

Woodbine Field Day Highlights

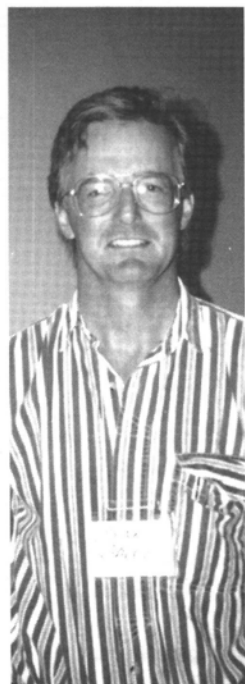
MICHAEL BLADON

Facilities at Woodbine were very good and the meals were nice although the sandwiches at lunch were a little dainty for hungry people young and old! For those of you who were unable to attend the Field Day, the following is a recap of the major events.

Tour of Woodbine Facilities

Sean Gault gave a wonderful tour of both the buildings and grounds associated with the Woodbine Race Track. Eighteen hundred thoroughbreds are stabled at Woodbine in the summer and 300 in winter. Of these, 100 are used daily to fill the nine-race card. The landscaping in the centre field bounded by the three tracks is very attractive as this is where all eyes turn—particularly at the end of a race. Of the three tracks, one has a limestone base and is used for standardbreds. An eight furlong dirt/sand track has been designed for thoroughbreds, and the E. P. Taylor track is turf.

All the ponds are cosmetic except one which is used for irrigation. All water from the stables is recycled and pumped to a pond north of Rexdale Boulevard and then used for irrigation.



Standardbreds are stabled at Mohawk Raceway or at farms and brought in on race day. Tunnels have been constructed under the tracks so the horses do not walk on the track when coming from the stables, prior to the race. In this way, track standards are maintained. Only if there is a problem, like a washout with the track, are races cancelled. Otherwise the standardbreds race all winter. In the case of thoroughbreds, fog or a frozen track can stop them from running. The standardbred track (seven furlongs) is graded daily, but Monday and Tuesday are the heavy maintenance days. The E. P. Taylor turf track (one and a half miles) is mowed once a week to four inches or 10 cm. This takes eight to 10 hours using tractor drawn rotary mowers.

A veterinarian is at trackside during all racing events to inspect the horses before and after the races. Two ambulances follow each race (both human and animal). Cameras also follow the race and are located on the corners and head-on on the backstretch and the homestretch.

Some of the equipment used are two graders, which are used daily, along with four tandem water trucks with a capacity of

some 3300 gallons. Each are used to wet the track. Also used are Mitchell cutting harrows, plus farm harrows, to give a finished job. Two starting gates are used as well, one weighing 10 tonnes. Lanes may be changed on the turf track by using movable railings. All major races are run on the inside lane, or first lane. Railings are made of fibreglass and because they are one of a



kind, are very expensive (\$200.00 each). These are placed on metal stakes which in turn are fitted into sleeves in the soil. Manure is disposed of under contract by Leaver Mushrooms. Turf is rolled two to three times per week and always in the opposite direction to the way the horses run in order to push down the divots. Then five to six employees topdress the lanes after the races the next day. It is a very intensive labour process the day after the races. Also six to seven pounds of nitrogen are applied each season.

The turf track at Woodbine has a very wide turn. This means the horses do not have to adjust their stride. The track also boasts the largest straightaway in North America, which is slightly downhill, so it's not as hard on the horses legs.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Terry Quinn: A Mandate for Soccer at Home and Abroad

The Canadian Soccer Association is involved in an exciting period and has both international and national mandates. One is to elevate the game to the level of sports such as hockey, baseball and basketball. Another is to develop the game at all levels—youth, senior and professional. Today, soccer is the number one grassroots sport in Canada with 600,000 plus players,



is to develop players to meet and excel against the world's best. In Edmonton in 1994, 51,000 fans watched Canada tie Brazil 1-1.

More than 195 countries are members of FIFA, the world governing body of soccer, with 38 countries in our confederation, CONCACAF. International soccer is on a roll with more players, more interest, and more revenues than ever before.

There is a record increase in public interest in the National Team competing in the World Cup qualifying play for France in 1998 (Canada is now in tough shape after leading for most of the game and tying Mexico 2-2 in October).

Recent TV ratings have yielded viewer figures totalling 300,000 viewers per minute (VPM) which lags only behind NHL/Blue Jays baseball at an average of 400,000 VPM. It is forecasted that 38 billion viewers will tune in for the five week, 32 nation, 64 game tournament in 1998 with almost four billion watching the final alone. There will be constant pressure on FIFA to service the TV viewers, the paying spectators, and corporate sponsors by encouraging an entertaining product on the field with the highest technical standard of play.

For the future: grass, grass, grass!; more players in the female side of the game, including more World Cups for women; and continuing development in the skills of players, referees, and coaches (after all, soccer is just a kick in the grass!).

Editors Note: Attention to all those who believe that this article does not affect you. Canada is trying for the World Cup in 2010 and it is played only on natural grass. Does your field measure up? Would you like some of the revenues from being a host? What are your plans for more soccer fields in your municipality for this fast growing sport? Think about it!

Dr. Jack Eggens: History and Maintenance of Turf Tracks

Of all of the surfaces available for riding horses, and horse racing in particular, turf remains the most desirable.

The frequency of races on the same track, and the relative scarcity of suitable research on rootzones for horse racing, has led to the use of other surfaces such as sand. The better trainers and owners of standardbred and thoroughbred horses strongly desire a turf track over those made of wood, sand, or other artificial surfaces.

Major requirements of turf racetracks include:

- Flexibility (cushioning) - resulting from the development of mat. Pierrang and Catrice (1989) found that "flexibility of a turf track was a complex result of soil cohesiveness and ability to settlement and flow. A dry and fibrous thatch has to be developed while a moist and spongy mat must be seriously controlled."
- Firmness - the ability to resist the hard and repeated impact of hooves.
- Repair of severe divotting by hooves, especially on the turns.



- Development of a suitable mat (thatch) and its subsequent control in the off-season periods.
- Maintenance of turf density at the optimum mowing heights required to maintain a suitable sward. The turf is usually mowed at eight to 10 cm during the racing season and then dropped to four to five cm in the off-season to increase turfgrass density.

Grasses used frequently on horse racetracks include:

100,000 coaches, 10,000 referees, and an untold number of volunteers and organizers. The Canadian Coaching Association has recognized that soccer has more A and B level coaches registered than any other sport. An A license coaching certificate takes five to seven years to attain.

There are 11 domestic Canadian championships each year for both boys and girls, and ladies and men. In addition, 600 tournaments are held in Canada with a few like the Robbie which is known worldwide. Teams of all age groups from all parts of Canada travel to many parts of the world to play in soccer tournaments.

Soccer participates as a full partner in the Canada Games, the North American Indigenous Games and various regional and provincial games. This has made soccer more visible across the country. There has been a strong increase in the corporate sector of the game. In 1993, there were three national corporate sponsors. Today, 12 cover most of the programs. These are large organizations such as Burger King, JVC, Snickers, General Motors, Royal Bank, Air Canada, UMBRO, and Gillette.

The Soccer Association has over 200 full-time employees who work at the provincial and district/club areas to continue the development and organization of the game. In 1996, in conjunction with Con Agra, the house of the third Prime Minister of Canada was purchased as a national headquarters in Ottawa.

Pro Soccer

Presently there are five professional clubs in Canada, three outdoor and two indoor. The game is still evolving from a sport we play to a sport we watch.

At the international level, the mandate

Kentucky Bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)

- produces a dense sward which has good trampling resistance
- maintains an acceptable density when mowed at 10-12 cm
- has a strong rhizome system for sod strength and healing
- is a relatively strong thatch or "mat" producer— provides flexibility and resistance to divots
- seedlings are weak; sward establishment from seed quite slow (at least 18 months from seeding to use); and has very poor overseeding success when overseeded into an established sward for repair

Perennial Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*)

- establishes quickly from seed and produces a "trampling resistant" sward
- high lignin content
- has relatively low density at greater mowing heights, but because of its clumping nature, it tends to be somewhat hollow and lacks flexibility
- overseeds very well into an established sward
- rust is a problem for which there is very little control
- extremely aggressive at higher mowing heights and tends to outcompete Kentucky bluegrass

Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*)

- produces a sward with good density and flexibility but is sensitive to competition the higher you cut
- does not overseed readily and has poor healing potential
- used in the maritime climate of Britain and Europe, but suffers in the periodic high temperature stress in southern Ontario

Dr. Bob Sheard: Construction of the Woodbine Turf Track

Bob indicated that most of the information on the sand based turf track that he had advised on was covered in the construction pamphlet at the registration desk and had been sent to all members. He instead spent his time explaining the research being done at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute on the availability of water in sand rootzones. This was work he was involved with in 1995-96. See GTI HILITES in the September 1997 issue of *Sports Turf Manager* for more details. Essentially what the research showed was that many sand based greens are being overwatered instead of being allowed to dry down. Too much water may result in a waterlogged condition.

Andrew Gaydon: Irrigation at Woodbine

Here are the hard facts:

- two eight-inch pipes run down either side of the track; these constitute the mains for the irrigation system
- 12 to 14 sprinklers operate at one time
- on a manual start, the irrigation system goes through a complete cycle of 24 zones; however, the system has full automatic capability
- two men are employed full-time on watering and another in training; they have to be ready for sprinklers sticking, or for an underground break
- pump capacity is 700-800 gallons per minute
- watering is done on a five day rolling cycle, with water on the sixth day—20 minutes per sprinkler; takes seven to eight hours.

This is all run by a computerized system which results in savings in labour, money and water. Water will be crucial in the next 10 years as many local wells dry up. Woodbine is well off for water due to the ability to recycle and store the water from its stables in ponds (as mentioned earlier). The central computer also manages water, lighting, and the locking of gates (if required). The superintendent is close to the airport so he can download weather information to maximize the use of his equipment. Hand held radios or phones allow him to radio or phone to his office to change the irrigation cycle. ♦



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APOLOGY

to Dr. Bob Sheard and our members on the omission of graphs that accompanied GTI HILITES in the September 1997 issue of *Sports Turf Manager*.