

Rosenblatt Stadium - Home of the College World Series - Jesse Cuevas - Field Supervisor



The College World Series is held in Rosenblatt Stadium high above the winding Missouri River in Omaha, Nebraska. Omaha has hosted 39 of the 42 NCAA College World Series events. The stadium is home to the Omaha Royals, the AAA affiliate of the Kansas City Royals, but also is the home field for the University of Nebraska-Omaha football team, Creighton University baseball and several high school events.

The stadium was constructed in 1949 and recently had a \$3.4 million facelift. Field preparation, due to an intense and varied schedule, receives prime attention beginning March 15 of each year. Since the

College World Series is played over a nine-day period the ground staff is kept extremely busy.

Each spring the field is assessed for winter damage and the first of four complete fertilizer applications are made. Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass are overseeded and topdressed in April. Kentucky bluegrass cultivars Park and Touchdown are used because of their cool weather tolerance, and cultivars Merion and Adelphi are included because they perform well in the hot and dry weather. After the playing season a second overseeding is used to fill in weak and stress areas.

The key to field maintenance is aerification, which helps reduce field compaction and discourages water logged turf. Following aerification, the field is fertilized and sprayed for insects. The field receives approximately 1" of moisture per week, which is applied using eight 3/4" hoses, which is time consuming. Wetting agents and timely aerification provide the correct moisture levels for the turf.

Mowing is very important to the maintenance at Rosenblatt Stadium. The outfield is mowed at either 1 1/2 or 1 3/4 inches, depending upon the season, with an old Roseman 3-gang unit. The infield is mowed at 1 1/4 inches with a 36 inch reel walk behind mower. Mowing is performed in several directions to achieve a smooth and pleasing playing surface.

The skinned area of the infield has a black dirt base and just prior to the College World Series a supplemental application of sand and calcined clay is tilled into the surface. This encourages air pockets to form, which assist in providing a soft, cushioned bounce. Dragging and working the infield as much as

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seven times may be necessary to provide a level, smooth surface capable of providing a true hop to the baseball. All turf edges adjacent to the skinned infield are edged to provide crisp straight lines.

Since the income derived from the television rights of the College World Series is vital to the continuation of the event, the NCAA needs assurance that all games will be played, regardless of the weather. If it should rain during the College World Series tarping and untarping of the field becomes very important. Our grounds crew must be careful, precise and quick, so practice sessions are very important. Our best time is one minute, 57 seconds.

Being able to make transitions and caring for the field from one event to the other is the job of a good grounds manager. I consider myself a third generation groundskeeper. My mentor, the late Frank Mancuso, was a great teacher and friend who shared 30 years of his experience and knowledge with me. Frank acquired his skills from his father, Joseph Mancuso, who built the field 40 years ago.

My goals are to continue the quality and tradition that Joseph and Frank worked so hard to accomplish. As a new STMA member I am honored to be included with such an outstanding group of turfgrass professionals. STMA will help all of us to provide a safe, strong and beautiful turf at all levels of recreation and sport.

STMA congratulates new member Jesse Cuevas for a job well done for the 1988 College World Series. Members like Jesse provide the incentive for others to try a little harder and to continually strive for quality.

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