

## SIMMONS FIELD

- Original construction date: 1959
- Size: 121,900 sq. ft.
- Use: 800 hours of baseball specific include NCAA competition, High School regular and post season games, and baseball camps.
- Variety(s) of turfgrass(es): Kentucky bluegrass with perennial ryegrass in the wear areas.
- Overseed: This year overseeded with 'Rush', 'NuDestiny', 'Award' and 'Impact'. Also use RPR ryegrass to overseed the walk up areas, grass baselines and areas around the mound.
- Mix composition: 91 % Sand 9 % other
- Other mix: 2% Silt, 2.9% Clay, 4.1% Gravel
- Drainage: Herringbone system
- Challenges: This season was the most challenging I have ever survived since being a sports turf manager. Columbia (MO) led the country in most above average snowfall for a season at 320% above normal this year with 45.6". We had one of the wettest springs on record with 4.31" of rain and 13.79" of snow in March, and we had 45+ days in the 90's with the peak of 108 on August 2nd. It was the first time in my career that I printed of safety standards for how many hours you could be outside in below zero temps and how many hours you could be outside with temps in 100's.

Since the heaviest snow was in February when the team was practicing we had to do whatever was possible to get them outside. We borrowed two snow blowers and started removing the snow. It took days to finally break through all of it but little by little we started seeing the field.

The spring had many tarp pulls and lots of hand dragging because it was too wet to get any machines on the field. We have Kentucky bluegrass baselines and all the moisture and play took its toll on them so we decided to do a mid-season replacement. Due to snow we actually did the replacement a day before the game. If the NFL guys can sod before a game why couldn't I, with thick cut sod. I had them cut the sod at 1.5" and we installed it. The coaches and players loved it, and it is still holding up to this day.

The summer heat combined with the camp schedule made keeping 1.25" bluegrass a real challenge. I had always played around with bio-stimulants but this is the first year I used a program. I used Floratine Astron, Knife+ and Power C3 when I sprayed my fungicides (program designed by myself and Dr. Lee Miller of the University of Missouri) and was able to keep my grass growing and

green through most of the summer. The baseball coach said it was the first time they had green grass after the month of June.

Besides the weather the other reason I wanted to submit for Field of the Year is because of my student interns. When I started at Mizzou I told the students our goal is to win an award and they helped me prepare this application. They work so hard and I want them to be showcased for their efforts. The intern program was started by Dr. Minner and Dr. Brad Fresenburg with Jeff Salmond, CSFM as one of the first to participate. The interns get to do everything on the field and when they graduate they have years of actual working experience as well as having a degree.

**SportsTurf:** You mentioned a lack of records in your entry. What kind of record keeping do you use?

**McPherson:** I have been tracking everything in my Outlook Calendar this past year. I share the calendar with my co-workers and we are trying to record everything we do. Specifically we are tracking fertilizer, chemical, topdressing, and aeration applications. We are also putting notes for spreader settings, etc. This helps us fine tune applica-

tions our next time out. We are also recording disease instances or any unusual things we may find on the grass. For example my first year here we got summer patch on the bluegrass earlier than I thought we would see it in the year. After recording it in Outlook I would go one year in the future and put Summer Patch arrived last year on this date and then put a 2-week reminder to give me enough time to purchase some fungicide. I would then get the reminder and start monitoring for Summer Patch, watch the weather and apply a preventative if conditions were right. I believe this helped us keep the diseases under control last year. I would also put in all "last-minute" requests that would come through during a sports season and proactively see if they needed to be done the following year so we could do them on a practice or off day for the teams.

**ST:** What channels of communication do you use to reach coaches, administrators and users of your facility? Any tips on communicating well?

**McPherson:** I always try to meet face to face and to have one point of contact with each team. Sometimes different coaches

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within the same sport will have different ideas on things. I always find right before practices, on the actual field, great ideas or requests will be made that may not have been thought about in an office meeting. We have weekly meetings with administrators to keep them updated on everything. As long as I take care of the reasonable coach requests and stay within budget the administration allows me to do my job.

**ST:** What are your specific job responsibilities? What do find most enjoyable? What task is your least favorite and why?

**McPherson:** I am in charge of maintaining the sports field and grounds for the Mizzou Sports Park. If it is an athletic field or the grass and landscaping around our athletic properties I am responsible for the upkeep. I love being a part of the student-athlete experience. I enjoy knowing that the hard work and dedication by my team help make that experience better for everyone we have an encounter with whether you are a Mizzou athlete or a visitor.

**ST:** What changes if any are you considering or implementing for the winning field in 2012?

**McPherson:** We are always trying to get the field better. I don't think any of us in this industry think the field is in perfect shape. I am working on increasing the drainage behind home plate. I also put in a FieldSaver infield on my softball field this August and I am going to see how that surface works for us this spring and see if I might need to adjust my infield at baseball. We are really going to work on the details this year. I think most of the talks I am going to at the conference are baseball related. I feel like I can never learn enough about infield maintenance.

**ST:** How do you see the sports turf manager's job changing in the future?

**McPherson:** I answered this question 4 years ago and I talked about being more conscious about the environment. I think that is still very important for the future. I find myself promoting the benefits of a natural turfgrass field. I think the more we promote natural turfgrass and the benefits to the environment the better we will all be. ■

## Monthly maintenance and fertility programs:

### JANUARY

- Snow removal
- Indoor turf cleaning
- Indoor mound repair
- Drag warning track and skin area if dry enough

### FEBRUARY

- Outdoor practice begins weather permitting
- Mound and home plate repair
- Drag warning track daily
- Mow 1.25"
- Apply 1 pallet Turface Heritage Red calcined clay
- Apply 1 pallet Diamond Pro Dark Brown vitrified clay
- Turn on isolation valve for quick coupler behind the plate

### MARCH

- Repair mound, homeplate, drag warning track daily
- Subdue Maxx 1.0oz/1000 if wet when applying tarp and temperature going up
- Mow outfield 1.25" and infield at 1" every game day (minimum 3 days a week)
- Apply 20 bags of soil conditioner every 2 weeks (ratio of vitrified or calcined determined by weather conditions)
- Spray Floratine Astron 2oz/1000, Power C3 3oz/1000, and Knife+ 3oz/1000
- Turn on irrigation
- Biweekly needle tine aeration on infield and surrounds
- Biweekly spot seed with RPR

### APRIL

- Repair mound, homeplate, drag warning track daily
- Mow outfield 1.25" and infield at 1" every game day (minimum 3 days a week)
- Apply 20 bags of soil conditioner every 2 weeks (ratio of vitrified or calcined determined by weather conditions)
- Spray Floratine Astron 2oz/1000, Power C3 3oz/1000, and Knife+ 3oz/1000
- 1lb N / 1000 of 32-0-8
- Drive XLR8 64oz / Acre
- Weekly needle tine aeration on infield and surrounds
- Bi weekly spot seed with RPR 15

### MAY

- Repair mound, homeplate, drag warning track daily
- Mow outfield 1.25" and infield at 1" every game day (minimum 3 days a week)
- Apply 20 bags of soil conditioner every 2 weeks (ratio of vitrified or calcined determined by weather conditions)
- Spray Floratine Astron 2oz/1000, Power C3 3oz/1000, and Knife+ 3oz/1000
- Weekly needle tine aeration on infield and surrounds
- Bi weekly spot seed with RPR
- Irrigation based on ET
- Headway 3oz/1000

### JUNE

- Repair mound, homeplate, drag warning track minimum 1x a week
- Mow outfield and infield at 1.25" (minimum 3 days a week)
- Apply 20 bags of soil conditioner every 2 weeks (ratio of vitrified or calcined determined by weather conditions)
- Spray Floratine Astron 2oz/1000, Power C3 3oz/1000, and Knife+ 3oz/1000
- Irrigation based on ET
- Headway 3oz/1000
- Banol 3oz/1000
- Acelepryn 8oz/acre 16

### JULY

- Repair mound, homeplate, drag warning track minimum 1x a week
- Mow outfield and infield at 1.25" (minimum 3 days a week)
- Spray Floratine Astron 2oz/1000, Power C3 3oz/1000, and Knife+ 3oz/1000
- Irrigation based on ET
- Headway
- Subdue Maxx 1oz/1000

### AUGUST

- Drag warning track minimum 1x a week
- Mow outfield and infield at 1.25" (minimum 3 days a week)
- Spray Floratine Astron 2oz/1000, Power C3 3oz/1000, and Knife+ 3oz/1000
- Irrigation based on ET
- Aerate 5/8" tined on 2" x 2.5" spacing
- Topdress 40 tons of 90:10 sand
- Headway 3oz/1000
- Subdue Max 1oz/1000
- Laser grade infield
- 1lb N / 1000 of 32-0-8 17

### SEPTEMBER

- Repair mound, homeplate, drag warning track 2-3x a week
- Mow outfield 1.5" and infield at 1" (minimum 2 days a week)
- Apply 20 bags of soil conditioner every 2 weeks (ratio of vitrified or calcined determined by weather conditions)
- Spray Floratine Astron 2oz/1000, Power C3 3oz/1000, and Knife+ 3oz/1000
- Biweekly needle tine aeration on infield and surrounds
- Bi weekly spot seed with RPR
- 1lb N / 1000 of 32-0-8
- Seed 3 lbs/ 1000 'NuDestiny', 'Award', 'Impact', and 'Rush'
- Irrigation based on ET
- Irrigation audit and repairs after running daily through summer, added 5 heads this year

### OCTOBER

- Repair mound, homeplate, drag warning track 2-3x a week
- Mow outfield 1.5" and infield at 1" (minimum 2 days a week)
- Apply 20 bags of soil conditioner every 2 weeks (ratio of vitrified or calcined determined by weather conditions)
- Spray Floratine Astron 2oz/1000, Power C3 3oz/1000, and Knife+ 3oz/1000
- Biweekly needle tine aeration on infield and surrounds
- Bi weekly spot seed with RPR
- 1lb N / 1000 of 32-0-8
- Deep Tine Aeration
- Topdress 40 tons of 90:10 sand
- Irrigation based on ET 18

### NOVEMBER

- Drag Warning Track
- Mow outfield 1.5" and infield at 1.5" (minimum 2 days a week)
- Good edge and re-sod thin areas
- Get field ready for spring baseball in case it snows until March again

### DECEMBER

- Anything we can do
- Equipment maintenance



# New Kentucky bluegrass resists summer patch

**B**arenbrug USA has developed a new Kentucky bluegrass called HGT (Healthy Grass Technology). According to Barenbrug's Christiaan Arends, its trials have revealed that it is wear-tolerant, very summer patch-resistant, performs well in heat, and is aggressive in the transition zone.

"For example, Dr. Dennis Martin at the University of Oklahoma is excited about this grass because they don't have any

The origin of the product traces back to selection of Kentucky bluegrass clones that were chosen as they survived intense artificial traffic applications in 2001.

bluegrasses than can really survive that climate," he said.

Arends said with its fast germination (7 days) and establishment HGT should be a good choice for sports turf applications. "In a private trial at Michigan State it proved to be very good in traffic tolerance," he said, "as well as in NTEP where it has been #1 ranked at Michigan State and #2 at Rutgers University on traffic tolerance."

HGT has been developed through extensive testing under harsh climatic conditions. The origin of the product traces back to selection of Kentucky bluegrass clones that were chosen as they survived intense artificial traffic applications in 2001. The clones were selected for not only tolerating the traffic

but rapid recovery after traffic application. These clones were further subjected to heavy disease pressure in Mid-Atlantic states. After 3 years one clone was selected for seed multiplication. The seed was entered in NTEP as BAR VV 0709 in 2005. It showed extreme disease tolerance to summer patch in trials in Oklahoma, North Carolina and Tennessee. It also showed superior tolerance to damage from bill bugs and white grubs in data from Utah and Tennessee.

"The variety name will be 'BarVette', Arends said. "We call it HGT as we have more similar varieties coming and those will be sold under the brand name HGT. We are in the process of patenting the product."

According to Barenbrug, the product will only be sold to sod growers through a licensing program and will only be sold in blends & mixtures and at not more than 25% due to its aggressive nature. ■

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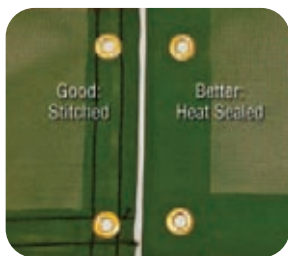
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### **IncrediSeal heat-sealed hems**

New for ArmorMesh products as a standard feature: IncrediSeal reinforced hems and seams. All sewing and stitching eliminated so there is zero possibility of thread breaks, open seams or hems. Clean look with no pleats, no black webbing on hem, and no stitches. Web reinforcement is inside the 3-ply heat bonded hem. IncrediSeal is standard on all ArmorMesh field covers, batting practice infield protectors and collar protectors, football sideline tarps, jump pit covers and windscreens.

**CoverSports USA**



### **FieldSaver winter turf blankets/growth covers**

FieldSaver covers keeps turf protected all year long and also from harsh winter conditions, while promoting faster spring growth and green up. FieldSaver winter turf blankets/growth covers feature: Woven Polypro, translucent fabric with 90% light pass-through for better, quicker growth; hems and brass grommets so the cover can be secured with staples or stakes that stay put; and optional yellow safety color stakes for more visibility reduces tripping hazards and prevents loss of stakes in turf. More and more experts are including winter growth blankets/growth covers in their turf protection plan. Can your turf and budget handle passing on this small investment for another year?



### **New Toro synthetic turf groomer for Sand Pro 3040/5040**

Toro is introducing the Synthetic Turf Groomer for use on the ToroSand Pro 3040/5040. This attachment grooms and redistributes infill material on synthetic fields and is designed to provide adjustable down pressure from the onboard hydraulics to help evenly distribute infill from high spots to low spots. Additional features include quick-adjust pitch, which allows operators to change the grooming aggressiveness, and a unique brush design for increased distribution of material. An optional spring tines kit attaches in front of the brushes to loosen synthetic turf before grooming. In addition, an optional magnet behind the groomer is available to pick up unwanted ferrous debris on the playing surface such as pins, nails and clips.

**The Toro Company**



### **MG72 Multi Groomer**

The MG72 Multi Groomer provides versatility and ease of use for maintaining synthetic turf. Lifts and fluffs matted down turf fibers. Levels and redistributes infill. Promotes water drainage and more; made of 6 ft. wide heavy duty steel construction. Pull with a variety of towing machines. Numerous options including ball coupler hitch. Built-in electric lift system with wireless remote control saves down time and labor. No tools needed to adjust.

**Heying Company**



### **Verti-Clean groomer/cleaner**

The Verti-Clean is an inexpensive groomer/cleaner that uses a ground driven brush to gently pick up surface debris from a synthetic turf playing field. All this material is thrown on a rapidly shaking filter, which collects unwanted debris, and then redistributes any infill material that was lifted back onto the field. The unit includes a fixed brush to incorporate the infill back into turf fibers.

**Redexim North America**



### **The Field Commander Chameleon**

We know grooming, maintaining and conditioning synthetic turf can be a challenge, but the Field Commander Chameleon takes that challenge head-on. The Chameleon grooms for both conditioning and appearance, sprays, levels infill, paints, and applies field markings; you can even remove painted lines and markings all with just one machine. Kromer manufactures five Field Commander models to make your synthetic and natural fields look and play great. Kromer is your answer for athletic field maintenance.

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### **Estate Master sweeper available**

Gravely offers the Estate Master, a towable lawn sweeper which is formed by hitching three Gravely Suburbanite lawn sweepers together. With a 100-inch sweeping width, the Estate Master is capable of picking up grass, leaves, twigs and debris from a large turf area. The Estate Master is easily towed by a front engine turf and garden tractor, zero-turn riding mower or an ATV with a rear hitch hole. It has eight polypropylene, steel-backed brushes in four staggered rows to create a manicured field. The sweeper also provides variable height adjustment independent of the frame. Each sweeper unit has a front face plate with a variable vertical adjustment to help control how debris is deflected into the basket.

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\*There must already be a national sports turf manager from your facility or commercial member from your company before you may sign up in the Associate category.

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— Bob Campbell, CSFM  
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## 2011 Terry Mellor Continuing Education Grant

**STMA**, in partnership with Turface Athletics, is pleased to present the 2011 Terry Mellor Continuing Education Grant to Weston Floyd from the University of Texas at Tyler. He is the Eastern Region representative on the Texas STMA Board of Directors, has hosted seminars at his facility for the members, and continues to champion the Texas Chapter as an excellent resource for sports turf managers in Texas.

According to the person who nominated

Floyd, Dan Bergstrom, senior director of major league field operations for the Houston Astros, he is a, "proven and promising young professional." Bergstrom continues, "He will use his time wisely at the conference, and he will continue to grow in our industry. I expect his leadership and loyalty to STMA in the future to only grow."

In winning the grant, Floyd receives a complimentary conference registration and up to \$1,000 in reimbursement of ex-

penses for travel, lodging and incidentals in Long Beach for the 2012 Conference. He will also be recognized as the recipient at the 2012 STMA Awards Banquet on January 13.

STMA and Turface would like to thank all those who applied for the Terry Mellor Continuing Education Grant and would encourage all STMA members looking for assistance in getting to the 2013 Conference in Daytona to do so as well. ■

## Inaugural Gary Vanden Berg Internship Grant Presented

**STMA is pleased** to announce Aaron Bryant of the University of Tennessee as the winner of the first Gary Vanden Berg Internship Grant. Bryant interned for the New York Mets at Citi Field under the supervision of Bill Deacon, director of landscaping and field operations. According to Deacon, Bryant was, "an outstanding worker, was very inquisitive and demonstrated an ability to apply what he had learned." According to Dr. John Sorocean, associate professor and distinguished sci-

entist at the University of Tennessee and Bryant's academic advisor, "Aaron is an outstanding young man who has tremendous passion for the sports turf industry, particularly baseball. Also, he is an excellent student and a leader in-and-out-of the classroom, including as an officer in the UT Turfgrass Club."

The \$1,000 grant is awarded to an STMA Student Member in good standing with the association, who is enrolled in at least six credit hours in the current semester or se-

mester immediately before the internship, and who successfully completed their internship. The grant is intended to offset the costs Bryant incurred while interning including, but not limited to transportation, lodging, food, and subsidy to any wages. In addition to receiving the \$1,000 grant, the winner will also receive a full conference registration and 3 nights lodging at the next STMA National Conference and Exhibition. ■

## STMA Presents Awards at Baseball Winter Meetings

**Last month**, STMA presented the Minor League Baseball Sports Turf Manager of the Year Awards at the Baseball Winter Meetings in Dallas. STMA proudly sponsors these awards, which are presented annually to a Sports Turf Manager at the Triple-A, Double-A, Single-A and Short-Season/Rookie levels.

The winning sports turf manager from each of the 16 leagues (three Triple-A,

three Double-A, five Single-A and five Short-Season/Rookie) is then eligible to compete for the award within their respective classification. The awards are selected by the STMA Awards Committee.

The 2011 STMA Minor League Baseball Sports Turf Managers of the Year are:

- Triple-A: Joey Stevenson, Indianapolis Indians
- Double-A: Matt Parrott, Bowie Baysox
- Single-A: Doug Tanis, Winston-Salem Dash
- Short-Season/Rookie: Jon Hall, Danville Braves

STMA and the Awards Committee commend these individuals for their outstanding dedication, effort and talents which have elevated their facilities to the pinnacle of Minor League Baseball playing surfaces. ■

## Save the Date for 2012 Regional Conference

**After a highly successful event** last year in Knoxville, TN STMA will again host a regional conference in 2012. The Mid-American Regional Conference will be June 26-27, 2012 in Cincinnati, Ohio at Paul Brown Stadium, home of the Cincinnati Bengals. In addition to the Ohio Chapter, Kentucky, KAFMO, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Tennessee Valley and Virginia chapters are all supporting the event.

The education program will include speakers from around the nation on a variety of turfgrass topics, facility tours, an exhibition and a networking event. More than 300 people have been on-site for previous events in Knoxville, Seattle, Ames, IA and Philadelphia. We look forward to another great event in Cincinnati and hope to see you there! ■

**STMA and the Awards Committee commend these individuals for their outstanding dedication, effort and talents which have elevated their facilities to the pinnacle of Minor League Baseball playing surfaces.**

# STMA Announces 2011 Field of the Year Award Winners

**STMA is pleased to announce** the following Field of the Year winners for 2011.

## Baseball

- Schools and Parks – Village Green Park; Village of Northbrook, IL; Michael Brouillard
- College and University – Simmons Field at Taylor Stadium; Columbia, MO; Josh McPherson, CSFM
- Professional – Roger Dean Stadium; Jupiter, FL; Jordan Treadway

## Football

- Schools and Parks – Louisa County High School Football Stadium, “The Jungle”; Mineral, VA; Michael Hopkins
- College and University – Ryan Field at Northwestern University; Evanston, IL; Randy Stoneberg

## Soccer

- Schools and Parks – Maryland SoccerPlex; Boyds, MD; Jerad Minnick
- College and University – Ludwig Field at the University of Maryland; College Park, MD; Jeremy Menna
- Professional – Pizza Hut Park; Frisco, TX; Allen Reed

## Softball

- Schools and Parks – Ashley Ridge High School Softball Field; Summerville, SC; Robert Behr
- College – Patricia Wilson Field; DeLand, FL; Steve Barnard

## Sporting Grounds

- Schools and Parks – Infinity Park; City of Glendale, CO; Joshua Bertrand

A panel of six judges independently scored each entry and presented awards based on the playability and appearance of the playing surfaces, innovative solutions employed, effective use of budget, and the development and implementation of a comprehensive, sound agronomic program. The STMA Awards Committee includes Chair Allen Johnson, CSFM; Patrick Coakley, CSFM; Jeff Fowler; Joe Kovolyan, CSFM; Sarah Martin, CSFM; and Tim VanLoo, CSFM. These judges come from all segments of STMA membership and represent some of the finest facilities in all of America.

Winners will be presented with their award during the Annual STMA Awards Ban-

quet January 13, 2012, at the Hyatt Long Beach in Long Beach, CA. In addition to their award, each Field of the Year winner receives complimentary registration to the 2012 STMA Conference and Exhibition, 3 nights lodging, and signature clothing for the award winners and their staff. The winning fields will also be featured in a 2012 article in *SportsTurf*, the official magazine of STMA.

The 2011 STMA Field of the Year Awards are sponsored by Carolina Green Corporation, Ewing Irrigation, Hunter Industries, and World Class Athletic Surfaces. The support of these important STMA Commercial Members is necessary to provide our industry with a robust, prestigious awards program; one that recognizes the hard work of each STMA member and rewards those who excel. ■

## Thank you to STMA Awards Program Sponsors



## STMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

**Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona:**  
Chris Walsh [cwalsh@scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:cwalsh@scottsdaleaz.gov)

**Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.cstma.org](http://www.cstma.org)

**Florida #1 Chapter (South):** 305-235-5101  
(Bruce Bates) or Tom Curran [CTomSell@aol.com](mailto:CTomSell@aol.com)

**Florida #2 Chapter (North):** 850/580-4026,  
John Mascaro, [john@turf-tec.com](mailto:john@turf-tec.com)

**Florida #3 Chapter (Central):** 407-518-2347,  
Scott Grace, [scott@sundome.org](mailto:scott@sundome.org)

**Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.gatewaystma.org](http://www.gatewaystma.org)

**Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.gstma.org](http://www.gstma.org)

**Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.stmalabasin.com](http://www.stmalabasin.com)

**Illinois Chapter STMA:** [www.ILSTMA.org](http://www.ILSTMA.org)

**Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.imstma.org](http://www.imstma.org)

**Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.iowaturfgrass.org](http://www.iowaturfgrass.org)

**Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.kystma.org](http://www.kystma.org)

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**Mid Atlantic Sports Turf Managers Association (MASTMA) (formerly the Chesapeake Chapter STMA)** Ph. 410-704-2197  
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**Minnesota Park and Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.mpstma.org](http://www.mpstma.org)

**MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
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**Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
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**New England STMA (NESTMA):**  
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**Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey:** [www.sfmnj.org](http://www.sfmnj.org)

**Sports Turf Managers of New York:**  
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**Oregon STMA Chapter:**  
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[oregonstma@gmail.com](mailto:oregonstma@gmail.com)

**Ozarks STMA:** [www.ozarksstma.org](http://www.ozarksstma.org)

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# Q&A

# The new normal?

*We keep hearing people say the expression, "the new normal". In terms of sports turf management, what does that mean to you?*

*Missouri Turfgrass Meeting attendee*

I have also have been hearing this expression on a regular basis—almost always in reference to our current situation as a result of a poor economy. It has become so overused that I personally dislike the phrase almost as much as the now infamous, "We have to do more with less."

First, let's define normal. The statistician in me suggests that the word normal is an indirect reference to the concept of a normal distribution. A normal distribution is when there is an expect value (or a mean) around which there are observations distributed more or less equally below and above the mean. When looked at as a graph, the result is a "bell-shaped curve." One standard deviation accounts for about 68% of the observations closest to the mean. Two standard deviations account for 95% of the observations. A new normal distribution could have different means and/or different standard deviations. So, basically a new norm would be an experience that is very different than before and/or an extreme experience well outside a typical expectation.

The shift in the norm may not have a direct cause. For instance there has been a domino effect in sports that has influenced the sports turf manager's norm. The best examples related to budget reductions. In many cases game attendance at sporting events has suffered due to the economic situation of the fans. Some have either lost their jobs or have the threat of a lost job. The result is that many people are spending a greater percentage of their household in-

come on food, clothing, and shelter and less on items viewed as non-essential. A significant drop in average attendance results in lower revenue, so field managers have seen budgets reduced in response to the new attendance average. The same may be true of in terms parents paying for their kids to participate in sports.

**The field manager is not the only one making tough decisions that may influence field quality. Companies that have turf products are experiencing the same types of economic shifts.**

Different types of "new normal" may be the extremes in weather many of you have experienced the last few years. The yearly climate averages across the US may not be that different but many areas have experienced extremes in temperature, drought, and flooding. So, the "new normal" concept may be applied to much more than just our economy.

I keep hearing people say, "I will go back to doing \_\_\_\_\_ when the economy gets better." The blank may be filled with aerating, topdressing, weed control, etc. The problem is that if a sports field is to be maintained at a certain level of quality, it needs these practices regardless of the economy and weather. This new norm may really put the sports turf manager in a tough decision-making situation. A field manager still needs to provide a safe playing surface.

The field manager is not the only one making tough decisions

that may influence field quality. Companies that have turf products are experiencing the same types of economic shifts. Suppliers are selling lower quantities of products, so they have to make hard business decisions. For instance, the Gowan Company recently announced it would cease Rubigan sales on December 31, 2012. For many years Rubigan has been the go-to product for spring dead spot control and has been used for pre-emergence control of *Poa annua* on warm-season grasses. For Gowan Company this was strictly an economic decision based on reduced sales. Look for the disappearance of more products in the next few years.

There is also the Imprelis herbicide story from 2011. Imprelis was a great post-emergence product for controlling broadleaf weeds in turf-grasses. It was then linked to the death of thousands of Norway spruces, eastern white pines, and other selected tree species. The EPA forced its removal from the market. The liability was too great to keep it around. This situation will forever change the release of new products. One company representative told me to not expect any new herbicide products in the turf market for the next 10 years. This does not include generic products and older products re-labeled for use in turf.

So, these are just a few examples of shifts in what was considered normal. We will continue to have to adjust how we do our jobs, keeping our standards and user groups in mind. The often quoted American Senator Everett Dirksen once said, "I am a man of fixed and unbending principles, the first of which is to be flexible at all times." I believe that is an approach we should all consider adopting if we are to succeed with our new normal. ■

**BY DR. GRADY MILLER**

Professor, North Carolina State University

## Questions?

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