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BASF

DEERE'S NEW WALK-BEHINDS

Golf course superintendents' search for the ultimate greensmower is over. At weigh-in time, the new John Deere B Series Walk-Behind Greens Mowers keep the pounds off of the frame yet still tip the scales when it comes to design and operation features. The B Series features true 18-, 22- and 26-in. frames that are built to allow the operator to follow cut lines and overlap with more accuracy. An improved handlebar design adjusts to fit every operator and a forward mounting pivot point minimizes the effect of the operator over the cutting plane of the mower. And, a new grass catcher design improves grass catching ability, operator vision, and improved cut line marking. To decrease noise levels, the mowers are equipped with smaller pitched chain and new chain adjusters, as well as a larger muffler with high-impact resistant polymer chain covers. With new bedknife-to-reel adjustment knobs and a new oil drain funnel, the B Series mowers are also easier to adjust and service. All models feature an air-cooled, 4-cycle Honda GX120 engine.

John Deere/800-537-8233
For information, circle 156



2-WAY RADIO

Kenwood Communications has introduced a compact, rugged 2-way radio designed expressly for the job-site communications needs. The ProTalk XLS, a palm-sized radio with 4-mile range, transmits ultra high frequency (UHF) radio signals providing a penetrating, reliable communication link even in challenging RF environments. Equipped with a built-in VOX capability and vibration alert, ProTalk is user-programmable to provide two channels of voice communication from a choice 242 channel combinations. Its features will accommodate personal user preferences while satisfying specific requirements for organized group communications.

Kenwood Communications/800-950-5005
For information, circle 155

NEW CORE AERATOR

Redexim Charterhouse has introduced a new line of core aerators called Verti-Core, which they say penetrate more cleanly than other machines to a full 5 in. The units are available in three sizes: 4.2, 5.6, and 6.9 ft. All share a gearbox and crank design for the drive system, meaning there are no belts.

A control mechanism allows tine depth to be adjusted from 1 to 5 in., and a rapid-change feature permits quick tine changeovers, allowing the units to be fitted with a variety of tine types, including the popular 3/16-in. needles.

The company also markets Verti-Drain, Verti-Seed, Rapidcore, and Turf Tidy products.

Redexim Charterhouse/800-597-5664
For information, circle 157



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COVER STORY

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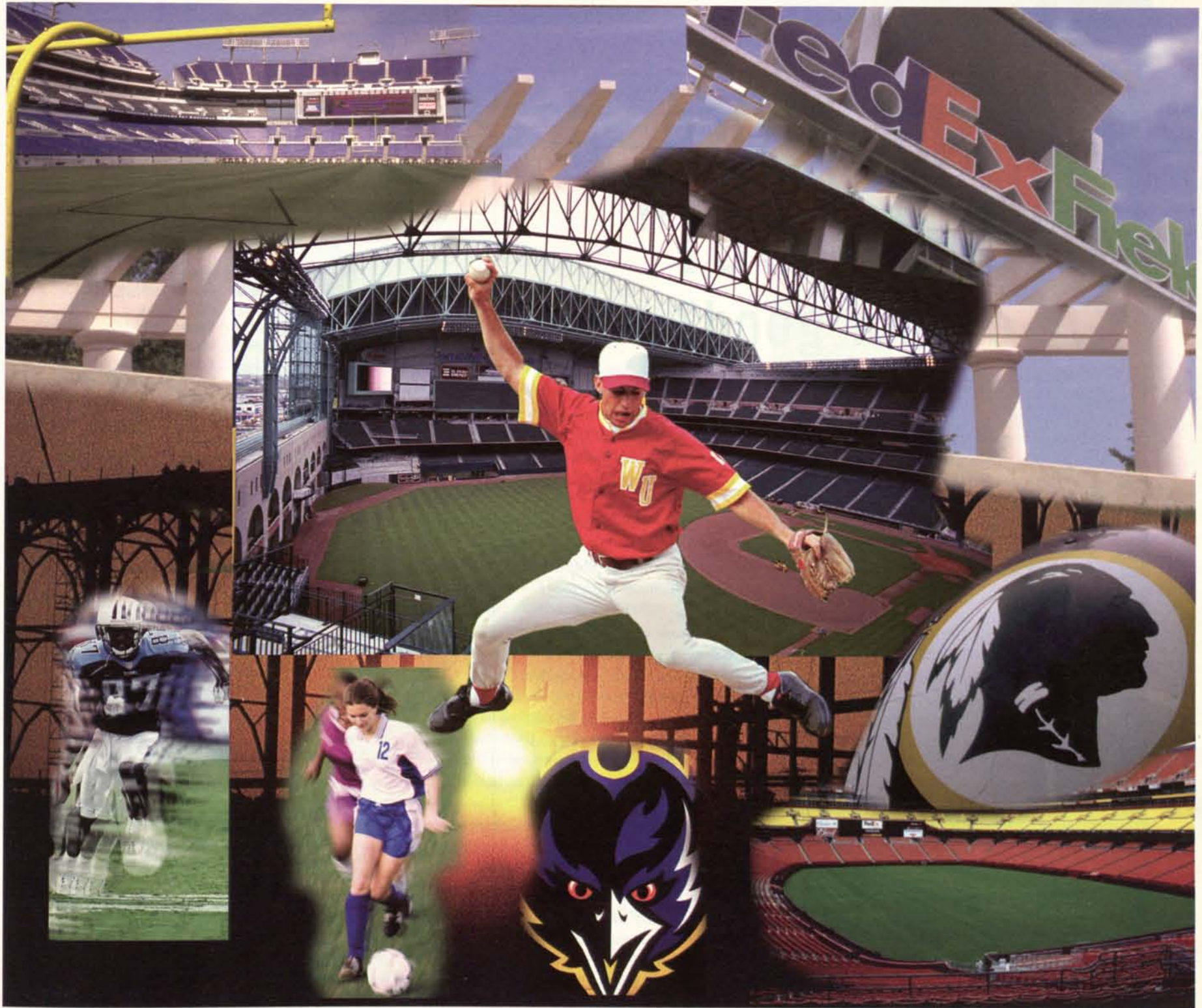
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COVER PHOTO by Caroline Baird, Samford University, courtesy of Samford University.



Fielder's Choice

It's hard to go wrong when you're choosing between two new warm-season turfgrass varieties as outstanding as SeaIsle 1 Seashore Paspalum and TifSport Bermudagrass. These two new patented cultivars can only be sold as certified sod or sprigs, and only by a member of a select group of licensed growers. Our top-quality producers have agreed to a stringent set of production practices. This means the grass you buy from a Florida, Georgia or South Carolina grower is going to be the same grass you buy from a Texas or California grower. And it'll be the same 10 years down the road. If you're involved with the installation or on-going maintenance of a sports field, you'll really appreciate how these turfgrasses compare to Tifway 419 and the other older varieties in use today.

While SeaIsle 1 is similar in texture and wear tolerance to hybrid bermudas, it may offer a number of important advantages. First and foremost, it can handle multiple stresses: prolonged drought, high salt levels, waterlogging and extremely high or low soil pH levels. Secondly, SeaIsle 1 can tolerate most types of alternate water sources, including wastewater, effluent, gray water, brackish water, and even ocean water. It requires less irrigating, less fertilizer and only minimal pesticide applications when compared to other warm-season cultivars. It also handles cloudy conditions and the low light intensity of domed stadiums extremely well. That's why it was such a good choice for the Houston Astros' new field. Take a look at its pluses and specify SeaIsle 1 for your new sports field or renovation project.

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the front office

“Old school” out for good?

Talking with a friend during last month's NCAA men's basketball tournament, I said I liked Gonzaga point guard Dan Dickau because he “has an ‘old school’ haircut.” That led to a discussion of our circa-1976 high school basketball uniforms, the style of which John Stockton (another Gonzaga man) still wears in the NBA today—you know, the kind that don't look like skirts on the shorter guys.

Depending on your point of view, “old school” is either the “only way the game should be played” or perhaps “Baby Boomer nostalgia.” It is really more than style or fashion. Though most professional sports have time-honored ways (in hockey, for example, you are probably not old school if you have all your God-given teeth), old school is more than tradition. Is the old school philosophy dying?

I think the term first described those who played for the love of the game and the competition. Think Pete Rose or even Ty Cobb. Here's a quote from the Georgia Peach: “Baseball is a red-blooded sport for red-blooded men. It's no pink tea, and mollycoddles had better stay out. It's a struggle for supremacy, survival of the fittest.” Whoa, Mr. Cobb, have a Kit-Kat bar!

Here's Rogers Hornsby: “People ask me what I do in winter when there's no baseball. I'll tell you what I do. I stare out the window and wait for spring.” Gee, I wonder if Jason Giambi stared out any window (besides the bank's) last winter?

Old school means giving 100% on every play. Remember when Carlton Fisk dressed down Deion Sanders, sparking a brawl, when Neon didn't run out a pop up at Yankee Stadium? It's an epidemic now. Today's players aren't about to risk pulling a hammy by hotfooting down the line on routine plays. Old schoolers don't call their agents before they blow their noses. They don't ask to sit down, ever.

Of course there are plenty of professional athletes who hustle and work at their craft year-round that we can admire. But as the years go by, and fewer of our “tribal elders” are around to pass along what the “love of the game” once meant, will our sons and daughters and grandchildren come to see old school as irrelevant, as not “maximizing earning potential”?

Call it old school or “positive personal development” or whatever you will, let's just keep the spirit alive. Let's make sure the youngsters we influence realize our games, while only games, still are meant to be played enthusiastically, with fervor and heart. Let's make sure they understand that while winning is not necessarily important, giving the effort in trying to win is.



Eric Schroder

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president's message

K.I.S.S.

Over the past few years we have seen many changes in the world and in our association. The information highway has allowed many organizations and businesses to excel in growth more rapidly than we could have ever imagined. With all the new technology available to everyone, I tried to recall what it was like before high-speed data systems, the web, fax machines, and cell phones. (How were we able to get things done without them?)

Our industry and association have adapted to the world of change very nicely by keeping it simple. A member I spoke with at a turf trade show in Baltimore referred to the K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple, Stupid) principle and how our association should apply it toward our continued growth.

At our national conference, I spoke with members who do not have access to a computer and rely heavily on this publication and the newsletter for information. The diversity in our organization allows us to focus on growth for all members, and also allows us to get a better handle on the big picture of sports turf management. And, at the same time, that diversity gives us the resources to help those with specific needs find the answers to help them work through problems with their fields.

What is awesome about our industry's diversity is everyone still has the same common goal, to provide safe fields for athletes, young and old, amateur or professional!

One area that will help get those involved more with the industry is our Mentoring Program. It began this year with a bang! The program allows for new members to learn and establish themselves with the resources our association has to offer. Membership Chair Mike Andresen, CSFM, Mentoring Subcommittee Chair Steve Wightman, and his committee have established a network of individuals across the country to help new members understand sports turf issues, establish contacts, build relationships, and make friends within our industry. This exciting program will be a benefit for ALL new and existing members.

Everyone has a story to tell about how you became involved in sports turf or how you moved from one job to another. Meeting and knowing many of you over the years, I have found that most sports turf managers are humble and modest and feel their achievements are not worthy of attention because you're only doing your job.

If you have moved or plan to change positions, have a new job, won an award, if your field is hosting a national event, or you sold 1,000 mowers for your parent company, please forward that information to Headquarters. We want to hear about your successes so we can inform the world about the great people of our association.

It's an exciting time—and I am not just saying that because it's baseball season. Our industry is poised for success on many levels. Due to various student requests we recently established a student subcommittee that gives college students a forum to review issues about how the STMA can support their goals so they too can be successful in the sports turf industry. Contact Headquarters for membership news about this new committee.

As always I enjoy hearing about your issues and will be glad to talk with you if you have a concern or question about our industry.



Murray Cook,
STMA President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Murray Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Photos by Andy Wilbanks

STMA 2001 Softball Field of the Year Samford Field of Samford University

Samford Field of Samford University, Birmingham, AL, earned the STMA 2001 Softball Field of the Year Award in the College/University Division. This high-use field gains rave reviews from visiting teams and spectators.

The original field area was planned and laid out approximately 20 years ago. It was designed as a recreational field, shaped as a rectangle with one larger end developed for softball with a skinned diamond in the corner. The soil profile was native heavy clay. The softball fence was removed in the fall to allow the outfield to double as the flag football field. The Samford Marching Band also used this field as an alternate practice site in the fall and summer.

Joe Collins has been the sports turf manager, based at Samford University, since 1995. He is responsible for the turf maintenance for all the University's athletic

BY STEVE AND SUZ TRUSTY

fields—the baseball, football, football practice and soccer fields and the band practice/intramural field, as well as the softball field. His employer is TruGreen Land Care, which holds the turf and landscape maintenance contract with Samford.

Collins says, "Samford softball was started as an NCAA Division I sport in 1986. Irrigation was installed that year, in conjunction with the beginning of the softball program. The system was designed for flag football, which was the primary sport played on the field at that time. There are six stations in triangular patterns going across the rectangular field. Consequently, when the softball fence is replaced, the wind screens hamper efficient water coverage."

Samford Field Maintenance Program

October

- Overseed with perennial ryegrass blend at 10 lbs. per 1000 square feet
- Fertilize with high P, K at seed germination

October through December

- Mow weekly or as needed at 1.25 inches
- Work infield skin daily during fall practice
- Blow or otherwise remove leaves and pine straw as needed

January

- Take soil samples

January through March

- Fertilize with 4-1-2 ratio at 1 lb. of Nitrogen per 1000 square feet
- Apply preemergent weed control with fertilizer combination at half-rate
- Mow at 1-1/8 inch weekly until games begin, then twice weekly. Double cut on game days
- Work infield skin daily

April, May

- Mow at 1.25 inch three times per week, double cut on game days
- Gradually lower turf height of cut to 0.5 inches as bermudagrass dominates
- Apply second half of preemergent weed control on 4-1-2 fertilizer carrier
- Mechanically edge grass areas monthly: infield, warning track and bullpens
- Work infield daily: drag, water based on conditions
- Paint fair line weekly, chalk lines on game days
- If needed, apply corrective materials based on soil test results (not needed past 3 years)
- Mid-May: aerify with half-inch hollow tines; topdress with 102 sand; drag cores and sand back into soil profile; use blower to remove turf debris



June through August

- Mow three times per week; raise mower height of cut by one-eighth inch monthly to reach 7/8 inch in August
- Chemically edge grass areas bi-weekly; mechanically edge grass areas monthly
- Spray weeds on warning track and bullpen areas
- Fertilize mid-summer with 34-0-0 at 1 lb. of N per 1000 square feet
- Mid-June and Mid-July: aerify with half-inch hollow tines; topdress with 102 sand; drag cores and sand back into soil profile; use blower to remove turf debris
- Control weeds if necessary with postemergent herbicide application following standard IPM procedures (primarily yellow and purple nutsedge)
- Apply fire ant bait; both mound treatments and broadcast
- Work infield as needed for summer camps and summer league practices; usually two to three times per week
- Maintain small ornamental plantings around field

September

- Mow weekly; height of cut 1 to 1-1/8 inch
- Chemically edge and spot treat any weeds on skin surfaces
- Work infield as needed; daily when fall practice begins



With the field still extensively used for intramurals, especially flag football, the sand was laser-graded to be most beneficial for that rather than the softball configuration.

Improvements

"In 1997, the field was regraded and a 3-5 inch sand cap added in an attempt to relieve a substantial drainage problem. With the field still under extensive use by the intramural groups, especially for flag football, the sand was laser graded in a manner most beneficial to the football, rather than the softball, configuration. The field is oddly contoured in the outfield and water must drain all the way across the infield skin to exit the field."

In June, following the regrading, the field was sprigged with Tifway 419 bermudagrass at the rate of between 500-550 bushels per acre. Collins adds, "In conjunction with this, I replaced the older irrigation heads, modifying the system to a mix of full and part circle heads, and installed the new heads on swing joints. The turf area is now fully covered, though manipulation of the timing is necessary to achieve the most efficient coverage. I pushed the grow-in with fertilization and irrigation, so we were ready for use in late August. The sprigging gave us a smoother playing surface, with none of the potential layering problems of sodding."

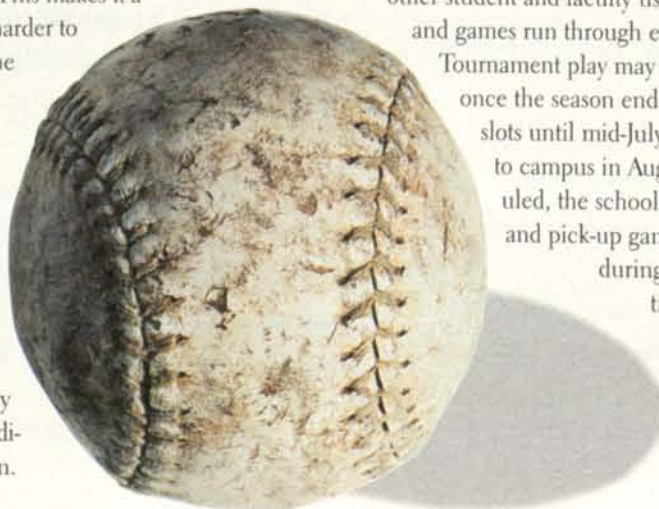
In 1998, the lighting was improved with the addition of two new standards of 10 lights each. Two bleacher sections were added to increase the seating capacity to its current 200. There is standing room viewing around the fence.

Collins says, "In the summer of 1999, new dugouts were constructed, approximately 10-15 feet further down the line from the existing ones. These were designed with bricks and white stone to conform to the campus architecture, Georgian Colonial. The university also added the new soccer field and band field, and decided to move the primary intramural use from the softball field to the band field.

"A 7-ft. wide warning track was extended all around the field. A layer of landscape fabric covers the native soil and is topped with crushed crimson stone. The outfield fence became a permanent fixture. In 2000, the batting cage was enlarged and new bullpens were added. In 2001, the batting cage and the catcher's area of the bullpens were paved and covered with artificial turf. We've added protective tubing at the tops of the fences and upgraded the signage, which has improved the overall aesthetics."

Large pine trees, close to the field, restrict sunlight along the third base line and foul territory in the fall and winter months. Collins says, "This makes it a bit tougher to grow grass in these areas and makes it harder to get the ground to dry out. We also have the issue of the pine straw that falls on field and must be removed."

The skinned area of the field is composed of local native clay, a bit heavier than the standard infield material, closer to mound clay consistency. Little sand or calcined clay is added, so the infield also holds a little more water than is standard. Mark Voisard, head softball coach, and Leigh Ann Ketcham, assistant coach, handle the maintenance on the skinned portion of the field. Though the retained moisture requires extra attention in February and March, it is appreciated during the hot, dry conditions that dominate the majority of the softball season.



Large pine trees, close to the field, restrict sunlight along the third base line and foul territory in the fall and winter months.

Coach Voisard handles the infield preparation before games and the post-game infield wrap-up. A quick coupler added behind the mound circle can accommodate either a 3/4-in. hose for hand watering or a sprinkler head. A hose spigot also is located at the home team dugout. The team currently uses a retired baseball tarp to cover the field when necessary.

Collins tackles the major lip maintenance and repair during that short maintenance window in the summer. He also backs off on the fertilizer rates when the season is over to give the turf a little down time that corresponds with the reduced level of play.

Field use

Samford Field is used approximately 47-48 weeks of the year hosting the university's intercollegiate softball program, intramural and physical education activities, and other student and faculty use. Practice for the collegiate season begins in mid-January and games run through early May, putting players on the field 5-6 days a week.

Tournament play may extend that schedule. Intramural play takes over the field once the season ends running into mid-June. Summer camps fill the remaining slots until mid-July, running 5 days a week for 4-5 weeks. Students come back to campus in August and, while no organized practices or games are scheduled, the school's open door policy allows field use for informal practices and pick-up games. This informal activity also fills any unscheduled days during the rest of the good weather season. Collegiate fall practice begins in September and lasts for 6-7 weeks, until the November temperatures become too cold for play.

The only down times fall during the dead of winter, school holidays, and that short window from the end of camps in July until the return of students in early August.