cannot be topped with soil or the system will fail. The trenches these systems create should run perpendicular to the way the water flows, end zone to end zone, in order to catch the water as it runs off the crown. Contractors don’t always like to do this because they have to create more fall in the trench. Running the length of

The trenches these systems create should run perpendicular to the way the water flows, arranged end zone to end zone.

does not always mean now they need 65 yards of fall, but going sideline to sideline means they only need 25 yards or so. A herringbone system is a workable compromise. Collection pipes run the length of each sideline and the slit trenches run at a 45-degree angle off of each collection pipe.

A common mistake made is installing a slit trench system and then maintaining the field as you had in the past. When core aerating, if you bring the cores to the surface and then drag them back into the field, eventually you are going to dirty the sand in those drainage channels and plug them up. You will eventually ‘cap’ the trenches with soil. Once the slit trench system is installed, it’s time to start sand topdressing and removing aeration cores. I suggest topdressing immediately after the slit
trenching is installed. To be ready for fall sports, you should put down about 3/8 inch of straight sand across the whole syste

m in spring. Run some test strips in the field surrounds until you become calibrated. This is a lot of sand. It looks like you are burying the grass. The grass will grow through the sand and in four days you'll be mowing again so don't be too concerned. You shouldn't plan on playing on the newly topdressed turf for some time.

This approach is a great way to go but it does require more money to maintain the field. You'll need to purchase sand every year, you'll need a large capacity topdresser, and one of the new core harvesters. It moves you to a higher level of maintenance, but remember the worst thing you can do is spend money on a trench system and maintain the field the way you always did. If you don't core aerate, or you do core aerate and drag the plugs back into the field, eventually the trench system will clog and stop working.

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