

SPORTS TURF MANAGER

Official Newsletter of the Sports Turf
Managers Association

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President's Message

Your Efforts Are Appreciated

By Murray Cook

It's been a challenging spring for many STMA members. Reports from across the country have detailed the heavy hits from Mother Nature. While large areas of the US are suffering extremely dry conditions, other areas have been deluged with heavy and frequent rainfall. While many sports turf managers are coping with water restrictions, others are experiencing flooding.

Despite all this, somehow, somehow, through a combination of knowledge, expertise, skill and good old-fashioned hard work, sports turf managers find a way to keep their fields in playable condition. Sometimes that requires postponing or canceling games during extreme weather conditions to preserve the field for future use. Explaining that need to field user groups, coaches and supervisors is a key part of this profession.

Good communication is essential. People respond more positively to things they understand, so it's important to include the reasons behind the decision to suspend field use along with the announcement of that decision. It's also important to understand that field owners, coaches, supervisors and field user groups each face their own pressures to get in all the games that have been scheduled. It's through working together that we are able to balance the needs of the sports program with the needs of the fields. It may take extra effort - making one more round of phone calls to discuss current conditions before announcing a cancellation or stationing a key crew member at the site to prevent unauthorized play - to produce the desired results. The good part of all this is, that whatever it takes, sports turf managers have proven that they are willing and able to step up to the plate to get the job done.

This dedication and commitment are so much a part of what you do every day, week after week, year after year, that most of you don't even consider it "anything



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special" any more. Yet, as I have the opportunity to talk with other STMA members across the country and learn about how you manage your field maintenance programs, I see the big picture of the impressive results you produce.

I'm also impressed with the networking that is so often involved in those results. While other industries may closely guard their "trade secrets," you are quick to share yours. You're open and honest about your successes - and your failures. You relate not only what worked in a specific situation, but also what didn't work. You want to help others share in those successes and avoid any negative outcomes. It's all about providing the best playing surfaces possible for all levels of play.

Your work is appreciated. Though you may not hear a thank you from those who use your fields, their appreciation is expressed through the joy of participation in the games. It's expressed through the success of those whose athletic skills continue to grow through youth leagues, high school, college and professional sports. The pinnacle of some athlete's "career" may be the championship played at any one of these levels - and played on your field. That appreciation also is expressed by those who continue to participate in sports as adults, and even as seniors. They, perhaps more than anyone else, play for the joy of playing. It's your efforts that make this all possible.

So, for all those who use your fields, and on behalf of STMA, thank you!