

Renovation of a Sand Based Field

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With the use that some of our best maintained fields are getting these days, it makes it increasingly difficult for the turf manager to produce results that users expect, and deserve. It is quite common for a field to be used for football, soccer, track, rigger and special events with changes occurring within a few days. How do we get a sand based field that has been completely destroyed by one season's use, back into play and in good condition by early June, or even earlier?

The first thing that comes to mind is to relevel the area and sod the entire bare area. This gives good results in a soil based field but sod on sand will create a layering effect in the soil strata and could ruin your soil structure and cause many problems, including a perched water table. If we could find a sod that's grown on the identical sand that the field was constructed this could possibly be an alternative. It appears that the only practical way to renovate the sand based field would be with seed.

An experiment was tried at North York's Esther Shiner Stadium in 1988-89. The field was constructed on a sand based mixture with small amounts of peat mixed into the top inches of the mix to help germination of the seed. Drainage tiles and irrigation were installed. The field drains very well, so water is not a problem. The only real problem with the field is overuse.

The last game on the field was November 19. 60% of the field was completely bare of any turf cover. Below is a breakdown of the dates of jobs that were done to get the field in play.

- Nov. 14 — Field aerated two ways with Ryan greensaire 2, cores matted into holes.
- Nov. 15 — Low areas filled with sand to level.
- Nov. 17 — Preparation for final football game of the season.
- Nov. 18 — Final game.
- Nov. 19 — 7:30 a.m. field was frozen, had to wait to overseed. 9:00 a.m. overseeded field with Jacobsen seed 3 ways (mixture Blazer, Fiesta II)
- Nov. 22 — Broadcast seed and topdressed entire field with sand.
- Nov. 23 — Put down green cover to protect field through winter months.
- April 18 — Tested irrigation system.
- April 19 — Began watering field with cover still in place (note: very cool spring).
- May 1 — Noticed first signs of germination. (Still quite cool). Took cover off and spot seeded and topdressed sparse areas ½ lb. N fertilizer 25-5-10. Had to mow the grass that was under cover, it was approx. 4" long.
- May 23 — ½ lb. N Fertilizer 32-4-8.
- June 4 — North York Rocks play the first game on the field. Turf cover about 95%.

The winter of 1988-89 was, in the Toronto area, quite mild, there was some concern that the seed under the cover might germinate in January due to warm temperatures and bright sunlight. The spring was very cold, germination of the ryegrass did not occur until May 1, there was concern that we would have to cancel the first game. If not for the cover holding the seed in place and keeping the soil temperatures up we would have not had our field in shape for opening day.

When the cover was lifted the turf under was very succulent and soft so it would appear that timing of the lifting of a cover is very critical to health of the new plants.

The experiment has proven to be a success with less than ideal conditions. The field was opened 2 weeks earlier in 1989 than 1988. The use of the greencover has given us some protection from mother nature and seem to have given us a jump on seed germination. The experience of last winter has prompted the purchase of another cover so the entire field can be covered, not just the centre bare areas.

Third Annual Athletic Field Day

About 110 people attended the S.T.A. Field Day held on June 15, 1989 at River Oaks Recreation Centre in Oakville. The rain held off in the afternoon so the equipment demonstrations went ahead as planned. It's good to see that so many suppliers came out to show us some of the new products available to make our jobs easier.

The morning sessions consisted of two presentations from Dr. Paul Ricke of Michigan State University. His talks were informative and valid for the southern Ontario area because of the similar climate we share with northern Michigan.

We also had a panel discussion presented by Dave Dick, Bob Kennedy, Leo Ostner and Dr. Riche, the discussion touched on some very practical ideas and gave all in attendance some food for thought.

The members of the S.T.A. would like to thank all involved and specially the town of Oakville for their hospitality.

See you next year in Kitchener.

New Budget Taxes Pesticides, Herbicides and Fertilizer

Business operators in the landscaping industry now have to pay eight percent sales tax on pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer. This year's provincial budget removed the sales tax exemption as of June 1 for everyone except farmers.