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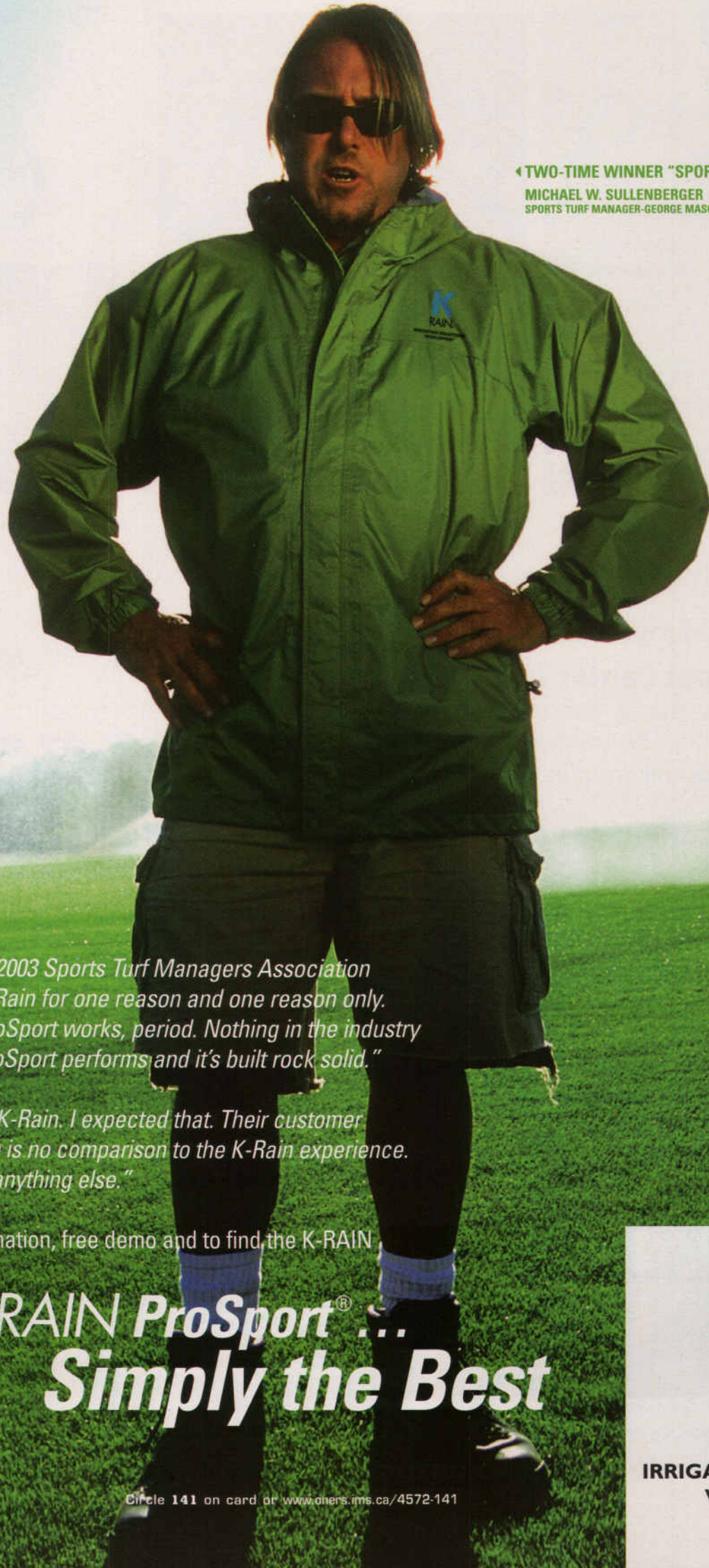
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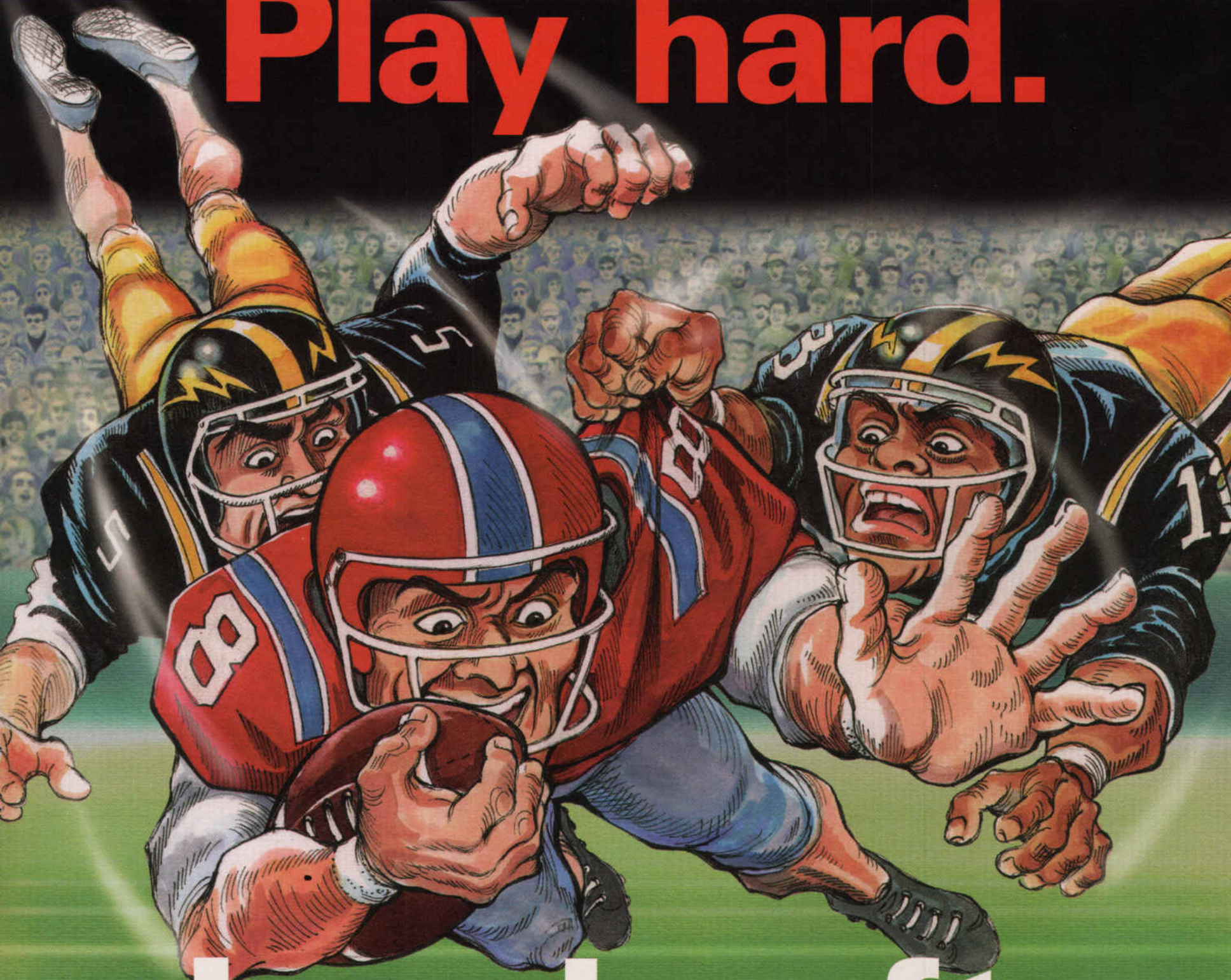
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ON THE COVER: A runner breaks free on the turf during a Blue Valley SD game in Overland Park, KS. Photo by Tim Galyean.

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from the sidelines

Secrets of a "winner"

Because I work out of my house and many folks don't really understand the life of an editor, there's real mystery to my day-to-day activities. And that's how I like it—imagine if some snoop reporter could gain access to my private training room and share my secrets with the world!

It has taken a lot of hard work to reach the zenith of my profession; countless hours stretching my wrists and fingers, and strengthening them so I can effectively use my keyboard all day and punch those damn little buttons on my cell phone. You have no idea how I've taken my natural talents and improved my skills through many long nights in the gym; I mean I've got to have some strong glutes to sit on all day. It's grueling but then, I'm just better than you are.

Of course I have a personal trainer; no one, no matter what his or her profession (even major league baseball players!) can reach the pinnacle just exercising on your own. Professionals need professional guidance, don't you see. I've been so kind as to share my trainer's routines and suggestions for improvement with some of my peers (you should see the wrists on *Landscape & Irrigation's* Jerry Roche—awesome!).

You can't use my training methods though; you will just have to envy my talent. Oh, go ahead and whisper, "How did Schroder get so good? His previous work was terrific sure, but these past few years, he's taken it to another level. I wonder if it's because his brain has just continued to grow, even as he entered his 40's? How else to explain that his head's now the size of a medicine ball?"

Rumors of my doing something "immoral or unethical" or "cheating" to reach my greatness are lies, and if you believe any of them, then you are a liar. And probably prejudiced against paunchy middle-aged guys with crooked teeth and big noses, too! I don't even know what cheating is. Admit it, you envy me and want to bring me down.

Besides, don't you think the great editors of the past, say Jann Wenner of *Rolling Stone*, or Walter Issacson of *Time*, had secrets too?

So you nattering nabobs of negativism, go away! Leave me alone to enjoy my brilliance unfettered by your jealousies. It's time for my, uh, Botox treatment and so I'll sign off now while you continue your pathetic finger pointing. Remember too, just in case one day a young Dan Rather wannabe violates my privacy and reveals my secrets to America's impressionable young editors, I want to state for the record now that the "cream" substance in my training room is for my chapped fingers, and the "clear" substance is computer screen cleaner. As for those hole marks in my glutes? Strictly cosmetic!



ERIC SCHRODER, EDITOR

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Reaching goals through strategic planning

Although the traditional spring board meeting is held during April, your STMA Board met in late February in Kansas City. We wanted to meet soon after the January Conference to spearhead our commitment to strategic planning.

Strategic planning is a means to advance organizations. Strategic planning is described as a "disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an association is, what it does, and why it does it." Strategic planning is a blueprint for the future of this association and is vital to the success and growth of STMA.

With the robust goals STMA has set, spending time discussing the association's strategic direction can help us to achieve these goals. Examples of topics discussed include: overall expansion of the conference including a site selection strategy, membership growth, industry influences, certification goals, chapter development, and management.

Your board is also dedicated to implementing a strong committee system. STMA relies on committees to help guide and execute work. For the association to make the most effective use of its volunteers, it is important that we specifically define the purpose of each committee and the work that is expected of the committee this year. In addition, to strengthen our network of volunteers, it is important to extend our reach to more of our membership.

A strong committee system brings great perspective and insight to the board and staff. They also enhance the association's effectiveness by researching issues thoroughly and then making recommendations to the board for action. All of your board members serve as committee chairs or as a board liaison to a non-board member committee chair to help facilitate communication.

Before this board meeting, committee chairs were asked to submit to Kim Heck, CEO, a completed worksheet that outlined their committee members, purpose of the committee, and specific goals they want to accomplish in 2005. As a part of our strategic planning discussions, committee priorities were revisited to be sure they align with the goals, objectives, and strategies of the strategic plan.

An addition to this year's committee system is the Synthetic/Natural Turfgrass Task Force, which was created as a direct result of membership requests and discussion. The board agreed to create the Task Force to gather and disseminate factual information and provide education for those evaluating the potential use of synthetic turf or natural turf. A goal of the Task Force is to create a "white paper" that will aid in decision-making.

I look forward to sharing our strategic plan with the STMA Membership and reporting back our progress relative to the plan and committee work throughout 2005.

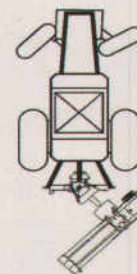


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Home Depot Center handles special events

Early evening shot of the Stadium Field set up for the NCAA Division I Men's Soccer College Cup.

BY SUZ TRUSTY

When Kyle Waters tells new acquaintances he works for the Home Depot Center, most people ask him, "Which department?" It takes a while to explain he's in charge of the fields and grounds, including the extensive landscaping, of the sports event showplace in Carson, CA.

Home Depot Center is a 125-acre sports development with a 27,000-seat soccer stadium, a track & field facility, an indoor velodrome, an 8,000-seat tennis stadium, nine additional soccer training fields, and multiple additional tennis courts. It is the home of Major League Soccer's Los Angeles Galaxy and of Chivas USA, a new MLS team. It's the US Soccer Federation National Team's Training Headquarters and an official training site for US Track & Field. It was the training camp for the San Diego Chargers last season and hosted the NCAA Division I Men's Soccer College Cup in December, along with numerous other major sports events and a few concerts. Maybe you saw it on TV during the X Games or in that Chevrolet truck commercial with Howie Long.

Waters says, "It's hard to explain the concept of a multi-use, high traffic facility to anyone outside the industry, especially one with so many different events going on, often at the same time. Industry insiders understand the driving forces in making it all work are our outstanding crew and supportive management team."

The stadium field, and fields 1 through 5 have the same basic structure. Each has a subsurface drainage system with drainpipes on 15-foot centers connected to the storm drain system. This is topped with a 6-inch USGA spec sand-based soil profile. Each was sodded with Bull's-Eye Bermudagrass and has been overseeded with perennial ryegrass.

The additional 8 acres of practice and multi-purpose fields have a clay pan base with a 4-inch sand-based cap and Bermudagrass sod. This area can be laid out in multiple configurations to meet needs. It's been set up as 22 small soccer fields. The typical layout for the Chargers practices is one full size and three half-size football fields. The complex also includes one synthetic FieldTurf soccer

field. Construction on a second began in late February.

There are four clay-surface tennis courts that the crew maintains with a regimen similar to that of the skinned area of a baseball infield. The 18 hard-surfaced tennis courts require little staff time. An outside contractor on a preset schedule washes them. Waters' crew maintains the 3-mile DG running trail with 12 fitness stations that run around the perimeter of Home Depot Center.

They're also responsible for the approximately 20 acres of ornamental turf. This includes 14,000 square feet of newly installed sod that replaced an area of

flowerbeds. "That section of flowerbeds was between the main drive and the practice fields," notes Waters. "Many players and fans opted for the direct route, through the flowers, rather than detouring around it on the existing walkways. I believe it is more realistic to recognize users' traffic patterns and accommodate them when possible than to go against the natural flow. This conversion will allow us to focus a little more time on the rest of the 10,000 plants on site."

"Efren Quintana and his crew are responsible for the landscape and ornamental plants. That includes 1,636 trees, 3-1/2 miles of Oleander shrubs, 2-1/2 acres of flowerbeds, 7 acres of planters between the in-ground landscaping and the stadium, and the 115 plant-filled pots that highlight the concourse. Besides the standard pruning, edging, trimming, and cleanup, he orchestrates three seasonal color change

outs for all the plantings. And, because of the locations of those 115 pots on the stadium concourse, they require daily hand watering."

The ornamental turf areas are primarily turf-type tall fescues that require weekly mowing. Some Bermudagrass is infiltrating in the higher heat and most heavy-traffic areas. Since the turf textures and coloration are similar and the variation isn't noticeable to the general public, Waters plans to follow a general maintenance program that will encourage the turf best adapted to the specific site conditions to dominate in that area.

The extensive Rain Master irrigation system contains over 8,000 heads, 775 valves and 18 satellites. Waters says, "All of the irrigation is with reclaimed water. The water test for the month of January registered an SAR of 12.78. Using the effluent water is especially challenging on the sand-capped fields since the clay sub-surface, basically traps and holds the salts. The buildup generally reaches so high a



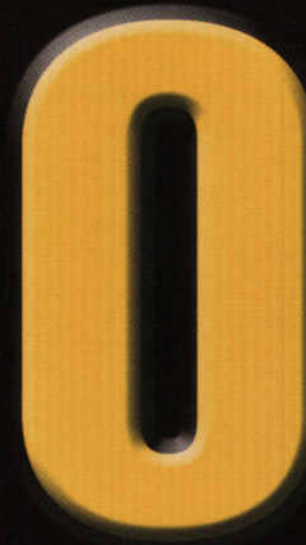


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level in June or July that even attempting to neutralize it by putting out approximately 1-2 tons of gypsum per month throughout the year, the bicarbonates and chlorides in the water, eventually seal it off contributing to black layer.”

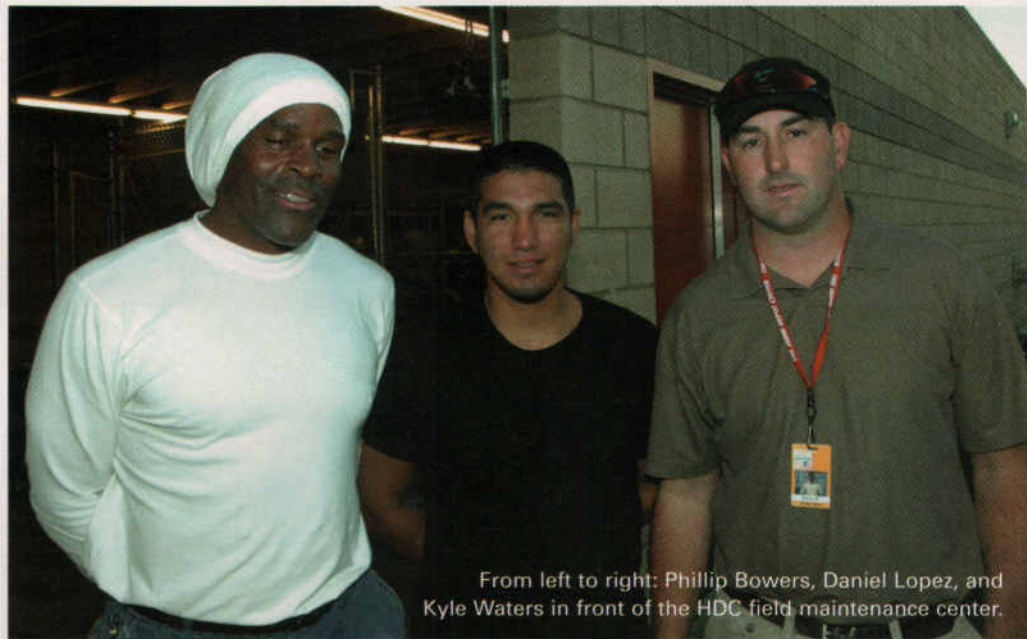
The stadium field is generally mowed four times a week during game weeks and five times a week in non-game weeks. Fertilization is based on soil and tissue test results. Floratine's 20-0-4, 3-0-28 and Protesyn are applied every 10 days. Granular fertilizer is applied twice a month on the ratio of 2 pounds of potassium to 1 pound nitrogen a month. Iron is applied to boost color once or twice a month depending on the game scheduling.

Mowing height of cut generally is maintained between 3/4 and 1 inch for all the fields. Waters has found this reduces the need to sweep up clippings or undertake thatch removal. Field painting is a constant process. One morning or afternoon is devoted to painting the stadium field for each game. Daily painting was required for the Charger practices. Phillip Bowers, Daniel Lopez and Kevin Lewis can paint up to 9 soccer fields in a day. Logos are added on the main stadium for certain events such as NCAA College Cup, USA Rugby 7's, and CIF high school football.

The busiest week

Waters and crew faced their busiest week to date this past summer. Waters says, “The JP Morgan Tennis Tournament drew record crowds and extensive TV coverage. Efren and Ben Garcia were in charge of all the flowers on the court. We also had a cycling event in the Velodrome, so they handled all the flowers for it too. This meant daily change outs, with everything watered at both venues, on the concourse and everything in place before activities began. We also needed to set up misters so spectators would stay cool. Ben handled all of that. The Chargers were on site for training. Kevin, Daniel, Manuel Vanda and Phillip took charge of the maintenance and painting requirements of the Chargers and their camp needs. Everyone on staff then, when time allowed, continued our daily maintenance of painting and mowing on the U.S. Soccer and Galaxy training fields. My main focus was on the load in for the X Games.

“We couldn't drive the semis to bring in the dirt for the X-games during crowd movement times or Charger practice times,” says Waters. “And we couldn't load in



From left to right: Phillip Bowers, Daniel Lopez, and Kyle Waters in front of the HDC field maintenance center.

or out during the hours of the tennis tournament because of the noise factor for the players and fans. I worked with Brian Melekian, HDC Director of Operations, and Lee Zeidman, Senior VP of AEG Operations, to coordinate the timing between tennis matches and Charger practice times. Basically, we could only move dirt from 11pm until 6 AM.”

Each of these events involved one or more of the facilities' major user groups. There was no way to prioritize: each of the groups was equally important and equally deserving of the top level, highest quality conditions. Attention to detail was essential.

Waters says, “Everyone on our staff stepped up to do whatever it took to deliver our best. There was so much involved at each venue, with so many different timing requirements. Everyone knew what needed to be done, whether it was coming in at 5:30 AM to water the plants on Center court or staying past dark to paint for the Chargers under the headlights of the Pro-Gators, they did it. I can't say enough about what a great job my staff did.”

After the X Games

It took five days to bring in the 8,000 cubic yards of dirt and build the dirt road course for the X Games. The Super Moto course had them driving out of the stadium through the concourse, going outside the gate and then back into the parking lot and re-entering the stadium on the other side. Once the dirt was in place, the crews were on site for another six days. The X Games event was televised by both ESPN and ABC August 11-12th.

Waters says, “We needed to have the field in shape and ready for a Galaxy Soccer game set for August 1. Kurt Kitchens and his company JPD “Just Pushing Dirt” had the dirt removal calculated per truck so we could get it out and off site in 36 hours. Bill Barkshire was set to begin the laser leveling as soon as the dirt removal was completed and 255 irrigation heads were reset. We'd hoped to till the sand profile to relieve compaction and add more root zone material, but the tight timetable wouldn't allow it.

“During the setup and removal of the course, six of the irrigation valves had been broken. This set us back quite a bit. We had 255 heads to put in and were also switching out from Hunter to Rain Bird 5505 and 8005 heads. Neal Beeson of



Pre-game introductions of competing teams for one of the College Cup games. Cameras are in place and rolling.