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COVER STORY

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COVER PHOTO: Arizona's Luis Gonzalez celebrates World Series-winning hit.
 Photo courtesy of West Coast Turf.

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the front office

Joe Paterno, my hero

I am a graduate of Penn State's School of Journalism so my reverence for football coach Joe Paterno is deep-rooted and long-standing. But after last season and all it entailed for our country and JoePa, my admiration is greater than ever.

Coach Paterno is a leader, a humble role model, a man who has his priorities straight—not to mention being successful at his chosen profession. In these troubled times, everyone could use a Paterno to emulate.

Paterno began the season needing two victories for the most coaching wins in Division I history. When the team lost its first four games, playing as poorly as any team in Paterno's 36 years as head coach, critics said the game had passed the 73-year-old by. His response: "We're just not a very good football team right now." An honest man doesn't believe in excuses.

Then against Northwestern the Lions rallied for a come-from-behind 38-35 win. The next Saturday they came back from a 27-9 deficit to beat Ohio State, 29-27, and Paterno had the record. The coach had not once mentioned it to his players.

The literature major from Brown still knows how to coach. Down by 17 points at halftime to Michigan State, Paterno ordered every player to keep his helmet on during the intermission. That message, along with his trademark halftime game plan adjustment, sparked the Lions to yet another comeback win.

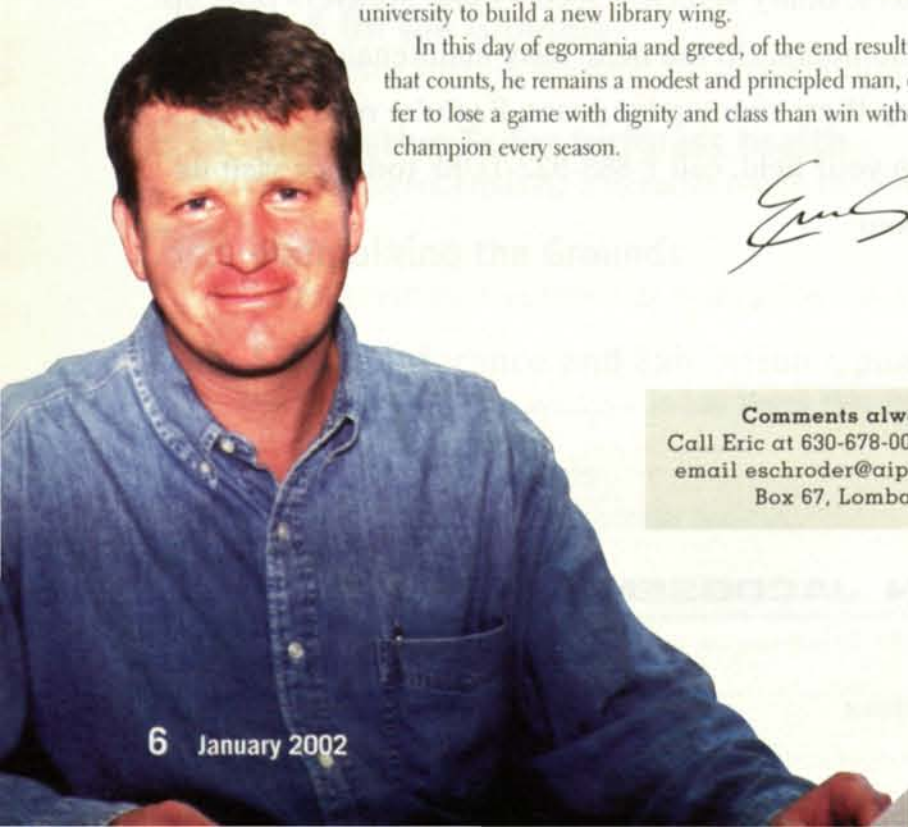
Paterno's lack of ego is commendable. He doesn't ride around practices in a golf cart, wearing wrap-around sunglasses and chatting on a cell phone to the media. He still enjoys teaching the game. It's so Paterno to not put names on jerseys or stickers on helmets for scoring touchdowns. He knows football is a team game.

While winning games is a priority, Paterno is committed to a bigger one: graduating players. The Penn State football team's 68 percent rate continues to track well above the national norm of 50 percent.

This is a man who passed up an opportunity to coach in the National Football League for a \$1 million contract, more than 25 years ago when that was a lot of money. Sue Paterno told ESPN her husband was considering the offer one night when he overheard her crying as she tended to their newest child. He then realized she didn't want to uproot the family; he chose

Happy Valley. The Paternos have since contributed millions of dollars to the university to build a new library wing.

In this day of egomania and greed, of the end result being the only thing that counts, he remains a modest and principled man, one who would prefer to lose a game with dignity and class than win without. Joe Paterno, a champion every season.



Comments always welcome.
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president's message

Greetings from STMA headquarters

I hope each and every one of you had a most joyous holiday season. I also hope that 2002 is off to a good start. Many of you are ready for another great STMA conference, this time in Las Vegas. If you are an STMA member, you hear from me in each issue of your newsletter. If you are not an STMA member, let me encourage you to get involved in **THE** association that is dedicated to your industry.

You know the effort you put into what you do. Do those responsible for your paycheck know? How about those that use the fields you maintain? How about the general public? Do any of them recognize the special expertise it takes to maintain fields, at all levels, in a safe, playable and, hopefully, in an aesthetically pleasing condition? If they don't, you can work with others in your chosen profession to get the word out on what you do and how important it is. Individually, that is a formidable, if not impossible, task. Collectively, through the efforts of STMA, much can be done to spread the message.

Have you ever had a problem with any of your fields? Have things just not gone right some times? Have you scratched your head, wondering if anyone out there might have a solution for your problem(s)? Maybe you would just like someone to validate that you did everything you could but the weather just didn't cooperate. Maybe your field is being used more than it should be for the budgeted maintenance program. An association of individuals with similar problems, concerns, or questions can really help you do a better job of what you do.

STMA has grown rapidly the past 6 years, but could be growing much faster if YOU would get involved. Everyone qualified to receive this publication should be a member of STMA. If you are a member, tell your peers who are not members what you get out of your membership. In the recent STMA "Every Member Survey," more than 92% of the respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with STMA. That tells me that STMA is a tremendous organization that is doing what the members want. Even with that level of satisfaction we are striving to do better. If you feel that you could be getting something else out of membership, let us know so that we can provide what you need.

We were also told in the survey that our website needed improvement. The STMA Website Committee listened and the result of their work is now evident in

the completely revamped www.sportsturfmanager.com. While it is vastly improved, keep checking it, because new information and features will be added constantly.

The best way to make this YOUR organization is to lend your support through dues, ideas, local involvement through Chapters, and attendance at conferences. I hope to see you soon.

If you would like to know more about this industry and its members be sure to read the article in next month's *Sportsturf* for more details from the "Every Member Survey." You will gain insight on number of fields maintained, total acreage maintained, budgets, salary ranges, educational backgrounds, and much more.

ST



Steve Trusty,
STMA Executive Director

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Sportsturf Manager of the Year: Dr. Tony Koski

Former golf course super-turned-professor promotes professionalism, brings turf managers together

BY ERIC SCHRODER

Dr. Tony Koski has been chosen *Sportsturf's* 2002 Manager of the Year by his new peer group, the previous winners of the award. The reason Tony was selected this year is perhaps best described by Abby McNeal, the assistant turfgrass manager for INVESCO Field @ Mile High, Denver:

"Tony has always been available to answer questions or to offer advice. He has helped me as an academic advisor through college and after graduation, for the past 7 1/2 years. Tony has made countless visits to my job sites, to just stop by and talk about the fields. The advice and guidance he has offered me throughout my young turf career is irreplaceable."

Kalin Stovall, Colorado State University sports turf manager, says Dr. Koski is involved and helpful. "He's introduced me to people that I've learned from, and he's great at networking. If he doesn't know the answer to a question, he'll connect you to someone who does know the answer," says Stovall. "He couldn't make our last home football game this year but was listening to it on the radio; late in the game he heard it was 'slippery' so he called me after the game to find out what had happened. The field had started to frost up a bit was all, but Tony wanted to check in with me on it."

"He's so involved. On top of his teaching, horticulture research, working with students and graduate students, the Turf Club, involvement in the Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association where, for example, this year he's an integral part of the upcoming conference," Stovall continues. "He never says 'no.'"

"He's always trying to educate, and help people in this industry land on their feet. He's incredibly knowledgeable whether it's knowing the tried and true methods or the latest websites to check out. He has hands-on experience too, he's not just all about books," says Stovall.

Steve Wightman, ST's Manager of the Year in 1996, says, "I met Tony in 1988 when he interviewed at CSU. He was of course, the unanimous choice."

Tony has been a profound inspirational leader in the turfgrass industry. His quiet unassuming demeanor commands attention in reaping the rewards of both his insightful knowledge of turfgrass science and his friendly, humorous personality. Tony's dedication to the sports field industry manifested by his important research and personal involvement makes our industry proud, honored, and privileged to have him recognized as Manager of the Year."

Ideal industry representative

Tony has been involved with turfgrass teaching, research, and extension since 1980, when he began working on his MS degree at Ohio State. After finishing his Ph.D. in 1987, he became assistant professor of turfgrass management at Colorado State University, where currently he advises approximately 60 undergraduate students, teaches a turfgrass management class, and provides extension education for all facets of the Rocky Mountain turfgrass industry. Since 1988, he has coordinated the educational program for the annual Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Conference that attracts around 1,000 turf professionals.

Tony has been a member of the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) since 1990 and is currently a Board member. He serves as Education Committee Chair, putting together the people who set up the STMA Conference program (and does much of the meat of that assignment himself, we hear). He also works with other STMA education issues, including developing a speaker's bureau. Tony also serves on the Certification Committee and worked with the entire Committee to develop the test for Certification and took charge of setting up the test format, says Suz Trusty, STMA communications director.

He also serves on the SAFE Foundation Board and is developing the criteria for research grants, along with other issues affecting research. Tony is an Honorary Member of the Colorado Chapter of STMA.

Suz Trusty says, "He's a mentor for more students and former students than I can count. This year, the two Dr. James Watson Scholarship recipients are from the Colorado State turf program, undergrad Don Frantz and graduate student James Newberry. Tony has a wonderful ability to provide information in a format his audience can understand, whether he's making a formal address to a high-tech group, giving an on-field clinic for a group that has never tackled a sports field project before, or talking one-to-one with anyone. Besides that, he's a genuinely nice guy!"

"Tony realizes the importance of sports turf management and the abilities of sports turf managers, and he promotes that nationwide. He's dedicated to the importance of athletic fields and those who take care of them at all levels, park and rec to professional," says Dave Rulli, STMA board member and stadium manager at Jeffco Stadium, Lakewood, CO.

"He's always available and always willing to help. Tony bridges the gap between the professional level at Coors Field or Invesco to guys at the high school level. He connects people, makes us all one instead of putting some at a high level, and making others afraid to bother them. He treats everyone like we are in one big common-goal group."

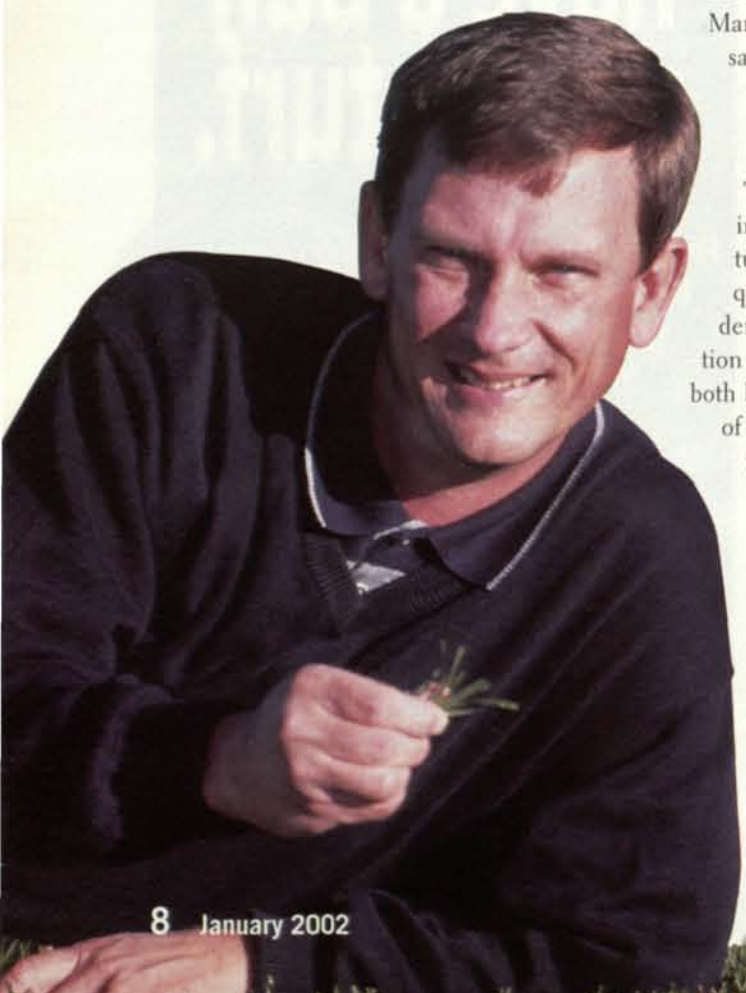
"He's very deserving."

Tony's vision

"I believe that education is of paramount importance to the formation and continued development of the sports turf manager. The importance of education has become even more evident to me through involvement with the STMA Certification program, as a current Board member, and as a speaker at a number of STMA Chapter meetings across the country," says Tony on the STMA website.

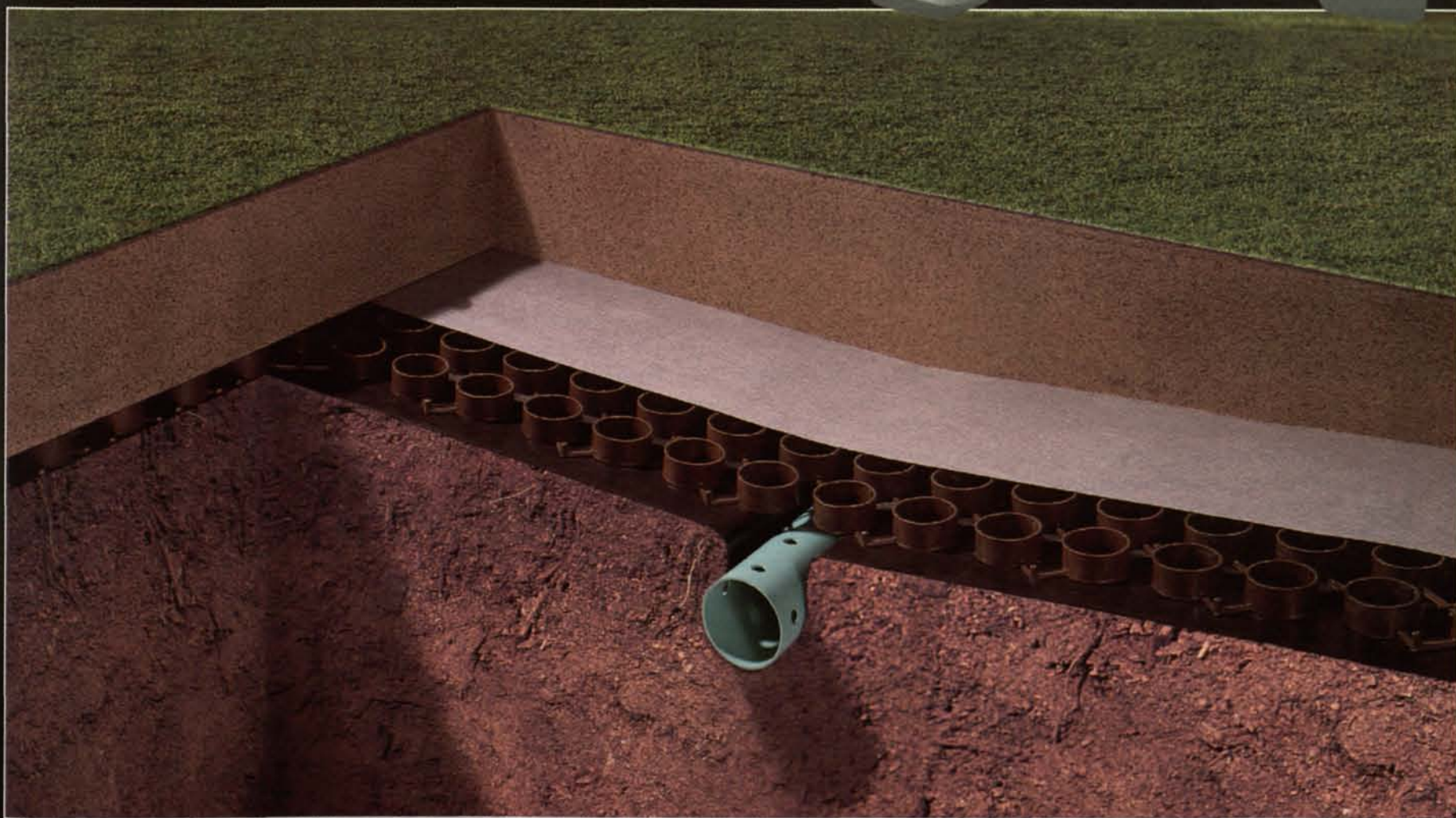
"I sense a genuine need and demand for quality education among sports turf managers everywhere. The STMA is working hard to fill those needs via the national conference, *Sportsturf* and newsletter, through chapter support, and with the initiation of the Certification Program. It is exciting for me to participate in these endeavors."

ST



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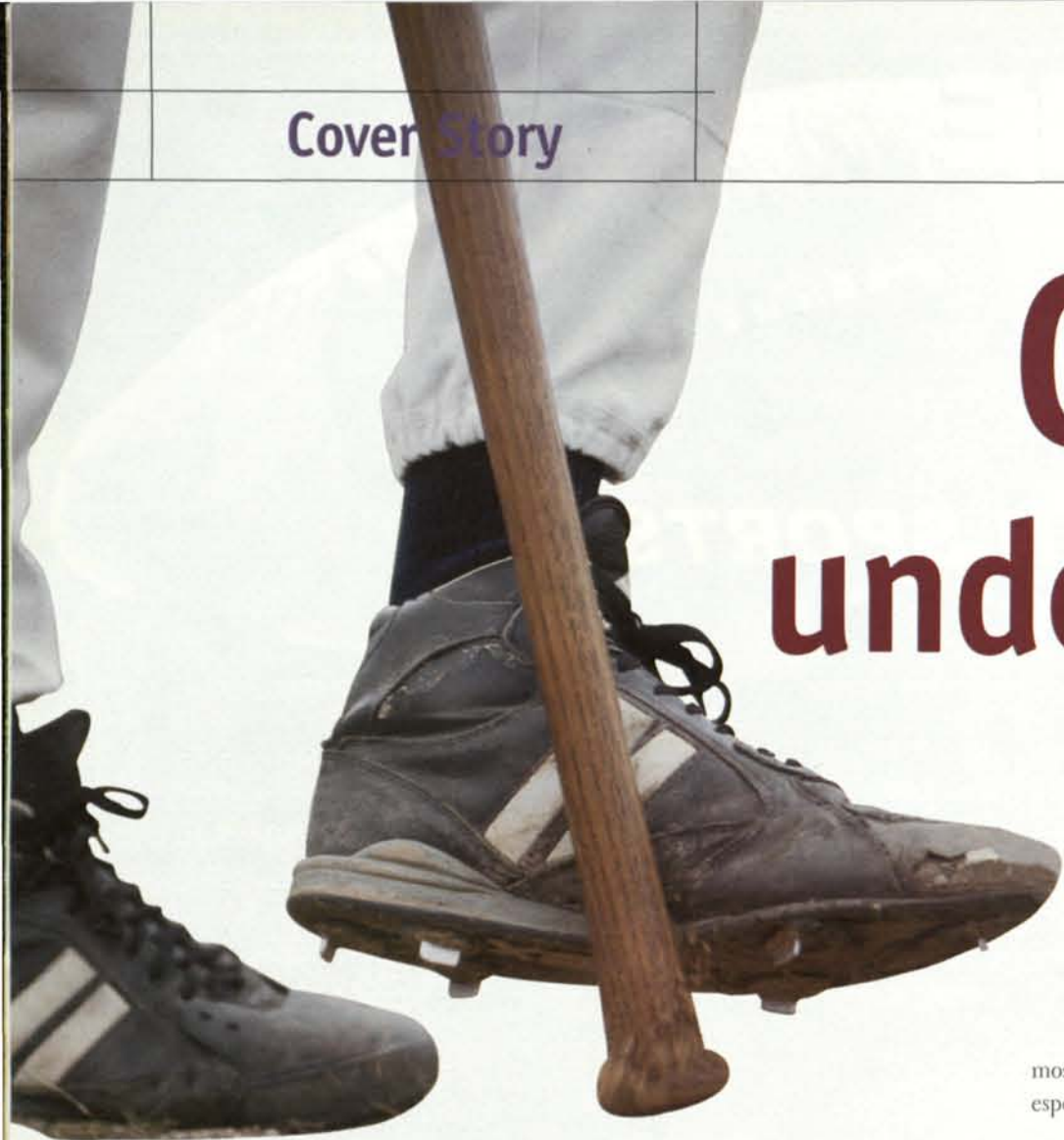
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Growing under a roof in

How Bank One Ballpark survived the first November World Series



When the Arizona Diamondbacks launched their first regular season at Bank One Ballpark in Phoenix in 1998, they were the first pro baseball team to play on natural grass in a retractable-dome stadium. Now they're the best baseball team to play on natural grass under a retractable dome. Proud of his championship team and proud of his field, head groundskeeper Grant Trenbeath takes us behind the scenes for a look at the challenges and ultimate victory of growing real grass at the BOB.

"It's pretty amazing to be growing natural grass here in a roofed facility in the desert," says Trenbeath. "So it was really gratifying to be able to provide a great field for the National League Championship games and finally the World Series and survive the ultimate in wear and tear."

Grass, peanuts, and pine tar

From the start, the D-backs have offered fans the combination of an ultramodern facility—complete with a built-in swimming pool—and all the traditional sights, sounds, and smells of America's pastime. The layout of the field dates back 100 years with a dirt path between the pitcher's mound and home plate, reminiscent of those seen in very early pictures of the game. Traditional organ music and the crack of the bat take care of the sounds. As for the smells, an ad sponsored by Bank One in the team's program says it all: "Freshly mowed grass, peanuts, and pine tar, all in one whiff. If the Diamondbacks made cologne, we'd wear it to work."

But by mid-season of the team's second year, it looked like freshly mowed grass at the BOB would be just another field of dreams. Two tough, shade-tolerant grasses, zoysia and a blue-rye mix, had shown promise but ultimately couldn't handle the extreme weather conditions and large amounts of shade. In a single day, the grass could experience searing 100-degree desert heat then 78-degree air conditioning that lulls it to sleep, resulting in slower growth and further inability to handle stress. And even though the turf received natural sunlight and incandescent growth lights at every opportunity,

most games at the BOB are played with the retractable roof closed, spelling trouble especially during a homestand.

"During a home stand, the rightfield corner (which typically gets the most shade from the dome) gets only about 2 hours of sun a day," says Trenbeath. "Even with the dome open all day, the outfield corners receive only 4 hours of sunlight. In winter, two-fifths of the field is in constant shade."

Desperate for a solution, Trenbeath visited West Coast Turf, a large sod grower and installer with farms throughout the Southwest. He wanted to check out the grower's new hybrid bermuda called Bull's-Eye.

"We wanted a grass with great playability, one that's firm yet soft for safe footing and a predictable bounce," said Trenbeath. "We wanted durability and recuperative ability plus a warm-season grass that would overseed well and establish quickly in early spring for our pre-season games beginning late March."

Introduced in 1999, Bull's-Eye is an improved hybrid with a dense upright growth and tightly packed leaves near the soil surface, leading to better footing, greater durability and quicker recovery, according to the grower. Bull's-Eye also shows a more aggressive and complete spring green-up than other bermudas.

"What I saw during my visit was very appealing," says Trenbeath. "Compared to other bermudas, Bull's-Eye is darker and more bluish, definitely something different. I knew I wanted a bermudagrass for toughness and heat tolerance and Bull's-Eye's improved shade tolerance certainly sounded great. So we went for it on the entire field."

During the All-Star break in July of 1999, West Coast Turf's crews installed about 100,000 sq. ft. of sod. Trenbeath had ordered it thick-cut and with a 2-in. soil base for better anchorage and immediate playability. He also specified "big rolls," which are 3-1/2 ft. wide by 30-ft. long (105 sq. ft.). These large rolls cut installation time and create a more immediate finished look with fewer seams.

Seasons later, the Diamondbacks boast the grass as one of the stadium's state-of-the-art amenities and have named Bull's-Eye the official turf of the BOB. Bull's-Eye has become so popular in Arizona that West Coast Turf sells it to consumers under "BOBSod" and it has been specified for the Kansas City Royals/Texas Rangers new spring training facility opening in the Phoenix area this spring, according to the company.



Tony Womack strokes a game-winning hit against the Yankees.