

STMA Founder George Toma Named NFL Pioneer Award Winner



George Toma

To pro football fans, the induction of the "Magnificent Seven" into the Pro Football Hall of Fame was an historic event. To STMA members, it was that "and then some." George Toma, one of STMA's Founders and Playing Field Consultant for the National Football League, also was honored.

Jim Steeg, Vice-President of Special Events for the NFL, presented Toma with the Daniel F. Reeves Pioneer Award during the first formal event of the Enshrinement Weekend celebration, the August 3rd Mayor's Breakfast.

The Award is named for the late Daniel F. Reeves, former owner of the Los Angeles Rams and a pioneer in the NFL, to "honor an individual whose innovative ideas have contributed to the game of professional football." It has been awarded only four times since 1972.

Hall of Fame announcement notes from the presentation state, "Toma, considered a master at his trade, is sports preeminent groundskeeper. His innovations, expert

care and preservation of pro football's championship fields, including all 35 Super Bowls, has earned him widespread recognition and acclaim. It is a reputation he has earned over a career that spans nearly 60 years."

Toma's first groundskeeping job was at the Class A Eastern League home of the Wilkes-Barre Barons in Pennsylvania. Emil Bossard, the legendary Cleveland Indians groundskeeper, was Toma's first mentor. He served in the Army during the Korean war, then returned to sports turf management, moving through the ranks of several minor league teams. In 1957, he accepted a position with the Kansas City Athletics. When the Athletics moved to Oakland, Toma remained in Kansas City, soon becoming the head groundskeeper for the Kansas City Royals. He was hired in 1963 to provide his expert services for the Kansas City Chiefs. His first direct connection with the NFL came with field preparations for the first Super Bowl. Toma has since demonstrated his field expertise on baseball, football and soccer venues around the world.

In 1981, he lent his expertise to the formation of the STMA. He remains active and has referred a number of members over the years.

Congratulations, George, on a job well done "and then some."



Professional Development: Effective Time Management

Time can be the most difficult aspect of the management program. Unlike other resources at the disposal of the sports turf manager, time is fixed - predetermined and unchanging.

You can add to your staff by selective hiring, by the intelligent integration of interns, or by recruiting and training volunteers. You can improve your efficiency, and that of your staff, through education and training. You can increase your equipment resources through a combination of purchase and leasing programs, through shared purchasing, through short-term rentals, or through borrowing. You can add to natural precipitation by irrigation. You can increase your turf density by overseeding. You can even add to your usable field space by such practices as "creating" a soccer field in the outfield of an existing softball or baseball field.

But you can't increase your time resources. There are 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day, 365 days in a year - no more; no less. The better you manage the time resource the more effi-

cient and effective your overall program will become.

The Big Picture

The first step in managing your program's time resource is determining how much you have to allocate. You can't "spend" all 24 of those hours on work, at least, not most of the time. So determine, realistically, how much of your time and how much of each staff member's time is available to allocate per day, per week, per month and per sport season.

To do this, you can use a calendar and a pen or pencil; develop a simple grid using paper and pencil or *continued on page 14*

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an erasable board and markers; or use a purchased printed or computerized time management/organizer system such as Franklin Planner or Day-Timer.

List each individual within the program and the total number of hours you can "spend" for each of them each day during a one-week period. Next determine the "must do" tasks to be completed for each day within that week. Then fit each individual's time onto the planner by workable blocks, such as 15 to 30 minutes. Obviously, you'll need to match the skill level of the individual to the task that must be done. Delete time from the total available per individual as you transfer it to the planner. Continue this process for the year

Time the Techniques

In many cases, you'll already have key parts of your program precisely timed. For example, you know how many staff members it takes to handle the pre-game set up of the baseball field within the time available. Each individual has specific assignments and knows

what to do, when to do it, and what tools to use. Many of you have put a stopwatch to this, testing various tools and/or various individuals in specific situations to determine the quickest methods and the best combination of people and tools to achieve the desired results.

You're shooting for a similar level of efficiency throughout your time management program, so keep that stopwatch handy. This takes a combination of "thinking out of the box" about how and why you and your staff perform certain procedures and the perseverance to explore other alternatives. Time specific tasks, handled with specific tools, by specific individuals or teams of individuals and keep track of the results for comparison.

Using your current equipment, how long does it take to cover your football field with a core aerator at pre-set spacing with a pre-set coring depth? How long does it take to cover only the areas of heavy

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wear on that field? What is the time comparison between coring the entire field in one direction and coring the heavy wear areas in two directions? Which method of "spending" your time produces the best results?

Using your current methods of baseball field "lip" control, how long does it take to complete your post-game clean-up? Can you trim the time involved and achieve the same results by switching to a different method, i.e. using brooms or a blower if you're currently raking? Do you "save" or "spend" time in your overall post-game time scheme if you assign fewer or more people to this task? Do a different set of tasks fit better with lip clean-up detail than the ones currently assigned? How is your overall time affected if you switch the assignment of lip clean-up to a different individual or group of individuals?

Use the same stopwatch and method-switching procedures to compare the time "spent" on all your maintenance practices, such as mowing, topdressing,

overseeding, fertilization, mound and batters box repair, infield skinned area preparation, setting the bases, line and logo painting, dugout clean-up, weed control around fence lines, etc.

Make It Work for You

Completing all this comparison could take an entire season, but the results will be well worth the effort. You may discover a few, or many, changes that can help save you time. You may discover you've already developed an extremely efficient time management program and there is little you can do to improve your operating efficiency with your current tools and equipment and staffing levels. Either way, it strengthens your management position by providing you with solid data to support your maintenance program.

The next step is to look at your overall situation. If, as is the case with so many sports facilities, you are facing greater time demands, either through added use of your existing fields or through the development of new fields at your facility, the data you have developed will be very helpful in determining what you'll need to make that work.

And you can put the data to work for you. Using your data, you can demonstrate to your supervisors and budgeting entities that you've analyzed your program and fine-tuned it to accomplish the maximum in efficiency and results. You can then use your data to show how many additional labor hours you'll need to "spend" to facilitate the maintenance necessary for newly constructed fields and/or for additional use of existing fields.

Since you can't increase the number of hours in a day, you will need to "find the time" to handle the added workload through other avenues. Your data can support the request for additional full-time or part-time staff members, or for the establishment of a trained volunteer workforce. Your data can support the request for upgraded equipment to perform specific procedures more quickly and efficiently. Your data can support the request for greater control over field user groups and the allocation of field space and on-field time in order to keep fields in better condition and reduce time-consuming renovation procedures.

Controlling how you "spend" time leads to a more valuable overall sports turf management program.

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