in firmness, stability and uniformity. Because rapid percolation is essential for turf track usability during rainy weather, sand-based tracks and arenas have great appeal.

Sands, however, can vary. Particle size analysis divides sands and soils into seven soil types: very coarse sand (2.0 to 1.0 mm), coarse sand (1.0 to 0.5 mm), medium sand (0.5 to 0.25 mm), fine sand (0.25 to 0.10 mm), very fine sand (0.10 to 0.05 mm), silt (0.05 to 0.002 mm) and clay (less than 0.002 mm). Sieving determines the category of the five sand types.

Particle designations also may be referred to by the size of the specific sieve or screen used in the analysis process. For example, a very fine sand that would pass through a sieve opening of .088 mm but not through a sieve opening of .074 mm could be defined by a 170 mesh Tyler Screen Scale designation, an 88 micron Standard US Series designation or an alternate (ASTM) US Series designation of No. 170.

In addition to being defined as the size between two sieves, the particle size may be defined as that passing through a specific size sieve or as that being retained by a specific size sieve. The soil scientist, turf manager and



construction engineer must clarify specifications precisely according to a single method of analysis and designation.

The effectiveness of a sand profile is dependent upon the particle size and uniformity. Particles touch, bridge and leave voids — spaces through which oxygen, gas and water can easily pass. With too much variation between particle sizes, even different sand sizes, the voids between coarse particles may be filled by fine or very fine particles.

If the sands used are too coarse, they move more freely and may be too soft for equestrian events. If the sands are too fine, movement is diminished, resulting in greater hardness. Bulk density, a measure of dry soil volume, rates the particle distribution. A higher bulk density equals finer particles; a lower bulk density equals coarser particles.

The material of which the sand is formed also must be considered. This determines the angularity or sharpness of the sand, its durability and its chemical components. Natural or crushed rock quartz sands generally are favored for turf areas because of their chemical inertness and resistance to physical weathering.

Impurities within the specified components may require hydraulic screening for removal. If the sand will be combined with some type of organic material, the precise size and make-up of this material also must be determined. Loamy sand can tighten a coarse sand profile and add agronomic benefits for better rooting. However, when adding soils to sand, the sand should be medium to coarse. Soils added to medium to