



Category Blast Service

Use this new Category Blast Service to get FREE information on the products or service categories listed below which you are planning to purchase within the coming nine months. You will receive information, and possibly other follow up contact, from appropriate companies advertised not just in this issue, but throughout the year in *sportsTURF*. Just circle the number(s) on the reader service card (opposite) corresponding to the product or service categories below and drop the card in the mail!

- 9001 Aeration equipment
- 9002 Baseball Field grooming equipment
- 9003 Drainage
- 9004 Fertilizer / soil amendments
- 9005 Field covers
- 9006 Field marking paint / equipment
- 9007 Infield mixes
- 9008 Irrigation supplies
- 9009 Mowers
- 9010 Seed
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- 9013 Turf equipment

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placed out of play to protect the players.

On native-soil fields, it may be necessary to add some drain lines. As far as placement is concerned, drain lines can be adapted to your situation. They should be approximately three feet deep and approximately two inches wide, and surrounded by pea gravel and coarse sand on top.

I recommend allowing the turf to run across the line with rhizomes and stolons so an organic layer is not on top of your line.

Compaction

Compaction is another big safety concern. A hard field can make footing a problem, and injuries can stem from athletes sliding, diving, or being knocked to the ground. An aerification program can help avoid these problems.

Aerification helps reduce the bulk density of your soil, creating a softer, less-compacted field. Aeration tines are available in a variety of sizes; your choice of equipment will depend on how much recovery time your turf will have before the next event, how

much damage to the turf is acceptable, and the severity of your soil's compaction.

Your irrigation program will also affect field hardness. If the proper amount of moisture is not maintained in the soil, it will become so dry that it will crack and become extremely hard. This type of field will not cushion an athlete's fall, and the possibility of injury increases dramatically.

Lips

For baseball and softball fields, lips that occur where the skinned area meets the turf create common safety hazards. Lips cause horrendous and unpredictable bounces, and players can be severely injured attempting to react. They also create a tripping hazard for players running between the skin and the turf.

Preventative maintenance is key to solving this problem. Use brooms and rakes on the edges of your skin after events, and wash any lips with a hose when the field will be out of use for a few days. When large lips develop, you can pull up the sod and rake the excess soil.

Skinned soil

Many factors come into play with skinned area maintenance. When prepping the field for a game, you need to consider weather (humidity, temperature, chance of rain, cloud cover, dew points, etc.), your soil composition, watering practices, and player preferences.

Scarifying the mix will blend the material and fill in cleat marks and other indentations. If you only use a mat drag, the divots will fill with loose material, and you will not alleviate bad hop problems.

Once you've scarified, mat drag to make your surface smooth. You can then use water to get it to the desired consistency.

Worn areas created by too much play can also cause injury. Worn areas diminish field uniformity. They can give different footing than surrounding areas, and can give athletes different than expected results.

Time is the key factor here. If you've got the luxury of time, you can use methods such as topdressing, fertilizing, and sprigging the



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Before the season, during the season, and after the season, fields need to be monitored for safety. Here is a short checklist of things to look for:

- ✓ Wet areas (grade/drainage problems)
- ✓ Compaction
- ✓ Lips on the borders of skinned areas
- ✓ Skinned area consistency
- ✓ Worn areas
- ✓ Field equipment hazards
- ✓ Irregular irrigation heads

worn areas if it's in the budget.

If the turf needs to be repaired quickly, you must sod. But remember, it's important to keep the turf consistent for ball roll.

Any material you add to your infield should be applied to a small, 10-foot by 10-foot test section before it's added to the entire skinned area. If you're happy with the test area's performance after a trial period, then and only then should you incorporate the material into the entire area.

Above the turf

Field safety concerns extend beyond the playing surface. All nets, cages, walls, fences, and poles need to be maintained to protect the safety of all facility users. All of this equipment must be checked before each event.

Nets and cages should be examined for holes. These could allow balls to sail out of the field of play into the crowd, and they can cause balls to bounce back unpredictably at players on the field. Walls, fences, and poles need to be properly padded to lessen the impact of potential collisions.

Below the turf

If improperly installed or maintained, equipment within the turf can be dangerous as well. Irrigation heads that sit too high or too low with reference to the soil surface can cause players to trip or misstep.

Even irrigation heads that were initially installed correctly can pose problems later on if left unchecked. Thatch and topdressing can cause a field to rise above the level of the original installation. You should adjust irrigation head height as part of your rou-

tine maintenance program.

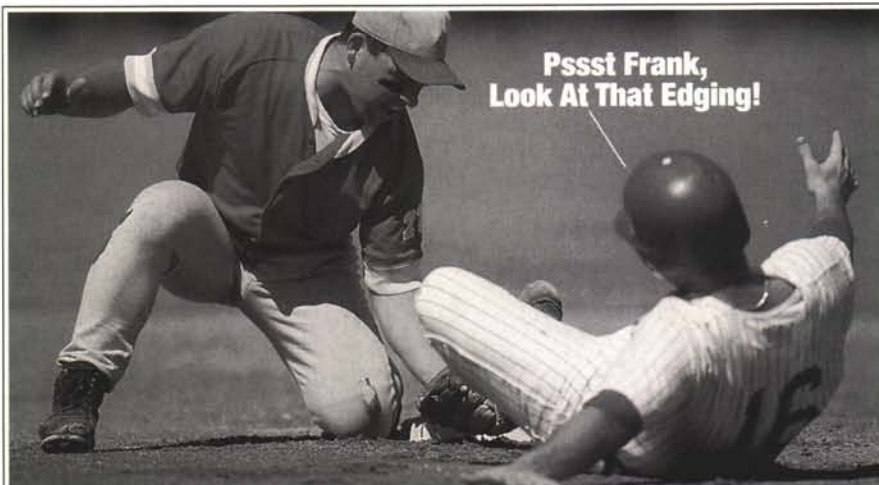
Placement of the heads is also important. You don't want to sacrifice field safety for good coverage by placing too many heads or by placing them in high-traffic areas.

The first and foremost job of the sports turf manager is to protect athlete safety. No matter what the level of play, you don't want to end an athlete's career. If the field is

safe, you can watch events without worrying, and know that you've done your job.



Kevin Robinson is head groundskeeper for Durham Bulls Athletic Park, home of the Durham Bulls, AAA affiliate of the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.



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Springs to action

STMA in Action

On March 24, 25 people participated in the first day of the third annual Irrigation Seminar of the Mid-Atlantic Field Managers Organization (MAFMO Chapter STMA). Turf Equipment and Supply, Inc., a Toro Irrigation distributor, hosted the event at its office in Jessup, MD.

Turf Equipment and Supply provided an irrigation consultant to conduct the classroom segment of this two-day event. Attendees learned how to assess their water needs, and how to design an irrigation system that would best fill those needs.

On March 25, 20 of the attendees regrouped at Montgomery Blair High School to put that knowledge to work in a hands-on irrigation system installation for the school's field hockey field.

The school had purchased the major components for the installation, and Turf

Equipment and Supply donated the glue, Teflon tape, and other incidentals. The company's irrigation consultant also joined the crew to help put the classroom lessons into action.

The MAFMO group installed the pipe, made the head connections, and started up and tested the system. The hands-on project gave those who were new to irrigation system design an opportunity to turn theory into reality. The project also gave chapter members the satisfaction of giving the community a great service.

Chapter news

North Texas Chapter: The chapter is planning a field day/golf outing May 20 in Flower Mound, TX.

For information, contact Rene Asprion, Diamond Pro: (800) 228-2987; or Tom Welch, CSM, Central Garden and Pet: (800) 788-9581.

Nor-Cal Chapter: The Northern California Chapter will hold a Seminar on Wheels tour 8 am-3:30 pm May 21 in the Bay area. It will include a site visit to the Oakland Raiders Training Facility conducted by Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Ken Irons and his staff. Participants will also enjoy a tour of the UC-Berkeley athletic facilities conducted by Sports Turf Manager Bob Milano and his staff. The tour will then visit Piedmont High School, where Gary Cook of Robert Bothman, Inc. will give a presentation on installation of the sand base and drainage systems for baseball diamonds and multi-use fields.

For information, contact Janet Gift: (530) 758-4200.

Indiana Chapter: A May meeting is in the planning stages. Details will be announced soon.

For information, contact Terry Updike,



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B & B Fertilizer: (219) 356-8424; or Pat Hickner: (800) 672-4273.

Iowa Chapter: ISTMA will meet 1-4:30 pm Sat., Jun. 5, in Hawarden. The meeting will focus on baseball field repair.

ISTMA will hold a Seminar on Wheels tour in the Ames area Jun. 23. Sites will include Iowa State University, Ames Youth Complex, Reiman Gardens, and Ames High School.

For information, contact Lori Westrum at the Turf Office: (515) 232-8222, or fax: (515) 232-8228.

Florida Chapter #1: The Florida Chapter will meet Jun. 15 at the Orange Bowl in Miami. Host Dale Sandin will conduct a tour of the facility. The meeting will focus on sports field fertilization, and Dr. George Snyder will be the featured speaker.

For information, contact John Mascaro: (954) 341-3115.

KAFMO Chapter: The Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization will hold a Grounds Seminar at Hershey Stadium Sat., Jun. 19. Morning educational sessions will include presentations by Bob Hummer of Hummer Turfgrass Systems; John Tshudy, Director of Buildings and Grounds for Hershey Park; and Steve LeGros, Superintendent of Hershey Stadium. To help make this a

family day, KAFMO has put together a package that includes full-day reduced admission to Hershey Park and admission to a Hershey Wildcats Soccer game.

For information, contact Dan Douglas, Reading Phillies Baseball Club: (610) 375-8469, ext. 212.

Tennessee Valley Chapter: TVSTMA will hold a workshop Jun. 23 at the University of Tennessee. Featured speakers will include Bob Campbell, Dr. Gil Landry, Dr. Jim McAfee, Dr. A. J. Powell, Dr. Tom Samples, and Dr. Coleman Ward.

For information on this event, contact Bob Campbell: (423) 974-2977, or call the chapter contacts listed.

For general information, contact Tom McAfee, Nashville Sounds: (615) 242-4371; or Bob Hogan: (888) 224-6426.

Colorado Chapter: The Colorado Chapter will hold its first-ever Seminar on Wheels tour Jun. 23. Sites will include Coors Field, Mile High Stadium, and the Denver Broncos Practice Facility.

CSTMA's annual golf tournament, the Lawnmower Man Open, will be held Jul. 20 at Westwoods Golf Course.

For information, call the **NEW** chapter hotline: (303) 346-8954.

Mid-South Chapter: A joint meeting this spring between the Mid-South Chapter and the Tennessee Valley

Chapter is in the planning stages. The date and a mid-state location will be announced soon.

For information, contact Jim Calhoun: (901) 755-1305, or Robert Bodi: (901) 383-2414.

Great Lakes Chapter: GLSTMA has two events in the planning stages: a tentatively planned workshop with the Cleveland Browns (date TBA), and an athletic field day and workshop at Ohio State University Jul. 7.

For information, contact Joe Zelinko: (800) 897-9714, or Boyd Montgomery: (419) 885-1982, or visit the chapter Web site: <http://members.tripod.com/~glstma>.

Wisconsin Chapter: The Wisconsin Chapter will participate in the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association's Summer Field Day at the O. J. Noer Facility Aug. 10.

For more information, contact Rich Riggs, R. H. Rettler & Associates: Inc.: (715) 341-2633.

Minnesota Chapter: The annual Workshop on Wheels is in the planning stages. Details will be announced soon.

For information, contact Connie Rudolph: (651) 646-1679.

Michigan Chapter: For information, contact Rick Jurries, West Ottawa Public Schools: (616) 395-2364.

Midwest Chapter: For information,

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call the chapter hotline: (847) 622-3517.

So-Cal Chapter: For information, contact the chapter hotline: (888) 578-STMA.

MAFMO Chapter: For information, contact the hotline: (410) 290-5652.

Chapters on the grow

New Chapter: A new chapter is taking shape in the Kansas City MO/KS area. For information, contact Trevor Vance: (816) 504-4271, John Cundiff: (816) 525-7600, Bill Tritt: (816) 941-4424, Jody Gill: (913) 681-4121, Gary Custis: (816) 468-6215, or Jay Sutton: (816) 795-8873.

Arizona Chapter: For information, contact Bill Murphy, City of Scottsdale Parks & Recreation Department: (602) 312-7954; or Kris Kircher, City of Chandler Parks & Recreation Department: (602) 786-2728.

Nevada Chapter: For information, contact Ibsen Dow: (702) 649-1551; or Alan Paulson, Clark County School District: (702) 799-8724.



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How Long Should I Wait?



by Dr. Dave Minner

Have questions? Send them to Dave at: ISU, Hort. Dept., Ames, IA 50011.

How soon after natural-turf installation is it safe to use a field for regular playoffs? In the most typical scenario, how often does a soccer field require repairs, and what are the most vulnerable areas?

—Stan Adanek
Toronto, Canada

Well Stan, I'll give you some numbers based on my experience building and renovating fields. But keep in mind that no standards have been set for grow-in time.

It has also been my experience that very few people wait for a field to fully mature. Instead, as soon as the soil is covered with green plants, and as long as the sod isn't flying under foot, many consider the field ready for play. In truth, young fields may look good, but they decline quickly when play starts and recovery is very slow.

Seeded fields

With a high seeding rate of perennial ryegrass and under optimum establishment, you can produce a field completely

covered with green foliage in about two months. The field may look good, but it will have no mat or biomass cushion between the green blades and the soil. The top of the plant is easily worn away, and recovery from immature buds in the crown is limited.

In general, it takes a complete year for a cool-season grass to develop a reasonable stand that will tolerate and recuperate from moderate traffic. Extensive tillering occurs mainly in the fall. This is when the field thickens up, making a substantial gain in mat production.

The traffic tolerance of a seeded field more than doubles when it's allowed to mature for one year, compared to when play starts as soon as foliage covers the bare ground.

Sod

When buying sod, you benefit from a mature grass system that contains thatch mat, crowns, tillers, rhizomes, roots, and a small amount of soil. Sod that is cut with a conventional soil thickness of 0.25 to 0.5 inches usually takes 60 to 90 days to develop a four-inch deep root system. Sod will root faster and produce a stable playing surface sooner in a topsoil field than in a sand-based field. Even with sodding, some sand-based fields never completely stabilize until the second or third year after planting.

A specialized procedure which cuts large-roll sod with two inches of soil attached has been recently used to substantially reduce the time between laying sod and playing a game. In fact, with two-inch thick-cut sod, you can literally play a game as soon as the sod has been placed and rolled. Each roll of sod is 42 inches wide and 30 feet long and weighs nearly one ton, so they don't move around.

Repair

Wear patterns on soccer fields typically show up in the goalie box, penalty kick area, and throughout the center of the field.

Each year, you should budget to replace 50 percent of the goalie box area with new sod. The small area can be replaced quickly and easily. The sodding operation brings in new soil and helps keep this area level. Repair by seeding alone is seldom successful, and it often results in dug-out depressions in the goal areas.

To make your field repair program more effective, I recommend you develop a field rotation program. For example, if you have four fields, use three fields and renovate the fourth field. Allow a full year for your seeded or sodded areas to recuperate. After a year, put the renovated field back into play and rotate out a different field for renovation.

David D. Minner, Ph.D., is an associate professor with the Department of Horticulture at Iowa State University. He serves on STMA's Certification Committee. Send your questions to Dave at: ISU, Hort. Dept., Ames, IA 50011; or call: (515) 294-2751, fax: (515) 294-0730, or e-mail: dminner@iastate.edu.

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