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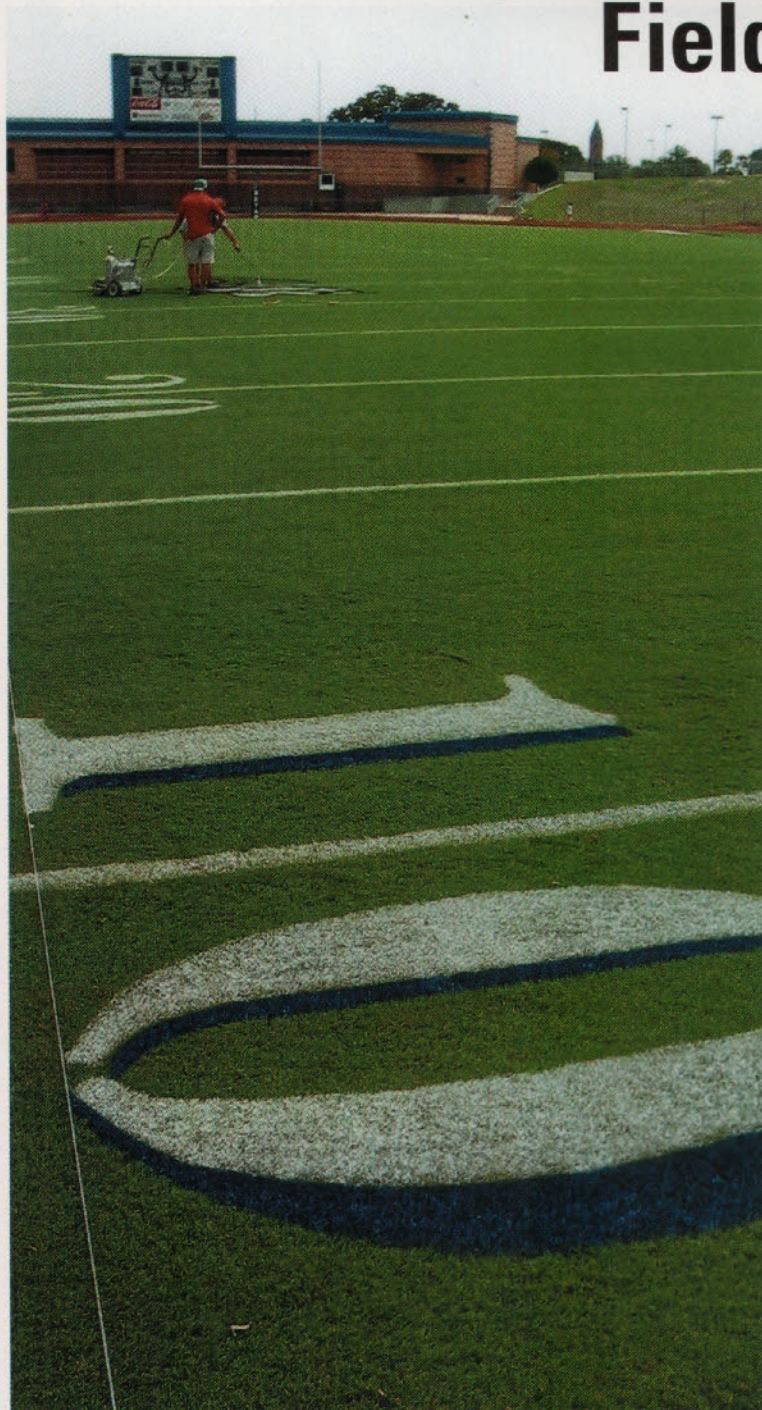
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Bryan (TX) High School lights up

Field of the Year Awards



David Hanus, grounds and athletic field supervisor for Bryan High School, Bryan, TX, hit the Daily Double this year by winning the Sports Turf Managers Association Field of the Year Award in two categories – Schools & Parks football and Schools & Parks softball.

Hanus has been maintaining the fields at Bryan for 14 years and now has 14 fields of hybrid bermuda spread over 23 acres. Along with his one full-time assistant, Derald Bell, and part-timers Philip McAdam, Andy Hood, Cheyne Solesbee, and Josh Slayback, Hanus provides safe and aesthetic playing surfaces for his student athletes.

SportsTurf recently asked Hanus some questions about his background and turf philosophies:

ST: First question – how true to life was the movie “Friday Night Lights”?

Hanus: The movie exaggerated some things to make it more entertaining, but there’s no denying the popularity and importance of high school football in Texas. Many of the stadiums rival what you find at many small colleges, complete with video replay boards and seating for over 10,000. And Texas is one of the top states for producing quality football players for college and pro teams.

ST: Please share a few ways you get the most out of your maintenance budget.

Hanus: We stress the basics: regular mowing at the recommended height is at the very top of the list, along with watering as needed and regular fertilizer applications. Each field will be aerated numerous times during the growing season and topdressed with sand during summer. Nothing fancy, just keeping the turf as healthy as possible to prevent problems.

I’ve managed to keep records of our field maintenance for prior years, so we know what has worked for us and what hasn’t. The chemical budget is very small, so we’ll just make a spring pre-emerge application on most of the fields for crabgrass control and then rely on spot treatments for other weeds. Fungicides are on a spot-treat basis, too, and even then only on game fields and only when critical. And we like to add Primo to the field marking paint when we initially line practice fields and middle school game fields in order to stretch the painting intervals.

During winter, we will make the field logos for the upcoming season out of 6 mil. poly. We don’t get to purchase large equipment very



often, but our mechanic, Leonard Muesse, does an excellent job of keeping everything in running condition well past their normal life expectancies due to his preventive maintenance program. Our original reel mower, purchased in 1994, is still going strong for example.

ST: Tell us about your background, how you got interested in turf management, and what your specific responsibilities are now. How has membership in STMA helped your career?

Hanus: I've always been interested in plants, something I inherited from my grandfather. I was always planting vegetable gardens in the

back yard and mowing most of the lawns on our block. A neighbor had a yard full of roses, shrubs, fruit trees, just about everything, and I was always interested in how they grew.

I majored in horticulture at Texas A&M University and after graduation worked as a county extension agent for 5 years. During that time I worked with several school districts and golf courses in setting up maintenance programs, and that's when I really became interested in turf. Then after 6 years with a lawn care company, I was hired in 1992 by Bryan Independent School District. I oversee the grounds maintenance at 28 campuses and 14 athletic fields with a full time staff of 15.

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FIELD OF THE YEAR



I rely on Derald Bell, our athletic field technician, for most of the daily maintenance on the fields. He makes sure everything is done to keep the fields in great shape. We've also been fortunate over the years to have turf students from Texas A&M work with us on a part-time basis each semester. They get turf management experience and we get enthusiastic workers; it's been a fantastic arrangement!

STMA has been very important in my career. I've been fortunate enough to attend three annual conferences since 1996. The sessions are always practical and informative, and the contacts you make are invaluable. I don't have to tell you how willing turf managers are to help others

in the industry, whether it's sharing information or even loaning equipment. It's a brotherhood and STMA is the main group.

I remember several years ago wanting to paint our endzones with diagonal lines just like Notre Dame does. So I looked up their field manager in the STMA Roster, called him, and he willingly gave me all the information on the number of lines and how they were angled. I also keep in touch with the STMA members at nearby Texas A&M and Tomball ISD, asking questions and trading information. *SportsTurf* always has something I can incorporate into our programs, and I use the website for its links to suppliers.

ST: How do you communicate with field users, fans, and administration?

Hanus: I stay in regular contact with all of the coaches. If there is a need to do something on a field that may be disruptive to practices, I'll contact them beforehand and work around their schedule as much as possible. They appreciate what we try to do with the fields, so they work with us. Email is used often, but I also see most of the coaches regularly due to the time spent on-site. I also communicate several times a week with the district's athletic director via email or in person to keep him updated on the overall field picture, such as specific problems we are facing or if some juggling needs to be done with schedules.

ST: What's your biggest challenge this season?

Hanus: Our biggest challenge has been the weather. The conditions last fall and winter made overseeding with perennial ryegrass a challenge. We had long stretches of warm temperatures and a total lack of rainfall. The last half of this summer has also been very dry. Since our local water supply is high in sodium, we need periodic heavy rains to "flush" out the fields and keep them at their best.

ST: What's the best part of your job? The worst part?

Hanus: The best part of my job is being able to spend each day working on athletic fields. I've always loved sports, so this is a way to stay involved and have some impact. When everything comes together and the field is in great shape before a big game, it's extremely rewarding.

I guess the worst part of the job is dealing with issues that all turf managers face: the weather, the budget—all the things that challenge us daily. ■

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Irrigation systems: winterize now and rest easy until spring

By Dennis Slibsager

With winter quickly approaching, getting the turf in your care prepped to handle whatever Mother Nature decides to throw its way is a top priority. If you're located in a part of country that is regularly subjected to freezing temperatures and punishing doses of ice and snow, you probably know all too well the perils these forces can inflict on your irrigation system.

The potential problems you could face from improper irrigation system winterization are considerable. Removing as much water as possible from the pipes, backflows, valves and sprinkler heads now will not only prevent the mains and laterals from freezing and bursting, you will ultimately save yourself the headache and budget pressures of making costly repairs next spring and summer.

Getting your irrigation system ready for winter is a manageable process if you take the time to understand your options and closely follow a few relatively simple steps.

There are three basic ways to get an irrigation system prepared for winter: compressed air "blow out"; automatic drain valve method; or manual drain valve method. Whichever technique you choose, remember that it's preferable to leave the controller plugged in but in the "OFF" position during the winter months. Doing so could prevent accidental start-up if a well-intentioned crewmember plugs it in before the system is fully pressurized and operational in the spring.

Backflow preventers

Before we discuss how to properly drain water from your system, let's talk a little about winterizing the backflow preventer device. If your



system is equipped with a backflow device, remove any water trapped in the ball valves and testcocks by opening and closing them several times by hand. When fully open or fully closed, ball valves and testcocks have a tendency to trap water between the ball and the housing, so leave them open at a 45 degree position to prevent cracking during a freeze.

If you have a pressure vacuum preventer (PVB), typically all you have to do is make sure to drain the ball valves, testcocks, and

mainlines coming and going from the device. Technically, there is still a little water trapped between the #1 check valve and the outlet of the device. Usually there is enough room for water expansion in this area, but you could also take it apart and drain it completely for peace of mind.

If you have a reduced pressure backflow preventer (RP), the process is slightly more complicated. In addition to draining the ball valves and testcocks, you should also take apart any area like the #1 and #2 checks, as well as the relief valve that traps water in a confined space leaving little to no room for freezing and expansion. In addition to draining all the water, this gives you the opportunity to check the integrity of the rubber seat washers, diaphragm and o-rings in these areas to look for cracks. This will enable you to plan in advance if you need to buy any new parts for the next season. In large devices (3-10"), these can be costly items.

Before working on your system, always be sure to turn the water off at the point of connection and open any drain valves before the backflow preventer.

Compressed air "blow out"

This method uses compressed air to evacuate water from the system, from the mainline pipe to the sprinkler heads. Make sure to use the correct type of air compressor for your system. It should be capable of delivering between 80 to 400 cubic feet per minute (CFM) at 50-60 psi depending on size and length of the mainline and laterals. You want volume (CFMs), not pressure (psi). If you are unsure which type of air compressor to or rent or buy, consult either your irrigation distributor or preferred irrigation component manufacturer.

After shutting off the water to the system at the point of connection and draining the backflow, connect the air compressor to the mainline after the backflow preventer, which could be a quick coupler valve or a tee specifically installed for this purpose. As a safeguard, always check the air compressor manufacturer's specifications for the correct equipment hookup procedure.

Activate the zone of sprinklers at either the highest elevation or the farthest point from the compressor. Allow the air to flow to that zone until water and water vapors no longer appear from any of the sprinkler heads. Repeat this process until water is fully evacuated from each zone, finishing at the zone closest to the compressor.

Cycle through each zone at least two times to completely drain the lines, as water may settle into low points in the lateral pipe. Also, never run the compressor without at least one sprinkler valve in the open position, as this reduces the chance of pressure build-up that can damage your equipment and send sprinklers or tops of sprinklers flying through the air.

Automatic drain valve method

A basic winterization procedure for systems with automatic drain valves that open and completely drain the pipes when pressure falls

THOUGH SIMPLY SHUTTING DOWN THE SYSTEM FROM THE CONTROLLER WILL EVACUATE A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF WATER FROM THE SYSTEM, IT WILL NOT DRAIN ANY WATER CAPTURED IN THE CONTROL VALVES.

below 10 psi could be as simple as turning off the water supply, the controller, and draining the backflow preventer.

An automatic drain valve is a spring-loaded device commonly installed on sprinkler heads or lateral pipes. Normally installed downstream from control valves, automatic valves open when the system is shut off and help drain water from the pipes. When the system is turned on, the resulting water pressure shuts the valve and fills the pipe with water.

Though simply shutting down the system from the controller will evacuate a considerable amount of water from the system, it will not drain any water captured in the control valves. Therefore, thorough system winterization should include the removal and disassembly of control valves.

Manual drain valve method

Winterization procedures for a manual drain valve system are similar to those for an automatic system. The biggest difference is that you will need to locate and open all of the drain valves by hand.

Manual drain valves are located at the end of each zone, at the end of the main line and at the low points on the lines. To drain the system, turn off the water supply, the controller, and drain the backflow preventer. Next, open the sprinkler control valves located farthest from the controller. Slowly open the manual drain valve to drain the pipe. Repeat this process from one zone to the next along the system mainline.

If you manually operate your electric zone valves, you still need to go the controller and cycle through each zone at least once to get the water out of the solenoid. If you don't remove the water from the solenoid, you will be buying new ones in the spring. Typically there is enough water trapped in a solenoid to freeze and damage it.

Though no two irrigation systems are alike and, in some cases, were likely designed and installed before your tenure, proper winterization can be accomplished if you take the time to understand your preventative maintenance options.

Dennis Slibsager is the Colorado Springs Branch Manager for Ewing Irrigation, Inc. ■

John Mascaro's Photo Quiz



If you would like to submit a photograph for John Mascaro's Photo Quiz please send it to Turf-Tec International, John Mascaro, 1471 Capital Circle NW, Suite # 13, Tallahassee, FL 32303 or email to john@turf-tec.com. If your photograph is selected, you will receive full credit. All photos submitted become property of *SportsTurf Magazine*.

Answer: from page 16

The green lines on these clay-based turf tennis courts in the early winter are a vivid reminder of how important proper pH is to the soil. These tennis court lines had been made using chalk powder comprised of calcium carbonate. With each line marking during the year, the calcium carbonate slowly brought down the pH of the acidic clay-based soil on which the grass tennis courts were built. When winter brought its first cold temperatures, the grass turned brown first in the areas without the proper soil pH. The areas under the lines were still green and growing. This photo illustrates that having the correct soil pH allows for proper nutrient uptake throughout the year which will in turn, leads to better turfgrass health and winter hardiness on your athletic fields. ■

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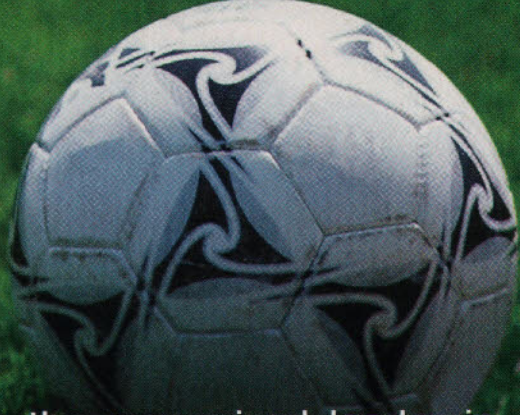
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STMA Chapter News

Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona: The 14th Annual Sports Turf Field Day, presented by the City of Yuma and AZSTMA, will be held Nov. 30 at the Yuma Civic Center, 1440 W. Desert Hills Dr. Contact Larry Munoz at 928/373-5221 or Joel Hubbard at 928/373-5227. For info on the Chapter, contact David Oropeza at doropez@cityofnogalez.net or 520/285-5781 or Felipe Garcia at fgarcia@ci.flagstaff.az.us or 520/774-2868.

Chesapeake Chapter STMA: For information on the Chesapeake Chapter, contact Glenn Sweet at glenn_sweet@london.net or call 301/495-5522.

Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association: If you are interested in running for the Board of Directors, please contact Richard Buelter at 303/233-2922 or dbuelter@jeffco.k12.co.us. Deadline for getting your name in is Nov. 17. For more info visit www.cstma.org or call the Chapter Hotline at 303/346-8954 or President Buelter at 303/233-2922, or email him at address above.

Florida #1 Chapter: For info visit the Florida #1 Chapter page on STMA's website or contact Tom Curran by e-mail at ctom-sell@aol.com or at 954/786-4138 or Bud Nolder at 954/797-2560.

Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association: In November, the Gateway chapter will host its annual Holiday/end of the year lunch, date and location are TBA. For information contact Mark Vessel at 636/940-7776 or e-mail vessel@slysa.org or Frank Schaffer at 636/940-7776.

Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter or

upcoming events, contact Skip Kirby at 770/928-1580 or by e-mail at skip@championshipinc.com.

The Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: For more information on the Chapter or upcoming events call Carol Gundlach, CSFM at 909/594-5611 ext. 5174 or e-mail cgundlach@mtsac.edu.

Illinois Chapter (formerly Midwest Chapter) STMA: For information on the Illinois Chapter or upcoming events call chapter secretary Libby Baker at 847/263-7603 or e-mail Bake60ft6in@aol.com.

Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association: For info visit www.iowaturfgrass.org or contact Jeff Wendel, CGCS of The Turf Office at 515/232-8222 or fax 515/232-8228 or e-mail Jeff@iowaturfgrass.org.

Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO/STMA): The 11th Annual KAFMO Athletic Field Conference will be held Friday, February 16, 2007 at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg/Hershey. The conference will feature a trade show, awards program and seminars. Seminar topics include synthetic fields, diseases, mowing, calibration and more. Visit www.KAFMO.org or email KAFMO@aol.com for more information. For more information on the chapter contact Dan Douglas at 610/375-8469 ext. 212 or email to KAFMO@aol.com.

Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter or upcoming events, go to www.kystma.org or contact Tom Nielsen at 502/212-2287 or by email at tnielsen@batsbaseball.com or Aaron Boggs at Aboggs@batsbaseball.com.

Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA): MiSTMA Scholarship applications are due Nov. 25 and Field of the Year applications are due Dec. 8, for additional information, go to www.mistma.org. The Great Lake Expo & Turf Conference will be held Jan. 8-10, 2007 at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, for more information, please contact www.glte.org. MiSTMA monthly Board meetings are the third Wednesday of each month at 10am at the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center on the campus of MSU. Board meetings are open. For information on the Chapter, visit www.mistma.org or contact Chad Follis at 269/377-3340 or 269/381-0596 or by email at chadfollis@farmngarden.com.

Minnesota Chapter STMA: For information on the Minnesota Chapter, or upcoming events, visit www.mstma.org or contact chapter President Tom Adamini at 952/953-2420 or by e-mail at tadamini@ci.apple-valley.mn.us.

MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association: The 2006 KTC Conference and Trade Show will be held Oct. 22-26, 2006 at the Holiday Inn University Plaza Hotel and Sloan Convention Center in Bowling Green, KY. For information on the MO-KAN Chapter or upcoming events, contact Jody Gill at 913/239-4121 or by e-mail at jgill@bluevalleyk12.org.

New England STMA (NESTMA): The new NESTMA Board of Directors is: President Nick Caggiano; Vice-President Mike Buras; Secretary Joe Kovolyan; Treasurer Tim Walsh; and Immediate Past President David Pinsonneault. Board members are: Jim Connelly, Rick Perruzzi, Matt Tobin, Joe Cazeault, Ben Andrews, Eric Blanton, Chris Kneale, John Barry, and Special

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Advisor Mary Owen. For information on the New England chapter contact David Pinsonneault at 781/861-2757 or e-mail dpinson@ci.lexington.ma.us or Nick Caggiano at 603/589-3370 or e-mail caggianon@ci.nashua.nh.us.

Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Nebraska Chapter or upcoming events, contact Jennifer Roeber at 402/441-4425 or by e-mail at jenr@saltdogs.com.

Sports Turf Managers of New York: For information on the New York Chapter or upcoming events, contact Mike Albino at 315/468-6225 or (c) 315/427-1214 or mikealbino@earthlink.net or Kevin Meredith at 607/287-6609 or kimeredith@earthlink.net.

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey: The 91st Annual New Jersey State League of Municipalities Conference will be held Nov. 13-16, 2006 at the Atlantic City Convention Center. For information call SFMANJ at 908/730-7770, e-mail HQ@sfmanj.org or visit the Chapter website at www.sfmanj.org.

Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA): For information on the Ohio Chapter, contact OSTMA headquarters at 614/354-1196 or Ostma@aol.com. You can also visit www.ostma.org. The new OSTMA address is PO Box 3426 Dublin, OH 43016.