

MIDWEST BREEZES

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*



Toyota Park

Which game is the real football? Is it the game that Americans play in the fall with helmets and shoulder pads or is the “beautiful game” played with a round ball by the rest of the planet? Just a question, however if you are going to play soccer you will want to want to play on the best pitch in Chicago. You are going to want to play at Toyota Park in Bridgeview where Eric Adkins is the Turf Manager.

Toyota Park, located in Bridgeview was the site where the American Women’s soccer team began their quest for the World Cup with a must win “play-in” with Italy. They won the game and went on to run the table until they met their fate and finished a disappointing second to a very quick Japanese team in the World Cup Finals held this past summer in Germany. The site is also home to the MLS (Major League Soccer) Chicago Fire and the WPS (Women’s Professional Soccer) Chicago Red Stars. Toyota Park has hosted high school football, high school and college soccer and lacrosse games. Along the way, it has also entertained the likes of the “Parrot heads” with a Jimmy Buffet concert and the “Phish-heads” the loyal followers of the band Phish. The Park is a multi-use field that gets a lot of “action” yet needs to maintain “world cup quality” turf for MLS and inter-

national “friendly” soccer games. Not the easiest job in turf maintenance.

Eric is a graduate from the Michigan State University Turf program and has previously worked as a Golf Course Superintendent at courses in Illinois and Michigan. He has worked at Toyota Park since 2006 when it opened. The field has some unique features that help Eric grow the high quality turf the athletes demand. The soil profile is sand based, similar to a USGA green and is plumbed for water removal and forced cooling with a Sub-Air system. In order to maintain the soil at a constant 62 degrees, the profile has 40 miles of ½” tubing filled with glycol and a large pump station to heat the field and keep the turf actively growing as needed during the colder seasons. The turf is a blend of low mow Kentucky bluegrass and ryegrass mowed at 5/8”. Eric prefers to keep the turf firm and fast but the players prefer it a little softer (insert faking soccer injury joke here). Eric has help from his Assistant Tom Forrest and a crew of 2.

Eric faces some unique microclimate challenges. Shade is his biggest enemy. The east side bleachers block out the sun until noon each day. The stage overhangs the goal mouth on the south end which is also one of the heaviest wear areas



on the field. He needs to manage for diseases just like the rest of us. He over-seeds p. rye as needed in small wear areas and will call in the "Godfather of Sod" Paul Carlson from Central Sod to do turf repairs featuring the big roll sod. "The nice thing about the big roll sod is the sod is so thick that that it provides a stable foundation to play on the next day". Eric has good success using Tenacity to control the ever invasive poa annua. He top-dresses heavily with sand three times a year to promote overall firmness and smoothness. He has similar a concern as Golf Course Superintendent trying to promote a smooth ball roll. I didn't get a chance to "stimp" the field but it looked pretty "fast". Go check it out football fans. **-OC**



**Delivers
brains
and
brawn.**

**CAN A UTILITY VEHICLE
REALLY DO THAT?**

Vehicles that go where you need them to go, doing the jobs you need them to do, day in, day out, without problems. Brains and brawn. Now available in utility vehicles.

Nadler Golf Car Sales, Inc.
2700 N. Farnsworth Ave.
Aurora, IL 60502
Call: 630-898-1616 for Eric, Chad or Dave
www.nadlergolf.com

YES, IF IT'S A 

1 800.CLUBCAR • clubcar.com

**S
O
D**

**Sod That Fits Your
Course To A Tee**

All varieties available as washed sod,
traditionally cut sod or big roll sod.
Your Single Source for:

Bentgrass Varieties

- Penncross™ Bentgrass Sod
- Pennlinks™ Bentgrass Sod
- Penneagle™ Bentgrass Sod
- L-93™ Bentgrass Sod

Low Mow Varieties

- XL2000™ Bluegrass Blend
- Bluegrass Fescue Blend

Installation and turf stripping capabilities available.
We can custom grow to your specifications.
Please inquire.

H&E SOD NURSERY, inc.

3900 West 167th Street, Markham, IL 60428
708-596-7200
Member: **Midwest Sod Council** **1-800-244-7200**
WWW.HESOD.COM

**HOLLEMBEAK
CONSTRUCTION INC.**

SINCE 1969



Ridge Country Club - Hole 13
Chicago, Illinois

**Golf Course Construction • Renovations • Bunkers
Clearing • Feature Grading • Shaping • Drainage
Tee and Green Construction • Cart Paths • Grassing
Shoreline Stabilization • Pond Construction and Dredging
Laser Tee Leveling • GPS Golf Course Mapping**

P.O. BOX 103 • BIG ROCK, IL 60511 • 630-556-3891