

UPDATE Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey



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2014 FIELD OF THE YEAR

By Scott Bills, CSFM

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) received three applications for 2014 Field of the Year.

The entrants included Hammonton High School (Field Hockey Field) and Cinnaminson High School (Varsity Soccer Field and Varsity Football Field).

Following a similar process that was initiated in 2013, the SFMANJ Board of Directors established a committee to evaluate the applications. Debbie Savard, SFMANJ Executive Secretary distributed the applications to the committee members who then met with the applicants at their facilities. Members of the committee included Rich Watson (President), Sean Connell (Treasurer), Scott Bills, CSFM (Secretary), Don Savard, CGM, CSFM (Past President), Matt Olivi (Past President) and Bernard Luongo (Vice President).

The committee physically inspected each field and interviewed the applicants. In addition to the overall health and appearance of the fields, the committee also looked at safety, playability and maintenance. The applicants were asked about the amount of play each field received, improvements made to the fields, the overall turf care program and why they think their field warranted consideration for Field of the Year.

Once the field inspections and interviews were completed, the committee had a conference call to discuss each member's thoughts and to vote on a winner and runners up.

The entrants were honored with plaques commemorating their achievements at the 2014 Green Expo in Atlantic City.

Hammonton High School and Mr. Frank LaSasso were awarded 'Runner-Up' for the Field Hockey Field. Frank is a long standing member of the SFMANJ and one of the best sports turf managers in New Jersey. In addition to his duties as head of grounds for the Hammonton School District, Frank also coaches football and baseball. Hammonton High School won Field of the Year in 2011 for the Frank Capoferri Football Field.

Many years ago, Frank met the original grounds keeper for the Baltimore Ravens at a field day. He soon became someone Frank could depend on for advice. He even went so far as to give Frank some field supplies no longer needed by the Ravens. The turf on the Field Hockey Field at Hammonton High School looked like a sod farm. As anyone who manages field hockey fields knows (including field hockey coaches), the playing conditions, including height of cut, make it very challenging to maintain healthy turf. This field was above average in quality of turf and playability. Frank remains a dependable source of wise information for other sports turf managers and should be proud of his accomplishments.

Cinnaminson High School and Mr. Jeff Schofield submitted two applications for Field of the Year. His application for the Varsity Soccer Field earned Runner-Up and the Varsity Football Field was voted the 2014 Field of the Year. The soccer field is the first field you see when entering the main driveway of Cinnaminson High School. Jeff recognized this very early and ensures the field always makes a good first impression. More importantly, Jeff has brought the playing surface and turf quality to a level that is envied by many visiting teams. This year Jeff and his crew painted a large soccer ball in the middle of the field that provided a very unique feature. The Varsity Football Field is in the stadium and receives a considerable amount of play. Among the factors the committee considers include frequency of play and the condition of the field at the end of the season. Jeff did a great job preparing the field for the amount of heavy use it received in the fall as the turf cover and density were very good when the field was inspected in November. Jeff is also not a rookie to the Field of the Year process, having entered fields in 2010 for which he was Runner-Up. Jeff started at Cinnaminson High School without much knowledge about athletic field maintenance. When we first interviewed Jeff in 2010 he was navigating the mine field of school bureaucracy, but remained very enthusiastic. I remember Jeff had specific short term and long term goals. Jeff's most impressive characteristic was the honest assessment of how much he still needs to learn. Now, four years later, Jeff and Cinnaminson High School have earned the honor of being SFMANJ 2014 Field of the Year.

The Field of the Year program recognizes the efforts of member sports turf managers throughout New Jersey. Applications for the 2015 Field of the Year are due by September 30, 2015 and will be awarded at the Fall Field Day in November. In addition to a plaque, the winner will receive a complimentary registration to the conference.

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), SFMANJ Secretary, and Field of the Year Committee Chairman

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National Organization

Sports Turf Managers Association
www.stma.org

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This newsletter is the official quarterly publication of the
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SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.



A Message from the President . . .

It is a great honor to be addressing you as President . . .

by Rich Watson

It is a great honor to be addressing you as President of Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ). I have a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors since 2010 and hope to continue the great work performed by the Presidents that have served before me. The Association is a special group that consists of great people. Our goal as an organization is to provide as much support to our members as possible through field days, education, resource material and individual availability. "Sports Turf Managers helping other Sports Turf Managers" is a simple quote but it is the backbone of our organization.

I was very fortunate early in my career to get help from people in the industry. They shared ideas and problem solving techniques and helped guide me through a lot of field issues. "Nobody is an island". Sometimes it feels that way but whatever problems you are having, there are people out there who have gone through similar hardships and found a way to work through them.

Through my involvement in Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) and SFMANJ, I have gained access to some of the best sports field minds in the business. While it seems like a lifetime ago when I attended my first Rutgers 3-day Athletic Field Management Course, those early years exposed me to ideas and concepts that I still practice today.

In addition to great information I met people that shaped my career. The late Dr. Henry Indyk of Rutgers University pushed me to be my best and encouraged me to share with others what I have learned. People like Brad Park, Dr. Jim Murphy also of Rutgers University became great resources for sharing ideas about research and what was going on with my fields. Tony Leonard of the Philadelphia Eagles has become a friend and supporter which ultimately gave a high school groundskeeper a huge shot of confidence. These are just a few examples.

I guess my point is get involved! As we head into the spring season, there will be many challenges. If you have questions or need help please reach out. SFMANJ will be there to help. Go to our website and send us your questions. My contact info is listed below. I will always be available to help. Let me finish by paraphrasing a quote from Dr. Dick Caton about the sports turf industry, "I have never seen an industry that has been asked to do so many things with nothing and in spite of the challenges will always find a way to get the job done." Have a great season.

*Rich Watson is Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, Deptford Township Schools, and SFMANJ President
(email: Wats100@msn.com; phone: 856.832.7623)*



Dr. Henry W. Indyk Graduate Fellowship in Turfgrass Science

As many of you know, the turfgrass industry lost a dear friend and colleague in September 2005. We will all miss Henry very much and would like to insure that his legacy lives on. The Indyk family would like to establish a memorial fellowship to support graduate students interested in applied turfgrass science. This fellowship is being created to help assure that tomorrow's graduate students have the financial resources to get an advanced degree in turfgrass science at Rutgers University. To fund a full graduate assistantship each year in Henry's name, we will need to raise a total of \$400,000. Your generous support at this time will bring us closer to reaching this goal.

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*For information on other ways to support this fellowship, please contact
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Message from the Editor

By Brad Park

THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF MARCH

There are an increasing number of groundhogs 'prognosticating' how soon spring will arrive. It used to be just Phil from Punxsutawney, PA. There is now a groundhog on Staten Island and a litany of weather-predicting rodents throughout NJ, including in the town where I live.

In spite of an exorbitant amount of attention being paid to the 'holiday' known as Groundhog Day, there is something to be said about trying to predict the weather during the month of March, among what often seems to be the most variable and unpredictable during the year. According to the Office of the NJ State Climatologist, the monthly mean temperature for NJ (statewide) in March 2012 was 49.7-degrees Fahrenheit (F). In March 2014 it was 35.3-degrees F. Precipitation can be just as variable, both in terms of type and quantity. Is anyone really surprised to receive six inches of snow in early-to-mid March? During March 2006, monthly liquid equivalent precipitation across NJ was 0.81-inch. In March 2010, the State received 9.72-inches.



'In like a lion, out like a lamb' should be rephrased, 'Probably in like a lion, maybe, if we're lucky, out like a lamb'. There are a couple of things we know about the month of March: 1) It's the beginning of the spring sports season for New Jersey schools; and 2) It is illegal to apply nitrogen and phosphorous-containing fertilizers to turf prior to March 1 in New Jersey.

SUCCESS AT STMA

Members of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) Board of Directors attended another successful Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) conference held in Denver, CO during mid-January 2015. Quality education, significant networking opportunities, and an excellent trade show capped the week. Among the highlights of the week was the awarding of 2014 Dick Ericson Founder's Award to Tony Leonard, Philadelphia Eagles and SFMANJ Member. Rich Watson, SFMANJ President and 2013 Dick Ericson Founder's Award winner presented Tony with the award during the annual STMA Awards Banquet that concludes the conference.

I would like to recognize the accomplishments of ten Rutgers undergraduate students who competed in the 2015 STMA Student Challenge, held during the Annual Conference and Exhibition in Denver. The team of Ryan Daddio, Rutgers Turf Club President; Josh Moehler, Rutgers Turf Club Vice-President; Elizabeth Holmes, Rutgers Turf Club Treasurer; and Mark Hamersky finished tied for 6th out of 23 Undergraduate Student Teams in the competition. Additionally, Katherine Wickel, Meaghan Wells, Emily Braithwaite, James Surico, Brandon Lopez, and Joe Raimondo are recognized here for the strong effort they made preparing for and competing in the Student Challenge. Thanks go out to the SFMANJ Board of Directors for the annual \$1000 contribution to the Rutgers Turf Club to assist undergraduate students in travelling to/from the Conference site.

Brad Park is Sports Turf Research & Education Coordinator, Rutgers University; Editor, SFMANJ Update; and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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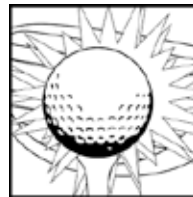
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A Look Back at the 2015 Sports Turf Managers Association Conference

Emily Braithwaite & Elizabeth Holmes

The Rutgers Turf Club would like to thank Rutgers University, the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ), and the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) for making our attendance possible at the 2015 STMA Conference and Exhibition in Denver, CO. Without these organizations we would not have the opportunity to experience the National Conference and Student Challenge. We enjoy taking part in the Student Challenge and representing the wonderful program at Rutgers University, as well as our home state of New Jersey.

This year, the Rutgers Turf Club sent three teams of students (ten students) to compete in the annual STMA Student Challenge. We also attended the educational sessions and industry trade show. The conference provides excellent networking opportunities for students interested in careers related to sports turf. Thanks to the many attendees and programs offered within the conference, it is a great educational opportunity as well as a chance to meet with representatives of the industry.

The first day in Denver was surprisingly sunny for the time of year. We got to the convention center early to register and sit-in some of the many open sessions offered by the conference. The most useful thing we learned from the opening sessions was a turf management

quiz application for smart phones. It contained questions and review about insects, weeds, turf identification, and much more. It quickly became a useful and fun study guide in our remaining time leading up to the test.

After opening sessions, we split-up and went to different presentations to learn what the professionals of the industry had to say. The topics covered ranged from synthetic turf, managing traffic stress, and everything in between. Two sessions included, "Insect Management for the Early Career Sports Turf Managers" presented by David Shetler, Ph.D and "How Soil Profiles and Layering Can Impact Turf and Playability" presented by Doug Linde, Ph.D. We received an inside look on management tactics that proved invaluable for the Student Challenge.

We attended a Welcome Reception; it was a great way for us to meet other attendees. Five of our team members volunteered their time by selling raffle tickets for the SAFE Foundation. The Foundation for Safer Athletic Fields for Everyone (SAFE) provides funds for research, educational programs, and scholarships geared towards the sports field profession. The money raised from the raffle, went directly into the foundation's vital programs.

Continued on page 13

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Design/Build of an Athletic Field

By Sean Connell

As the term implies, 'design/build' refers to the combined service of design and construction an athletic field. This could involve a range of tasks including clearing trees, stumps and debris to re-grading the inside of an existing running track where the outside grade is already fixed around the track. I constantly read technical specifications of engineered athletic fields for synthetic and native soil fields. Some are great plans and are very well thought out; others require local knowledge to accommodate athletes and/or the facility's employees. Most of the time, the simplest things are missed including access to areas that will always need some type of input (e.g. baseball or softball infield). Baseball and softball infields often have access to skin areas from the outfield fence. Without a warning track, temporary roadways are required; this puts extra pressure on the turf resulting from traffic to and from the skin area.

Does an infield ever fail to receive infield mix or amendments or even grading every year? The traffic seems perpetual to and from. Why would you not install a large gate as close to the infield as possible – the shortest distance across turf. Even a synthetic field can only be driven-on so much before a haul road shows-up, even with smaller trailers. Would you drive a tri-axle on the carpet? Not me either.

So, design/build can mean a lot of things when it comes to thinking globally about your entire site. Since I have been on the Sports Field Managers Association of NJ (SFMANJ) Board of Directors, I have visited so many high schools, colleges and professional fields that, after a while, one starts to really notice and admire how some facilities are set-up. They are so nice and make so much sense, which of course, bleeds into my decision making and recommendations for my customers.

In fall 2010, I started working at St Andrews School, Middletown, DE. My first job at this school was a pitcher's mound with mound clay and bricks. Since then I have built four athletic fields. The first one is what they refer to as a 'premium field' that has 5000 linear feet of subsurface drainage as well as imported topsoil and in-ground automated irrigation. The last two fields have been zero balanced soils and laser graded in-place without the import or export of materials. I performed design/build services on all the fields with input provided by the school's representative Phil Pensinger, a former golf course superintendent. It has been a



great relationship and we have worked together very well. We both believe good is good, not bigger is better. The intent of all the projects is to improve drainage, update turfgrass varieties, install in-ground irrigation and improve overall playing conditions.



My last design/build project was a soccer field in fall 2014. Phil sprayed glyphosate (e.g. Roundup Pro) on two occasions to control existing grass and weeds. This particular field consisted of a lot of common Bermudagrass. From there I used a two bottom plow to flip and disturb the soil. This piece of equipment is not a new concept but works great at the task. We then used an 8-foot disc to break the organic layer into small pieces that could be blended and used in the grading for the cuts and fills (once again, a piece of equipment that is simple and very inexpensive to operate but does an excellent job for the task at hand). Both pieces of equipment are stored outdoors until we need them again.

I then recorded grades on 50-foot centers on a piece of paper and calculate the slopes. In this instance, the field drained reasonably well, so I used the same the drainage directions (i.e. made the slopes go in the same direction) so as to not fight again.

Continued on page 12

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PHOTO RECAP: BORGATA HOTEL ATLANTIC CITY, NJ DECEMBER 2014

Photos by Debbie Savard

SPEAKERS



Dr. Roy Meyer



Dr. Eric Lyons



Dr. Bruce Clark



Dr. James Brosnan



AWARDS

SFMANJ Vice President, Rich Watson
Field of the Year Winner, Jeff Schofield
Dedicated Service Award Winners
Don Savard and Matt Olivi
Field of the Year Runner-Up, Frank LaSasso.



Rich Watson



Brad Park



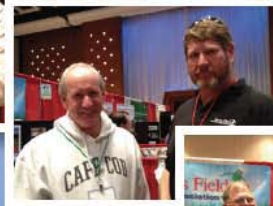
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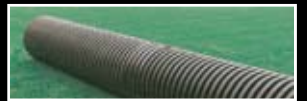
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After entering the slopes on the dual slope laser, I adjust the laser box by lowering it ever so often to spread-out soil to the edges. It is like laying a glass table down and spreading it to the sides. This can take several days or even a week or longer to achieve a laser graded field. This particular field is right next to a field we built the year before; we had to consider the grade the closer I got to field built the year prior.

After a strong week of laser grading/dirt moving, the field really started to take shape. One could see the laser grading was really taking all the humps and bumps out. As we were getting closer to the sidelines/end lines issues of grade popped-up, as always. At this point, I have to re-calculate slope and blend the two areas into a larger laser graded area.

After settling on a nice transition on all sides, I turn my attention to soil preparation which includes loosening soil in really hard parts, compacting fills to firmness that I feel will not settle. Settling in



general is not a huge issue when laser grading because you drive over the same place so many times. It seems in the cuts though the soil can be very compacted and will need some loosening for the best seed bed prep. We prepared the field ready for seed basically, cleaning and removing rocks, debris etc and finish grading. We installed a seven zone irrigation system on 50 x 50-foot centers using the largest heads available for sports fields. The

water pressure here is great, and we constructed the field right next to this one last year. We plumbed our valves, wires and stubbed pipe for this field last year. The cost savings was about \$7000 having that in place. So all we had to install were the heads, and run a couple hundred feet of pipe per zone. I compacted ditches using a jumping jack tamper with a small foot called a 'ski foot' 4 to 5 times backfilling as we backfilled. The heads were leveled and compacted with a sledge hammer before planting.

Continued on page 16



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A Look Back at the 2015 Sports Turf Managers Association Conference

The following day was dedicated to the Student Challenge. Sports Turf Managers Association offered a unique Student Challenge Review early in the morning to cover some strategies for the exam. Following the review, we were given a talk by a Sports Field Manager of a baseball team who shared with us his experiences on a day to day basis. The last portion of the session was dedicated to internship practice. We were given key pointers that could help us to potentially land internships as well as showing employers how to advertise their opportunities to students. We even participated in five minute mock interviews with industry employees; this was very beneficial.

After the morning sessions, we attended the Annual STMA Meeting and Luncheon. It began with a keynote speech from former NFL linebacker Karl Mecklenburg, from the Denver Broncos. He gave a very passionate speech about the importance of reaching for and achieving goals. His humbling story of adversity and eventually great success was a considerable motivator for the next event of the day, the Student Challenge.

At 2:00 pm, our three Rutgers teams lined-up alongside twenty-eight other university teams as we eagerly awaited the start of the exam. For the first thirty minutes of the exam, we had to assemble a portion of an irrigation system from a diagram. This was a challenge for many teams but we managed to remain focused through the task. After the practical portion of the exam, it was on to the written test. We diligently worked through two hours of questions, identifications and case studies. We emerged from the test room, exhausted yet confident. The hard part was over now, months of dedicated studying paid off, and we were free to enjoy the trade show.

The highlight of the trade show was the tour of the Toro booth. Fred Castenschiold and Kevin Hoban, Storr Tractor Company, provided the tour. We saw some new technology that is being employed on sports turf as well as gaining an interesting insight into the Toro company. The Student Luncheon followed and was attended by student teams eager to hear the results announced in the center of the tradeshow floor. We waited, nervously, as they announced the top three teams from two and four-year teams. Our top Rutgers team finished in 6th place. The team consisted of Ryan Daddio, Mark Hamersky, Elizabeth Holmes, Josh Moehler. The other two teams included Emily Braithwaite, Meaghan Wells, Katherine Wickel, Brandon Lopez, Joe Raimundo, and James Surico. We are



Front row (left to right): Brad Park, Advisor, Rutgers Turf Club ; Mark Hamersky; James Surico
2nd row: Josh Moehler; Katie Wickel; Meaghan Wells
3rd row: Ryan Daddio; Elizabeth Holmes; Fred Castenschiold, Storr Tractor; Brandon Lopez; Emily Braithwaite
Back row: Kevin Hoban, Storr Tractor; Joe Raimondo

very happy with our performance especially given that eight of ten club members had never been to the STMA challenge before.

The 2015 STMA Conference came to a delightful end the next day with the Annual Awards Banquet. We celebrated industry professionals as well as the student teams who participated in the challenge. We look forward to returning next year in sunny San Diego, California for another exciting conference!

Once again, we would like to thank Rutgers University, SFMANJ, STMA, and Rutgers Turf Club for enabling us to attend this conference. We'd like to especially thank our advisors, Brad Park, Sabrina Tirpak, Dr. Bruce Clarke, and Charles Schmid. Without their continued support for our club, we would not be able to attend these conferences. It's a privilege to be able to represent Rutgers University at these events, as well as being encouraged to network with potential employers and future colleagues. Thank you for your support!

Emily Braithwaite and Elizabeth Holmes are Rutgers Undergraduate Students, members of the Rutgers Turf Club, and participants in the 2015 STMA Student Challenge.

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The Crabgrass Conundrum

Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

Crabgrass, goose grass and other summer annual grassy weeds vex even the most experienced turfgrass managers. Summer annual weed grasses are clumpy, have a different appearance and texture than the surrounding turf and detract from the aesthetics. Not only are these weeds unsightly, they are unsafe. Athletes can suffer injuries due to poor footing and tripping hazards. These weeds also affect ball roll and stick handling for field hockey or lacrosse players. Most turf managers want to prevent or eliminate this weed problem.

Crabgrass and other grassy weeds are very opportunistic. Weed seeds in the soil germinate in voids between grass plants where sunlight, warmth and space create a hospitable environment for the weed seeds to germinate and thrive. The compacted areas of a sports field usually result in thin to nonexistent turf. It is these areas that are predisposed to weed infestation. Goose grass in particular seems to prefer compacted soils. Our goal, then, will be to minimize these voids.

The best way to prevent a grassy weed problem is to maintain a dense healthy stand of turf. In order to achieve that, the following best practices will help:

- frequent mowing at a recommended mowing height with sharp mower blades,
- adequate irrigation,
- a nutrient management program based on a soil test,
- soil cultivation including frequent aeration to relieve compaction,
- the judicious use of quality grass seed.

Besides following good cultural practices, sometimes we need an effective weapon to fight crabgrass and other weeds. Chemical herbicides are tools that turf managers use to help control crabgrass, goosegrass and other grassy weeds.

- Preemergent herbicide controls help to prevent crabgrass seedlings from becoming established.
- Postemergent herbicide controls disrupt the established weed's metabolic processes hastening death.

While our lawn and landscape turf manager friends use springtime preemergent crabgrass controls, sports turf managers should consider whether or not a preemergent control is right for their site.

Consider this common scenario: in the spring, a sports field receives heavy traffic, cleats and divots- all of which create voids. Many preemergent weed controls create a chemical barrier that prevents the weed seedling from developing. But here is the problem- any break in this barrier creates a void and presents an opportunity for a rogue weed to grow and thrive. Photo-degradation, temperature and other environmental conditions can also play a role in the herbicide barrier breaking down. If the turf receives spring soil aeration and seed, then the barrier is all but destroyed by the aeration (reducing the effectiveness of the chemical control) and the grass seed germination would be compromised by the preemergent barrier

from the herbicide. The result being poor weed control, poor seeding results and a waste of time and money. Later, when these rogue grassy weeds emerge, a postemergent herbicide must be used to control the infestation.

Sports turf managers with limited budgets want results and good value. Many of us trying to reduce pesticide use. That is why some turf managers skip preemergent controls entirely, wait for the weeds to grow and treat with post emergent herbicides. The advantage is being able to spot and predict the amount of infestation and make decisions of whether to blanket or spot treat the area with the control product. Another advantage is to wait until the weeds appear, identify them and choose a herbicide that will give the most control on the various different weeds. Some herbicides that are effective on crabgrass are not labeled for goose grass.

One problem with postemergent controls is that by the time the weeds become noticeable, heat, humidity and drought can stress the turf so that herbicide applications might have to wait until the weather improves and the turf recovers. Another problem is that sometimes you can treat weeds in the early summer with good results, only to have another crop appear a few weeks later making another treatment necessary.

Herbicide applications must be applied at the right time. Don't depend on a calendar. Weed seeds germinate when soil and air temperatures are just right and there is adequate moisture. These weedy grasses germinate in the springtime when soil temperatures warm to the mid 50°F range; so be scientific and use a soil thermometer and feel the soil for moisture. Herbicide applications must be applied at the correct label rate. It is easy for pesticide applicators misapply materials by mixing incorrectly, not calibrating equipment, applying too fast or missing areas and leaving stripes.

Perhaps the biggest thing to remember is that great sports fields do not become great in one or two seasons. Weed control improves as the turf stand becomes denser.

Don Savard is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) and Certified Grounds Manager (CGM); Director, Athletic Facilities and Grounds, Salesianum School; and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors.



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Design/Build of an Athletic Field

Continued from page 12

So, we have the irrigation system in and operational. We then clean and finish the field for seeding. I like to water the soil just enough to moisten and have no dust before planting. We chose a turf-type tall fescue (3-way blend) and seeded at 4 pounds seed per 1000 square feet. I add 10 pounds (10%) of a medium-priced Kentucky bluegrass with every hopper of seed. I also add 50 pounds of OceanGro or Milorganite to every hopper to help seed in at least 3 directions. This method has served me well over the years and it is more than apparent that seed distribution is critical when you see the results. We use a 3-point hitch tractor-mounted seed box to maximize seed to soil contact, which is critical. After seeding, we walk the field to pick up loose rocks, roots etc. and fill holes if needed. Again, we water enough to keep the soil moist and keep the dust down.



The last step we performed was the installation of an erosion control mat that is made of a wood fiber product that is ground up, emulsified and made into a roll. We like this mat because it does not contain plastic mesh and once it gets wet it sticks to the soil

extremely well. You have to sod staple the edges to account for the wind (i.e. keep it in-place) until it gets wet. The process took 2 days with 5 employees to complete 80000 square feet. The porous nature of the mat allows the seed to germinate quickly. It effectively stabilizes soil. Rarely do we have to repair washouts on an athletic field because it so flat like a table top. As we staple mat from irrigation zone to zone we water lightly to activate the seed mat to start sticking to the soil and start the seed germination process.

The seed germinated in 6 days and showed significant growth in 8 days. Of course we seeded this field the last week in August probably the highest soil temperature you could ask for.

In conclusion, after building so many athletic fields on the same property, it is pretty easy to make solid recommendations on design/build projects, the most significant recommendation is the need for laser grading. Laser grading takes the field to an elevated level of quality in such a timely manner that it pays for itself in drainage, looks and playability. It would be hard to not recommend. We reverse-tilled the field next to this field without laser grading; it drains and functions well but, side-by-side, there is no comparison.

Laser grading has also affected how I feel about importing soil. Our first field had 5000 linear feet of subsurface drainage with smooth

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wall pipe and greens grade gravel; it drains and functions awesome (it was laser graded in 4 directions: 2 slopes to sidelines and 2 slopes to the end zones). The real question entails, 'Was it worth 4 times the cost compared to field construction using the native soil?' The answer is 'Yes'. The field delivered what the school wanted: a premium athletic field. The turf quality, the playing conditions and overall aesthetic of the field far exceeded expectations. The

drainage was on 20-foot centers and the whole field was surrounded by a ditch with 8-inch perforated pipe in gravel with catch basins as needed. The imported topsoil was a very sandy soil (80-83% sand content); most of which consisted of USGA-spec sand. It made for a porous material, but, to save money, it was not a true blue signature golf course blend. It also had a nice organic content (more than 4%).

All of the fields have performed really well and the close attention paid to soil test results that affect inputs has really delivered on

so many levels, especially on post-establishment maintenance. Additionally, the following practices provided positive dividends: Selecting turfgrass varieties that have performed well in National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP; www.ntep.org) trials, laser grading, breaking down organic material, an irrigation plan, and utilizing proven construction practices. Effective design/build practices can allow facilities to achieve the goal of creating the best playing conditions using the most economical methods.

Sean Connell is President, Georgia Golf Construction, Woodbine, NJ; and SFMANJ Treasurer

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If A Field Could Talk

By Bernard Luongo

I hear.... I would Love to Trade Places with you one day
To be outside to be in the Fray
I hear.... what a great gig If you can get hired
To do just enough so you don't get fired
I hear.... sometimes your job has no stress
Just show up, clean up a mess
But what if the other side was told
Of what we do in the hot and cold
Of how fields are won and fields are lost
And the determining factor is line item cost
And who was there to tell the story
Of when that field was once in its glory
When aspiring athletes with vigor and vain
Tore their cleats into the turf and you winced in pain
It held up as well as it could under conditions
Then again we heard the same old renditions
Are you sure there wasn't more you could do?
My goodness look at the size of your crew
But it's not about us and it's not about them
It's all about safety and making that field a gem
So if a field could talk what tales it could tell
About wear and tear and seasons from hell
Now let's hear from the field it should have its say
It has children on it each and every day
Hey old field how's thing's going this season?
Hey let me tell you, I see no rhyme or reason
What do you mean please explain?
Well around the goal mouth's I have a lot of pain
Oh field what can I do to relieve this issue?
Give me some aeration around the soft tissue
What else can I do to ease your pain?
Throw a little seed and hope for rain
Please field, a sense I have let you down
What else can I do I feel like a clown?
Well, now that you ask here's more I will say
A little rotation will go a long way
I know it's a lot to ask only playing one season
But again let me tell you there's a rhyme to my reason
A season off and letting me rest
Makes me look my very best
My groomers and handlers have time to work their magic
They are my heroes so my season isn't tragic
I know in most people's minds I am just turf and dirt
But rewarding to me is leaving a green stain on an athlete's shirt
I've said more then I should, I've said my peace
One last parting remark, please do something about the geese

Bernard Luongo is Lead Groundsperson, Northern Burlington County Regional School District, Columbus, NJ; and SFMANJ Vice-President

Continued from page 14

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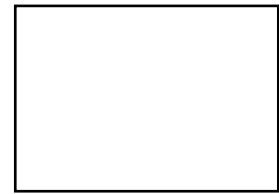
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