

# Setting up the Ballfield Maintenance Program

by Steve Wightman,  
 Jack Murphy Stadium

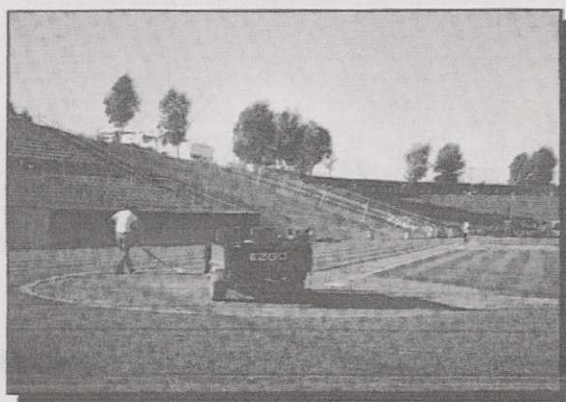
From time to time Sports Turf Manager will offer a "Tips From a Pro" article. These articles are written by your peers in the sports turf industry. This month, Steve Wightman of Jack Murphy Stadium offers a look into ballfield maintenance.

**W**ith Spring on everyone's minds, sports turf professionals are busy preparing fields for league games everywhere. In order to keep fields looking as good as "Opening Day" all year long, consider setting up a ballfield maintenance program. The following guidelines should help you develop a quality ballfield maintenance program, and answer some very important questions.

The first step in establishing a ballfield maintenance program is to **evaluate how the field is presently used**. How many games are played per day, per week, per month, per season and per year? What is the level of play? Are there any "windows" or open times when the field can be reconditioned or renovated during the week, month, season or year?

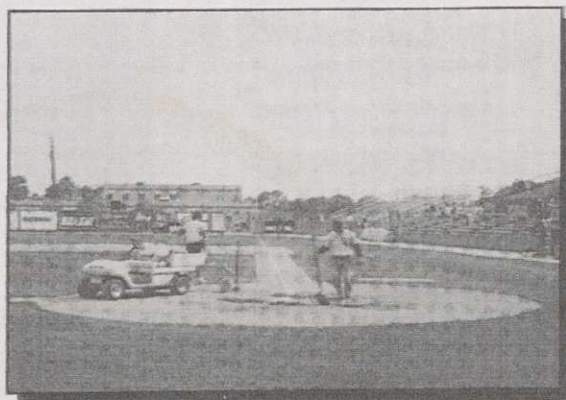
The second step is to **evaluate the condition of the field**. Are there any obstructions, either movable or immovable, that might interfere with play? Is the grass thick and healthy? Are there bare areas throughout the turfgrass? Are there wet spots and/or dry spots from the irrigation system? Are all of the sprinkler heads flush and level with the ground or are some sticking up and some in holes? Is the field too hard and compacted?

*Continued on page 3*



**Compadre Stadium**

**Ed Smith Stadium**



## SPRING FEVER!

Pictured above are turf professionals at Compadre Stadium, Chandler Ariz., spring training home of the Milwaukee Brewers and Ed Smith Stadium, Sarasota Fla., Spring training home of the Chicago White Sox.

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**SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP ISSUE**

**"Promoting Better and Safer Sports Turf Areas"**

## SPORTS TURF MANAGER

Official Newsletter of the Sports Turf  
Managers Association

Volume XI Number 2  
March/April 1993

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*Sports Turf Manager* is a publication of Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA). It is published bi-monthly and is free to STMA members. *Sports Turf Manager's* goal is to promote the mission of the association by providing a channel for communication between the representatives of the board and its constituency. STMA is not responsible for the opinions expressed in this publication. Address changes, advertising, photographs, and editorial inquiries should be directed to the executive offices.

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## President's Message

# STMA Benefits You

by Gil Landry, Jr.  
1993-94 President

As the STMA executive committee wrapped up its annual Winter meeting, it occurred to me how much our association has grown. We have added more than 150 members in the past year, our members are gathering recognition around the country, and we have begun to finalize our fifth annual conference and exhibition.

### Conference Set for November

Our 1993 Annual Conference and Exhibition will be held at Oriole Park at Camden Yards November 6-9 in Baltimore, Md. Mark your calendars now. Conference co-chairman Greg Petry and Dr. Henry Indyk have worked on arrangements closely with the Chesapeake Chapter, represented by Joe Ardolino and Paul Zwaska. I'm confident this committee will do everything possible to develop an exciting and successful conference and exhibition.

Because of STMA's growth, we are facing a challenging and exciting time in our industry. By far, the most important task our association faces today is preparing for the future. Beginning my first term as president, I remember looking at challenges ahead and wondering if we would be able to succeed. Fortunately, with the help some dedicated professionals, we are successfully meeting our challenges, making necessary and important changes, and creating new challenges for our future. Like the sports we prepare for, teamwork leads to success.

### Show your STMA Pride!

There is a major camera company that uses the slogan, "Image is Everything." This slogan is true for STMA — the success of our association depends on our image, not only to ourselves, but to our potential members. The impact we have on the sports turf industry also will dictate our success for years to come.

Obviously, the larger our association, the stronger our voice is for influencing educa-



Dr. Gil Landry Jr.

tion and technology. To increase our membership, however, we must rely on our strongest asset to get our message across — individual members like you. We've grown rapidly this past year, and we can only get better. We can grow not just in numbers, but in maturity. We've made some significant management decisions this year, decisions that will help this organization prosper down the road. But the real success of

this organization will be you. You must get involved, demand results from your leaders and take an active role in STMA.

◆  
*The most important  
task our association  
faces today is  
preparing for the  
future.*  
◆

### Refer New Members

If every member committed to bringing in another member, we would be 1,200 strong. That equates to more funding,

which brings more educational programs, scholarships and membership benefits.

Create a pitch, copy the membership application on page 7 for a friend, and renew your membership in the process. There's also greater incentive — free airfare or hotel accommodations. Details for the member referral contest are on page 6.

The time we take to enrich our position in the industry will also enrich the positions of those around us.

### The Future is Bright

The future of the sports turf industry looks better than ever. New technology, quality educational programs, and safety awareness are areas that are demanding our attention. The association you are building with your membership dollars and volunteer support is prepared to offer the resources to meet our challenges. After all, teamwork is the basis of our industry! □

## Ballfield Maintenance

Continued from cover

Are there big "lips" or humps where the grass and the infield meet on the baseball or softball field? Is the infield area bumpy with depressions and holes? Does the infield have many rocks or other abrasive material? Are there deep holes in the batter's boxes and pitching areas? Does the field drain water well?

The third step is to evaluate the resources available for maintaining the field during the season and throughout the year. What equipment and materials are available for maintenance? What is the availability of personnel to work on the field? What is the weather like during the times the field is in use and when it is not in use? What is the budget? What is the priority for having this field in tip-top shape?

Before answering any of the above questions, look at how the field is now being used, what condition the field is in and what resources are available. Once these issues are identified, a good ballfield maintenance program can be developed in time for first pitches everywhere. Remember: The more use a field has, the more care must be given to provide for a safe and enjoyable experience. □

Steve Wightman, Jack Murphy Stadium, San Diego, Calif., is an STMA Board Advisor.

## Preparing for Spring Sports

From the STMA-Chesapeake Chapter

Are you ready for Spring sports? Go through this checklist to be sure:

- Is your equipment serviced?
- Did you receive a game schedule?
- Are your supplies stocked?
- Have you completed a turf maintenance schedule for 1993?
- Have you made adjustments and contingency plans to avoid last year's problems?
- Are you aware of this season's weather forecast?

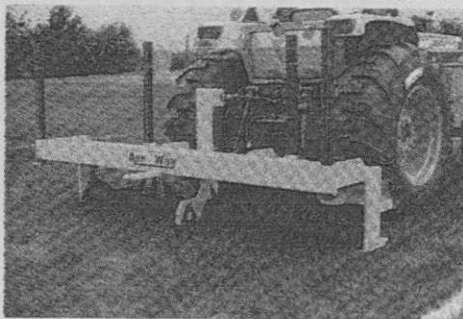
Only you are responsible for your fields. Make sure you are organized and efficient to anticipate next year's problems. Remember, field excellence translates into a higher level of play and fewer field-related injuries. □



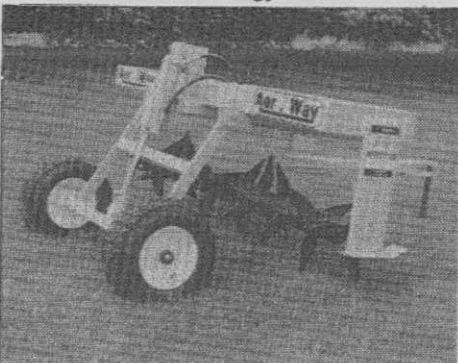
## Your Comments Are Welcome!

The written word is a powerful thing. Exercise your power by letting us know what you think -- about this issue or about STMA. You can address your comments to Lisa Bruno, editorial coordinator, *Sports Turf Manager*, 401 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611-4267, call 312/644-6610 or send a FAX to 312/245-1083.

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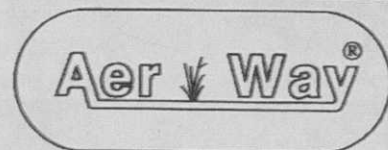
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# Safety on Athletic Fields Begins at the Elementary Level

by Dr. Richard G. Caton and  
Dr. Henry W. Indyk, Turfcon™

It is difficult to find athletic fields used for professional, intercollegiate and interscholastic competition that are constructed in accordance with state-of-the-art technology. It is even more difficult to find properly constructed and maintained playing fields that are designated for the use of young athletes in the elementary schools across America. Many elementary school fields are in very poor condition and, because of the risk of injury to the student athlete, are often deemed unfit for competition.

Since there are no standards for certifying playing fields for athletic competition, games are contested on poor playing surfaces and, even worse, less care is given to fields designated for use by younger athletes.

Because of problems that arise from faulty original construction, some schools employ the services of experts in playing field construction and maintenance to assist with new construction projects. Such is the case in Millville, N.J. where the Administration and Board of Education elected to employ the services of turfgrass experts to manage construction and reconstruction of playing fields in the school district. These fields, located at elementary schools, are used primarily by children and student athletes.

The Millville Board of Education, concerned with the condition of the playing fields and conscious of the need for safety improvement, contacted turf consultants to evaluate the fields, develop specifications, monitor construction procedures and coordinate the project. The initial plan was for developing two fields at existing schools and one field at a newly constructed school.

## The Process

Individual specifications were developed for each field based upon a critical evaluation of each site. In the evaluation process, specific determinations were made for soil conditions, drainage, grade, debris, etc. Although each of the three fields was close to each other, an underground drainage system was specified for only one of the fields. This particular field had poor natural internal drainage conditions. The other

two fields were adequate and would not require the expense of installing a drainage system.

## Soil and Drainage Options

Each field was provided with an eight-inch layer of a modified topsoil (referred to as a root zone mix) above an approved subgrade. Soil samples submitted by contractors were evaluated for appropriate physical and chemical characteristics. On the basis of laboratory analyses, specifications were developed for proper modification with an approved sand to provide for appropriate physical characteristics of the root zone mix. In addition, the results of chemical analyses served as a basis for determining and specifying the requirement for enhancement of the nutrient status mix.

*Many elementary school fields are in very poor condition and, because of the risk of injury to the student athlete, are often deemed unfit for competition.*

Adequate internal soil drainage provides for soil moisture control during and immediately after natural rainfall, particularly when in excess of the water holding capacity of the soil. However, periods of soil moisture stress for turfgrass growth is commonly encountered. As an assurance of maintaining proper soil moisture conditions, each field included automated irrigation systems with small pop-up irrigation heads.

## Sod Selections

Sodding was selected as the most appropriate means of establishing the natural turfgrass playing surface. The use of sod significantly reduces the waiting period necessary for the turfgrass to become well established before being subjected to use. A high-quality tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass sod grown on a loamy sand soil was selected.

Each area featured a softball field with a totally skinned infield constructed with a

coarse sand subgrade covered with a four inch layer of infield mix. Backstops, fencing for player protection and fencing encompassing the entire field, were included.

## The Monitoring Process

When site clearing began, all of the construction procedures including the quality of all materials were monitored to determine conformance to specifications. All activities were recorded and dated. Written reports were issued as a means of communicating the project's progress.

The completion of one field, the near completion of a second field and the anticipated completion of the third field represents the conversion of totally barren playing surfaces to natural turf surfaces with characteristics basic to natural turf playing

fields for athletic activities. These new fields reflect not only upon the forward thinking of the Millville School Administration, but also its sensitivity to providing for the safety of its school children, beginning at the elementary school level. □

*Dr. Richard G. Caton is coordinator of consulting services and Dr. Henry W. Indyk is director of agronomy for Turfcon™ GSI Consultants of the Greenway Group in Horsham, Pa. Dr. Indyk also is on the STMA Board of Directors.*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** At press time, representatives of the STMA Technical Committee submitted the second draft of guidelines for a total field maintenance publication. STMA is working with the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM). Read *Sports Turf Manager* for more details as they develop.

# Welcome New STMA Members

**Peter J. Ashe**  
Hillsdale College  
Hillsdale, MI

**Sam Clay**  
Tulsa Drillers  
Tulsa, OK

**Paul Cherry**  
St. Xavier University  
Chicago, IL

**Jay Downs**  
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**William Harden**  
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Orland Park, IL

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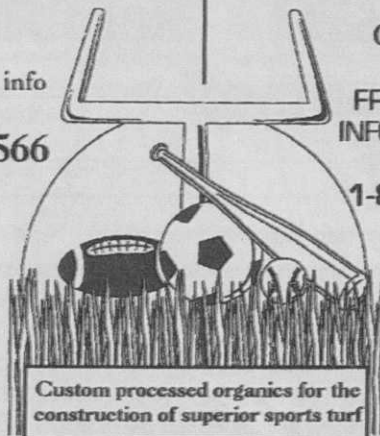
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# News From STMA Headquarters

by Bret Kelsey, Executive Director

**W**ith the busy season upon us, STMA Headquarters recognizes your time spent reading is at a premium. Here's a brief update on the many STMA programs and issues.

## Sports Turf Manager Changes

Throughout this year our newsletter editor, Lisa Bruno, will continue to improve the look of *Sports Turf Manager* and add practical information such as the new "Tips from a Pro" section, where members will share their experiences and allow you to tap into the vast knowledge base within the STMA membership.

## Sponsor Packet Mails

STMA's new sponsorship packet was recently mailed to commercial members. The program outlines options for vendor exposure through contributions and sponsorship in STMA's membership directory and newsletter. To those that have already signed on, thank you. Your funding is going directly into the programs and services that provide education and professionalism to the sports turf industry.

## Membership Drive

Our next membership drive officially begins with this month's issue of *Sports Turf Manager*. This issue will be sent to prospective members and target-specific industry segments, so get the word out and pass this issue around. If you need extra copies, give us a call. Also, look for the full page membership ad in the April issue of *sportsTURF Magazine*.

## Membership Directory Update

We are currently in the process of completing a 1993-94 Membership Directory and Resource Manual. Thank you to those who are sponsoring this project through advertising.

Request letters have been sent to commercial members to update their contact information. If you have not responded, please do so as soon as possible. If you are a commercial member and have not received an update request, please call Headquarters at 312/644-6610.

## Sports Turf Topics Ready to Mail

*Sports Turf Topics*, STMA's new Resource Library will be mailed to members in April.

The Resource Library is comprised of the educational materials written by STMA members in various publications throughout 1992. The library contains more than 20 articles on most aspects of field maintenance, construction, weed control, soil composition and more. The library is offered to all members free of charge and for a nominal fee to non-members.

## Financial Status

STMA's debt to past creditors is now \$13,897.57, down 67 percent from where it was last year. Your board and staff are working to eliminate the debt by the end of this year so that resources are focused on new programs and services. Meanwhile, Adams Publishing, publishers of *sportsTURF Magazine*, has decreased its monthly payments to STMA from \$2,500 to \$1,500 beginning in June. Bruce Shank of *sportsTURF* notified us that the financial agreement with STMA is "negatively affecting the profitability of *sportsTURF*."

## Institute Update

The Midwest Regional Institute, hosted by the Midwest Chapter, is scheduled for June 30, 1993 at Wheaton College in the Chicago area. San Diego's Jack Murphy Stadium will host the Southern California Regional Institute on July 23, 1993. Watch for registration information shortly.



Bret Kelsey

## Thanks for the Thanks

Headquarters has received several thank you letters from STMA 1992 Awards and Scholarship recipients. I wish we had space to share all the kind comments these recipients had about being recognized by their peers. I encourage all of you to take part in the Awards Program in 1993.

The next full board of directors meeting will be June 29 in conjunction with the Midwest Regional Institute in Chicago. As always, your comments and questions are welcome. Please address all inquiries to STMA Headquarters, 401 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611-4267. Best wishes for a successful and safe Spring turf season. □

## Enter the STMA Member Referral Contest!

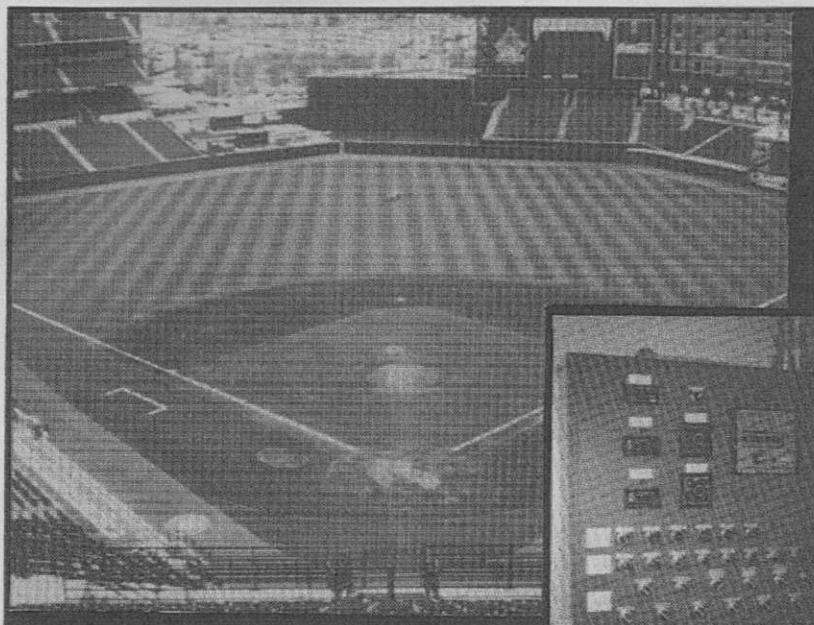
by Rick Johnson, Illinois Lawn Membership Committee Chair

Show your STMA pride by referring new members. If you refer the most members, you will receive round-trip airfare and registration to STMA's 5th Annual Conference and Exhibition in Baltimore — FREE. If you are a resident of the Baltimore area, you will receive three free nights at the Marriott Hotel, headquarters for the conference, along with a free registration.

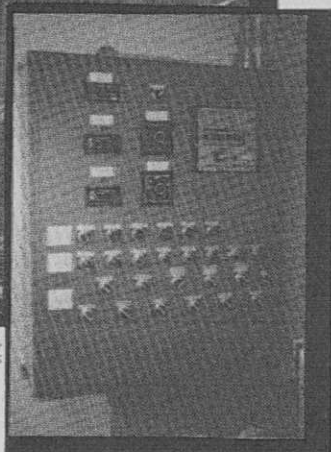
To participate, simply refer new members (a minimum of three members is required). Be sure they mention who referred them when joining — to make things easier, the membership form on the following page has a sponsor line. Make a few copies with your name on it and pass them along! Contest progress reports will appear in the May/June and July/August issues of *Sports Turf Manager*. For more information and guidelines, contact STMA Headquarters at 312/644-6610. Good Luck!

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STMA provides members with a variety of benefits, including: Education through regional institutes and conferences; support for sports turf research; facilities tours; a national awards program; access to the STMA National Conference and Exhibition; complimentary subscriptions to *Sports Turf Manager* and *sportsTURF Magazine*; and much more.

If you're serious about the sports turf industry, then it's time to become a member of STMA. Join today!

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|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional sports turf facility manager                                  | \$75  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional members from same facility                                      | \$45  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four-year colleges and universities  | \$75  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional members from same facility                                      | \$45  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other schools, parks, ext. agents, municipal                               | \$50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional members from same facility                                      | \$30  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student  | \$20  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial affiliate (U.S. or International)                               | \$150 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional members from same company                                       | \$30  |
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