

Field Marking Trial Under Way at UC-Davis

by Bob Milano
University of California-Davis

It was the bottom of the seventh in the annual city softball championship when the sports editor reported:

"The arcing pitch was crushed high and deep down the left field line, nearly as high as the new light tower. The left fielder dashed in hot pursuit of this tremendous drive and all that we could see was the name of the team sponsor on his back. The ball sailed over his head and appeared to land on the outside edge of the exaggerated 14" wide foul line. As the home team began to celebrate an apparent victory with the winning run scored, the umpire cried, "FOUL BALL!!" The home team charged onto the field and..."

We've all seen field markings for sporting events slip from the ideal, crisp 4" painted white line to an exaggerated trench, sometimes 12" or more wide, and 3" deep. Officiating problems like the one above result from repeated applications of non-selective herbicides that create erosion-prone, vegetationless "trenches." More importantly, these trenches are a real safety hazard to players, recreational users and maintenance staff. A safer, more cost-effective method must be found to reduce hazards and aggravation.

The University of California (UC) Davis Grounds Department, the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), and UC Davis Extension Turf Specialist Clyde Elmore and his staff have collectively begun a field marking trial. The trial, conducted at the UC Davis soccer facility, will examine current marking techniques and explore other alternatives in a realistic field setting.

The trial, established in September of 1992, will evaluate typical marking materials for cool season turf. Diquat, round-up and latex paint will be compared with paint that has been modified with Primo, a plant growth regulator, at three different rates.

The goal of the trial is to gather data about all of the available striping alternatives and to also determine the safest, most cost-effective solution. Preliminary results will be presented at the University of California's Extension class entitled, "Sports Turf Management for Professionals," March 30-31, on the UC-Davis Campus. For more information, call 916/757-8899. □

Bob Milano is an STMA Board Member and is the grounds operations manager for the Department of Grounds, University of California-Davis.



Paint modifications for UC-Davis Field Marking Trial. The trial will evaluate typical marking materials for cool season turf.

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