

Editorial

We would like to get more information from School Boards as to their maintenance practices. Many we hear from do very little maintenance because the money is not there, or their fields are maintained and used by the local parks department. Still others, contract out the work. We feel young people participating in school sports deserve better. In their guidelines, the Ontario Physical Health and Education Association instructs people as to how their helmet or padding should be worn, but does not include field inspections prior to use of the turf facility. Surely it is time we placed more emphasis on these areas, as it is part of education.

On a different note, in conversation with Bill Campbell of Fairlawn Sod, he indicated that he was sure that many sod producers would consider special mixes for sports fields. If there was a need, they could scalp and overseed, and probably grow in approximately nine months. He would grow on coarse sand which could then be put on a sand based field.

At the University of Guelph, we have just finished reseeding our hockey field and on the advice of turf experts, used a 50/50 mix of perennial rye and Kentucky bluegrass. The mix consists of 25% Welcome and 25% Harmony Kentucky bluegrass. Then 25% each of Pennant and SR 4100 perennial ryegrass. This was seeded on the parent soil on an irrigated field. We feel this will give a field with high wear tolerance. Town of Oakville (article later) is having good success using Rebel II Tall fescue. It stays green all summer, is drought resistant, has low fertility requirements and will grow on most soils — ideal on fields with no irrigation. Belhaven Sod Farms Ltd., produces a

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Renovations & Maintenance at University of Western Ontario

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The grounds are responsible for the maintenance of 300 acres of fine turf plus 30 acres of sports turf. I watch our fields used for track & field meets, classes, intermural events, intercollegiate games and practices and anything else deemed possible.

We have one football stadium, a football practice field, rugby, two soccer fields, field hockey and four baseball diamonds, all with natural drainage.

Prior to renovation and maintenance, our practice fields were extremely poor. Attempts to commit labour and materials fell on deaf ears. We knew if we could get supplies, these fields would have a turf comparable to our stadium.

We wanted to renovate, but were unable to get on the field, as it was booked solid until mid-June. We sprayed the area with Roundup at this time, confident of still obtaining good results. We expected to work on the field in ten days, only to find it was booked for an army demonstration on the long weekend of July! We ripped up the soil to a depth of 12" to help breakup the heavily compacted soil, then rough and fine graded the area and filled in the low areas. We broadcast a starter fertilizer 0-20-10, then turf type perennial rye at a rate of 81 lbs./1,000 sq. ft. Lastly, we hired a contractor to hydromulch the area to conserve moisture. We watered early morning and late afternoon from a nearby river. Initially down 1/2", and after germination, deeper. The seed germinated in five days and the next week we made our first cut at 2", then twice weekly. We then applied 10-6-4 SCU and even after watering, experienced burning, perhaps due to the high humidity at the time. August 16th, we had a good turf surface, which was used for our first intercollegiate practice.

Response from coaches, players and upper management, who had all watched our progress, was only positive. The field, no longer a knotweed infested battleground, remained in good condition 6-8 weeks longer than the former mud patch.

Confident from these results, we started our '89 program with a soil test in late October 1988. Then applied 10-6-4 at 1/2 lb./1,000 sq. ft. Soil test results indicated a phosphorus deficiency but pH within ideal area. We decided to apply twice, once at planting time and one mid-June. Then all fields were reserved first and second weeks of May and we aerated them in three different directions and drag matted the cores and the first application of 0-20-10 which was applied at 1/2 lb./1,000 sq. ft. Next was seeding using an overseeder and turf type perennial rye at 5 lbs./1,000 sq. ft. in two different directions. Following overseeding another 150 lbs. of seed was broadcast to place seed between the rows planted with the overseeder. Drag matting after this gave us better seed to soil contact. Germination was good, but the knotweed persisted even though weed killer was applied. After using wetting agents, on our main stadium, we tried more on this area on a rainy July day to get more penetration. While I was on vacation for two weeks, 10-6-4 SCU was applied and also a weed killer. On my return, I found a terrific stand of turf and no knotweed. I was told that one man looked after all the irrigation and cutting of these areas.

Our program consisted of twice weekly cutting at 2 1/2" until late June, then raising 3" until September, then back down to 2 1/2". Quite often we would have to vacuum clippings because of the fast growth.

Jim Galbraith, Supervisor