

In The Spotlight - On The Spot

Play ball! Those words turn the spotlight on your field and put you on the spot. Just as if a director had shouted "lights, camera, action" - your field - your work - your professional image - become the focus of attention. The sport may be baseball, softball, football, soccer, rugby, polo or bocce ball. Whatever the game, your field is front and center, the stage on which all action will take place. Spectators in the stands, watching TV screens, or scanning newspapers view the results of your efforts.

Athletes - from the seasoned professional to the youngest, least experienced player - put their bodies and their skills to the test of the playing surfaces you have prepared for them.

Neither the spectators nor the players care that insects, diseases, heat and drought, drenching rains, or cold and snow have attacked your field. They don't care that your fertilization budget has been cut, your irrigation system is outdated, or your equipment is out for repair. They don't care that the field has hosted 20 events in the last week or a regional marching band competition yesterday. They only care about today, this game, right now.

To the players and their dedicated supporters - each game is an end in itself - as important to them in that moment as the final round of the College World Series or the last play of the Super Bowl. Your field is in the spotlight and you are on the spot because this game, each and every game, is that important to you, too.

Good field conditions give the athletes the opportunity to concentrate on the game and play to the best of

their abilities. Poor conditions draw their attention away from the game and reduce the level of their play. Bad conditions may put them at risk for injury.

If the field looks good, the spectators probably won't notice. If the field looks bad, they'll probably complain and offer their opinions about how you are doing your job whether or not they know you, the sport, turf, or sports turf management.

You know all this - and have chosen to be a sports turf manager. You face head-on the ever-changing challenges Mother Nature throws at you, determined to overcome them all. You find a way to work through overscheduled field use and budget and resource limitations. You focus on constantly improving your skills and those of your crew. You work at educating all those you interact with about the importance of field maintenance and field conditions. You do all this to produce a top quality, highly playable field. You're a sports turf manager - a true professional.



Rosenblatt Stadium - Home of the College World Series
 photo courtesy Donna C. Lynn, STMA Headquarters



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