

## SPORTS TURF MANAGER

Official Newsletter of the Sports Turf  
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# President's Message

## Black Eyes Take Time To Heal!

by *Steve Guise, President*

It drives me crazy to read in the newspaper that brand new fields are being referred to as "cow pastures" and are being tilled under without a single game played on them. Aren't these fields being designed and built using USGA specifications or equally exacting and well-developed soil specifications? At the very least, aren't these owners using a licensed agronomist to consult and provide quality control during the design and construction of these fields? How can we as professionals continue to allow these fields, in some cases, high profile fields, to be installed or maintained improperly? It's not only extremely expensive, but also frustrating, I'm sure, for all involved. And every time one of these situations occurs, it's a black eye to our industry and to our organization.

It is critical for the STMA membership to reach out to architects and contractors to provide leadership and direction in field design. Who better to provide input in a field's design than the individuals that have the experience in maintaining such fields? Professional, educated sports turf managers know the basic "dos and don'ts" in construction methodology, understand the long-term effects of the various components involved in construction, and have extensive knowledge in the multiple aspects of maintenance procedures and their impact on the field.

Agronomists experienced in the soil profile being designed are the ones who should be driving the design to meet the owner's and potential field users' needs. Too often, the budget is the major factor in design, without consideration to the long-term costs involved with "fixing" a poorly designed and constructed field. Frequently, the designer's lack of knowledge in the areas of athletic fields and the impact of such elements as drainage, soils,



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and amendments on these fields are the cause of the problems.

There are architectural firms out there that discovered this issue a number of years ago and provide a professional design team made up of agronomists, soil testing labs and sports turf managers. I take my hat off to these companies for their ability to recognize the importance of a well-designed, high-performing field.

A key element in this mix is the entry of the sports turf manager early in the design process. His or her input will help the designer reach construction decisions that will make long-term maintenance of the field more efficient, easier, and less expensive.

Professionalism!! We must create a network of STMA professionals in every category to provide assistance in these matters. To help address such issues, STMA does have a Technical Committee. Mike DePew, current Chair of the STMA Technical Committee, is committed to the development of a systematic approach to professional design and maintenance standard guidelines. Mike recently has joined the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) committee on STMA's behalf to work alongside some of the best agronomists in their fields such as Don Waddington and Norm Hummel, to mention a few. Let's support the efforts of this Committee and protect our profession.

*Steve*