

With Baseball On Strike, What Will Happen to Spring Training?

information compiled from various Sports Turf Professionals

With the baseball strike still on in mid-January, and spring training camps due to open in mid-February, will that heady call, "Play Ball," still ring out?

Yes, according to sports turf professionals. Supplies are still being bought; fields are still being maintained; all preparations are moving forward for "business as usual." The question is - not will they play, but who will play? And - how will the events that unfold affect baseball and all the people and things related to it?

The baseball strike has had an affect on everyone - players, team owners, stadium facility owners, fans - and the sports turf professionals. Sports turf pros are the ones who have spent all these months preparing their fields for the things to come.

Because many major league teams lease their spring camp facilities, cities in warm weather sites vied for the opportunity to serve as camp headquarters for major league teams - and their minor league affiliates. Game and practice fields, stadiums and all the peripheral facilities have been developed or expanded to fulfill the needs of the teams.

Why? Teams draw crowds and crowds spend money that boosts the community economy. Early season Fantasy Camps bring hundreds of middle-aged dreamers on site to play real games with their heroes. As the full contingent of players move into camp to get in shape, hone their skills, and vie for positions on the team, dedicated fans gather to watch their progress. Sportscasters from across North America - and the world - converge to observe, interview, photograph and tape the action. When minor league players come into the camp, the outreach to fans and sportscasters

extends to all those cities where these teams play throughout the year. The result - more fans and sportscasters converge on the camp sites.

This economic impact extends to those connected with the teams and the facility itself - the sports turf manager and crews, those who prepare the stadium, sell tickets, sell goodies, launder the towels and uniforms, keep the rooms clean, prepare the meals - and beyond into the community. Think of the use of hotel rooms, restaurants, and airport facilities, the rental cars, the extra activity at area shopping and sightseeing facilities.

Budgets must be planned well in advance. How do you compensate when a big chunk of your money comes from spring training camps or related spending? Sports turf managers have scheduled crews and maintenance procedures throughout the "off season" in preparation for camp opening. Everything and everyone must be in place to keep the fields safe, playable and aesthetically pleasing.

Facility managers and municipalities are counting on the revenue generated from season ticket sales, promotions, special nights, and all those things that go

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Official Newsletter of the Sports Turf
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Volume XIII Number 1
January/February 1995

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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 Managers' 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. © 1995 Sports Turf Managers Association. All Rights Reserved.

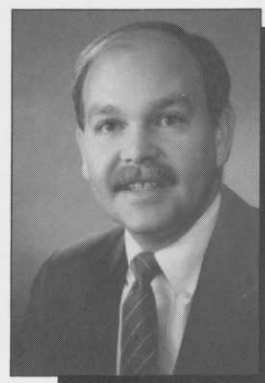
President's Message

by Greg Petry
President

As I complete my first year, which is the mid-point of my term as President of STMA, I am happy to say that we were able to accomplish most of what we set out to do this year.

Finances were one of our main concerns at the start of the year. Thanks to a number of people working together, we have been able to get them in order, with a few surprises, and a few disappointments. The surprises include extra revenue from sportsTURF magazine. This has been a big help to us all.

The biggest disappointment was that the regional institutes were not as well attended as anticipated, and therefore did not generate much revenue. These institutes are a major educational event and all of us should make an attempt to attend at least one a year. We now have an educational committee looking into more ways to promote what we already have, as well as forming more opportunities for us all.



Greg Petry

Our main goal was just to keep going, and growing, and we have certainly done that.

Thank you to Bret, Carey and Tina at STMA headquarters, and a number of other people who will be recognized at the conference in Bradenton.

I'd like to see us continue to grow in 1995, to keep our finances under control, and even build a surplus. In order to do that, it's going to take ALL of us, working together. Let's all try to recruit at least one new member in 1995. Can you imagine where we'll be at this time next year? I CAN! STMA

Baseball Strike

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along with spring training camps. Nor can other events take up the slack. Most spring camp facilities are designed for - and dedicated to - the game of baseball.

So many questions remain to be answered.

In the short term - will municipalities continue to support the sports turf professionals at the previously-budgeted levels? Will the added stress on personnel who will

be working under less than ideal circumstances take a toll?

In the long term - how will the extended strike and whatever the solution may be affect the game of baseball? Will fans continue to support major league teams? Will the minor league system emerge stronger - or weaker? Will college and high school baseball programs continue to thrive? STMA

The ABC's of More Effective Hiring

by Mel Kleiman, President of Humetrics, Inc.

In today's competitive business climate, you have to work smarter than ever to stay ahead. It's now important to get as much as you can from every employee. Regardless of the size of your staff, hiring is a major concern for every business.

Whether you sell or service, produce or distribute, your organization's success relies on its most valuable non-balance sheet asset - its people. By structuring your interview process and using the following rules as guidelines, you can make your hiring more effective:

A Attitude. A positive attitude is the most essential quality you can look for in a potential employee.

B Begin each interview with small talk. An applicant who is comfortable and at ease is more likely to be honest with you.

C Capacity. What are the mental and physical capacities required to do the job?

D Don't try to sell your company to the applicant first thing - a common mistake. Let him or her do most of the talking in the interview. Save the selling for only the strongest candidates.

E Evaluate the position you are trying to fill before you interview anyone. Decide what you are looking for before you look at the applicants.

F Find out as much about each of the applicants as you possibly can.

G Get the truth by telling the applicant that you expect the truth.

H Hear what the applicant is say-

ing in the interview. Don't look for things that you want or expect to hear.

I If your gut feeling says no, then don't hire.

continued on page 4

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ABC's of Effective Hiring

continued from page 3

J Just hire the right person the first time and you won't have to make excuses for hiring an unproductive employee.

K Keep looking for the right fit between the candidate, the position, and your organization.

L Limit the number of people you interview by pre-screening the applicants. Look at resumes, application blanks, telephone interviews and test results. This will save you time.

M Meet all of your objectives in finding the right employee for your company by defining what your needs are before you start to look.

N Never forget that what you see in an interview is better than you will ever see again in your entire life.

O Only you can make the hiring decision. Make sure it is a good one by gathering as much information as you possibly can.

P Personality. People have personalities, jobs have personalities, managers and companies have personalities. The better the personality fit, the better the candidate.

Q Quality employees make the difference between a good company and a great one.

R Remember, the less you know

about an applicant, the more you risk.

S Skills. Hire for the skills necessary to do the job. What are the skill requirements now, and are they likely to change?

T Test. The most cost effective way to get inside the real applicant is by testing. Not skill or drug tests, but personality and attitude tests that will give you a true picture of the applicant.

U Use all of your resources. Have other people in your organization interview the stronger applicants, do background checks, and check references to protect yourself from a potential bad hire.

V Value all of the information that you gather. Don't rely on first impressions or on instinct. There is a chance that you could be wrong.

W Work at finding the best person for the job.

X Exhibit genuine interest in each of the candidates. You may be looking at your new employee.

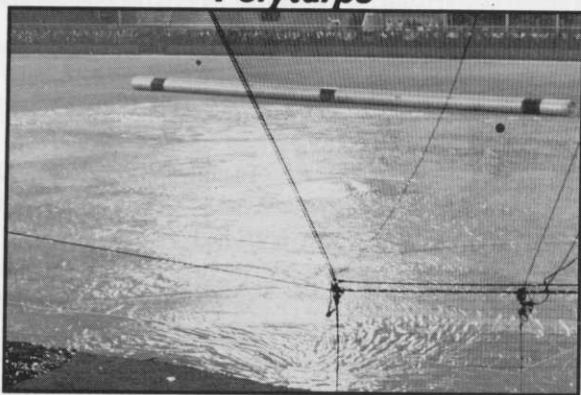
Y Yarn. What most applicants try to spin.

Z ZZZZZZZ Rest and reward yourself for a job well done after making a great decision. STM

Mel Kleiman is president of Humetrics, Inc., a firm specializing in the design and implementation of employment selection systems. For more information on hiring call the Humetrics office at 1-800-627-4473.

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“Lagniappe” - Where Are We Going?

by Gil Landry, Past President STMA

NO, it's not Italian. LAGNIAPPE is French, “Cajun French,” and it means something extra, something for nothing, or a baker's dozen. And, as my father's passing reminded me, I'm a CAJUN and damn proud of it. Even though this writing is hard because us CAJUNS tend to put the verb before the noun. And we often ask a question by making a statement first. For example, another of our members, Mike Matherne, is CAJUN too, did you know that? I'll see you in Florida, Mike.

Back to the point at hand. We needed something in this space. So here's something for nothing.

Many people start off the new year by evaluating their past performance and establishing their goals for the coming year. With that in mind and since I served two years as president and four years on the board of directors of STMA, I would like share some ideas with you.

The first item that comes to mind is the tremendous potential STMA has. STMA could be as large and even larger than the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). That organization has succeeded for many reasons, but probably the main reason is because its “leaders” took up the cause and dedicated themselves to an “idea or objective” that benefitted everyone, not just themselves. And these leaders began with their grass roots at the local

level, and then grew to the state and finally the national level.

STMA was founded by people with such an idea. And that idea is still alive - still the “heart” of what STMA is all about. How fast and how far STMA grows depends on “our leaders.” **And that's you.** If we each got one new member per year we would have over 1,400 members next year and over 5,600 in three years and over 11,000 by 1999. STMA needs people willing to promote the organization, to serve on committees, to share ideas, to solve problems, and to serve on the board of directors.

STMA needs to grow its revenue base so that we can produce educational materials and programs that will draw new members and help its members solve their problems. STMA should be involved in “certification” of its members to establish standard levels of professional competency. And I could go on and on.

In reviewing 1994, I would say we met most of our objectives. We helped complete the first national industry profile survey. We now have a measuring stick. The average sports turf facility in America spends over \$81,000 annually on products and services to maintain about 106 acres for 1,529 events/games. How do you compare?

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News From STMA Homeplate

by Bret Kelsey, Executive Director

On behalf of the STMA Board of Directors and Staff, welcome to Bradenton and the 6th Annual Conference & Exhibition!

In order to assess the value of this year's Annual Conference & Exhibition, and plan for the future, we ask attendees to fill out a critique on site, and, for those who couldn't make it, we urge input by mail, phone or fax. We value your opinion.

To further encourage the infor-

mation flow, regional chapter representatives, and the STMA board will hold a Chapter Relations meeting in Bradenton. This meeting is an annual event and a key element in providing the national and regional organizations an opportunity to discuss common issues and member benefits.

The STMA Board of Directors plans to meet four times this year, two full board meetings and two Executive Committee meetings.

The first of those meetings will be held February 3, 1995, in conjunction with the conference. If you have an important item for board consideration, please feel free to contact STMA Headquarters.

Sponsorship opportunities for STMA Commercial members were presented in a recent mailing to past sponsors and current Commercial members. Sponsorship opportunities include the bi-monthly Sports Turf Manager newsletter and annual Membership Roster and Resource Manual. To those companies that have lent their support to STMA over the past year - thanks again!

A special thanks goes out to Mike Hurd and Jeff Podobnick of the Pittsburgh Pirates Baseball organization - without their support, the 1995 Conference would have been impossible.

Looking ahead to 1996, STMA is planning to take the 7th Annual Conference & Exhibition to Southern California. Look for a formal announcement during the Conference in Bradenton.

Have a prosperous 1995! *STMA*

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"Lagniappe"...

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Our Annual Conference committee has done a fantastic job planning the 1995 annual meeting. You talk about dedicated people. Dr. Henry Indyk, Eugene Mayer, Mike Schiller, STMA board members, and Mike Hurd in Bradenton have made a tremendous effort to produce a terrific Annual Conference. It's a shame everyone can't attend. Our membership continues to grow. We're doing pretty good.

We did hit a few bumps this last year, but the road ahead to 1995 looks pretty smooth. We have the newsletter back to a regular schedule, and we continue to make progress in the financial area. I think we'll have a great crowd in Florida and we will continue to grow.

But, if we each got one new member...

Now there is Bucky Trotter, a Clemson grad, maintaining the Athletic Department fields at the University of Kentucky, and Bob Campbell, a University of Tennessee grad, maintaining UT's facilities... But this is a story that will have to wait. STMA

The Midwest Chapter: STMA will hold its Fifth Annual Meeting and Luncheon on Thursday, March 2nd, at the Schaumburg Golf Club, Schaumburg, IL, from 9:30 A.M. to 2:15 P.M. Following the luncheon, the Awards Program and Chapter Membership Update will be presented. For more information, contact The Chapter Hotline (708)439-4727.

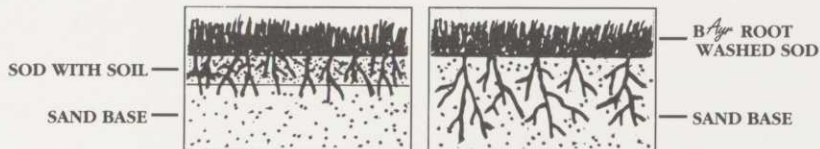
The New England Chapter, STMA is participating in the Massachusetts Turf Conference which will be held March 6-8, 1995, in Springfield, MA. The Annual NESTMA Breakfast will be held the morning of March 8th, prior to the beginning of the Conference program. Contact Mary Owen at (508)892-0382.

The Southern California Chapter: STMA will hold a Landscape & Lawn Seminar on April 27, 1995, at Sea World. Multiple demonstrations are planned for the morning sessions covering various topics. For more information, contact: Chris Bunnell at (619)432-2421.

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