



# Me?

## A Certified Sports Field Manager?

Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

Ross Kurcab, turf manager for the Denver Broncos INVESCO Field at Mile High Stadium became the first Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) in 2000. Since then, over 136 sports field managers have become members of this select group. Thousands of associations utilize professional certification programs to recognize individuals for their dedication to their chosen career and their ability to perform to set standards. Ask a certified professional "why?" and many of them will tell you that the certification process is one of the single most important steps they made in career development. Certification demonstrates that successful job applicants have the knowledge to deliver safe, playable and attractive sports fields. It also demonstrates to employers a significant commitment to career and competence. Quite simply, in an increasingly competitive and changing work environment, certification is an essential investment in one's professional future.

There are many qualified sports field managers taking care of sports fields, from the local ball field in the park to professional stadiums. When you become a CSFM, it means that you have taken your profession to the next level. After meeting the credentialing standards of education, experience, the applicant takes a written test. This exam is considered by many to be one of the most difficult in the industry to pass, which is one of the main reasons that those who do pass them display their credentials with pride. The sophistication of the exam development process also contributes to the preferred status of the credentials. Overseen by industry experts, the CSFM exams are specifically based on "real world" responsibilities of sports field management professionals. The program also requires that the CSFM stays current with trends, ethics, regulations, products and new developments that pertain to sports field management through continuing education as well as giving service back to the industry.

Over time, the CSFM credentials have gained a reputation among employers, professionals and industry experts as the most respected and preferred sports field management credential.

I work for a private high school. Whenever I request funding or make a proposal, I found I have more credibility as a CSFM than I would have as only "the guy who works outside taking care of the fields". It has expanded my network through my involvement with my local Chapter and by serving on STMA committees. I have become acquainted with people who I otherwise would not have met. I have trusted colleagues I can call when I need answers.

With over 20 years in the golf course and sports field industries, Scott Bills, CSFM understood golf course superintendents were way ahead of sport turf managers in education, experience and professionalism, as perceived by the public and their own supervisors. Wanting to play a bigger role in bringing more respect to position of 'sports turf manager', Scott sought the CSFM designation. In an interview with UPDATE, he explains: "As a contractor I was constantly frustrated by the poor designs and construction specifications put out by engineers and architects. In many cases, these professionals are learning about designing fields on the dime of the public. Over the past 8-10 years, I have worked for several bonding companies, municipalities and school boards doing forensic work, to determine what went wrong or why athletic fields have failed. I still see specifications with roots zones, grass seed varieties, fertilizer formulations and drainage plans that have been out of date for years or are no longer accepted practice within the industry. In addition, many sports fields are allowed to be built by road builders or other site contractors who have minimal

experience and do not understand the nuances of sports field construction. For the above two reasons, I felt to be a respected source of information and guidance, I needed to first qualify for the CSFM test and then pass it".

The credentialing process begins by contacting the STMA Headquarters and requesting a CSFM Information Packet, containing detailed information about the program as well as an application. The applicant qualifies for the program after first quantifying their education and their experience. The STMA's view is that a combination of education and experience are essential because the sports turf industry has become very sophisticated. You cannot become a CSFM by education alone.

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# TAMING THE SAVAGE EMAIL BEAST



Courtesy of Sports Turf Managers Association  
and Dr. John C. Maxwell's free monthly e-newsletter:  
'Leadership Wired' [www.INJOY.com](http://www.INJOY.com)

If making e-mail work for you instead of against you is a goal of yours, you won't want to miss Stever Robbins' article, "Tips for Mastering E-mail Overload," in a recent issue of Harvard Business School's Working Knowledge e-zine.

Robbins, a leadership consultant and author of "It Takes a Lot More than Attitude to Lead a Stellar Organization," says that "taming e-mail means training the senders to put the burden of quality back on themselves."

## He recommends a two-pronged approach:

- Lead by example by sending better e-mail yourself (by making your e-mails one page or less, editing forwarded messages, making action requests clear, providing full context at the beginning of each message, etc.)
- Explicitly training others to make their online communications more productive.

## When it comes to teaching others, Robbins offers the following suggestions:

- Only check your e-mail at certain times each day. Let your people know that if they need to reach you immediately, "e-mail isn't the way," he writes.
- "Charge people for sending you messages." One CEO Robbins has worked with charges employees five dollars from their budget for each e-mail she gets. "Amazingly, her overload has gone way down, the relevance of e-mails has gone up, and the senders are happy, too, because the added thought often results in them solving more problems on their own," he writes.
- Keep your responses short. Responding to three-page e-mails with three-word answers lets people know not to expect long responses from you, "and then you can proceed to answer at your leisure in whatever format works best for you," Robbins says.

## For other e-mail taming tips, see:

[http://hbswk.hbs.edu/tools/print\\_item.jhtml?id=4438&t=leadership](http://hbswk.hbs.edu/tools/print_item.jhtml?id=4438&t=leadership)

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Experience as a sports field manager is crucial. It is possible to become certified with only a high school education if you have enough experience in sports field management.

Next, the applicant takes a written test. The 300 question examination covers four major areas of sports field management: agronomics (both warm and cool season turf), pest management, administration, and sports specific field management. The CSFM exams are specifically based on "real world" responsibilities of sports field management professionals. This exam is considered by many to be rigorous.

After successfully passing each of the four sections of the exam with a minimum 80% passing grade, the program also requires that the CSFM continues to stay current with trends, regulations, products and new developments that pertain to sports field management through continuing education as well as service to the industry.

For many, there is a personal satisfaction one can get after qualifying for and attaining the CSFM designation. While almost anybody can get a job working within the sports field industry, to be recognized as a true professional within this craft validates the hard work, knowledge and experience necessary to build one's career.

For more information, visit the Sports Turf Managers Association website [www.stma.org](http://www.stma.org) and click on Professionalism - CSFM Program.

Now, isn't it time you accepted the challenge and put the credibility and recognition of this certification to work for you?

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