

have a full tank of gas left and do not want to burn if unnecessarily, you can add a fuel stabilizer and run the engine for about 10 minutes to ensure that the stabilizer has been mixed with the fuel

Change the oil and the oil filter (if equipped). True, the fresh oil will just sit over the off-season, but it will provide you and opportunity to examine the oil system for any contaminants. If you see anything unusual, you can have the problem repaired during normal downtime and prevent a slow start to the next mowing season. When changing the oil, if you notice milky oil or a shiny sludge in the filter, it is a sign of coolant leakage. If the oil smells burned, it is a sign of overheating. Put a dab of oil on a paper towel: A lighter stain "halo" around the darker stain indicates fuel in the oil. You may also be able to smell the fuel in the filter.

Servicing the air filter system at the end of the mowing season is especially important, if you plan to also use your mowing equipment for fall-cleanup activities such as mulching leaves. Using a mulching mower or a vacuum system makes leaf cleanup quick, but it's also a very tough environment for

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An example of an accomplishment: It Can Be Done.

As a Northern Michigan University student in the late 1980's, Heather Nabozny tuned in Detroit Tigers radio broadcasts to remind her of home, family and the excitement shared during the team's championship 1984 season. While that World Series run may seem particularly distant for fans of a franchise that lost 119 games in 2003, the 33-year old Milford, Mich., native has never felt closer to the franchise. Armed with a turf-management degree from Michigan State and a track record of success as head grounds keeper for the West Michigan Whitecaps, Nabozny became the first (and remains the only) female head groundkeeper in Major League Baseball history when the Tigers hired her in 2000. Paul Steinbach asked Nabozny how she groomed her own path to the bigs. She is also a Certified Sports Field Manager.

Q: What led you to consider this profession?

A: At NMU, I thought I wanted to do social work. Then in the summertime, I worked for my father's lawn-care company and he would send his

employees to turf-management seminars. Michigan State was at the one of them talking about its turf-management program, and the light bulb just went on: "Wow, you can go to school for that?"

Q: What about turf management appealed to you?

A: I am not much of an office person. I do what I have to do here to keep everything organized, but I love to be outdoors. And the reason I steered toward athletic fields is I like to be athletic myself. I run on the warning track during batting practice when the team is in town.

Q: Why has groundskeeping traditionally been a male-only field?

A: Athletic fields have just come into the forefront as an area of study, and until I took this position there really weren't any women doing athletic turf. I don't think young women really even know anything about managing turf.

Q: Do you avail yourself to women wishing to learn?

A: There have been women who have called at the suggestion of men: "Hey, call Heather up. You'll probably feel

comfortable talking to her about how to break into the I business and how to move up." To be completely honest, being in the minority gives us a better chance of being remembered. But it's also very important that we do an excellent job. If you're in the spotlight, there's extra pressure.

Q: How did you react to the launch of the Unofficial International Heather Nabozny Fan Club?

A: It kind of cheeped me out at first. They'd say, "Yeah, we're in your fan club. Can we get our picture taken with you?" Being kind of a private person, it's a little odd to me, but it's also an honor.

Q: What kind of player feedback have you gotten for your efforts?

A: The younger players who come up are real complimentary, and the others are just kind of out here to do their job. To me, if there's no news, that's good news.^{2c}

Person to Person

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