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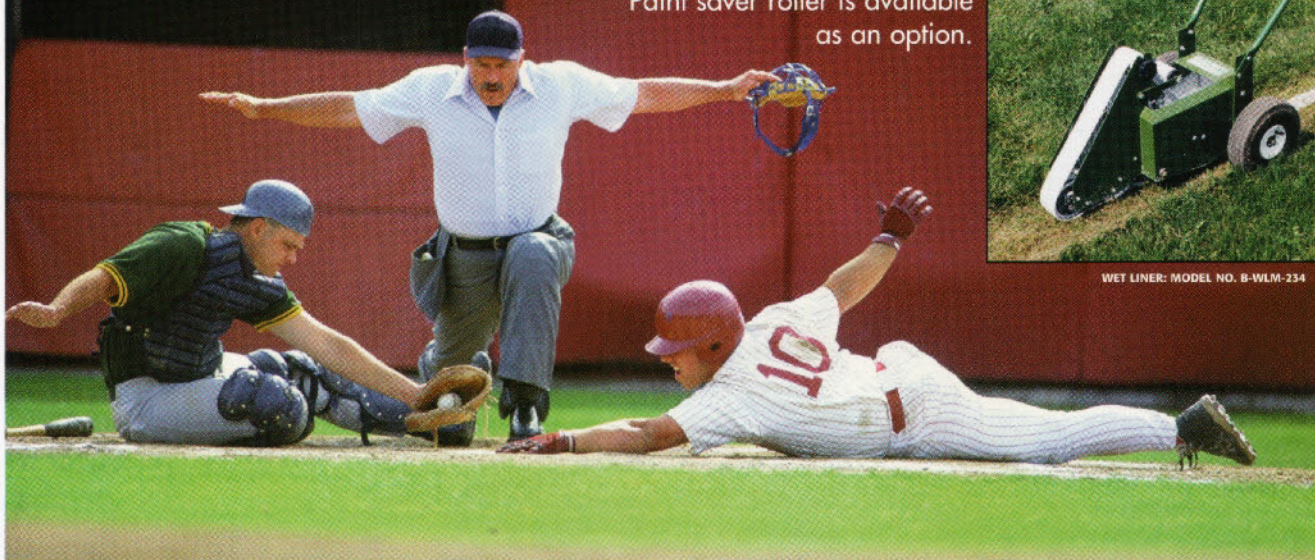
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34



FEATURES

39



Field Science

- 8** Field management in the transition zone
- 22** Restoring synthetic surfaces after floods
- 30** What drives you nuts? Turf managers respond!
- 33** Kyle Waters sees it all at Home Depot Center

Field of the Year

- 34** Roser going out on top after 35 years in Rockford
- 39** Tribute to Dr. Kent Kurtz, by Mike Schiller, CSFM

25th Anniversary

- 42** What the STMA has meant for Mike Andresen, CSFM

DEPARTMENTS

From the Sidelines	6
STMA President's Message	7
John Mascaro's Photo Quiz	19
STMA In Action	44
STMA Chapter News	46
Marketplace	49
Online Education	52
Q&A	54

Steve Roser (with grandson on his lap), Rockford (IL) Park District, won the 2005 STMA Field of the Year Award for High School Soccer.

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From the Sidelines

"Doc" Kurtz, 1940-2006



ERIC SCHRODER
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Kent "Doc" Kurtz died in February after a short and courageous battle with cancer. Dr. Kurtz was instrumental in developing what is today the Sports Turf Managers Association, and served as Official Historian of STMA. He was employed as professor of Ornamental Horticulture by California State Polytechnic University at Pomona, CA for 36 years and consulted on many sports fields and golf courses around the world. Mike Schiller, CSFM, former president of STMA and a close friend of Dr. Kurtz, writes a wonderful tribute to his mentor in this issue (p. 39).

Mike says if you wish to donate to a memorial in Doc's honor, please contact the College of Agriculture, Cal Poly Pomona, 3801 West Temple Avenue, Building 2, Pomona, CA 91768, 888-232-9724 or agriculture@csupomona.edu.

Renowned turfgrass breeder Dr. Wayne Hanna recently was awarded the prestigious Turfgrass Producers International (TPI) Honorary Member Award, which is infrequently presented only to those who have "improved the turfgrass industry in a significant way."

His TifSport bermudagrass, released in 1996, has become the grass of choice for golf course fairways, tees and roughs. Dr. Hanna has another legacy, perhaps just as important as his breeding work. He has always made sure his grasses are grown, inspected, and sold under a rigorous set of rules and guidelines designed to promote on-going purity and uniformity. Dr. Hanna is currently working diligently on a new shade-tolerant bermudagrass, which he hopes to release in 2007.

Grass Stains Productions now has available all of their music videos, starting with "Like a Rock" from 2003 through this year's "Summon the Hero." All proceeds above costs benefit the SAFE Foundation. Available for \$8 each or all four for \$25. If you have not seen these videos they wonderfully capture the challenges, triumphs, and professionalism of turf managers everywhere. Contact Steve LeGros at 603-828-2586 or steve.legros@unh.edu.

Correction Dept. In our March issue on page 55 we ran the same caption twice in error. The photo at lower left is actually of Floyd Perry accepting the Dick Ericson Award from STMA president Mike Trigg, CSFM. Congratulations, Floyd, and sorry for the mistake.

In January we tagged another mower "ZTR" which is a registered trademark of Dixon. We learned something and apologize for the error.

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San Francisco, CA 94102
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The Official Publication Of The Sports Turf
Managers Association

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SportsTurf (ISSN 1061-687X) (USPS 000-292) (Reg. U.S. Pat. & T.M. Off.) is published monthly by M2MEDIA360, a BevAI Communications, Inc. company at 760 Market Street, Suite 432, San Francisco, CA 94102. **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 San Francisco, CA and additional mailing offices. COPYRIGHT 2006, SportsTurf. Material may not be reproduced or photocopied in any form without the written permission of the publisher.

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MIKE TRIGG
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I had the privilege last month to attend the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show in Providence, RI. The New England Sports Turf Managers Association, NESTMA, is one of the organizations involved in developing the Conference. NESTMA President Dave Pinsonneault told me how the chapter also works diligently to provide quality workshops and field days for its members throughout the year. Their members, like all STMA chapter members, also take advantage of networking through the chapter to learn and share from each other and from other experts.

Our affiliated chapters can use \$500 in Chapter Development Funds available from the STMA. The money can be used for bringing in educational speakers, purchasing computer equipment, newsletter assistance, website design/hosting, even insurance for event coverage (which could cost a chapter \$2,000 to \$3,000 if purchased separately). Being an STMA affiliated chapter provides an opportunity for chapters to promote this resource/relationship with STMA to draw new members and reengage those who have let their memberships lapse.

Chapters truly are the lifeblood of a national organization. In fact, if forced to choose between belonging to a national organization or a local one, the local choice will win 100% of the time. National organizations, however, have many resources to give to local chapters. STMA also provides 1) a global view of the profession that helps shape programs and services; 2) new opportunities for partnerships that will benefit local chapters and individual members; and 3) and access to a strong network of peers in other regions.

STMA chapters offer their members so much, like awards, scholarships, and numerous other membership benefits. Earlier this year, KAFMO, the Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization, launched a new website that highlights their calendar of annual events with pictures of members at seminars and field days, and more. All members receive a quarterly newsletter and a manual that includes technical materials, vendor resource guide and membership roster.

I invite you to check out the STMA Chapter News in this month's magazine (page 46). Many chapters are either conducting or planning workshops and field days throughout 2006. If you are not a chapter member, I encourage you to find out more about what a local STMA can offer.

I want to thank all the chapters for their continued dedication and commitment to STMA. The Board wants chapter members to be advised and informed, to be involved and recognized, and to know that this Association is here to benefit you.

Mike Trigg

Field management in the transition zone

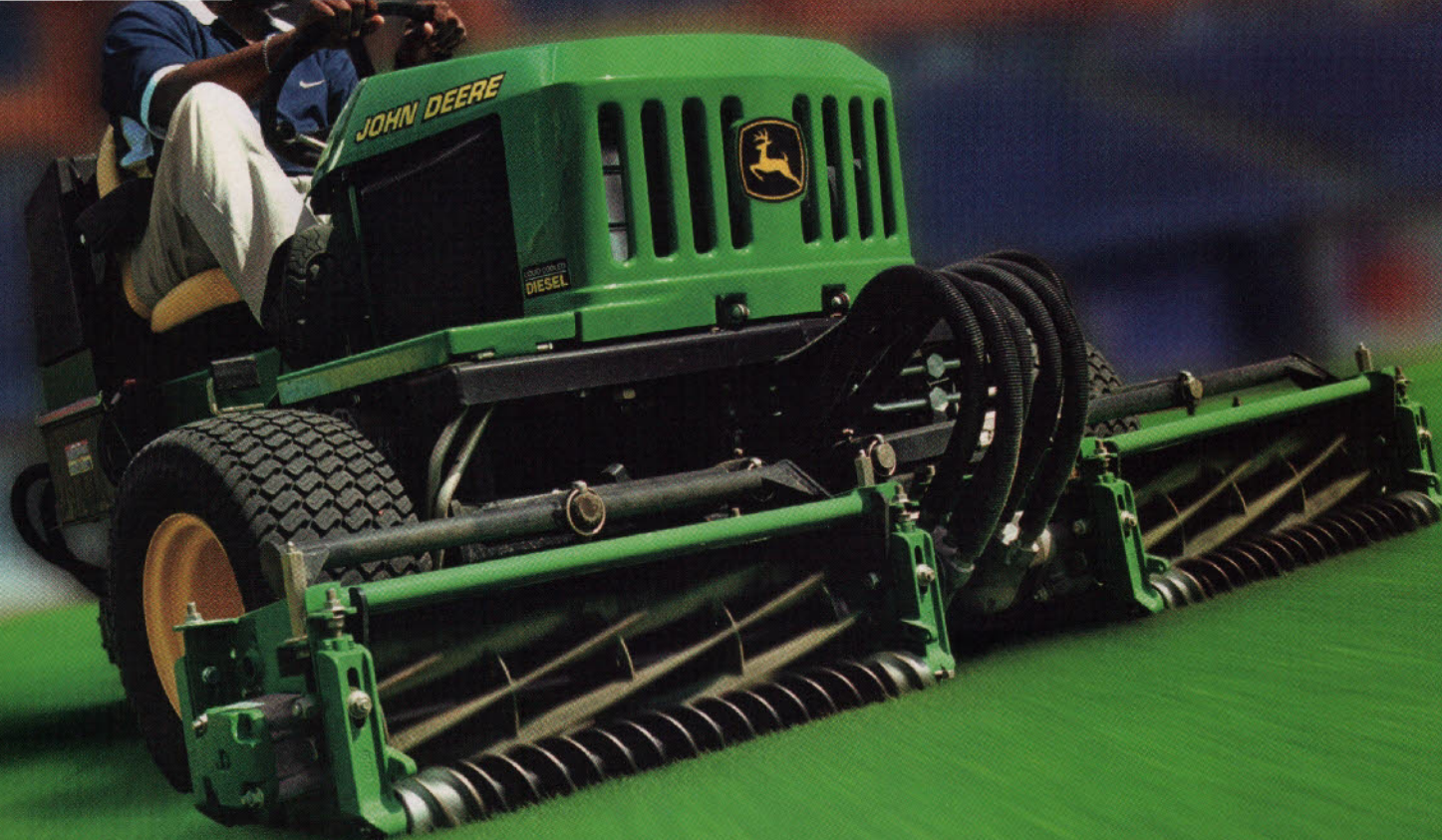
By Dr. Art Bruneau and Casey Reynolds

Managing athletic fields in the Transition Zone of the southeastern United States can often be the best and worst of both worlds. Hot, humid summers with plenty of sun can provide an ample growing season for warm-season species like bermudagrass. At the same time, these summers eliminate any chance of being able to grow most cool-season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass year round.

Inversely, the bermudagrass-growing season is very short in parts of the transition zone, lasting only 4 to 5 months (May-September). For this reason, many athletic field managers overseed with species like perennial or annual ryegrass to extend color during fall and spring sports like football and baseball. This dilemma is part of what makes managing bermudagrass athletic fields in the transition zone so tricky for turf managers all over the Southeast.

The Transition Zone is an area that sits at the northern adaptation of warm-season grasses and the southern limitation of cool-season grasses. It runs from North Carolina west through Tennessee, Arkansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. For most athletic fields in these regions, bermudagrass is the species of choice for several reasons. First, its aggressive rhizomatous and stoloniferous growth habits allow it to tolerate the wear and tear commonly associated with athletic fields. Popular sports like football and soccer place a lot of pressure on highly used athletic fields from cleat damage, traffic, and compaction. It takes an aggressive species like bermudagrass to be able to recuperate from such damage. Second, bermudagrass is easily overseeded for fall and spring sports like football and baseball. Although, these sports can be played on non-overseeded, dormant bermudagrass, there are many instances where this may be unacceptable. For example, can you imagine turning on your television to watch a nationally televised, primetime Thursday night college football game and seeing dormant bermudagrass? Not likely.





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Also, many baseball programs, whether at the college, high school, or municipal level, prefer to play on overseeded turf.

The third reason bermudagrass is the preferred species is that it's easy to manage. With the right inputs from fertilization, irrigation, and mowing, bermudagrass can take almost anything you throw at it from football games, concerts, graduation events, etc. I am sure athletic field managers all over the Southeast have plenty of stories of events that someone in administration has asked them to host on their field. So, in order to keep your fields in tip-top shape, here are some general guidelines on bermudagrass management in the southeast transition zone.

One of the first questions to address is what variety of bermudagrass is best for athletic fields in the transition zone. Keep in mind that when managing an existing bermudagrass field, it is very difficult to incorporate a new variety, in which case this is a trivial point.

However, when establishing a field from seed, sprigs, or sod, variety selection is an important first step. There are many available varieties on the market today. To illustrate this point, there are currently 42 different varieties of bermudagrass in the existing National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) bermudagrass trial. The Crop Science Department at North Carolina State University is one of many host-sites for this trial, and of the 42 varieties being tested, about half are commercially available.

The interesting point of this is that 29 of these 42 varieties are available as seed. In the past, the only bermudagrass varieties that possess the low growth habit, dark color, fine leaf texture, and overall high quality that is needed for high-profile, high quality athletic fields were hybrid varieties.

The most popular of these hybrid varieties of course is Tifway (often referred to as 419). Tifway is an inter-species cross between Common bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*) and African bermudagrass (*Cynodon transvaalensis*). Although Tifway has proven over the years to be a high-quality, reliable variety, the drawback is that it must be sprigged or sodded. Many athletic field managers at the high school and municipality level do not have the budget to do this and therefore are forced to seed.

Seeded varieties, until recently, typically possessed characteristics very similar to common bermudagrass which included coarse leaf texture, light green color, and an open canopy that cannot tolerate low mowing heights. However, this is no longer the case. Many of the newer seeded varieties perform as good or better than some of the hybrid varieties regarding density, color, leaf texture, and overall quality.

Another important factor that should be taken into consideration is cold tolerance, especially in the transition zone. Older varieties like Midiron, Quickstand, and Vamont used to be the selections of choice when cold tolerance was an issue. However, their appearance made them unsuitable for use on high profile fields. Newer varieties like TifSport, Patriot, Yukon, and Riviera have been shown to possess not only desirable growth characteristics, but improved cold tolerance as well.

