It should be understood that the principles and concepts provided in this article are very basic. Most all of us are sports field managers and not soil scientists. Our understanding of the different aspects of turf management is generated on a need to know basis. As the demand for quality, safety and playability of our sports fields increases, this demand will continue to push us to the limits of our abilities and understanding. I don’t claim to know all there is to know about moisture management and its relationship to soil physics but I will continue to read and increase my understanding. As I do I will continue to provide our readers with what I consider to be accurate useable information.

The following books were used as reference material and are highly recommended reading material for anyone wishing to gain more knowledge in this area.


The main question is this; what is the current condition of the turf? If the turf is still retaining good color and looking healthy, I would delay the late season fertilization. If fertilizer were applied after top growth ceased and the turf is totally dormant, this application would be considered a dormant application. The purpose and benefit of a dormant application differs from that of late season fertilization in that the benefits are reaped in the spring. Some of the nutrients are absorbed into the root system and some are held in the soil. In either case the majority of nutrients are utilized as the turf awakens from dormancy in the early spring. Its benefits are realized by the stimulation of root development, early green up, lateral growth and finally top growth. When dormant fertilizer is applied in the late fall, any spring fertilization should be delayed and only applied when visual evaluation of the turf reveals a deficiency. This typically becomes evident in the late spring when a light application of nitrogen along with phosphorous and potassium shown to be necessary by a soil test is all that is typically required.