

Setting up the Ballfield Maintenance Program

by Steve Wightman,
 Jack Murphy Stadium

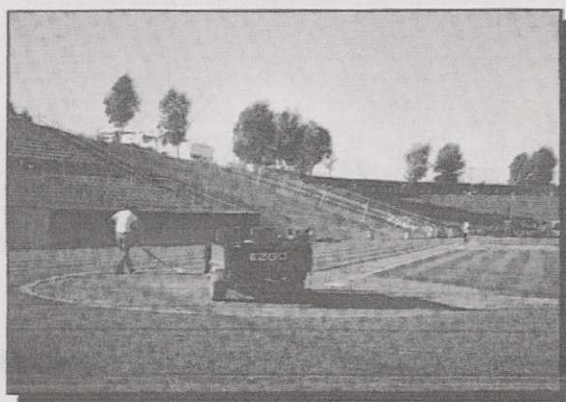
From time to time Sports Turf Manager will offer a "Tips From a Pro" article. These articles are written by your peers in the sports turf industry. This month, Steve Wightman of Jack Murphy Stadium offers a look into ballfield maintenance.

With Spring on everyone's minds, sports turf professionals are busy preparing fields for league games everywhere. In order to keep fields looking as good as "Opening Day" all year long, consider setting up a ballfield maintenance program. The following guidelines should help you develop a quality ballfield maintenance program, and answer some very important questions.

The first step in establishing a ballfield maintenance program is to **evaluate how the field is presently used**. How many games are played per day, per week, per month, per season and per year? What is the level of play? Are there any "windows" or open times when the field can be reconditioned or renovated during the week, month, season or year?

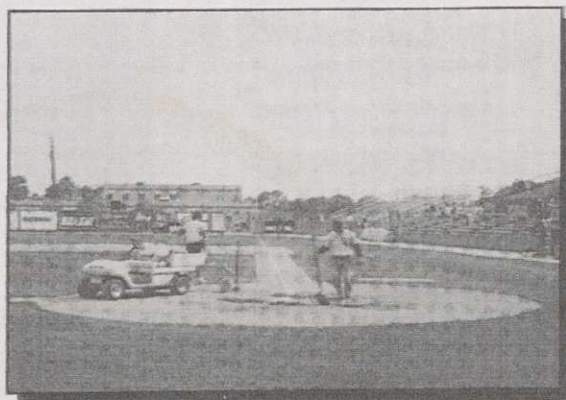
The second step is to **evaluate the condition of the field**. Are there any obstructions, either movable or immovable, that might interfere with play? Is the grass thick and healthy? Are there bare areas throughout the turfgrass? Are there wet spots and/or dry spots from the irrigation system? Are all of the sprinkler heads flush and level with the ground or are some sticking up and some in holes? Is the field too hard and compacted?

Continued on page 3



Compadre Stadium

Ed Smith Stadium



SPRING FEVER!

Pictured above are turf professionals at Compadre Stadium, Chandler Ariz., spring training home of the Milwaukee Brewers and Ed Smith Stadium, Sarasota Fla., Spring training home of the Chicago White Sox.

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SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP ISSUE

"Promoting Better and Safer Sports Turf Areas"

Ballfield Maintenance

Continued from cover

Are there big "lips" or humps where the grass and the infield meet on the baseball or softball field? Is the infield area bumpy with depressions and holes? Does the infield have many rocks or other abrasive material? Are there deep holes in the batter's boxes and pitching areas? Does the field drain water well?

The third step is to evaluate the resources available for maintaining the field during the season and throughout the year. What equipment and materials are available for maintenance? What is the availability of personnel to work on the field? What is the weather like during the times the field is in use and when it is not in use? What is the budget? What is the priority for having this field in tip-top shape?

Before answering any of the above questions, look at how the field is now being used, what condition the field is in and what resources are available. Once these issues are identified, a good ballfield maintenance program can be developed in time for first pitches everywhere. Remember: The more use a field has, the more care must be given to provide for a safe and enjoyable experience. □

Steve Wightman, Jack Murphy Stadium, San Diego, Calif., is an STMA Board Advisor.

Preparing for Spring Sports

From the STMA-Chesapeake Chapter

Are you ready for Spring sports? Go through this checklist to be sure:

- Is your equipment serviced?
- Did you receive a game schedule?
- Are your supplies stocked?
- Have you completed a turf maintenance schedule for 1993?
- Have you made adjustments and contingency plans to avoid last year's problems?
- Are you aware of this season's weather forecast?

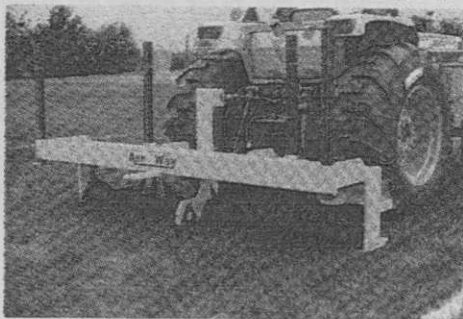
Only you are responsible for your fields. Make sure you are organized and efficient to anticipate next year's problems. Remember, field excellence translates into a higher level of play and fewer field-related injuries. □



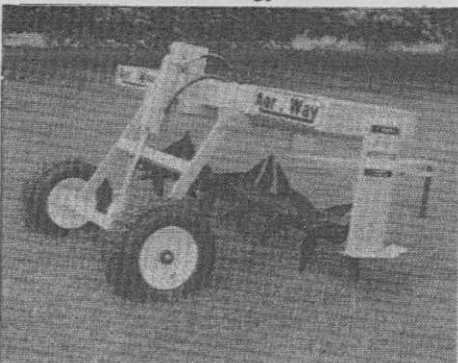
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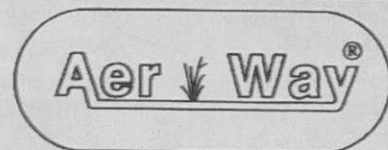
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