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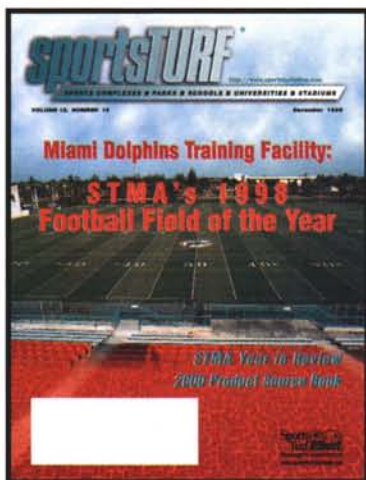
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Miami Dolphins training facility, Davie, FL
Courtesy: Miami Dolphins.

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ONE YEAR \$40 TWO YEARS \$65
FOREIGN (ONE YEAR) \$65 • \$130 Airmail or Single Copy \$5

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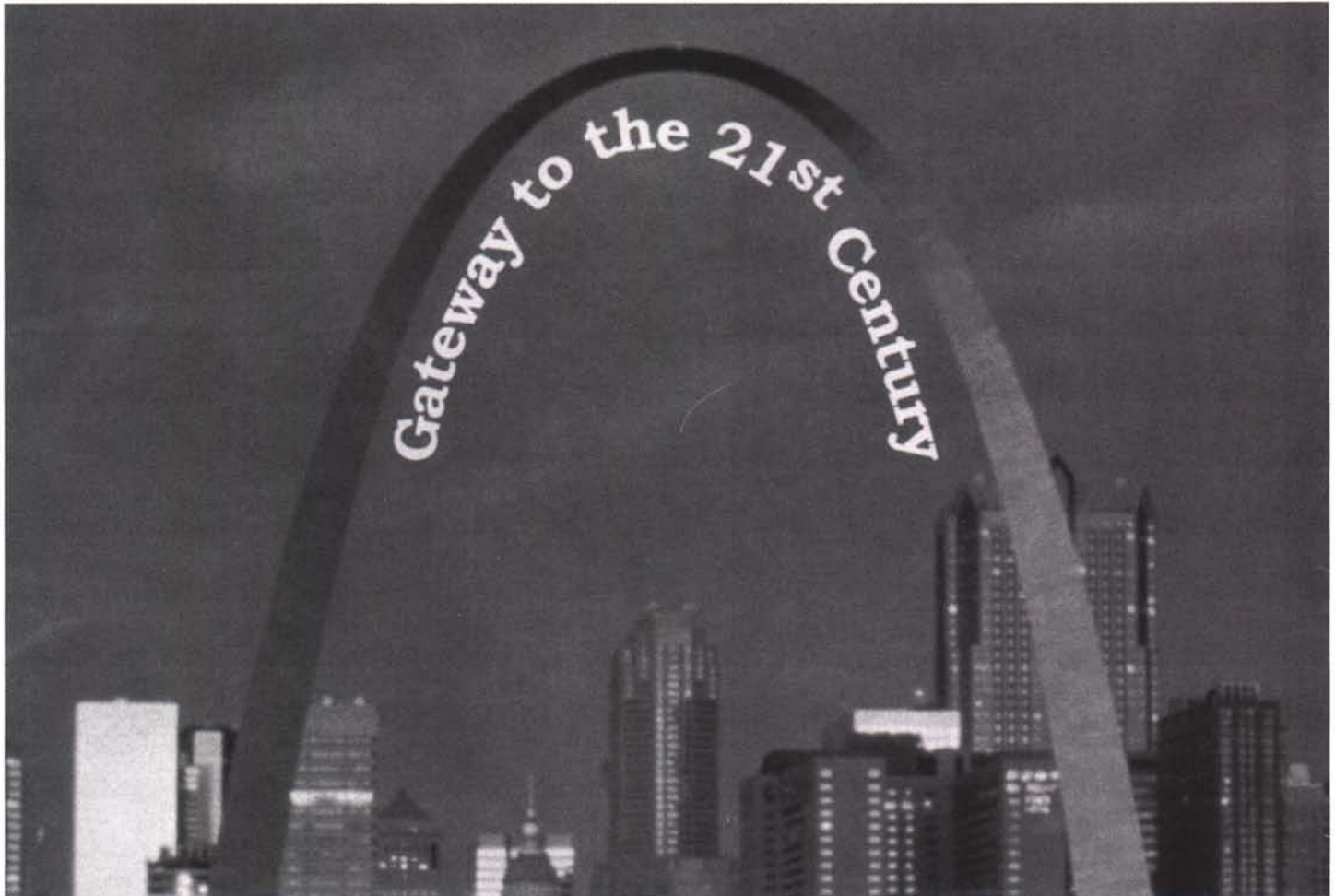
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PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID at Arlington Heights, IL and at additional mailing offices.

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Adios, Steve!

You might be asking yourself, "Isn't this where I usually see Steve Berens' picture and read his words of sports turf wisdom?" By now, you may have heard or read that Steve left *sportsTURF* (ST) to start a new chapter in his life: he moved to Denmark to teach English. He was (and still is) a very good editor, and improved the quality of ST during his short tenure. I want to thank him for his hard work, and I wish him much success in his new endeavor.

Instead of rushing out and finding a new editor, you'll now have two people working on ST. I'll be taking the lead in shepherding the magazine through the publishing process. Mike SanFilippo (a current Adams' employee) will be working with me. My goal is to educate Mike during the next six months or so about the STMA and ST before transferring the editorship to him.



Both Mike and I will be attending the STMA 11th Annual Conference & Exhibition in St. Louis, and we look forward to seeing all of you. Let me reassure you that the quality of ST will not only remain the same, but it will continue to improve. Please call me at (847) 427-2057 (e-mail: rbenes@mail.aip.com) or Mike at (847) 427-2083 (e-mail: msanfilippo@mail.aip.com) to let us know your likes and dislikes with the magazine.

Certified Sports Field Manager

All STMA members should have received the Certified Sports Field Manager Certification Program Information Packet within the past few weeks. If you didn't receive a packet, call the STMA office at (800) 323-3875.



Letter to the Editor

Dear *sportsTURF* Magazine subscribers:

I have received a number of calls requesting copies of or information about the "New Pennsylvania Design." I would like to clarify that these soil mix design numbers, termed "New Pennsylvania Design" in the book *Sports Fields: A Manual for Design, Construction, and Maintenance* (by Jim Puhulla, Jeff Krans, and Mike Goately) do not represent a researched root-zone mix for athletic fields, but are suggested merely as a starting point for discussions concerning sand-based athletic field root-zoners.

I am currently working with the STMA in an effort to support research that will lead to STMA guidelines for the construction and maintenance of sand-based athletic fields.

Sincerely,
Andrew McNitt

Tom Mentzer Leaves the Turf Industry

Tom Mentzer, public relations counsel for Swanson Russell Associates and a Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association board member is leaving both organizations to take a new agency job that will not involve him in the turf industry. Tom did a great job representing his clients and keeping me informed about the goings on in the green industry—on any given day I could always count on receiving a minimum of five press releases from Tom. Have fun, Tom, with your new job.

See you in St. Louis!

Rob Benes
Group Content/Editorial Director

Tip of the Month

Safety First

Beating the lawsuit wave

by Floyd Perry

A famous philosopher once said: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." There isn't a more comforting blanket of protection than to have your guns loaded and in place before an accident or lawsuit occurs.

Every aspect of athletic competition must follow guidelines to guard against frivolous lawsuits. Staff meetings, risk-management conferences, facility walk-arounds, educational seminars, and bi-monthly documented checklists have become an integral part of the progressive groundskeeper's maintenance umbrella.

Be pro-active

In the southwestern United States, a member of an adult softball league brought a suit against his park and recreational facility for a sliding accident that resulted in a broken ankle. The plaintiff sued to recover injury expenses and lost wages, and for personal embarrassment. He tacked on an extra \$50,000 because the defendant was the local government, a phenomenon that's been described as deep pocket syndrome.

Fortunately, the city recreation department had safety policies and procedures in place:

- Grounds staff had placed a completed daily worksheet in the logbook.
 - The evening staffer and umpire had signed off on the pre-game evaluation sheet, and placed it in the logbook.
 - The area supervisor had signed his bi-monthly check list, and it was in the logbook.
- The staff responded promptly and professionally to the accident:
- An evening staff member was on the scene.
 - The staff member called 911 on

continued on page 31



2000

January 6

New York State Turfgrass Association's (NYSTA) Northeast Regional Conference, The Marriott, Albany, NY. Contact NYSTA: (800) 873-8873 or (518) 783-1229.

January 10-13

North Carolina Turfgrass Conference and Show, Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte, NC. Contact Marsha Richardson: (910) 695-1333.

January 11-13

Eastern Pennsylvania Turf Conference & Trade Show, Valley Forge Convention Center, King of Prussia, PA. Contact Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council (PTC): (814) 863-3475.

January 12

Professional Turf & Landscape Conference, Westchester County Center, White Plains, NY. Contact Carol Mueller: (914) 636-4195.

January 12-16

Sports Turf Managers Association's (STMA) 11th annual Conference & Exhibition, St. Louis, MO. Contact STMA: (800) 323-3875 or (712) 366-2669.

January 17-20

Michigan Turfgrass Conference, Holiday Inn South-Hotel and Convention Center, Lansing, MI. Contact Kay Patrick: (517) 321-1660.

January 17-February 4

Professional Golf Turf Management School, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. Contact Keith Wilson: (732) 932-9271, ext. 617.

January 19

South Carolina Landscape and Turfgrass Association's (SCLTA) annual conference, Jamil Temple, Columbia, SC. Contact SCLTA: (803) 738-2021.

STMA MESSAGE



Carry the Flag

I had the privilege the other day to step away from my busy office duties at Marina Landscape and spend the day as a student of Floyd Perry. I was one of the 75-plus sports turf enthusiasts at a Floyd Perry workshop in Riverside, CA. I had a ball!

For all of you that have attended one of his presentations, you can understand my excitement for a day well spent in the class room and on the field. Floyd's workshop reminded me of my college days at the University of Rhode Island when the soils class would venture out of the classroom and into the depths of the earth to review a soil profile. It's the combined experience of seeing, hearing, and touching that cements the learning process and really makes a difference in one's education. For all of you who have not had the opportunity to experience Floyd's "Day on the Field," I highly recommend it. And, while you're there, pick up an STMA membership brochure to join our organization if you are not already a member, or pass it on to your colleagues. Floyd will be with us at the 11th Annual STMA Conference & Exhibition in St. Louis (Jan 12-16, 2000), so be sure to thank him for all he's done to carry the flag and promote our organization across the United States.

There are many other STMA members who also deserve a big thank you for carrying the flag. Some of these individuals serve as speakers at state, regional, and national conferences and include information about the STMA and our programs in their presentations. Many provide our membership brochures to their attendees.

Those planning and coordinating Chapter meetings carry the flag on the local and regional levels. Many of the STMA Chapter leaders work in conjunction with their state or regional turfgrass associations to develop and coordinate a "sports turf track" at the conferences of these associations. Some chapters also opt for a booth at trade shows to spread the word about their chapter and the national association.

Most of our STMA members carry the flag in one-on-one or small group networking situations, freely sharing information, advice, and sometimes "don't do as I did" experiences.

Wow, what an association we have!

Out on the field, cold weather is closing in and many soccer fields are showing the heavy wear of near constant play. Do get that aeration completed and fertilizer applied before the snow hits and the ground freezes in the northern climates. Here in California and throughout the South, our perennial ryegrass has been overseeded on our bermudagrass fields to protect the warm season turf from further damage in its dormant state. Do adapt your fertilization programs for this new crop. Follow this tip from Bob Campbell at the University of Tennessee: topdress those sand-based fields for added surface stability. Watching a few televised football games last week, it sure could help.

Do take advantage of all the educational opportunities available to you. A good groundskeeper is a smart groundskeeper.

Stephen Guise, STMA President
(714) 704-0403

Miami Dolphins Training Facility Practice Fields Triumph as STMA's 1998 Football Field of the Year

by Bob Tracinski

Triumph over challenges. That is what earned the Miami Dolphins Training Facility practice fields of Davie, FL, STMA's 1998 Football Field of the Year honors in the Professional Category. That is what has kept the fields in top condition through 1999.

Casey Gifford, Head Groundskeeper,

and Edwin Lamour, Assistant Groundskeeper, are the Grounds department. They are responsible for the two football fields—4.5 acres of playing surface. They also maintain all landscaping on the 9-acre property, including more than 30 palm trees, 800 feet of ficus hedge, and 700 square feet of flower beds.

"Our fields withstand the ultimate punishment by servicing a professional football team with several 300-plus

pound bodies ripping at the surface six days per week for six straight months," Gifford said. "Field demands are no less stringent early in the year, beginning with corporate sponsor events; flag football camps; the regional punt, pass and kick competition finals; and high school football clinics. By mid-March, the pro players begin their off-season conditioning program consisting of sprinting, agility drills, and circuit training four days per week. That program runs through the start of Training Camp in mid-July and is interspersed with three mini-camps. For the main Training Camp in July and August, the entire team is assembled for full days of meetings and two-a-days (90-minute on-field practices, twice a day).

"By then we're into the full schedule of practices for pre-season games, followed by the regular season and the playoffs. When the Super Bowl is in Florida, we're the host practice site for the AFC champs. Our biggest downtime comes in February, which is the end of football season. That's our major window for renovation," Gifford commented.



STMA President Steve Guise (left) presents the 1998 Football Field of the Year, Professional Category to Casey Gifford, Head Groundskeeper. Also pictured (l to r) Edwin Lamour, Assistant Groundskeeper and John Davis, Director of Engineering and Maintenance.



Opening day of Camp Dolphins 1998. The official training camp of the Miami Dolphins in July.

Prescription Athletic Turf (PAT)

The facility was originally constructed in 1993 with a Prescription Athletic Turf (PAT) system and was sprigged with bermudagrass.

Gifford started as Assistant Groundskeeper in 1993, in time for the field grow-in, after earning his Associate of Science in landscape technology from Broward Community College. He was promoted to Head Groundskeeper in January, 1998. He's currently pursuing a BS degree in turfgrass science from the University of Florida in Davie.

Lamour became Assistant Groundskeeper in March, 1998, moving over from Pro Player Stadium with experience in NFL game preparation and from working the World Series with the Florida Marlins.

"Due to several flaws in the original installation (prior to our tenure) that resulted in drainage problems, we were forced to re-install an entirely new PAT

system in 1997. The Motz Group installed the current system. A plastic barrier covers the native soil subsurface. The drainage and irrigation pipe network was placed over the barrier and covered with 12 inches of a pure sand profile. It is a very coarse silica sand, which conforms to the USGA root zone sand recommendations, and is imported from Ortona, FLA. This was topped with standard-cut Tifway 419 bermudagrass sod that was grown on a native sandy soil," Gifford explained.

"The PAT system can be operated manually or automatically. In the auto mode, the computer constantly monitors the moisture level in the sand profile. If the level is too low, the subirrigation will activate. If the water level is too high, the gravity valve will open and allow water to drain into the pipes and off the field. If the water level continues to rise, the gravity valve will close and the vacuum pumps will accelerate drainage off the field and into a canal adjacent to the fields," he continued.

The irrigation system consists of 10 zones on triangular spacing with eight Hunter I-40 heads per zone. All zone valves are located together in the pump station. Two 25-hp pumps are controlled by a variable frequency drive (VFD) system to provide the minimum amount of electricity required to satisfy the demand. Three quick coupler locations on the field allow for hand watering when necessary. A fresh water canal adjacent to the facility is the water source.

A sloped area of turf on the native sandy soil between the building and back of the endzone was not included in the PAT system and had caused problems both with runoff from irrigation water and rainfall and with hydrophobic conditions.

"In 1998 we coped with the situation by spraying a wetting agent every two weeks to increase water absorption. We also used our aerator's slicing blades to break apart the top surface to allow better oxygen levels for the roots and to promote stolon growth. Once the season was over, we installed an additional irrigation zone in that area using landscape heads that are closer on center and only spray 20 feet. Now we can run that zone by itself to control conditions and not interfere with the playing field moisture levels," Gifford commented.

Battling the Rain

In 1999, battling the rain was Gifford's top challenge. He keeps extensive records of weather conditions and maintenance procedures, and had logged 66

inches of rainfall between January 1 and November 3. "We need to balance moisture levels with evapotranspiration rates," he said. "In the summer months, 20 minutes of morning irrigation will have dissipated by afternoon. In the winter months, 3 minutes of irrigation could stay around for a week."

Then there is the hurricane season. Gifford and Lamour are joined by the three-person Engineering and

Maintenance staff in preparations when the hurricanes are bearing down. The regular maintenance schedule, including mowing and field painting, keeps going during hurricane preparations. If the storms do not hit, the team will practice as usual.

This year, tropical disturbance Irene became Hurricane Irene overnight and dropped 15 inches of rain in 3 days. Hurricane Floyd posed a great threat to



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Casey Gifford, Head Groundskeeper, spraying micro-nutrients with a Smithco Sprayer.



Edwin Lamour, Assistant Groundskeeper, mowing the playing surface.

south Florida until it turned north, away from the Florida coast. Because of the threat, all pre-hurricane precautions had to be instituted.

"We know the drill pretty well by now and have developed a checklist to follow. We have one goal post on the facility. We take the bolts out of the gooseneck and lay it down on its side so can't bend and be damaged or cause damage. There are windscreens on all our fences to keep our practices closed. We take them all down and tie them to the bottom of the fences so the force of the winds won't blow the fences over. We bring in anything

throughout the facility that could be whipped around: signage, trash cans, ashtrays, everything. We turn off the VFD pumps to protect the electrical control systems," Gifford said.

"Because hurricanes bring power outages, we put our PAT system drainage control panels in a manual position locked into gravity flow. What we have to avoid is having the system locked in a closed position during the heavy rains. While drainage isn't as fast in the gravity flow position as it would be with the vacuum system operating, it does allow the fields to drain without the operation

of the computerized central panel. During Hurricane Irene we were able to pump off the excess water. All the news helicopters flying over Davie reported the Dolphins training camp was the only dry spot in south Florida," he explained.

Excessive rainfall adds to the fertility challenge of the sand field. Gifford takes soil samples at least every two months and uses the results as the basis to supplement any nutrients that are low. Following the Motz Group's recommendations, he applies 50 pounds of dolomitic limestone per 1,000 square feet of the playing surface every two months

Maintenance Program

January: Mow 2 to 3 times per week, paint fields each Tuesday.

February: Verticut in two direction, core aerate and remove cores; topdress with 150 tons of #200 trap sand; fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1.5 pounds of N per 1,000 square feet.

March: Mow 4 to 5 times per week; fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1.5 pounds of N per 1,000 square feet.

April: Verticut in two directions, mow 4 to 5 times per week, paint fields for Quarterback School I, fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet, apply liquid micromix.

May: Core aerate and remove cores, mow 4 to 5 times per week, spray Orthene for mole crickets, paint fields for Quarterback School II, fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet, apply dolomitic limestone at 50 pounds of product per 1,000 square feet.

June: Verticut in two directions, mow 5 to 6 times per week, spray for Pythium with Subdue Maxx, apply mole cricket bait, paint fields for Quarterback School III, fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet, apply liquid micromix, apply 18-46-0 + at the rate of 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet.

July: Core aerate and remove cores, topdress with 50 tons of #200 trap sand; mow 5 to 6 times per week, paint fields every 4 to 5 days, spray for pythium with Subdue Maxx, spray Orthene for mole crickets, fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1 pound of

N per 1,000 square feet, apply dolomitic limestone at 50 pounds of product per 1,000 square feet.

August: Verticut, mow 5 to 6 times per week, paint fields every Tuesday, apply mole cricket bait, fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet, apply liquid micromix.

September: Core aerate and remove cores, mow 4 to 5 times per week, paint fields every Tuesday, fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet, apply dolomitic limestone at 50 pounds of product per 1,000 square feet.

October: Verticut, topdress with 50 tons of #200 trap sand, mow 4 to 5 times per week, paint fields every Tuesday, fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet, apply liquid micromix, apply 18-46-0 + at the rate of 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet.

November: Aerate with slicing blades, mow 4 to 5 times per week, paint fields every Tuesday, fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet, apply dolomitic limestone at 50 pounds of product per 1,000 square feet.

December: Aerate with slicing blades, mow 4 to 5 times per week, paint fields every Tuesday, fertilize with 15-5-15 at 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet.

Note: Mowing height is always 7/8-inch; clippings are always caught.