

## Certification - It's Worth It!

Becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager, CSFM, is much more than adding the letters behind your name. It's a sign of distinction that shows the industry and the world that you've achieved the top level of professional competence as a sports field manager, and that you've committed yourself to continue your professional development to maintain that status. Here, the first five CSFMs give you their perspectives on the process and the designation.

Ross Kurcab, CSFM, said, "The process was as simple as following the instructions, quick and painless. I tested through an assessment center. The testing was straightforward and simple -- other than answering the questions. I feel I've become a more well rounded sports turf manager. It forced me to study in areas where I hadn't had experience, like baseball skinned infields, which I wouldn't have done otherwise. It was great to put something positive in my personnel file and to receive the recognition from my bosses and my peers. It made me better at what I love to do and that's what I did it for. I consider it a strong brush stroke on the canopy of my career."

Ted Baker, CSFM, said, "Going through the certification process tested my skill level and helped validate all I've learned through STMA over the years. It has helped me define my direction. My Park District asked key employees to implement a plan for their education and certification. Since I had just achieved Certification status and know the requirements in CEUs and ISPs necessary to retain it, I've been able to give them a clearer path of where I'm going in my professional development."

Eric Adkins, CSFM, said, "The application process wasn't difficult or time consuming. I studied for the test, but I didn't knock myself out doing it. The test is tough enough to challenge you, but it's not impossible. The main benefits will be down the road as more people become certified. The jobs will be more geared to a CSFM. That's what has happened with GCSAA. In the long run, I know Certification will be the biggest benefit I'll get from STMA. It's a privilege to be one of

the first. I wanted to distinguish myself within the profession and I think that has happened."

Mike Schiller, CSFM, said, "Back when I was STMA president, it became apparent we needed to act on the Certification issue we'd been discussing for years. Because we had the funds to move forward and we had a dedicated, hard-working committee and the full support of the Board, the Certification Program became a reality. Then I wanted to show my support by becoming one of the first ones certified.

And I made it. I hope my brothers and sisters in sports turf management also will go after certification because the more of us that become certified the better off our industry will be. In the future, employers will look at certification as being a vital part of the resume."

Dale Getz, CSFM, said, "I think it's a good exercise to go through the introspective process of doing a resume. Preparing the application is fairly simple and user friendly. In preparation for testing, I

reviewed the competencies and then studied things I felt I wasn't quite up to date on and brushed up on things I had forgotten. It sharpened my skills and I wouldn't have done it otherwise. The test was challenging, yet rewarding. I see the CSFM designation as a personal accomplishment that will have increasing significance in the future. Do I think it's worth it? You bet I do. Am I proud of it? Yes. The first thing I did when I received the official notification was to order new business cards with CSFM after my name."



Stephen Guise (l), presents the plaque to Ross Kurcab, our FIRST Certified Sports Field Manager



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