

STMA's First Officers and Board

The first official meeting of the Sports Turf Managers Association was held on March 4, 1981 at Purdue University. The first officers included:

President - Dick Ericson*
Minneapolis, MN

Vice President - Harry Gill*
Milwaukee, WI

Treasurer - Dan Weisenberger*
Purdue University

Executive Secretary - Erik Madison Jr.
Appleton, WI

Directors

Tony Burnett*
RFK Stadium
Washington, D.C.

Dale Sandin*
Orange Bowl
Miami, FL

George Toma
Kansas City Royals
Kansas City, MO

Jay Bolt**
Director of Buildings and Grounds,
Grand Valley State College,
Allendale, Michigan.

Pete DeVos**
Culver Military Academy
Culver, Indiana.

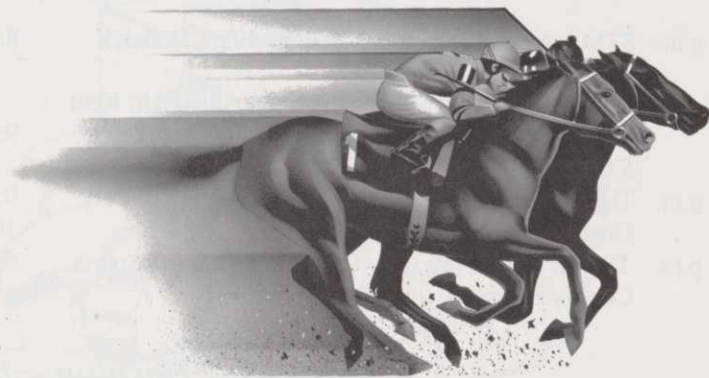
Robert Gillie**
Fort Wayne Community Schools,
Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

* Current STMA members

**If anyone knows the whereabouts of the above pioneers, please let us know.

Research On Turf Racecourses And Other Equestrian Tracks

Arthur Read, RVA Omnisports Inc., Don Mills, Ontario



Research into the design of Turf Racecourses has paralleled work in the golf course and sports field areas with a slightly greater emphasis on durability because of the heavier loads that are imposed by a race horse.

Early courses were constructed in natural pastures and fields, but some pastures became preferred because of their superior load bearing qualities. These were well drained sandy clay loams.

As racing becomes more formalized in North America the need for longer lasting surfaces resulted in the creation of sandy loam "dirt" courses with no grass cover and improved turf courses with a sand topsoil growing medium. A typical layout is Woodbine Racetrack, which we designed in 1954. The area of turf is in excess of one million square feet, in comparison to a typical sports field which is in excess of 100,000 square feet. The infield inside the tracks contains approximately ten acres of ornamental turf and infield lakes of ten million gallons of water storage for irrigation. This basic layout is followed in the construction of most new racetracks.

The big improvement in turf courses occurred in the late sixties when research into sand growing mediums proved their designability and were introduced by our firm into tracks such as Turf Paradise, constructed in 1979 here in Phoenix. This track incorporated subsurface irrigation and an improved infield design.

One of the difficulties in turf track design is to control irrigation on the turns which can slope as much as eight feet in 100 feet. Utilizing tests made on the growing mediums enabled the development of the right combination to solve the problems of dryness on the higher parts of the turns.

Another use for all weather designs is in the development of grass parking areas. As long as parking is restricted to afternoons or weekends so that sufficient light is received by the plants, attractive parking areas can be developed. At the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid, the State Parks refused to permit paved parking lots. Over 15,000 spaces were required. The impasse was solved by using grass.

Racing outside of North America went in a different direction than racing in North America where dirt tracks without grass are the norm. Elsewhere in the world, sand tracks without turf are only used for training. Racing is conducted year round on turf in some areas.

Kikuyugrass can be maintained for winter racing. New grass strains and improved maintenance procedures including heating have extended the growing season. Longchamps Race Course in Paris has two turf courses.

Research has led to improvements in many areas. There is a new polymer racing surface at Newmarket, England under rain conditions. The new Equitrack polymer surface has also been used as a growing medium for turf in our tests and can be custom designed for the extended load conditions.

Other new research projects we are completing include fiber and chemical reinforcing for increased strength of turf tracks, playing fields and parking areas, and we expect to have them ready for use soon.

The need for improved materials for sports facilities has been further emphasized by the legal actions which have been brought against many industry groups. We have been working on the coordination of research into the relationship between playing surface and injuries and will be starting two projects which look at this inter-relationship.