

## **YEAR END FIELD RENOVATION**

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The baseball fields at the training and minor league facilities for the Toronto Blue Jays in Dunedin, Florida are shared by many and receive heavy usage that pushes the limits of the turf. Annual Fall renovation typically involves resodding of high traffic areas and eliminating berms that have developed over a number of years. The renovations project that has had the greatest impact has been the installation of a new irrigation system and pump station at our minor league training facility.

The Toronto Blue Jay's facilities are located at two different sites. The minor league complex consists of three full size fields and a practice infield. Activity at this site includes minor league spring training, extended spring training, mini camp for new players, Gulf Coast rookie league, Blue Jay Fall Instructional League, high school baseball activity, and a full schedule of youth league practices, games, and tournaments. Dunedin Stadium is host to major league spring training, Class A Blue Jays, high school practices, games, and tournaments, and a few rookie league games. Dunedin Stadium consists of one regulation field and a practice infield.

The irrigation system at the minor league complex was completely replaced on two of the three fields and the half field. The old system was composed of Toro S600 heads and supplied by submersible pumps from three different wells. Major problems existed with inadequate pressure (20-25 psi at the heads), inadequate output, poor coverage, poor head performance, and water restrictions. The new system consists of Hunter I20's on the sidelines, Hunter I25's on the infield and the outfield. A new PSI pump system was installed that consists of two 15 hp. VFD pumps, maintenance pump, and a fertigation pump.

The other major area of concern has been to eliminate berms that have developed over a long period of time. Berms develop when clay moves into the grass edges and is not removed on a routine basis. When this goes unchecked very noticeable and hazardous berms can develop. We have noticed as much as a 1" buildup of clay on grass even when a good effort has been made to keep the edges clean.

A procedure that works well as a preventative maintenance tool is to aerify the edges, remove the cores and then roll. This procedure removes a lot of clay and lowers the edge. Other preventative measures include a combination of leaf raking, brooming, and blowing clay off the grass on a daily basis. Periodically, we will use a 1" hose to wash the edges.

Significant problem areas are stripped, raked to grade and resodded. Preparation is the most important part of this renovation process. We pay particular attention to detail at this point so that once the sod is laid very little follow up rolling and topdressing is necessary.