

# SFMANJ Names its 2013 Field of the Year

By Scott Bills, CSFM

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) received five applications for 2013 Field of the Year. The entrants included the Middlesex County Park Commission, the Somerset County Park Commission, Cumberland County College, the Borough of Glassboro and the Northern Burlington County School District.

The SFMANJ Board of Directors decided on a different evaluation process for 2013. As of the September 2013 board meeting there were no applicants for field of the year. The Board decided to send out a survey to member sports turf managers, in an effort to entice interest. The result was 5 full applications and one survey returned from Morris Township. The Board also decided to have different Board members meet with the applicants to physically inspect the field that was entered and interview the sports turf manager.

The following entrants were recognized at the 2013 NJ Green Expo and awarded 'Runner Up' plaques.



At Cumberland County College, G. Michael Collins submitted a field of the year application for the softball field. Board members Don Savard and Sean Connell met with Michael on campus. Both Don and

Sean were pleasantly surprised by the quality of the field and ingenuity of the turf program. Michael informed Don and Sean they were recycling the fryer oil from the cafeteria for use in the turf equipment. In addition, Michael had initiated an organic turf program. Despite only being at the college for one year, Michael has used his experience in lawn care and landscape management to make numerous improvements to the athletic fields and campus grounds.

In Columbus, NJ, Bernard Luongo, Grounds Supervisor of the Northern Burlington County School District submitted an application for the varsity soccer field. Despite having to manage 27 fields with a four man crew, Bernard continues to improve his fields. This spring, Bernard initiated a program to laser grade and reconstructed the pitcher's mound and batter's boxes on the varsity and JV baseball fields. In addition, the infield mix on the varsity baseball field was amended to provide a firmer surface that will not migrate into the grass edges. Bernard continues to follow the turf program designed for the school by Brad Park of Rutgers University, which includes cultural practices such as aeration and overseeding, plus scheduled application of nutrients required by the soil testing. Bernard strongly feels maintaining a regular mowing schedule which includes returning clippings to the soil and keeping mower blades sharp, have improved the health of the turf. Last season Bernard began using turf blankets on the stadium football field and wear areas on other



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fields to encourage faster turf establishment. The SFMANJ would also like to thank Bernard and the Northern Burlington County School District for hosting the 2013 Spring Field Day.

Dave Kuscinsky, grounds supervisor at the Torpey Athletic Complex once again submitted an application for the baseball field. Dave inherited a field that was designed poorly, with most of the



infield pitched towards home plate. As a result, Dave is constantly doing hand work to keep the field playable. SFMANJ President, Matt Olivi visited with Dave at the field and as usual was thoroughly impressed by Dave's enthusiasm and knowledge. In an attempt to improve drainage, Dave explained he had the field laser graded this year. His turf program continues to show positive improvements with a very playable infield and outfield. Dave continues to aerate and topdress on a regular basis.



Rich Watson and Scott Bills visited Adam Simmons of the Borough of Glassboro at the main park on South Delsea Drive. Adam entered the football field for 2013 Field of the Year. During the visit Rich and Scott were thoroughly

impressed with Adam and the results he was able to achieve on the football field. Despite visiting the field in later November, the field had signs of minimal wear and consistent turf coverage. Adam

explained his turf program, but feels he still has a lot to learn. Much like Michael Collins of Cumberland County College this once only the first year Adam was fully in charge of the athletic fields. Due to his efforts, Adam Simmons will be hosting the 2014 Spring Field Day. The all day program will include a trade show, equipment demonstrations and educational session that will include DEP credits.

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey congratulates Michael Collins of Cumberland County College, Bernard Luongo of Northern Burlington County School District, Dave Kuscinsky of the Somerset County Park Commission and Adam Simmons of the Borough of Glassboro for their efforts to provide safe and playable fields.

## 2013 Field of the Year

Larry Mayerowitz, General Supervisor, Middlesex County Parks Commission submitted an application for the football field at Waterfront Park, South Amboy, NJ. Larry and Middlesex County have been members of SFMANJ since inception and have submitted field of the year applications in the past.

Matt Olivi, SFMANJ President visited with Larry on a rainy day. Despite the gloomy weather, the field glowed. Matt couldn't believe that after dozens of Pop Warner and high school games the field looked like it was the beginning of the season.

Larry has maintained the field with a consistent turf management program including balanced fertilizer applications and weed treatments as needed. In addition, the cultural practices put in place by Larry many years ago continue to show benefits. The field is mowed no less than twice per week. In addition, wear areas are inspected and overseeded after each use. Finally, the field has been aerated and topdressed every fall.

*Continued on page 12*

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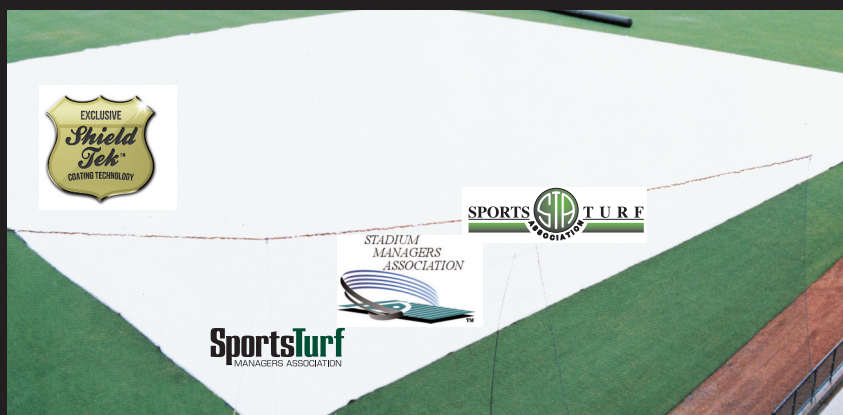
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In addition to heavy use, the field was also covered with several feet off brackish water after super storm Sandy in October 2012. If it was not for the consistent turf management program the field would never had the recuperative powers to withstand this type of stress.

Perhaps more impressive that the physical condition of the field were the letters of commendation and thanks by several user groups who plan on the field and interact with Larry on a regular basis. In fact, one user group commented that he would put the natural turf field at Waterfront Park up against any synthetic field.



Larry was awarded the 2013 Field of the Year plaque at the NJ Green Expo conference in Atlantic City on Tuesday, December 10, 2013. In addition, Larry was honored by the Middlesex County Board of Chosen

Freeholders at their monthly meeting. Several board members of SFMANJ once again presented the award to Larry in front of the freeholders and his peers. During the presentation, a slide show with pictures of the field was observed by all in attendance.

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey congratulates Larry Mayerowitz of the Middlesex County Park Commission for winning the 2013 Field of the Year award.



The SFMANJ Field of the Year program recognizes the efforts of member sports turf managers throughout New Jersey. Applications for the 2014 Field of the Year are due by the end of October 2014 and are awarded at the NJ Green Expo in Atlantic City, NJ in early December. In addition to a plaque, the winner will receive a complimentary registration to all education sessions, the two day trade show, dinner and one night lodging at Trump Taj Mahal.

If you have any further questions regarding the program please feel free to contact the SFMANJ office.

*Scott Bills is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM); Secretary, SFMANJ; and SFMANJ Public Relations Committee Chairman*

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