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# JAN.05

VOLUME 21 / NUMBER 01



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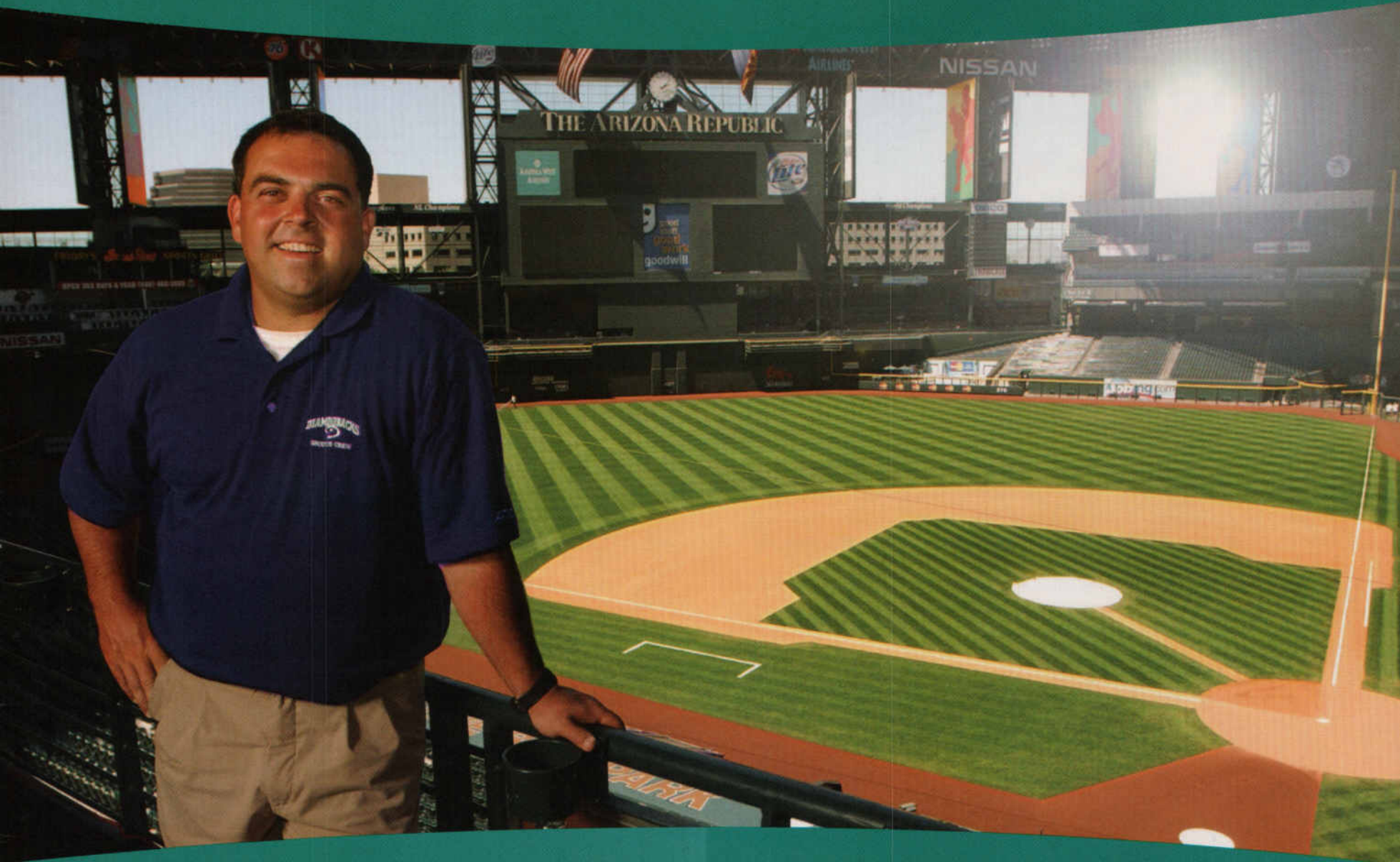
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Davenport Field, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

SPORTSTURF (ISSN 1061-687X) (USPS 000-292) (Reg. U.S. Pat. & T.M. Off.) is published monthly by Adams Business Media at 833 W. Jackson, 7th Floor, Chicago, IL 60607. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Sportsturf, P.O. Box 2120, Skokie IL 60076-7820. For subscription information and requests, call Subscription Services at (847) 763-9565. Subscription rates: 1 year, \$40 US & Poss.; 2 years, \$65 US & Poss.; 1 year, \$65 Canada/Foreign Surface, 1 year, \$130 Airmail. All subscriptions are payable in advance in US funds. Send payments to Sportsturf, P.O. Box 2120, Skokie, IL 60076-7820. Phone: (847) 763-9565. Fax: (847) 763-9569. Single copies or back issues, \$6 each US/Canada; \$9 Foreign. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL, and other mailing offices. COPYRIGHT 2004, Sportsturf. Material may not be reproduced or photocopied in any form without the written permission of the publisher.

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from the sidelines

# What's in a name?

"Strict measures need to be implemented to ensure SOD does not become established in Michigan, or if it is already established (which I suspect is the case) to contain its spread as much as possible."

According to Turfgrass Producers International (TPI), the "Law of Unintended Consequences" kicked in when the magazine *The Landsculptor* featured an article written by Dr. David L. Roberts from Michigan State titled, "Sudden Oak Death - A Disease We Don't Want." Within the article the acronym SOD was used as an abbreviation for Sudden Oak Death. The consequences of that acronym become apparent as you read the above excerpt.

"Sod" or "SOD" is not something we need to have associated with the green industry the way "Chernobyl" is to the clean air industry, or perhaps how "Barry Bonds" is to clear consciences. (My apologies for that shot but Henry Aaron was a boyhood hero and I'd like to see him keep the HR record.)

In fairness to Dr. Roberts, it should be noted that he did not create the acronym SOD for Sudden Oak Death. The acronym has been in use and is still being used by an alarming number of sources from within the U.S. Department of Agriculture on down to county and state agencies, special task forces, university researchers, extension agents, and even nurseries.

Here are some other examples from Jim Novak at TPI:

"The presence of these fungi generally indicates an advanced stage of the disease, though they are present on many other trees that are not suffering from SOD."

"It should therefore not be assumed that all dying oaks have SOD. The impact of SOD must be considered in the context of all of the factors affecting tree health."

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture has adopted an interim federal quarantine to prevent the artificial (i.e., human-assisted) spread of SOD to other parts of the U.S."

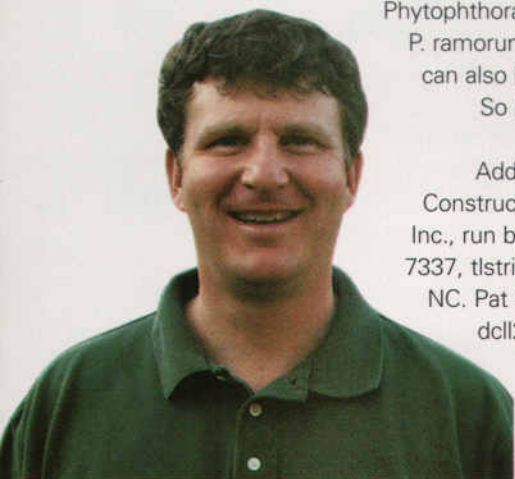
"Unfortunately, the use of SOD as an acronym for Sudden Oak Death may have an unintentional yet detrimental impact on turfgrass sod producers," says Novak. "In reading the above excerpts from numerous sources one can easily see how well intentioned information could be misinterpreted when taken out of context."

Novak encourages everyone in the green industry to give serious consideration to the discontinuation of the acronym SOD in reporting or identifying Sudden Oak Death.

Phytophthora ramorum is the proper scientific genus and species name. P. ramorum or Ramorum leaf blight and dieback are other names that can also be used.

So let's all "lay some slack" on SOD.

Addendum: Two companies we should have had in our Field Construction Company listing last month are Athletic Construction, Inc., run by Tony Strickland, CSFM, out of Oakwood, GA, 770-532-7337, tstrickland@charter.net; and Field Builders, Inc., out of Charlotte, NC. Pat O'Connor's company can be reached at 704-400-6757 or dcil2003@aol.com. We regret not listing these last issue.



**ERIC SCHRODER, EDITOR**

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## president's message

# See you down the road

I have thought about this last message for quite some time, probably since I became president a couple of years ago. There were many times I actually looked forward to it while suffering through my monthly panic attack as the deadline neared and I had no idea of what to write.

I hope I succeeded in conveying the benefits of membership in STMA and how vigilant we must be to preserve what we believe to be the sanctity and integrity of sports.

I would like to thank everyone for their support over these past two years and thank each of you for entrusting me with the duties of your president. It has truly been an honor and responsibility that I did not take lightly. In some ways, the past two years have flown by and, in other ways, they seem to have occupied a lifetime. I know that I am a better person for all the new friends I have made and been able to work with.

A while back, I wrote a message about those of us in STMA being the guardians of the game. It was a compilation of my thoughts and reflections on the way the game used to be played versus the way it is played today.

Sadly, those days are gone forever. With that in mind, STMA and each of us who are sports field managers must also be willing to change without having to give up our core principles or we risk being left behind.

This past year, the Board of Directors decided that it was time for STMA to step out on its own by establishing our own headquarters and staff. This has provided us the opportunity for self-evaluation, as we look at where we are going and how we are getting there.

Kim Heck, our new CEO, has not only brought a fresh approach to the way we do business, but also has brought new ideas for how STMA can better serve all its members. There have been and will continue to be some missteps as we experience this changeover, but, in the long term, this is the only way STMA can reach its full potential.

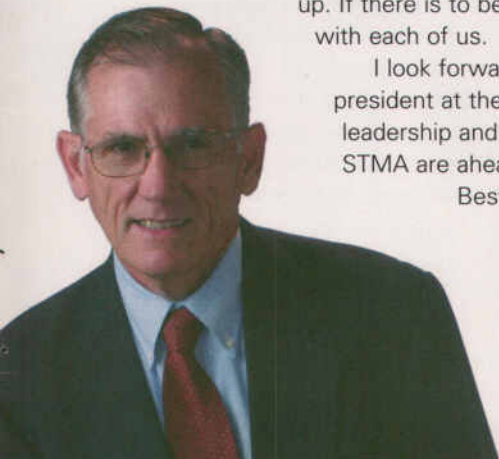
As in any other field, this profession requires a strong national organization. There is strength in numbers. Working together through STMA, sports field managers can do far better for the advancement of this profession than they can as individuals.

There are a number of people who have never been a member and some that gave up their membership for various reasons. STMA is our members. With your membership, you can help make the association what you want it to be. This is the perfect time to be a part of this association and be a part of forming a new and better STMA.

If you truly care about this profession and its future, now is the time for you to step up. If there is to be a change in our association and profession then it has to begin with each of us.

I look forward to working with Mike Trigg when he assumes the post of president at the annual conference in Phoenix later this month. With Mike's leadership and help from each of you, I am convinced that the best times of STMA are ahead.

Best wishes to each of you.



**BOB CAMPBELL, CSFM**

[bcampbell@UTK.edu](mailto:bcampbell@UTK.edu)

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field of the year

# University of Virginia wins Sports Field Complex of the Year

BY SUZ TRUSTY

**T**he University of Virginia, Charlottesville, earned the 2003 Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Sports Field Complex of the Year Award in the College/University division. This award recognizes the commitment to excellence in overall field quality, safety, playability and appearance throughout the athletic field program.

Jimmy Rodgers, CSFM®, joined the UVA Athletics Department in June 2000 as sports field manager. He says, "The University of Virginia Athletic Department has embarked on an aggressive campaign to be one of the best, if not the best, college sports programs in the country. We have adopted a motto that clarifies our intent: 'Uncompromised Excellence.' Over the past two decades, our administration has spent its money wisely on building excellent field foundations, and they currently provide me with the operational support to maintain our sports turf to meet our coaches' expectations. I was extremely honored to accept this award for our University and our athletic department, and am pleased that it did indeed support and compliment our overall goals."

The University of Virginia Sports Field Complex encompasses a group of premium athletic facilities. The main complex consists of a soccer/lacrosse stadium, a baseball stadium, a track and field complex, two natural grass football practice fields, an artificial turf practice field, and three natural grass auxiliary practice fields. The auxiliary fields are used primarily for men and women's soccer and for conditioning and agility drills by all the teams. The football game field, David A. Harrison III Field at Scott Stadium, earned the STMA College Football Field of the Year Award for 2001. Scott Stadium is in the heart of campus, three-quarters of a mile away from the rest of the fields in the main University Hall sports complex. This adds up to 16 acres of close-cut sports turf. There also are 8 acres of common fescue, bluegrass and perennial ryegrass turf areas surrounding the fields and athletic buildings that are under the care of Rodgers and his staff.

With the highly competitive level of the University's teams, the fields are in use nearly year-round. The combination of spring and fall play and summer camps leaves the winter holiday season as the only true downtime. This competi-

tive level also puts the fields in the spotlight.

Rodgers says, "Each of the game fields and each group of practice fields have variations in the soil profiles, the internal and surface drainage, and the types of turfgrasses used. In addition, since we're located in the middle of the transition zone, we're managing warm-season grasses during the hot weather months and overseeded cool-season grasses during the cold weather months while still preserving that Bermudagrass base. We're also constantly adjusting our maintenance programs as we seek to continually improve field conditions to provide our coaches with the best possible playing surfaces, whatever the sport or the season."

## The fields

Scott Stadium first opened for play in 1931 with a native soil field. This was converted to an artificial turf field in 1978. In 1992, a Motz PAT system was installed with a 12-inch sand-based soil profile, a multi-zone in-ground irrigation system, and Kentucky bluegrass turf. The subsurface drainage tiles, on 20-foot centers, funnel water into a mid-field drainpipe that feeds into a storage tank at one end of the field. The system can be used to either pump or draw water off the field into the storage tank or to draw on the stored water to sub-irrigate the field.

After 2 years of bluegrass play, the decision was made in 1994 to convert to Vamont Bermudagrass overseeded with perennial ryegrass. Structural renovation of Scott Stadium in 1999 and 2000 created additional seating. In spring 2001, the stadium and field hosted a Dave Matthews Band concert that drew 55,000 fans. Through Dave Matthew's generosity, funds were set aside to protect the field's turf. After thorough investigation of all options, Rodgers determined that rental fees associated with using high-end protective covering came close to the expense of renovating and replacing the Vamont. He opted for a geotextile cover to protect the inner profile of the field and selected TifSport Bermudagrass to replace the Vamont.

He says, "Renovation began in April 2001, two days after the concert and was completed within 40 days. The existing Vamont surface was stripped away, the sand matrix was "bleccavated," and a soil fumigant was applied. The field was then laser graded and resodded with TifSport.

"We have a rim of natural organics that surround the PAT area of the field. The different soil matrixes proved to be a challenge from the nutrient standpoint.



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Though we sodded wall to wall, these different soil profiles had different responses to our nutrient amendments and thus required some differences in the other maintenance procedures. We found to adequately nurture our new base we needed to cut our Nitrogen (N) application rates from 3/4 to 1 pound per thousand square feet to 1/3 to 1/2 pound per thousand square feet, and apply weekly rather than every 2 weeks. We also raised the height of cut thus increasing the canopy."

Current Head Coach, Al Groh, has used the facility exclusively for football games, though future concerts are a possibility. There are seven home games each year and a spring game. Occasionally, the visiting teams will walk through on the Friday before a Saturday game.

Davenport Field, the baseball facility, was established in its original location in 1975. It was initially a bluegrass/fescue field, which was replaced with artificial turf. It was converted back to natural turf in 1990. A sand-based profile was installed in the infield and foul ground area in conjunction with this conversion. The outfield is native soil augmented with sand topdressing. The field has no internal drainage. A 1% crown from the pitcher's mound back to the 408-foot mark in center field facilitates surface drainage. The Vamont Bermudagrass is overseeded with perennial ryegrass in the fall and the spring. The outfield Vamont is not pure; it has patches of Tifway 419, which makes overseeding more difficult to manage. The warning track is crushed brick. The skinned area materials are augmented and maintained to provide the speed and playability factors desired by the baseball coaching staff.

The college spring baseball season begins in January. The field hosts practices and 30 home games during that period. Fall practices start in September and run

through the end of October. There are also high school baseball tournaments in spring and several camps during the summer. Football occasionally has used the outfield for summer conditioning drills.

Rodgers says, "In 2003, we experimented with the spring topdressing material, using 20% turkey litter combined with 80% Matoponi sand. The sand component gave us the desired topdressing material to combat thatch issues. The organic turkey litter added the desired Nitrogen for the Bermudagrass base coming out of dormancy. The distinctive odor is a factor, but it dissipates within 24 to 48 hours. The results were successful enough to prompt us to repeat this procedure in 2004."

Klockner Stadium is the game facility for men and women's soccer in the fall and men's and women's lacrosse in the spring. It averages 60-80 game events per year, split between the four teams. It hosts some out of season use at the request of any of the four teams using the field. When weather conditions and field use schedules allow, it also may be used for some pre-competition practices.

The Motz Group originally built the field as a sand-based PAT system in 1992. Rodgers says, "After contracting Pythium blight in 1994 when the piping and drain tile backed up and kept the field saturated, the bluegrass turf was replaced with Vamont Bermudagrass and some drain tile was replaced. With the drainage restored, the sand-based profile has done an adequate job of moving water off the field. Over the years, a significant organic layer had built up at the 4-inch depth that restricted water movement at that point. We have begun a comprehensive deep tine aeration program combined with 'super topdressing' and laser blade leveling procedures with varying topdressing materials. We then screen drag the top-

## Field Maintenance Sidebar: The University of Virginia

### Football Game Field: David A. Harrison III Field at Scott Stadium:

#### March

Early season maintenance as needed and weather permits

Begin mowing as needed at 7/8 inch height

#### April

Core aeration at 3 to 4 inch depth (early April, after spring game), cores not removed

Begin spoonfeeding 1/2 to 3/4 lb. of N/K per 1,000 sq. ft. at start of green-up of Bermudagrass

Mow at 7/8 inch

#### May

Lower mowing height to 5/8 inch to help transition out perennial ryegrass  
First full balanced fertilization timed with warmer temperatures to stimulate Bermudagrass.

Core aeration at 3 to 4 inch depth or deep tine coring to 6 to 8 inch depth, cores removed

Topdress with 50 to 60 tons of 90 percent "Matoponi" sand; 10 percent turkey litter compost

#### June

Dethatch if needed, combined with additional topdressing (early June)

Slice or core aeration at 3 to 4 inch depth (late June), cores not removed

#### July

Core aeration at 3 to 4 inch depth (six weeks from first field use), cores removed

Topdress with 30 to 40 tons of "Matoponi" sand

Slice aeration three weeks from first scrimmage (late July)

Raise mowing height to 15/16 inch

#### September

Begin perennial ryegrass overseeding; overall applications will reach 25 lb per 1,000 sq. ft.

Apply P before overseeding

#### October-November

Continue overseeding with perennial ryegrass as needed

#### December-January

End of season maintenance as needed and weather permits

Throughout the Growing Season

Fertilization/nutrient application program in accordance with annual soil and tissue test results - the amount, source and timing adjusted to fit the

needs of the dominant turfgrass. Generally 8 to 10 lbs. of slow and quick release N per growing season. Slow release combines balanced levels of N and K. Quick release N generally applied as

46-0-0 Urea when can assure irrigation control of moisture levels. Light applications of Iron made as needed for field aesthetics.

Weed, disease and insect control conducted on an as needed basis following IPM guidelines

Pre-game Practices

Clippings collected and removed only on mowing the day before games and game day

Field painting begins on Tuesday of game week and completed by Thursday (Friday for rain day and touch ups)

### Baseball Field:

Mound, batters box, skinned surfaces and warning track maintained to top-level competition standards

Continual maintenance of transition areas from skin surface or warning track area to turf during active play and practice periods

Overseeding in late February or early March at the rate of 8 to 10 lb. per 1,000 sq. ft.

Transition out perennial ryegrass at end of spring playing season

Summer renovation of turf wear areas as needed, worked between camps, strip and resod heavily worn areas, sprig areas of lesser wear

Begin preparations for overseeding in late August, apply P as needed according to soil test analysis, dethatch in combination with first seed application

Spring and fall cultural and fertilization programs focused on perennial ryegrass needs; summer cultural and fertilization programs focused on needs of Bermudagrass base

Weed, disease and insect control conducted on an as needed basis following IPM guidelines

### Soccer/Lacrosse Game Field:

Early spring core aeration at 3 to 4 inch depth, cores not removed

Spring dethatching if needed based on visual evaluation

Deep tine deep tine coring to 6 to 8 inch depth, cores removed

Super topdressing with "Matoponi" sand with particle size greater than .5 mm; screen drag topdressing to fill aeration holes