



Sports Turf Manager

FOR BETTER, SAFER SPORTS TURF. AUTUMN 2014. VOL. 27. NO. 3.

Achieving Success in the Turf Industry Through Continued Education

Sidney Ryzebol, 2014 Sheard Scholarship Recipient

The days of progressing along a career path without at least some sort of related schooling are quickly coming to a close, no matter what industry you are in. Colleges and universities alike are offering more and more programs for even the most niche industries – programs that many people would consider to be unnecessary. The Turfgrass Management diploma program offered through the Ontario Agricultural College at the University of Guelph, would be a program that would fall into this category. Some would ask, “how much could you possibly learn about growing and mowing grass?” For those of us in the industry, the answer is obvious, you can learn a lot! No matter what sector of the turf industry you're in – whether it be sports turf, golf or lawn care – it is becoming imperative to have at least a base post-secondary education in the field. Yet the need and importance of education does not end once you have received that “piece of paper” and secured a position within the industry; that should be considered only the beginning. A successful sports turf manager uses ongoing education as a valuable resource to improve their skills as well as the skills of those around them.

Like any job, most of the skills a sports turf manager needs in order to perform their duties are learned simply through experience

in the field. Why then, is additional education so important? Education is less important in teaching us “how” to do our job, but rather gives us the perspective of “why” that job is being done as it is. It allows us to look with a critical eye at the work being done, and determine whether there is a more effective means of reaching the same or, more importantly, superior results. It is all too easy for a turf manager to fall into a comfortable routine or a set of management practices that produce acceptable results year-after-year, without ever looking critically to see if there are improvements that could be made. In most cases, a critical eye can always find ways to improve upon what is being done. In this ever-evolving industry, it is important that turf managers work hard to improve and keep pace with new hurdles as they present themselves, as there will come a time when just acceptable results will no longer cut it. Ongoing education can equip a turf manager with an ever-expanding arsenal of tools necessary to adapt and discover new solutions, all the while ensuring that a critical view is kept of the management regime required to guarantee the continued success of our operations.

There are a number of ways for turf managers to ensure that they are receiving industry specific education on an ongoing

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President's Desk

BY TENNESSEE PROPEDO

What a strange year it has been so far, from a winter that would not leave to the summer that never was. Mother Nature has certainly been up to her old tricks again.

Ontario experienced a cool wet summer that aided in the recovery of much of the extensive winterkill that left both sports turf managers and golf course superintendents scrambling this past spring. In the west, numerous areas have already received their first taste of the white stuff, which I hope is not a sign of things to come.

Things continue to evolve with our branding and marketing initiative, new incorporated and trade style names and new look. Shortly our education committee will be rolling out a new Synthetic Sports Turf Field Safety and Maintenance Course in collaboration with Mark Nichols of TURFIndustry. Mark is well known in the industry and this course will be of interest to those who manage or maintain synthetic sports turf and to those who wish to develop additional knowledge and skills in this area. Please register early as this course will sell out quickly due to the limited number of seats available. Complete details are available online at SportsTurfCanada.com.

In this issue, you will get a glimpse into two summer sports turf field days. The first, submitted by Hugh Norris of Surrey Parks & Recreation, recaps the successful event that occurred on August 20th in BC in conjunction with our great west coast partners, the Western Canada Turfgrass Association. From all indications this was a highly successful event and kudos to all that made it happen. The 27th annual Ontario event was September 18th at Cutten Fields Golf Course, Guelph. The attendance was fantastic and some of the highlights were the presentation of both our Sports Turf Manager of the Year Award and the Robert W. Sheard Scholarship. Deadlines for the 2015 awards are December 1st and May 30th respectively. See inside for the articles from each of our award recipients.

I would like to offer congratulations to *Turf & Recreation Magazine* and to its editor Mike Jiggins. Celebrating 20 years under its current ownership and Mike's editorial direction, *Turf & Recreation Magazine* represents the turfgrass industry in its entirety, from coast to coast. A long-time supporter of Sports Turf Canada, you will almost always see Mike at our events and reporting our news.

Our very best wishes to Katie Dodson who has joined the Olds College Turfgrass Research Program as lead Research Scientist, while completing her Ph.D. from the University of Guelph. Prior to her tenure as Senior Turfgrass Research Scientist for Jacklin Seed, Katie was a fixture at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, home of Sports Turf Canada. She has spoken at many of our association and industry events and we look forward to her continued involvement in the Canadian turfgrass industry.

In closing, I would like to personally thank Pam Charbonneau who has announced her retirement from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in January 2015. Pam, who coincidentally has her office down the hall from us at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, has been an educator and researcher for all of us in the turf industry for the past 23 years. Pam's research and extension work in the field has left an incredible footprint for all of us to follow. Her continued involvement with the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium kept us well informed with the numerous changes that this profession has undergone over the years. Pam, I wish you a Successful, Healthy and Long Retirement and please don't be a stranger, you're too valuable to our industry. •



Sports Turf Manager

FOR BETTER, SAFER SPORTS TURF. AUTUMN 2014.

"There is not a sprig of grass that shoots uninteresting to me." ~ Thomas Jefferson



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Sports Turf Manager is

Indexed In



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Inside this issue...

REGULAR COLUMNS, DEPARTMENTS & SMALL FEATURES

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Opinions expressed in articles published in Sports Turf Manager are those of the author and not necessarily those of Sports Turf Canada.

Deadline for Winter 2014 Sports Turf Manager: November 7

Achieving Success in the Turf Industry Through Continued Education

Continued from page 1

basis throughout the duration of their careers. One of the most important ways we can do this, is to become an active member of an industry association. These associations strive to support industry professionals in a variety of different ways. They provide members with access to current industry research and up-to-date information through regular publications, magazines and educational books focused on sports turf. They also facilitate professional development for their members through annual educational conferences, symposiums, workshops and field days designed to keep sports turf managers informed on current topics within the industry. They offer access to the wealth of invaluable experience and advice of their network of industry experts, who are there to offer assistance to sports turf managers with whatever turf related problems they are having.

Aside from becoming involved with an industry association, turf managers should always be seeking out and attending industry trade shows and seminars, enrolling in courses whenever possible and positioning themselves to attain certification in as many different areas of the industry as possible. This will ensure continual learning and growth, and result in a very well rounded professional who can ideally handle any challenge he or she faces on the job. Taking weekend courses to receive certificates in topics such as irrigation, becoming a licensed pesticide applicator, or even completing the four week Turf Managers' Short Course at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute are all very attainable, yet highly beneficial steps to take. While it is not necessarily a requirement in all sports turf establishments, taking the steps to become IPM (Integrated Pest Management) Certified is one goal sports turf managers and their respective organizations, should aim for. Becoming IPM Certified demonstrates to customers, peers and the public that your pest management practices meet the very highest standards to guarantee effectiveness and reduce hazards to both people and the environment. It also ensures that you will continue to receive ongoing education, as to remain certified you must obtain Continuing Education Credits annually from events approved by the IPM Council of Canada.

Not only is it important for sports turf managers to become educated, it is equally as important to use knowledge as a tool to educate the people that we work with. Turf managers should be able to pass on pertinent knowledge and educate staff. Staff then better understand their roles and become more invested in what they are doing. This can ultimately result in less of a burden on the turf manager as educated staff should think more critically and contribute towards achieving more efficient and effective management regimes – benefitting the organization as a whole.

Event Calendar

Association Events are Highlighted in Green

November 21

Registration Deadline November 7

Sports Turf Canada/TURFIndustry

Synthetic Sports Turf Field Safety & Maintenance Course

Cutten Fields, Guelph, ON

www.sportsturfcanada.com

December 1

Sports Turf Canada

Sports Turf Manager of the Year Award

Nomination Deadline

www.sportsturfcanada.com/Awards&Scholarship

December 1 – 4

Registration Deadline November 14

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Atlas Tube Centre, Lakeshore, ON

www.sportsturfcanada.com/STMMCourse

January 13 to 16

Sports Turf Managers Association

Conference & Exhibition

Denver, CO

www.stma.org

STC members can register at STMA rates!

January 26 to February 20

University of Guelph

Turf Managers' Short Course

www.turfmanagers.ca

February 17 to 19

Atlantic Turfgrass Research Foundation

Atlantic Turfgrass Conference

Halifax, NS

www.agsa.ca

February 18 & 19

Ontario Turfgrass Symposium

The Evolution of Green

University of Guelph

Guelph, ON

www.turfsymposium.ca

March 10 to 12

Western Canada Turfgrass Association

Conference & Tradeshow

Victoria, BC

www.wcta-online.com

Turf managers should be able to educate and effectively communicate with upper management to put themselves in a better position to get priority work done. A turf manager must appear competent and be able to effectively communicate to their superiors what work must take priority, the resources needed to accomplish this work effectively, and why. If you can explain and give educated justification to your superiors, you will be in a better position to get the work that needs to be done completed in the most effective manner.

Most importantly, a sports turf manager must be able to effectively educate and communicate with user groups. More often than not, the turf manager and user groups seem to be at odds. User groups are generally unaware of how their actions can negatively impact the turf – such as repeatedly running football drills over the same lines on a field. Many recurring problems could be avoided if user groups were educated as to the reasons behind the management practices being performed on the fields. Communicating as to how they can work together with the turf manager by adjusting their

usage will only make conditions better on the turf in the long run.

In order for sports turf managers to be successful in their profession and for them to continue to improve and adapt when new challenges arise, there is a need for us to not only seek ongoing continued education, but also to be able to educate the individuals around us. Going through the motions to achieve “good enough” is not the path to being an effective turf manager. We must constantly be learning to assess our management practices critically, striving for improvement wherever possible. Opportunities for continued education are abundantly available to all professionals within the turf industry. Turf managers should also see themselves as educators. By sharing knowledge, the job of being a turf manager can actually become a lot easier. It puts the whole ecosystem of staff, management and user groups on the same team, working together to achieve the same goals. Education plays just as important a role in finding success in the turf industry as in any other industry. After all, there is much more to being a turf manager than just “growing and mowing grass.” •

Sports Turf Canada Announces 2014 Sheard Scholarship Recipient



L-R: Dr. Robert W. Sheard, for whom the scholarship is named, with 2014 recipient Sydney Ryzebol and Sports Turf Canada past president Paul Gillen at the association's 27th Annual Field Day in Guelph, ON.

Sports Turf Canada is pleased to announce that Sidney Ryzebol is the recipient of the 2014 Robert W. Sheard Scholarship. Sidney is entering his second year in the University of Guelph's Associate Diploma in Turfgrass Management Program, having just completed his summer internship with the City of Guelph. His scholarship essay submission “Achieving Success in the Turf Industry Through Continued Education” appears as our cover story for this issue.

The Sports Turf Canada scholarship, renamed for Dr. Sheard in 2007, was established in 1993 to encourage, support and provide leadership to those considering a career in the sports turf industry. Funded through association membership fees, it is intended to assist students with the cost of tuition, books and related expenses.

Awarded annually, the next application deadline is May 30, 2015. Visit www.sportsturfcanada.com for scholarship policies, application requirements and the application form. •

NEW & RETURNING MEMBERS

Alberta

Tracey Donnachie
Town of Whitecourt, AB

Ontario

Peter Purvis
Guelph Turfgrass Institute
Guelph, ON

Sidney Ryzebol
R.W. Sheard Scholarship Recipient
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON

Mark Nicholls
UBU Sports
Welland, ON

Scott Sim
Turf Care Products Canada Limited
Newmarket, ON

Tom Cheesman
Clifford Phillips
Brent Woolsey
City of Ottawa, ON

Reid Paterson
City of Vaughan, ON

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An Update on Field Safety Testing



Tom Serensits and Dr. Andy McNitt
The Pennsylvania State University

Tom Serensits is Manager of Penn State's Center for Sports Surface Research; Dr. Andy McNitt is Professor of Soil Science – Turfgrass, and Director of the Sports Surface Research Center, as well as Coordinator for Penn State's Turfgrass Science Undergraduate Program.

Penn State's Pennfoot machine measures both rotational and linear (translational) traction. Rotational traction is more related to injury risk while linear is more related to performance. For rotational traction, Pennfoot measures the amount of force required to rotate the shoe in the turf.

With another football season underway, coaches are finalizing game plans they hope will bring them season-long success on the field. Sports turf managers are no different but instead of wins, success means providing playing field conditions that maximize both playability and safety.

The current heightened focus on athlete safety has increased the scrutiny of all potential contributors to athlete injury, including the playing surface. In fact, all NFL fields are now tested and certified before every game using a set of "recommended practices." These recommended practices include tests such as field hardness (Gmax), soil moisture, infill depth, and visual inspections, depending on the surface type.

Much of the increased concern for athlete safety is due to a heightened awareness of the issues

surrounding concussions. Research indicates that most concussions are the result of violent athlete to athlete collisions. However, this same research indicates that approximately 10-15% of concussions in American football are caused by the head hitting the surface. Consequently, the hardness of the playing surface can affect injury risk.

By routinely monitoring field hardness levels, management practices can be implemented well before the surface exceeds hardness thresholds. For example, surface hardness of NFL fields is tested with the Clegg Impact Tester. The Clegg quantifies surface hardness by measuring how quickly a vertically-dropped weight stops when it hits the surface. In the NFL, all fields, both natural and synthetic, must be below 100 Gmax in all locations when tested with the Clegg. If hardness levels begin to approach 100, steps are taken to lower these values. Practices that lower Gmax of a surface include topdressing crumb rubber onto synthetic turf fields or needle-tine aerification on natural turf fields.

The Clegg model used in the NFL is equipped with a 2.25 kg missile and is calibrated from 0 to 150 G. A standard Clegg is calibrated from 1 to 1000. The 0 to 150 G calibration of the NFL model has better accuracy over the range of Gmax values typical of natural and synthetic athletic fields. (The NFL Clegg model can be purchased from turf-tec.com for approximately \$4,000.)

The F355

Another device traditionally used to measure surface hardness of synthetic turf fields is the F355. Named after the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard that describes its specifications, the F355 quantifies surface hardness using the same principle as the Clegg. However, the drop heights and mass of the weights differ between the devices and the generated Gmax values are not interchangeable. For instance, 100 G as measured with the Clegg is not the same as 100 G measured with the F355. While the NFL uses a limit of 100 G with the Clegg, according to ASTM, a field should not exceed 200 G when measured with the F355.

In the past, the F355 has been used to measure Gmax levels on synthetic turf while the Clegg has traditionally been used on natural turf. However, because both devices use the same principle to measure surface hardness, either can be used, regardless of surface type. A recent ASTM subcommittee round-robin testing event at Penn State confirmed the high correlation between the Clegg and the F355. The round-robin testing included seven testing agencies and 15 surfaces. The full report is available on our website, ssrc.psu.edu.

Regardless of the device used, routine field testing benefits all athletes who use the field and demonstrates a commitment to field safety. Arguments can be made for either device, however, if fields are not being tested, no advantage is gained. Many field managers are now using the much less expensive Clegg adopted by the NFL, which provides a more affordable option for sports complexes that wish to be proactive and regularly measure Gmax on their own.

No surface hardness discussion is complete without addressing the reasons why fields get harder over time. Field hardness on natural turf fields is largely determined by soil water content and compaction. Dry conditions produce a harder field than wet conditions. A dry field combined with a high level

of soil compaction produces an even harder surface. Obviously, lack of turf cover can also contribute to higher Gmax values. We have measured Gmax values well over 250 Gmax (Clegg) on dry, compacted fields. As a reminder, the NFL threshold is 100 Gmax.

Not surprisingly, water management and core cultivation are key practices to reduce surface hardness levels. However, core cultivation during the season is not recommended. As a result, in-season techniques to reduce hardness are a bit trickier. NFL field managers have been experimenting with in-season needle-tine aeration and deep-tine units set to penetrate only a few inches to slightly raise the surface. These techniques have been fairly successful for short-term reductions in surface hardness without sacrificing playability, but care should be taken. If in-season cultivation becomes too aggressive, the surface playability may suffer due to reduced footing.

Synthetic Turf

On synthetic turf, contrary to popular belief, compaction is not a major cause of increased surface hardness. Infill particles are usually very uniform in size. This uniformity limits compaction potential and after an initial, post-installation settling-in period, compaction is minimal.

Instead, what we call “walk-off” crumb rubber is frequently the main contributor to elevated surface hardness levels. The crumb-rubber infill is what provides the cushioning. The small amounts of rubber particles being removed from the field in shoes, on equipment, etc. add up over time. As the crumb rubber layer thins, surface hardness increases. This is especially true in high-use areas.

Consequently, infill depth should be measured at numerous locations across the field regularly and compared to your turf manufacturer’s recommended infill depth range. Infill should be added when levels drop below the recommended range. Often, the entire field will not require additional infill. For instance, if the field is used for lacrosse, perhaps only the goal mouths will require a few buckets of rubber. In these situations, rubber can be hand-applied and worked in with stiff-bristled push brooms. Large scale additions of rubber often require repeated light applications of crumb rubber using a topdresser followed by grooming with a drag broom.

Recently, head injuries have received a lot of attention; however, lower extremity injuries can often

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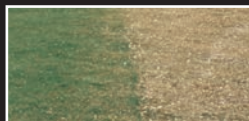
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sideline athletes for longer periods of time. Sometimes the playing field is mentioned as a possible reason for a knee or ankle injury. Often times the type of surface is mentioned as a culprit if the surface is synthetic. If the field is natural turf, the condition of the surface is sometimes blamed.

Another, possibly more important factor, is being recognized as a significant contributor to lower extremity injury. That contributor is the shoe. Remember, the traction between a shoe and the surface is affected by both the shoe and the surface. The aggressive cleat patterns found on many of today's most popular athletic footwear are producing traction levels much higher than we have seen in the past.

A certain level of traction is needed to run, change direction, and perform other maneuvers necessary for sports. However, high levels of what is called "rotational traction" have been indicated in increased knee and ankle injuries. High rotational traction means that the shoe is resistant to rotating within the turf as a player pivots. In essence, the shoe sticks while the leg rotates. If the shoe sticks, ligaments and tendons are put under additional stress, which may lead to increased injury risk.

We recently measured rotational traction of 30 commercially available shoes on Kentucky bluegrass, bermudagrass, and FieldTurf Revolution. The difference among playing surfaces was minimal

compared to the large differences found among shoes. Although there is not enough research to set safe and unsafe traction thresholds, our data suggest rotational traction, and therefore injury risk, varies greatly among cleat patterns.

Additionally, cleat pattern appears to play a much greater role than the playing surfaces tested. The database with rotational traction information for each shoe on each of the three surfaces can be found on ssrc.psu.edu. We plan to update this database each year with traction data from newly released cleat patterns. A related study that included multiple shoes on various surfaces has recently been published in the April 2014 edition of *Applied Turfgrass Science*, a peer-reviewed scientific journal. The study can be found on the journal's website, www.agronomy.org/publications/ats.

As we all know, injuries are an unfortunate part of sports. However, a proactive approach to field safety can help minimize injury risk. Routine surface hardness testing, adding crumb rubber when infill levels drop, educating trainers and parents about the importance of shoe selection are all things that we can do to provide the safest field possible. Because at the end of the day, the safety of the athletes using our fields is our number one goal.

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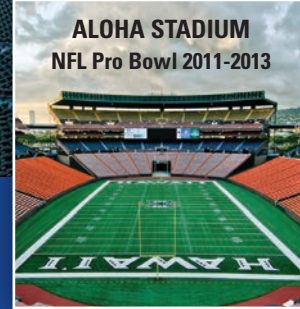
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27th Annual *Field Day Guelph, ON*

The banquet rooms at Guelph's historic Cutten Fields were filled to bursting at the 27th Annual Ontario Sports Turf Field Day on September 18th. More than 200 participants from the province's turfgrass sector attended – sports turf managers, researchers, students and industry suppliers – intent on learning more about drainage, field performance standards, protection and renovation. Golf Course and Grounds Superintendent David Kuypers welcomed us to the private golf and tennis club, setting the stage for the day's program. Cutten Fields was one of many Ontario golf courses that sustained heavy damage early in 2014.

We thank our featured speakers – Jason Henderson of the University of Connecticut and

Pamela Charbonneau, Turfgrass Specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Pam's research article is slated for publication in our Winter issue – watch for it! The always obliging Bill Clausen, Facility Manager, led our tour of the University of Guelph sports fields.

At such a large gathering of members we took the opportunity to honour some of our own with award and scholarship presentations and retirement best wishes.

Events, such as our field days, would not take place without the generous sponsorship and exhibitor participation of our industry suppliers. They play an integral role and are an important source of information for us all. We appreciate your support!

Thank you to our Generous Sponsors!





**Top: Touring the University of Guelph Sports Fields
Right: Davie Kuypers, Cutten Fields and Debbie Conrad,
Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation**



**Best Wishes Pam! Pam Charbonneau, OMAFRA with Sports Turf
Canada President Tennessee Propedo**



**Rob Witherspoon, Guelph Turfgrass Institute congratulates 2014
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2nd Annual *Field Day Surrey, BC*



Top: Where there's smoke there's Jed McGeachie and the Corix BBQ wagon. Special thanks to the Corix team for providing lunch once again this year!

Below: Mike Hebrard, Athletic Field Design (L) and Hugh Norris, City of Surrey, inspect the field painting logo template.

All photos Jerry Rousseau, unless otherwise noted.

The second annual West Coast Sports Field Training Day, hosted by the City of Surrey and the Western Canada Turfgrass Association (WCTA), was held at Cloverdale Athletic Park on Wednesday, August 20th. This year's event attempted to shift gears (literally) after last year's inaugural event in Langley, as it was smaller in scope and size, but not on energy or enthusiasm. And the weather was almost perfect, with just enough cloud cover to keep everyone comfortable.

For this year, the organizing committee's goal was to create a relaxing but stimulating day for the 80 delegates who attended from BC's lower mainland and Vancouver Island. The morning session included a presentation by Mike Hebrard of Athletic Field Design out of Portland, Oregon. His power point presentation and subsequent field demonstrations focused on sports field logo painting and ball diamond infield preparation. For many delegates attending, working with stencils and logo painting are not something that is practiced to the same degree north of the 49th parallel.

Mike's hands on demonstration included creating a stencil from scratch out of a 10' x 12' vinyl tarp. Attendees were encouraged to help out with creating and then filling in the "Softball BC" logo with paint supplied by Tomko Sports. The end result was a very impressive professional looking logo, created from simple materials and a bit of high school geometry. Painted logos, when strategically situated on a sports field or ball diamond, create an attractive and professional looking finish when hosting provincial or national caliber tournaments.

The afternoon session was dubbed the "Landscape Midway and Rodeo." This session was modeled after a much more competitive model that exists in some areas in the United States. Cities, municipalities and towns compete in landscape related tasks and equipment operation against each other. Competitions in some states actually produce a state champion. However, in



Softball BC logo.



Double winner! University of BC's Krista Hewlett shows off her prize(s) from the skill competition.

Photo: Hugh Norris

true Canadian spirit, the afternoon activities in Surrey were designed to be mostly fun with prizes to stimulate a competitive and engaging atmosphere. Approximately 30 prizes were awarded that were generously supplied by the attending vendors, who all stepped up to the plate to host a variety of tasks from field painting blindfolded, to skill testing landscape product application quizzes, to a timed irrigation scheduling and product knowledge race.

“At the end of the day, I believe we accomplished our goal of providing a low-cost, unique and stimulating atmosphere for sports turf professionals” said Hugh Norris. “Hopefully, another BC city will carry the torch and continue with the 3rd annual event in 2015. Lastly, I want to thank the City of Surrey and especially the Surrey Parks, Athletic Field Operations staff for rallying behind the committee’s vision to host this style of event.”

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With increasing frequency, while on sales calls, I have participated in interesting and frank conversations about the direction our industry is bound. It sure can be fun to try to guess and speculate where we are all heading, but it does beg the question, what does the future hold for us all in the turf industry? That's not an easy question to answer, but as this column is meant to offer a perspective from a sales representative's point of view, what does the future have in store for us? Will there be a need for an industry representative in 10, 15 or 20 years down the road?

Understandably, some might scoff at the title of this column considering the current plethora of suppliers vying for a turf manager's time. It's understandable that some might consider the notion that salesmen are on the verge of extinction to be laughable. That being said, the "Golden Age" of the salesman is most certainly long gone. The Golden Age is now nothing more than a romantic stroll down memory lane to

years and a book by E.B. Weiss, that created some attention, predicted that through pre-qualifying, pre-selling, branding extensive marketing, the salesman would be essentially eliminated.

The internet undoubtedly has leveled the information asymmetry, but in my self-interested opinion, I believe there will always be a need for a turf industry representative for the following reasons:

As much as the internet is the "information highway", it is also the "disinformation highway". A good salesman should provide accurate and unbiased information on all existing and new products that will best fit the needs of the customer. Also, with time at a premium nowadays, who has the time to sift through pages of product information?

Secondly, there could be longer wait times to receive product. A salesman is the key contact who bypasses customer service and communicates with warehouse personnel to drop their current task and

The Industry Sales Rep: An Endangered Species?

Paul Grotier, Direct Solutions, A Division of AAT

a bygone era, to a simpler time, so I am told, when there were two or three suppliers to buy product from and when the salesman was virtually a single source of information for the turf manager - product related or otherwise.

Nowadays, one can hear comments such as how the internet might replace and be the death knell of my vocation. It's no secret that more and more consumers are purchasing online, replacing some of the face to face transactions that used to occur. Consumers today have access to such a wide array of products that can be purchased via the internet. So, why can't one simply order their fertilizer, chemical or field needs online as well without having to place an order through a salesman?

Interestingly, the demise of the salesman has been predicted since the early 20th century. In 1916, an article in the *New York Times* asked, "Are salesman necessary?" Print advertisement was said to be more efficient and the conversions of farms into cities, where news and information spreads at a faster rate, were cited as possible threats. Fast forward fifty

divert their energies elsewhere when a customer needs product immediately. That's not mentioning finding product for a customer when the warehouse is out of stock!

Thirdly, and what I used to appreciate the most from our sales representatives, was that they were always just a phone call away to simply share an idea with, or discuss product application rates and mixes when a decision had to be made immediately. The key is to build a relationship based on trust.

It's no secret that our market is very well serviced or maybe even over-serviced. Who knows? If population dynamics are accurate, maybe we are due for a little attrition on our side of things, but at this point, I still believe there is a role for the turf industry representative. All we have to do is to strive to provide value, unbiased information and the best customer service before and after a sale. •

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Improving the Quality of Sports Fields in the City of Toronto

Ray Stukas, Manager, Parks, Toronto & East York District, City of Toronto

Every day we make decisions which could change our lives forever. As public servants, every day we make decisions which affect other people's lives.

I have been very fortunate to work in an organization which exists to serve the public. I am even more fortunate to work for a division which has as its goal improving the quality of life for the residents of the City of Toronto.

Towards this end, the City of Toronto Council passed a motion on July 11, 2012, with respect to Outdoor Sports Field Provision, Maintenance Standards and Fee Structure. Essentially this motion directed the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, in cooperation with sports organizations, to develop and implement a plan to improve the quality of sports fields. In September of that year I was assigned as manager lead for this initiative.

Our first step was to communicate with the Toronto Sports Council to enlist their involvement. Subsequently we invited incumbent Sports Field Permit holders to create a Sports Organization Reference Group (SORG) and sub-committees to provide input on issues which needed to be addressed to improve the quality of our fields and diamonds. Volunteer representatives from baseball, soccer, cricket, lacrosse, Australian football and Ultimate Frisbee stepped forward to populate SORG, the Maintenance Standards sub-committee, the Permit Issues sub-committee and the Capital Plan sub-committee. The Capital Plan sub-committee was dissolved prior to the first meeting as the

subject matter was going to be dealt with in a broader Facilities Service Plan. The scope of this review covers all Parks, Forestry and Recreation facilities including sports fields.

In 2013, 16 committee meetings were held to discuss and agree upon maintenance standards, field classification criteria, pre-post season field condition audits, allocation of sports turf crews, responsibilities and contributions of sports organizations, inclement weather and block booking policies.

On the City staff side an internal Sports Field Committee composed of one Park Supervisor lead from each district: Etobicoke and York, Toronto and East York, North York, and Scarborough; a Customer Service Supervisor (Permits section); and two Program and Standards Officers, one specializing in turf and the other in community consultation, was created. Given the volume of work, an Administrative Support Assistant was added to the team. All still were responsible for their current duties.

Prior to the first meeting of SORG we met with parks staff from the City of Hamilton and the City of Markham who were kind enough to give us a tour of their sports fields and diamonds. It became apparent that we had fallen behind. The critical missing piece that these municipalities had, which we did not, were specialized trained crews to maintain our A, B and C classified fields. The creation of trained dedicated crews to implement an enhanced integrated plant health care (IPHC) program was our first recommendation.

The four lead Park Supervisors from each district all

Sports Fields Classification/Rating Standards – May 3, 2014				
Facility	Premier	A	B	C
Baseball Slo Pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult-sized field 250' or greater, home run fence or outfield • Irrigated • Dugouts • Fence • Warning Track • Bleachers • Pitcher's Plate/Mound (for baseball) • Home Plate • Dedicated staff on site • Lining/dragging • Groomed daily • Cut 3x per week • Aerified 4x annually • Fertilized 4x annually • Overseeded 4x annually • Topdressed 2x annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult-sized field 250' or greater, home run fence or outfield • Irrigated • Players benches • Pitcher's Plate/Mound (for baseball) • Home Plate • Groomed 3x per week • Cut 2x per week • Aerified 4x annually • Fertilized 4x annually • Overseeded 4x annually • Topdressed 2x annually (100% turf area both applications) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigated • Home Plate • Groomed 2x per week • Cut 2x per week • Aerified 3x annually • Fertilized 3x annually • Overseeded 3x annually • Topdressed 1x annually (100% turf area) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Irrigated • Home Plate • Groomed 1x per week • Cut 1x per week • Aerified annually • Fertilized annually • Overseeded annually • Topdressed (60 fields 100% turf area)

completed the Turf Managers' Short Course at the University of Guelph in February, 2013. A new classification entitled Sports Field Foreperson was created. Four Sports Field Forepersons were hired. It was decided that there would be long term benefits if they also completed the Turf Managers' Short Course, which they did last February. All now have crews of five permanent staff who last spring completed a four part training program designed and taught by Roger Macklin, our Turf Committee chairperson and Doug Smith, our Integrated Plant Health Care specialist. The training program entitled Program of Excellence covers principles with respect to soil

types, soil compaction, fertilizers, sports turf seed blends and topdressing blends including processes, equipment training and calibration. During the winter season the crews are assigned to maintaining outdoor artificial ice rinks.

I would like to add that Roger and Doug also created the enhanced IPHC program. The charts include our new maintenance standards for the 39 Premier, 93 'A', 172 'B' and 367 'C' permitted fields/diamonds the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division maintains. The IPHC program is now also linked to the field classification rating criteria.

Sports Fields Classification/Rating Standards – May 3, 2014				
Facility	Premier	A	B	C
Soccer Football Rugby Cricket Field Hockey Field Lacrosse *Ultimate * revised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult-sized field • Irrigated • Goal posts • Dedicated staff • Lining • Synthetic turf surface • Cut 3x per week • Aerified 4x annually • Fertilized 4x annually • Overseeded 4x annually • Topdressed 2x annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult-sized field • Irrigated • Goal posts • Cut 2x per week • Aerified 4x annually • Fertilized 4x annually • Overseeded 4x annually • Topdressed 2x annually (100% turf area, summer) (50% turf area, fall) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigated • Goal posts • Cut 2x per week • Aerified 3x annually • Fertilized 3x annually • Overseeded 3x annually • Topdressed 1x annually (50% turf area; goal line to goal line) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Irrigated • Goal posts • Cut 1x per week • Aerified annually • Fertilized annually • Overseeded annually • Topdressed (100 fields 50% turf area)

Our ultimate objective is to customize the program for individual fields in order to optimize input costs. Last fall, soil samples were taken for all 'A' classification fields to begin this process. As well, turf diagnostic instruments including soil thermometers, soil moisture meters, soil penetrometers and refractometers, have been purchased and forepersons trained in their use. Also a Turf Colour Meter has been purchased to assess turfgrass quality. By quantifying the colour parameter to turfgrass quality, the turf colour meter can be used to inform on fertilizer performance and release characteristics as well as germination, establishment and drought stress. A methodology for weed counts has been agreed upon and data will be compiled over time to use as one of the indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. We will also be utilizing pheromone traps to assist us in determining the proper application of nematodes. A formal diagnostic program is planned to be in place for next season.

Although ambitious, we believe collecting this data will enable us to develop a leading edge IPHC program for municipal sports fields.

We have also begun replacing the aging and limited variety of turf equipment used in delivering our maintenance program. Four top of the line, high volume broadcaster topdressers have been purchased. More tarps are being purchased primarily for newly seeded areas to accelerate establishment of turf. They also seem to have a dual benefit in keeping unauthorized play

off areas and are slightly more cost effective than snow fencing when labour costs are considered. High quality dragmats have also been purchased. When core aerifying, cores will now always be dragmatted in. Purchase of other equipment is planned, however these purchases are budget driven and will occur over time. Fortunately, we have five municipal golf courses which are willing to share equipment, when possible.

Further to our ongoing efforts to improve delivery of service, the IPHC crews participated in a pilot Work Management System, tracking work activity on iPads issued to them. Currently they are testing Smart Pen technology to determine which system best fulfills our needs.

The benefits to the community that came out of this initiative have not been limited to the delivery of higher quality fields but also better communication between stakeholders. Sports field user groups can now access information with respect to field closures which is posted Monday to Friday by 3:00 pm on the Parks webpage or through Twitter.

I could go on. It's been a busy year particularly after the winter we had.

Let me end by saying I am more than honoured to receive the Sports Turf Canada Award for Manager of the Year in 2014 but it is shared with all my colleagues at the City of Toronto who have brought us to this point.

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**Front Row L-R: City of Toronto staff Kevin Caissie, Liz Kouri, Ray Stukas, Rob Witherspoon/Guelph Turfgrass Institute, Andrew Gothard, Rob Uprichard
Back Row L-R: Dennis Dametto, Doug Smith, Roger Macklin, Ed Lewis, Mike Martin, Paul Orichefsky**

While announced in the Spring, we took the opportunity at the recent Sports Turf Canada Ontario Field Day to formally introduce and congratulate Ray Stukas as the 2014 Sports Turf Manager of the Year. The award is sponsored by the Guelph Turfgrass Institute.

The Sports Turf Manager of the Year award is a prestigious honour which recognizes an individual's professional ability and contribution to the Canadian sports turf industry and shows appreciation for their proactive and progressive efforts within the profession. Nomination deadline for 2015 award is December 1, 2014. Visit www.sportsturfcanada.com for entry information.

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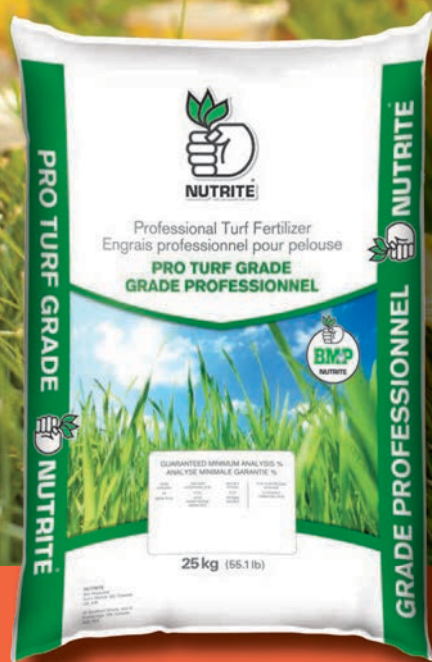
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