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from the sidelines

You think you have it rough?

Jimmy Rodgers, CSFM, wanted a new challenge and he got one. After five successful years at the University of Virginia, last spring Jimmy took over as head turf manager at RFK Stadium, new home to the Washington Nationals as well as pro soccer's DC United. We checked in with Jimmy in mid-July:

"On Opening Day we simply did not have enough hard packing pitcher's mound clay incorporated into our pressure points. I corrected it the next day, but some players had heard about the opener and saw problems where there were none," Jimmy said. "I took some grief for about a week when things settled down.

"In the interim, the front office instructed me to use a different mound clay product. So I excavated all of the clay that I had placed on and after April 15, and replaced it with this new product, which failed miserably. The third game on it, with 300-game winner Greg Maddux pitching, the umpires asked for our assistance to fix the mound," Jimmy said. "After that fiasco, I re-excavated the inferior clay and placed my preferred brand, which we'd used originally. We have had no mound issues since."

The RFK mound disappears into the infield for soccer set-ups. "We have had a few glitches, but for the most part the hydraulically driven plate operates as intended," Jimmy said. The cylinder that the mound is lowered into is too small so we have to cut out an 18-inch perimeter all the way around the mound for each conversion. After we cut it, the mound recesses 4 feet under the playing surface."

"For the most part, the field is performing well," Jimmy said. "The Bermudagrass sod, overseeded with rye, that was installed in March either came with very little Bermuda base or froze out once installed, because I have very little Bermuda to speak of. Last week [July 10-17], we ripped out our infield and foul ground areas and replaced with 100% Bermudagrass.

"The outfield is 80% ryegrass which is problematic in that there are now two different fields to manage. Different fertility, different mowing heights, different fungicidal needs, certainly different aesthetics," Jimmy said.

I asked Jimmy what are the biggest issues in changing the field from baseball to soccer or vice versa. "The wear that the field receives from the conversions. Soccer has required that all infield clay areas, mound and home plate, be grassed for their games. Converting back to baseball is difficult work," Jimmy said. "During baseball road trips I can't fine tune because it's a soccer field. I didn't realize how stressful both physically and mentally it would be. What we're trying to do is too big a bite."



ERIC SCHRODER, EDITOR

Comments always welcome.
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The first 365 days

I have asked Kim Heck to reflect on her first year as STMA's CEO. From my perspective it has been a year of getting our house in order and focusing on strategic planning for even stronger success in the future. As with any year of change, it is important to look at where we've been to help design a roadmap for the future. I believe our board has worked very hard on your behalf to do just that, and we have great confidence in the staff we have chosen to get us there.

Mike Trigg, CSFM, President

Wow. I can't believe it has been a year already. It has literally flown by. My first month I was office-less (except for my home office that still has dial-up Internet connections!), spent much time traveling back and forth to the former Council Bluffs office to effect the transition, found office space in Lawrence, hired employees, selected office equipment, set up new business accounts, supervised the move of thousands of pounds of files, and on and on. It was a whirlwind and I loved it, yet I was certain that my life would become right-paced as soon as everything was settled in Lawrence.

Wrong. That was a little too optimistic because there were a few activities on the horizon for STMA: the 2005 membership drive, annual elections, scholarship and awards judging—oh, and a little event called the STMA Conference and Exhibition. The board had the foresight to hire a conference events planning firm, Marketing and Events (M&E), who managed a marvelous conference with the help of STMA Finance and Operations Manager Erica Spurling and Member Programs Manager Leah Craig. Both had cut their conference teeth on the GCSAA Conference and Show and were tremendously helpful to M&E, and to me.

The Conference and Exhibition has been the highlight of our year for the simple reason that staff and I were able to meet a huge number of our members. That's what makes our jobs meaningful, and fun! Our work at STMA focuses on one activity: providing service to members. We hope that you feel our commitment and passion for member service when you interact with us.

Although we consider our first year a resounding success, we certainly aren't satisfied. We have many ideas on how to provide more value to members, more ideas than resources. But that is good. It makes us constantly challenge ourselves to streamline processes, use new technologies, and find innovative ways to accomplish more with less.

This year you will see an even stronger commitment from us to understand the sports turf management profession. We plan to use member surveys, qualitative research, and one-to-one interactions with members and their employers to gain a 360-degree perspective on the profession. Only by thorough understanding of your challenges and successes can we develop programs and services to help you achieve your goals.

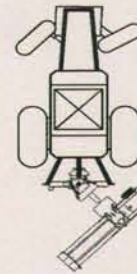
We want to thank our board for their commitment to us and for their leadership of STMA. We are privileged to work with them and honored to work on behalf of STMA's membership.



KIM HECK (L), LEAH CRAIG, AND ERICA SPURLING, STMA HEADQUARTERS STAFF



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Use pre-germinated divot mix for field repair

BY MIKE ANDRESEN, CSFM, AND DR. DAVE MINNER

Most cool-season grasses can be pre-germinated to speed establishment and recovery on athletic fields. Perennial ryegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and tall fescue have been pregerminated and used in a divot mix to hasten seedling establishment. The Iowa State University turf management team uses the following program to manage the sand-based fields at Jack Trice

Stadium and Johnny Majors practice facility:

Begin the pregermination process 4 or 5 days before the time you will actually apply seed to the field.

Submerge seed for 12 hours. Put a 50-pound bag of seed into a large watertight container. We keep four 50-gallon plastic trashcans on hand and mark them "for pregermination only." Woven plastic seed bags that seed typically are packaged in are perfect for pregermination because the water soaks through the bag and the seed remains contained during the draining cycle. Fill the container with water so that

Athletic field seeding schedule BY DR. DAVE MINNER

Cool season grasses adapted to the northern half of the United States are typically seeded from 15 August through 15 October. Late summer temperatures are still warm enough to quickly germinate seed and the ensuing cool and moist autumn will promote dense growth by tillering. Many sporting activities unfortunately conflict with this ideal time for grass

establishment. The following seeding scenarios are presented to establish or reestablish grass amidst a continuous field use schedule. The strategy is to seed often and at higher than normal seeding rates in an attempt to overcome the complete removal of grass cover and exposure of bare soil. For a download, see <http://turfgrass.hort.iastate.edu/extension/seed.pdf>

Field Use Scenario	Monthly Activity and Seeding Schedule for Intense Traffic Areas								
	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
New construction bare soil							* D,B KB 1.5-3#/M once	*	*
Fall Football		D,B KB Once	D,B KB+PR				* C,B,PD Weekly KB	* C,B,PD Weekly KB	* C,B,PD Final seeding KB+PR
Game Field Multiple Use Fall Football + Spring Soccer	* C,B,D KB	* C,B,D,P D Weekly KB	* C,B,D,P D Weekly PR	D once			* C,B,D,PD Weekly KB+PR	* C,B,D,PD Weekly KB+PR	* D, Dor once KB+PR
Football Practice Field	* C PR	* C PR	* D PR	D, Sprig Berm		*	* C PR	* C PR	* D, Dor KB+PR

*, Field being used PD, Pregerminated Divot Mix; TF, Tall Fescue; D, Drill seed; Dor, Dormant seeding; BR, Bermudagrass; B, Broadcast seed; KB, Kentucky bluegrass; C, Cleat-in-seed; PR, Perennial ryegrass



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the seed is completely immersed. Add 4 ounces of Pana-Sea (or other biostimulant or organic fertilizer) to each container with the seed and water. A heated shop is preferred so that everything equilibrates to about room temperature or 70 degrees. Do not use chilled water or freezing conditions. Include a fungicide to the soaking mixture during the early football season if seedling damping off by Pythium is anticipated.

Drain seed for 12 hours. It is recommended to have a 12-hour soak cycle followed by a 12-hour drain cycle, followed by another 12-hour soak cycle. For convenience we remove the bags each morning and allow them to drain during the 8-hour workday. Before the end of the workday we set up another soak cycle for the night. Even when we have forgotten about the bags and allowed them to soak for 2 or 3 days there has still been good germination.

Pregenerated seed is alive. Even though you may not see root tips the seeds have begun to respire and are alive; there is no turning back now. If the pregerminated seed dries in storage or in the field after planting it will die. You can refrigerate, not freeze, the living seed for about a week to slow down the growth if you want to plant it later.

Make divot mix by combining pregerminated seed, sand, a calcined clay product, and green dye. Remove the seed bag from the pregermination container and allow a few minutes for drainage. A con-

crete or smooth blacktop surface works fine for mixing. Dump a 5-gallon bucket of sand on the surface and add some seed, calcined clay, and dye over the pile. Use plastic to avoid staining of the hard surface if desired. Continue adding sand, seed, calcined clay, and dye until you have a layered pile. Shovel the pile to one side and then back again to mix. The recipe is 15 pounds of perennial rye or 10 pounds of Kentucky bluegrass seed, 40 gallons sand, 50 pounds calcined clay product, and 32 ounces of Green Lawngr dye.

Remove divot debris before seeding. Load a 5-gallon bucket half-full of divot mix and work the field from sideline to sideline five yards at a time. After mechanically sweeping the field there may still be debris in the divot that can be swept out by hand to insure good placement and establishment of the divot mix. Simply work a handful of mix into the divot then firm and level with your foot. Turf that is pushed-up or bubbled is worked back in place and flattened by foot. Divots that are completely dislodged seldom root sufficiently so they are removed and replaced by a 4- or 6-inch plugs taken from a nursery or surrounding area of the field. Any remaining divot mix is spread in worn areas of the field.

Not all the seed survives but those that do represent mature plants for next year's field. Seeds that are visible after placing the divot mix will seldom establish, but those just below the surface will develop if watered. The seeding rates (continued on page 14)

Seed count per square inch and seed weight per 1000 square feet for various divot mix depths

Given: Perennial ryegrass has 225,000 seeds/lb and divot mix uses 15 lbs seed/40 gallons sand
Kentucky bluegrass has 1,500,000 seeds/lb and divot mix uses 10 lbs seed/40 gallons sand

Divot mix depth (inches)	Perennial Ryegrass		Kentucky bluegrass	
	Lbs seed/1000sqft	Seeds/sq.in.	Lbs seed/1000sqft	Seeds/sq.in.
1/16	15	23	10	104
1/8	30	46	20	208
1/4	60	92	40	416
1/2	120	184	80	832
1	240	368	160	1664

Indicates amount of seed that forms a seedling for each species.