

How Do You Do...?

The Question -- How Do You Prepare for Special Events on your Fields?

Answered by David Mellor, Milwaukee Brewers Baseball

We try to get involved right from the start for any special event on our field, whether it's a high school tournament, special dinner function, concert, etc. We talk directly to the promoters to make sure that they understand that their event IS going to require extra man-hours, possibly re-sodding afterwards, aerification, etc. so that they will have that planned into their budget. Communication is very important so make sure that you have one key person to deal with issues concerning changes, problems, their damage control deposit, etc. Make sure that both this contact person and your powers that be recognize the fact that a special event is an extra job and that anything that might be needed after the event to repair the field to pre-event status should be the responsibility of the event promoter and NOT come out of your budget.

As far as pre-event conditioning, we try to apply a preventive fungicide and extra potassium to the field, but our main goal is to go into an event with a healthy field, then you have a much better chance of coming out with a healthy field.

Answered by Charles Forsman, Lakeside School, Seattle, WA

I would have to say that our preparation for special events is to try and keep the fields well maintained throughout the year. We have a relatively small operation here, however, a special event is special no matter how big or small you are. We have a football/lacrosse field, a soccer field and a softball field that are in use from September through mid-May, so the only thing we can do is fertilize and do spot maintenance where we can. The football field is used for practice every day with 2 home games. The soccer field also is used for practice every day except we play 15 home games and any playoff games, with practices, that are needed, depending on how the season goes. Generally, we're in post season tournaments every year.

After the season is over (depending

on the weather) we try to overseed and topdress before winter sets in. We do fertilize in late October or early November to give the field something to nibble on during the winter. Spring sports (lacrosse on the football field and boys soccer on the soccer field) start in March, so, that means practices start as early as February and the fields are then in use until mid-May. As soon as sports are over in May, we till up the center section of the football field and re-seed with 9-10 lbs. of ryegrass mix per thousand, with starter fertilizer and topdress with a 1/4" application of sand. On the soccer field, we aerate, drag, overseed and topdress at the same time. Fortunately, we have no play on any of the fields during the summer and we generally have them ready to go when practices start up again in mid-August.

As far as pre-event conditioning, we try to apply a fertilizer with extra potassium so we go in with the field as healthy as we can. That way, we come out much better on the other end.

Answered by Bret Prather, War Memorial Stadium, Little Rock, AR

Since I'm in the middle of preparation for my 1st major college game of the season, I'll walk you through that. Main preparations include a balancing act of mowing,

fertilizing, painting and final mowing before the 1st game. We try to get the painting done in between mowing demands of every two days so that it will be dry in time to mow in the late afternoon/evening. Day 1) we concentrate on the red 14" outline of ARKANSAS on each endzone. We mix / oz. of Primo for every 5 gallons of paint to keep the grass from growing out and to keep the color in longer. Day 2) we concentrate on the boundaries, lines, numbers and hash marks. Day 3) is devoted to the decorative 6' border and the end zone letters filled in with white paint. Day 4) Following a fresh cutting, we'll refresh all the white coats as needed before the Friday practice. After practice ends, we'll re-mow the field one more time before the game on Saturday. This particular week, Mother Nature threw us a curve with 3 rain-out days so everything now doubles on two long days. I am hopeful that it will allow time for at least the basics like the regulation lines and markings. No two field painting schedules are exactly alike, especially when our seasonal rains come in on a game week.

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