

$$\frac{1 \text{ lb}}{.21\%N} = 4.76 \text{ lbs/M}$$

Cut the Cost!

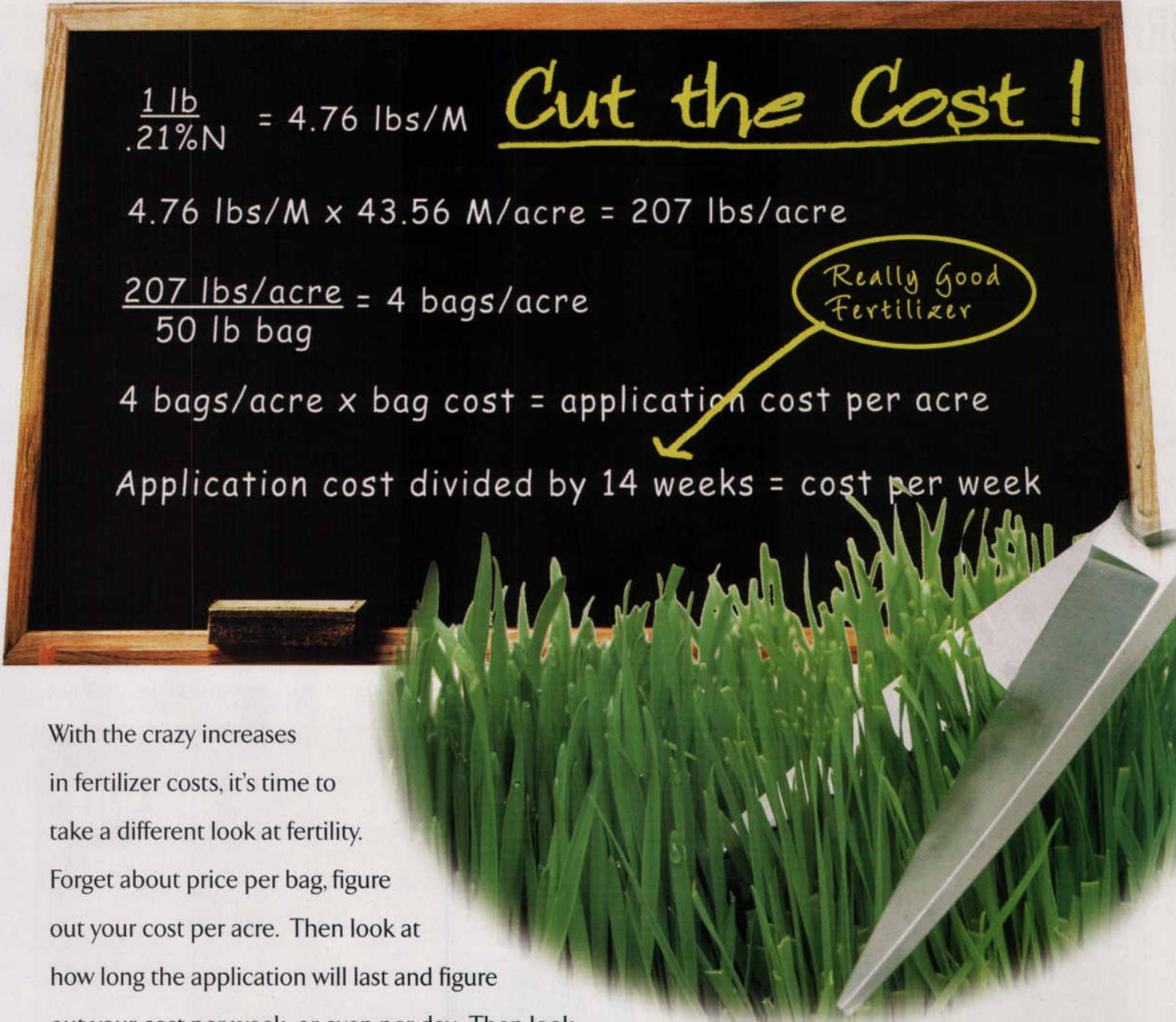
$$4.76 \text{ lbs/M} \times 43.56 \text{ M/acre} = 207 \text{ lbs/acre}$$

$$\frac{207 \text{ lbs/acre}}{50 \text{ lb bag}} = 4 \text{ bags/acre}$$

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IRRIGATION & DRAINAGE

Program coordinators and recreation aids are responsible for securing the control towers and concession facilities. Concession contractors are notified and responsible for securing their equipment and supplies.

At about 11:20 am Friday, I phoned my director and informed him that Goldin and Gulfport SportsPlexes were secure and that I was releasing my team to take care of their personal needs and property.

By Saturday, August 27, Katrina was strengthening and definitely heading our way. I now started my personal preparations:

- Fill up cars and fuel cans
- Service and test generator
- Inventory can goods and water (Usually bought at the start of hurricane season in June)
- Check flashlights
- Clear yard of anything that moves
- Place candles about the house
- Board up windows and doors
- Pack personnel memoirs and valuables
- Pack small suitcase and personal hygiene items
- Load car
- Fill tubs and sinks with water
- Decide on final destination
- Call family, friends and employer

Our plan has always been to depart when a hurricane is no less than 8 hours away. We tracked the news most of the night Saturday and since Katrina was projected to hit on Monday morning we decid-

ed that we would leave Sunday around noon. We were heading east on I-10 to Tallahassee, FL. By 10 AM Sunday I-10 was backed up to New Orleans and estimates were that it would take 8 hours to get to Mobile, AL—usually a 50-minute drive. We had a decision to make, be stuck in traffic or stay home. We chose to stay.

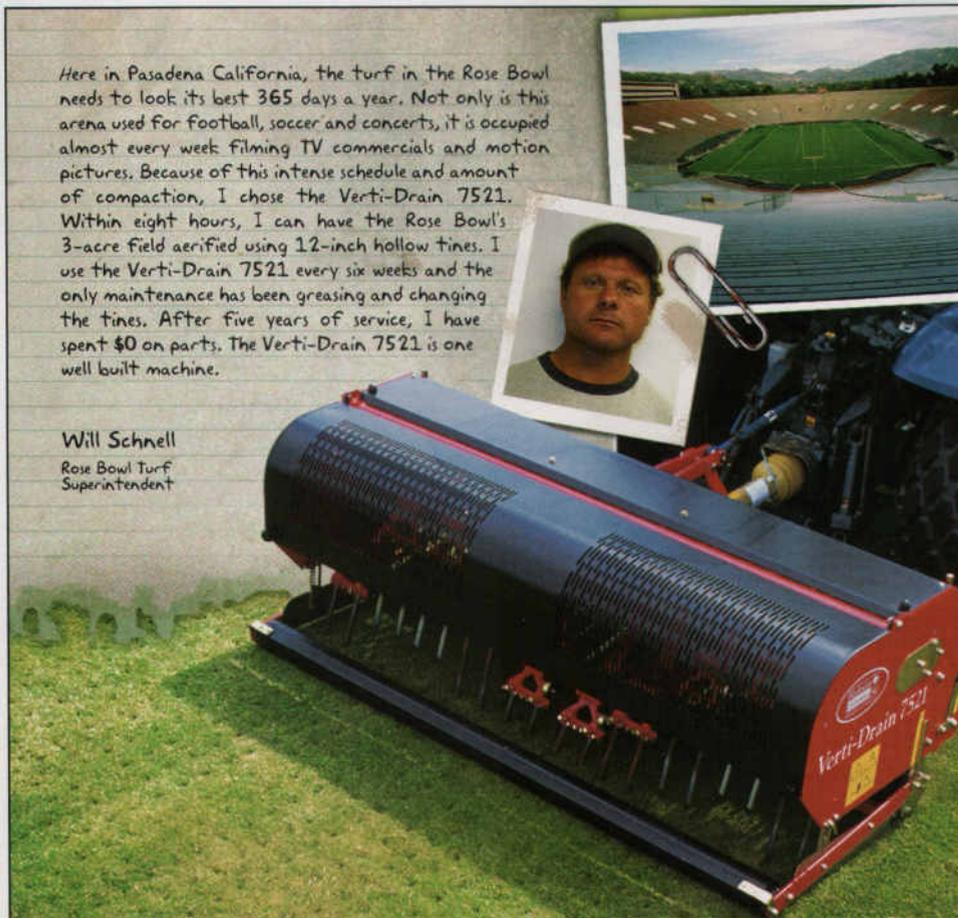
Katrina's full effect started around 5 AM Monday morning. First went the power, so we turned on the battery powered TV. Then went the TV station. We turned on the radio. Then went the radio stations. For the next 12 hours my family and I listened to Katrina batter the house. At about 6 PM the worst was over. My son Keair and I went outside to see the unbelievable destruction. My entire neighborhood was severely damaged. My home sustained minor damage as compared to others. One pecan tree on the house, roof damage, ceiling damage, a little water damage inside, and the fence around my property completely down. We were blessed.

On Tuesday morning, August 30, the order of business for me was to get out the chain saw and remove the tree from the roof, get the damaged areas covered, contact the boss and my crew. I was able to take care of my roof. We had no form of communications in the entire city, cell phones didn't even work. I decided to venture out to check on the SportsPlexes. Trees and power line poles were down everywhere and blocked most of the roads. My son and I rode bicycles to Goldin Sports Complex about 1/4 of a mile away, where my company truck is parked.

Goldin is a 25-acre site consisting of a "4-plex" baseball/softball complex, a two-field football/softball complex, outdoor pavilion, playground, basketball/tennis courts, and a maintenance shop. The fields

Here in Pasadena California, the turf in the Rose Bowl needs to look its best 365 days a year. Not only is this arena used for football, soccer and concerts, it is occupied almost every week filming TV commercials and motion pictures. Because of this intense schedule and amount of compaction, I chose the Verti-Drain 7521. Within eight hours, I can have the Rose Bowl's 3-acre field aerified using 12-inch hollow tines. I use the Verti-Drain 7521 every six weeks and the only maintenance has been greasing and changing the tines. After five years of service, I have spent \$0 on parts. The Verti-Drain 7521 is one well built machine.

Will Schnell
Rose Bowl Turf
Superintendent



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are built to USGA spec with a 6-inch, sand-based rootzones, certified Tifway 419 Bermudagrass, and laser leveled with a 1.5% slope. The complex is almost 3 years old and plays host primarily to local league activity but it often used as an overflow complex for large tournaments usually hosted by the Gulfport SportsPlex.

To my amazement the physical structures suffered minor damage, mostly roofing. Sixty percent of the fencing was destroyed and there was minor damage to the playground. All 22 field lighting poles were leaning with a few light fixtures missing. All four scoreboards and eight foul line poles were destroyed. Every parking light pole also leaned, all 56 of them.

So far so good

Every square foot of soccer/football fields was covered with debris from nearby homes and apartments that were completely destroyed. The baseball/softball fields were slightly littered with debris but the skinned infields were completely stripped of its conditioner (approximately 1/4 inch of crimson stone). Infields are 13,000 square feet each. My overall assessment of Goldin was good as compared to the surrounding community. To my amazement the maintenance building suffered very minor damage.

I got into my truck and snaked my way across town to the Gulfport SportsPlex. That's when I realized that my entire city was devastated. I saw it first hand.

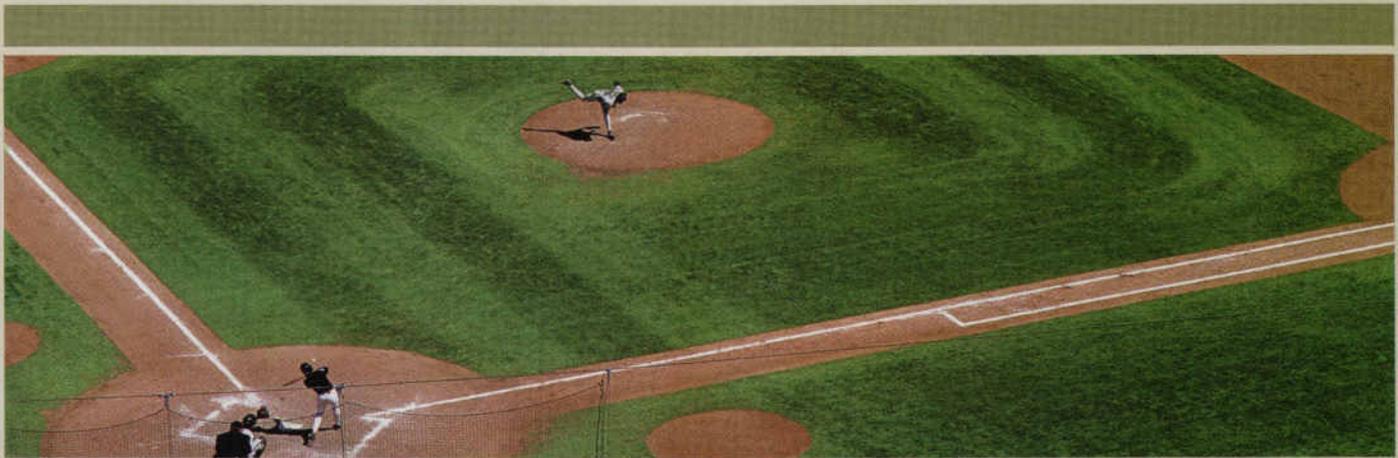
The Gulfport SportsPlex is a 250-acre site containing a five-field softball complex, four-field baseball complex, and a four-field soccer complex. The fields are also built to USGA spec with a 6-inch, sand-

based rootzones, and certified Tifway 419 Bermudagrass. All fields are laser leveled to 1.5% slope.

Both complexes are irrigated by Rainbird MaxiCom systems and both have Hubble lighting systems. Future additions to this facility include increasing the softball complex to six fields, a tennis complex, two additional soccer fields, and a four-plex replica stadiums (Fenway, Wrigley, Yankee and Gulfport Stadiums, respectively). To date the total cost of the SportsPlex is \$12 million. According to the Harrison County Tourism Commission, this year's 54 scheduled tournaments should pump \$13 million into the local economy through the weekly influx of players, coaches, and team supporters. We lost 12 events due to Katrina which easily means a loss of about \$1.5 million.

Upon entering the Gulfport SportsPlex, I saw that all 11 scoreboards were destroyed, all 70 field lighting poles were leaning, and 34 parking lot light poles were damaged. Fences were down and bleachers were flipped over, some as far as the right field fence, 300 feet away. The control towers and concession buildings also received major roof and interior damage. Then came the shocker—half of the maintenance building was destroyed, totally collapsed with equipment and supplies under it. All three pull up doors completely gone. My office in this building was intact but water-soaked.

On Wednesday my foreman, John August, reported for work and we started our assessment of what to do next. John's first mission was to find our team and assess their needs. I finally made contact with my director, we crossed paths on the road leading to the sportsplex. Still no communications were available. A department meeting was set up for Thursday. All



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IRRIGATION & DRAINAGE

city employees were placed on hurricane leave through Friday, September 2. By Monday, my team was accounted for and reported to work.

By that Wednesday we had all the debris off of the fields and most of the downed fencing cut and rolled up at the Gulfport SportsPlex. We removed everything that we could from the maintenance shop and took it over to the shop at Goldin. We spent the next few days cleaning up the debris at Goldin. On Friday we returned to the Gulfport complex only to find it occupied by disaster security forces. They locked us out and we didn't gain reentry for another week. We took the weekend off only to return to Goldin on Monday and find it occupied by a debris removal contractor. It seemed like all of our hard work was in vain. Tents were all over the fields, heavy equipment, mobile campers, and large trucks all over the parking lots. There were hundreds of people and no portable facilities. And 2 weeks later there were still no phones, no water, no power, and by the way, no rain.

Rain needed

I finally got control of Goldin and had the contractor moved to another site. My concern now was that the fields needed water. Our plan was to get a generator to run the pump at the Gulfport SportsPlex but Goldin is on the city's water main. Finally we got power after about 16 days and immediately started watering. We also gained reentry to Gulfport SportsPlex to perform maintenance and salvage what we could from the shop.

Our preliminary damage assessment was as follows:

Structures: 100% damaged, estimated loss \$502,000

Equipment: 10% damaged, 1% destroyed, estimated loss \$25,700

Fields: 80% damaged, 20% destroyed, estimated loss \$23,000

Other collateral: 10% damaged, 80% destroyed, estimated loss \$30,276

Clean up/debris removal: \$40,000

Emergency equipment: \$6,100

Potential revenue lost: \$48,000

As of September 23, we gained full control of both complexes and were back on track with our maintenance programs. We have not made any major repairs yet (late October) but the facilities were safe and have adequate lighting. On October 11 we started Little League tackle football at Goldin and the city's soccer and peewee flag football leagues started play at the Gulfport Sportsplex. All other tournaments were cancelled until further notice.

Help

Financial assistance is coming from a lot of different sources. Insurance claims take precedent then the state and federal government will assist with funding rebuilding efforts. Many cities and associations such as the National Recreation have adapted us and Parks Association and they all are providing some form of assistance to us. We want to give a special thanks to Jerry Pate Turf and the Toro Company for coming to the rescue during our time of great need. ■

Ken Edwards, CSFM, is the sports turf manager/superintendent for the City of Gulfport, MS.

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DYNAMAX'S NEW CONTROLLER

The Moisture Klik™, IL2-MC is a new commercial controller that can be added on to your irrigation timer to regulate the amount of water applied with an accurate soil moisture measurement. The IL2-MC has a calibrated soil type set point dial to make soil moisture set point adjustments. This design eliminates the necessity of expensive readout devices required to adjust a moisture setting. The dial shows the moisture target based on the water holding capacity for all soil types so setting the moisture target is easy.



Dynamax, Inc./281-564-5100

For information, circle 061 or

see <http://www.oners.ims.ca/5903-061>

TORO'S NEW CONTROLLER

The Toro Company's Irrigation Division has introduced the TIS-240, a controller with a 24-station count. Using real-time meteorological and agronomic information gathered through a combination of inputs, Intelli-Sense controllers determine how much moisture turf needs. Toro partnered with HydroPoint to develop a program called "ET (evapotranspiration) Everywhere," which incorporates the WeatherTRAK scheduling engine so the controller receives daily local precipitation updates and ET values via one-way wireless transmissions.



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Toro Irrigation/800-664-4740

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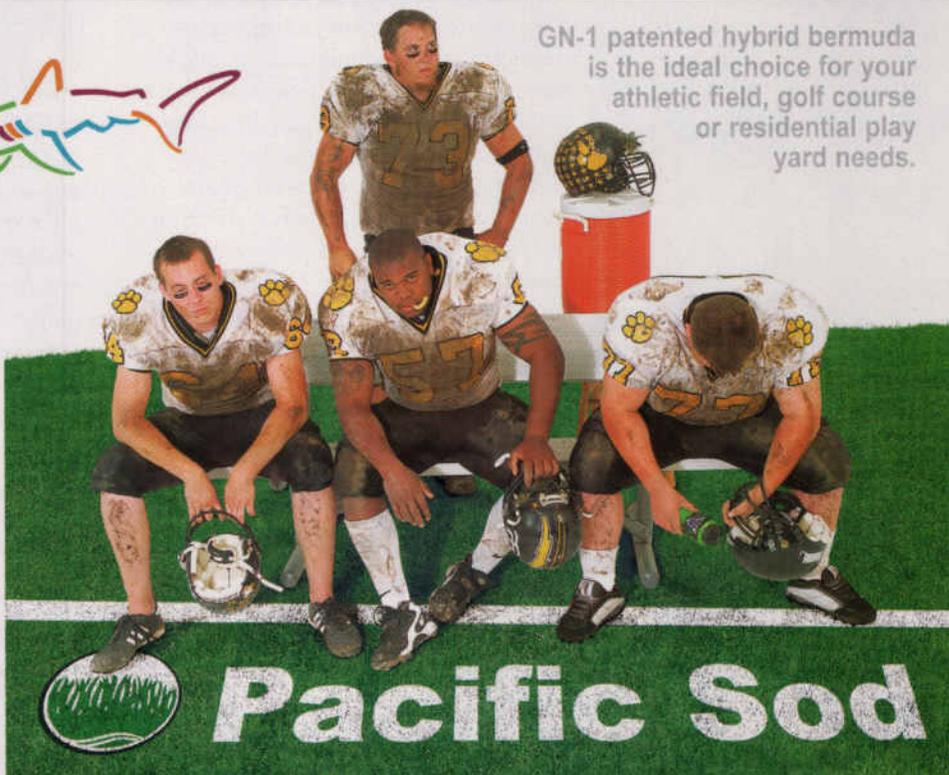
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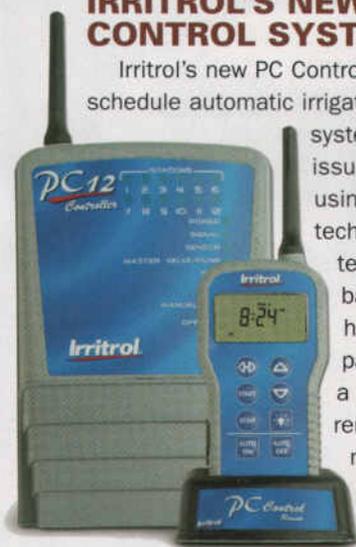


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IRRIGATION & DRAINAGE

IRRITROL'S NEW PC CONTROL SYSTEM



Irritrol's new PC Control system allows users to schedule automatic irrigation programs, check the system's real-time status and issue manual commands using computer and wireless technology. This 3-part system includes Windows-based software, a handheld remote, and a compact, indoor controller with a built-in transceiver. The remote can also be disconnected for handheld, manual operation commands to the system while walking the site.

Irritrol/800-883-1234

For information, circle 068 or

see <http://www.oners.ims.ca/5903-068>



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Profile Products/800-366-1180

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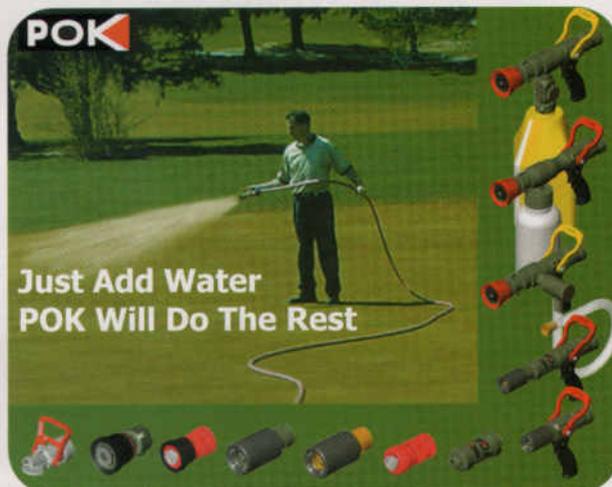
HUNTER I-40 W/ OPPOSING NOZZLES

Hunter's top-of-the-line I-40 commercial rotor can really go the distance when fitted with the dual opposing nozzle option, a Hunter exclusive that provides water coverage for large areas such as playing fields and campuses. A new 6-inch model of the I-40 now features dual opposing nozzles as an option. These secondary nozzles provide close-in coverage and are located opposite the primary nozzles for complete, full-circle coverage.

Hunter Industries/

For information, circle 062 or

see <http://www.oners.ims.ca/5903-062>



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NEW TURF IRRIGATION PRODUCTS

Dave Mihailides, the inventor of the underground reel, has joined with POK to introduce a new product line for the turf market that includes extreme heavy-duty multiple-gallonage spray pattern handline nozzles, tips, valves and chemical proportioner applicators. POK can customize these products with a color-coded system, variable gallonage, proportioning and more.

POK of North America Inc/410-901-9900

For information, circle 063 or

see <http://www.oners.ims.ca/5903-063>

K-RAIN'S NARROW PROFILE SPRAYS, KVF NOZZLES

The narrow profile pop-up sprays were built with the user in mind. Their narrow profile makes replacement effortless and a co-molded wiper seal ensures ultra reliable performance. Available in 2- and 4-inch models, the sprays provide flexibility in system design and feature a stainless steel retraction spring for unfailing riser retraction in all soil conditions. The narrow profile

body means they easily be retrofit into existing systems.

KVF adjustable nozzles have a female thread configuration to fit NPS spray bodies and their spray pattern results in matched precipitation throughout the coverage area. Extra long filters reduce the necessity of cleanings.

K-Rain Manufacturing/561-844-1002

For information, circle 066 or

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We would particularly like to thank some of the groundskeepers and staffs that we have had the privilege to work with including:

Roger Bossard
Heather Nabozny
Jake Tyler
Greg Elliot
Ken Mrock
John Nolan
Andre Bruce
Michael "Spin" Martin
Chris Powell
Darian Daily
Al Johnson
Brian Gimble
Ted Thorn
Matt Williams
Rob Montgomery
David Frey

Chicago White Sox
Detroit Tigers
Toledo Mud Hens
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And to all the many grounds crew workers, we thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with and beside you, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

"and then some!"

By Alan Goforth

George Toma titled his autobiography "Nitty Gritty Dirt Man" for good reason. At age 76, at the pinnacle of his profession, there still is nothing he would rather do than take off his shirt, get his hands dirty, and put an athletic field into playing condition.

Toma, a founder of the Sports Turf Managers Association, may well be the most recognizable name in the profession. The basement of his home in Westwood, KS is packed with awards he has accumulated in a career that has spanned more than six decades.

- He has been groundskeeper for the Olympics and World Cup soccer, as well as every Super Bowl ever played.
- In 2001, he became the first groundskeeper to be inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame.
- In an ESPN SportsCenter promotion, he was featured as the "Marquis de Sod."
- His autobiography was published in 2004.
- In perhaps the greatest honor the sporting profession can bestow, he even has his own bobblehead doll.

Those accomplishments are even more impressive when considering Toma's often-difficult road to the top. He was born April 2, 1929 in the coal-mining town of Edwardsville, PA. His father, a miner, collapsed and died from black lung disease when Toma was only 10. He started working immediately to help support his family, and hasn't slowed down since.

A neighbor began taking him to old Artillery Park in Wilkes-Barre, PA to drag the infield. When maverick baseball owner Bill Veeck purchased the Cleveland Indians in 1947, he got the Wilkes-Barre team as part of the deal. The following year, he sent Toma to spring training to learn from the master, Emil Bossard.

"Emil is the best I've ever seen," Toma says. "He could take a rake and lay out an infield that was right on the money. Emil's sons, Gene, Marshall, and Harold all followed him in the business. His



George Toma, center, is flanked by former All-Star hurler Bret Saberhagen, who's now building a field for the high school team he coaches, and West Coast Turf vice president Danielle Marman.

grandson, Roger Bossard, is now the head groundskeeper at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago."

Climbing the ladder

After serving in the Korean War, Toma began moving up the ladder in 1955, when he became head groundskeeper at Offerman Stadium in Buffalo. The following season, he moved to Charleston, WV with the Detroit Tigers' top farm team. Then came a call from the expansion Kansas City Athletics. Toma asked his mentor Bossard for advice.

"Son, let me tell you, don't go," Emil said. "I'm in there a few times a month trying to straighten that place out for the manager, Lou Boudreau. There's no drainage or irrigation. In the springtime, it floods you out. In the summertime, it gets so hot that it bakes you out. Stay the hell out of there."

Instead, he took the advice of management in Charleston: "George, the best thing for you to do is go to Kansas City. If you screw up, nobody will notice, it's so bad."

Toma didn't realize what a challenge the job would be. "I had one full-time person to help me, along with a group of local high school kids whom we hired during the season," he said. "Plus, we had to do everything on a shoestring budget, because the front office was so cheap. All we had was a Toro professional mower, an aerifier, and an International tractor. We even resorted to hiring a few winos off the street to pull tarps."

With the help of another mentor, Dr. James R. Watson of The Toro Company, however, he soon turned the field around. The surface had become a favorite of American League players well before Lamar Hunt decided to move his football team to Kansas City.

"I welcomed the opportunity to work on football fields again because of the variety," Toma said. "In baseball, where only three men play on grass, the wear and tear is minimal. In football, however, 300-pound men slam into each other and tear up the middle of the field. Plus, football is played in cooler temperatures in Kansas City, requiring a different approach to growing grass."

A national stage

Toma's life changed dramatically after the NFL and AFL merged. During a nationally televised game at Municipal Stadium in Kansas City, former commissioner Pete Rozelle remarked, "There is not much difference in the way they play the game, but I have never seen a better-kept field than they have right here."

That led to an offer from Tex Schramm of the Dallas Cowboys to prepare the Cotton Bowl for the team's annual Thanksgiving Day game. That game, in turn, led to Toma being in charge of Super Bowl fields for the past four decades.

"With all of the hoopla surrounding the game today, it's hard to describe how humbly it began," he said. "For starters, I was able to load all of the equipment I would need in an old 3 x 4-foot trunk. Today, the equipment is stored in a warehouse in Newark, NJ and shipped to the stadium in semi-trailers. The crew at the old Coliseum helped me prepare the field; I now have 20 hand-picked groundskeepers on our crew."

Of all of his many accomplishments, Toma is most proud of his work with the Super Bowl. "When I die, that NFL insignia is going to be right on my heart," he said. "That's how much I love the NFL."

If the NFL is No. 1, the STMA is a close second. Toma believes in sharing his knowledge and passion. "I was blessed to have a great mentor in Emil Bossard, so I understand how important it is to pass the torch to the next generation," he said. "In 1981, I sat down at the old Muehlebach Hotel in downtown Kansas City with three great men—Harry Gill, groundskeeper for the Milwaukee Brewers; Dick Erickson, groundskeeper for the Minnesota Twins and Vikings; and Dr. Bill Daniels, an agronomist at Purdue University. Kent Kurtz, a professor at Cal-Poly, also helped us get organized."

"At that meeting, we founded the STMA to support and encourage professional groundskeepers on all levels. From that humble begin-

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25TH ANNIVERSARY

ning, we now have more than 2,500 members. An annual award is presented in honor of each of the four founders. I am proud of mine, the George Toma Golden Rake Award. It's a way to honor hard work and then some, to distinguish the mediocre from the great."

Toma included an open letter to STMA members in his book (see sidebar).

And then some

From coal fields to Super Bowl fields, Toma has had only one gear—overdrive. He has always believed in going the extra mile to do things right but never knew just how to describe his commitment, until he received a letter from a fan.

"My family always taught me to give my employer 100 percent and more," he said. "That has been my philosophy from when I worked on farms in my teens through working on championship fields in my 70's."

"As much as I lived this philosophy of life, I never was able to adequately express it to other people. Then, in 1991, I received a letter from Bob Woolford, president of Shawnee Mission Medical Center in suburban Kansas City. He said he was at a Royals game and admired my crew, because we did our job 'and then some.'

"Those three words clicked with me, and I have been using them ever since. In fact, the STMA award named after me officially is called the 'George Toma And Then Some Golden Rake Award,' thanks to Bob Woolford."

Toma tries to instill that attitude in his crews and even in some of the professional teams with whom he works.

"I was doing some work at old Foxboro Stadium, and coach Dick McPherson asked me to speak to his players the night before their big game against the New York Jets," he said. "I discussed how the field would play, then told the players, 'Do your job, and then some. That is what distinguishes the mediocre from the great.'

"The next day, the Patriots were driving for the winning score, but the Jets held them at the goal line. Some of the players came up to me the next day and said, 'How are you doing, and then some?'

"I said, 'You know what? Bruce Coslet, the coach of the Jets, called me after I spoke to you, and I gave the Jets the same speech. They listened, and they stopped you on four downs.'"

Toma, who is away from home about 300 nights a year, still maintains a pace that would wear out many men who are half his age. In 2005 alone, he maintained spring training fields for the Minnesota Twins, built inner-city ball fields on behalf of Major League Baseball, and will prepare the practice fields and the playing surface for Super Bowl XL in Detroit next month.

The turf management profession wouldn't be quite the same without George Toma. He did everything he could to help make the STMA the thriving organization it is today—and then some. ■

Alan Goforth is president of Veritas Communications, Lee's Summit, MO, and co-authored of George Toma's autobiography.

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