



Meeting for a Sports Turf Summit in Beltsville, Md., were John Macik (left), Michael Latino, Elliot Roberts, Jack Murray, Fred Grau, John Macik, William Daniel, Kent Kurtz, Allan Shulder and Tim Bowyer.

## It's A Two-Way Street

As the industry liason for STMA it is my job to communicate the value of STMA to industry manufacturers and distributors. Industry has listened with interest to STMA's requests for support and have responded with little hesitation.

However, communication is a two-way street. I think members of STMA should likewise listen to the requests of manufacturers and distributors. Industry's biggest concern is the frequent request by major professional and university teams for products and equipment in exchange for "exposure". They doubt the value of this "exposure" and are tired of being asked for free equipment and products.

Industry would prefer to support a central sports turf organization with funds and products for research: either research on maintenance techniques and construction specifications or research on the size and potential of the sports turf market.

We can't expect manufacturers to fully back STMA when individual sports facilities are out cutting their own deals.

The potential of STMA will be most quickly realized if manufacturer and distributor support is shared by all members through STMA.

We have much to do and will need a "large" amount of industry support. Please help STMA by encouraging your suppliers to get involved with and give to STMA, not just to your facility.

Bruce Shank, Executive Editor,  
*Weeds, Trees & Turf*

## Safe Playing Fields Main Topic At Sports Turf Summit

On April 23-24 STMA was well represented at a Sports Turf Summit meeting to discuss the growing concern of injuries related to sports field conditions. Converging on Beltsville, Md., where the USDA research facilities are headquartered, were a diverse group of individuals and interests. These individuals came together with a single purpose in mind, that of improving sports turf.

During the meeting John Macik, sports medicine coordinator for the National Football League Players Association, described the natural versus syn-

thetic turf injury rates that his organization has been concerned with for several years.

Also attending the meeting were Michael Latino, eastern sales manager for Ransomes Equipment Co.; Elliot Roberts, director, The Lawn Institute; Jack Murray, research agronomist, USDA; Fred Grau, chairman of the Musser International Turfgrass Foundation; William Daniel, professor emeritus, Purdue University; Allan Shulder, executive director, Professional Grounds Management Society; Tim Bowyer, president, Southern Turf Nurseries; Tom Turner, University of Maryland; Don Waddington, Pennsylvania State University; and Kent Kurtz, executive secretary, Sports Turf Manager's Association.

## Players Like Grass, Not Artificial Turf

*The following is an article that appeared recently in the Kansas City Times, the morning line by Johnathan Rand.*

The Missouri athletic department is examining the feasibility of replacing the grass surface of Faurot Field with artificial turf, which would put Missouri football on the same footing as all its Big Eight opponents. In the interest of conferencewide equality, here's a better idea—rip out the seven existing artificial surfaces and leave them for the garbagemen.

Artificial turf is basically indoor-outdoor carpet laid over asphalt. Why it's legal, much less popular, to play football on this surface is hard to understand. Players tackled on artificial turf get jarred twice—once by their opponent and once by the carpet, which does not give, as does grass.

The National Football League Players Association (NFLPA) found that over the first eight weeks of the 1984 regular season, injuries averaged 8.7 a game on artificial surfaces and 6.9 on

grass. On the average, players were sidelined, longer by injuries on synthetic surfaces.

NFLPA President Tom Condon of the Chiefs said that when information is assembled for the entire season, the union possibly will ask that no new artificial turf fields be installed and that old ones be replaced by grass when they wear out.

"When it came in (Arrowhead Stadium) in 1974, many of the players left over from the Super Bowl teams complained how their legs hurt on artificial turf." Condon said. "I was 21 and nothing much bothered me, so I didn't give it much thought. Now I understand what they meant.

"We practice on grass and artificial turf (mainly in inclement weather) and you can really feel the difference, it's pretty dramatic. When we practice on artificial turf, the next day you're stiff and sore and on grass, you feel real good."

Artificial surfaces routinely cause grotesque rug burns on knees and elbows. Such fields have created a new injury — "turf toe," a bruising, swelling or dislocation of the big toe that often results from a steady pounding on the artificial surface.

The NFL lost two of its biggest drawing cards, running backs

Curt Warner of the Seattle Seahawks and Billy Sims of the Detroit Lions, last season because of knee injuries attributed to artificial surfaces. Warner's season ended in his first game when his right foot stuck in the field of the Seattle Kingdome and his knee collapsed. Nobody hit him. Sims' season was ended Oct. 26 in Minneapolis' Metrodome.

"I just got caught in the turf, I couldn't move," Sims said after undergoing surgery. "So really, the injury came from the turf, not from getting hit. Minnesota has some terrible turf, I don't like it."

So why have artificial surfaces proliferated in college and professional football? Because they're weatherproof and drain quickly, teams can avoid playing and practicing on frozen fields or in mudbaths, although Condon says, "From a fan's standpoint, I think they like to see the players get dirty."

Artificial fields require much less maintenance than grass. They make stadiums suitable for multipurpose use. They're a must for domed stadiums, although it's hard to understand why we can send a man to the moon but can't grow grass indoors.

A major appeal of artificial surfaces, however, is strictly cosmetic. They become status

symbols in the 1970s, installed to keep up with the Joneses of college and pro football.

Missouri's grass field has deteriorated since the south end of the stadium was enclosed in 1978. According to a statement by the athletic department, the additional seating structure reduced the flow of air into the stadium and contributed to a fungus growth, which affected the field's root system and created a slick playing surface.

The best replacement might be Prescription Athletic Turf, which the school also will consider. PAT is a grass field with a network of tubing underneath that gives it the drainage advantages of artificial turf.

Missouri Athletic Director Dave Hart and football coach Woody Widenhofer have spoken enthusiastically about the possibility of artificial turf in Faurot Field. Both mentioned the desirability of being able to practice and play in any weather. Widenhofer suggested artificial turf would enable his team "to throw the football and entertain people."

A lot of people associated with a lot of football programs have praised the virtues of artificial turf. But isn't it funny none of them are players?

## Sports Turf Manager's Association

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