

SPORTS TURF

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...for better, safer Sports Turf

EDITORIAL

When will it ever end?

I recently had a call from a sports turf manager about a new "all weather" sports field which had water on the surface following heavy rains during September. The field was constructed in an area of relatively heavy soils overlying bedrock at one meter. The soil material was excavated to bed rock and filled with pit run sand which was capped with a root zone sand, devoid of organic material and top soil. No drainage was installed. As predicted this saucer full of sand soon filled with water.

This is one of many, many examples of sports fields designed and constructed without the architect and the contractor having knowledge of the basic requirements of sports field construction. The price for the errors they make is carried by the sports field manager in future years and the citizens of the municipality who pay the taxes to correct the mistakes.

For decades there was an art in the building of a successful sports field. In some cases the "artist" was successful; in many the "art" was a disaster. Over the last twenty years the science of soil physics, water flow and agronomy has been used to design a system which has a high success rate in guaranteeing an "all weather" field. In most cases the costs over the long run are similar.

When will the scientist replace artist? When will the administrator and politician consult the sports turf manager before handing over the tax payers money? When will this waste end?

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is once again a pleasure to extend warm greetings to all Sports Turf Association members. I hope everyone enjoyed a safe summer and had much success with their sports field programs. Here in southern Ontario, aside for a few precious weeks in August when the sun shone brightly for an extended period, I am sure keeping mowing cycles on schedule was the primary challenge for most turf managers over the past few months. As we enter Fall, it seems the moist weather again will have a continuing impact on our fields, maintenance programs and schedules.

In August the STA was pleased to support the Field Day held at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute. The program and turnout were superb and Pam Charbonneau is to be congratulated on a wonderful day. Our Executive Secretary was present, promoting the Association, selling field guides and speaking with prospective members.

Your Directors have been working on finalizing the program for the upcoming Turfgrass Symposium to be held once again at the Regal Constellation Hotel. Again this year we will hold our Annual Meeting during the Symposium, followed by a special 10th Anniversary Dinner. It promises to be an exciting evening so please plan to join us along with many Past Presidents, Directors and Honourary Members. At the dinner, the STA will honour our Turf Management Short Course scholarship winners. More details will follow in the near future. Please remember when registering for the Symposium to check off the box which identifies you as a member of the Sports Turf Association.

In mentioning the Turfgrass Symposium, it reminds me that at this time of year many managers and supervisors are



preparing budgets for 1997 and once again, in most cases, budgets will be the same or lower than 1996. Funds for training and education are usually precious and easily pared down even further by senior management staff. We are constantly asking staff to work harder, smarter, and more efficiently. "We must be more creative, be more competitive, and use our existing funds even wiser to gain the maximum benefit this year" is an often used statement to rally the troops. How can we motivate our staff without giving them the proper tools to improve and enhance their work so they are competitive?

One of the educational tools we can provide is by sending *front line* operational staff to seminars such as the Symposium. Even if it is only for a day, giving an educational opportunity to one of the staff will be one of the soundest economic investments of 1997. This year during the inevitable rounds of budget cuts, lobby your senior administrators that training and education is an area you simply **CANNOT AFFORD** to reduce. These days it is almost impossible to reward staff with salary and benefit increases; at least we can offer them an opportunity to enhance their skill and knowledge level so they can work more effectively, efficiently and most importantly - feel better about themselves.

Good luck with Fall sports turf maintenance and renovation programs.

Wishing you better, safer sports turf

Christopher Mark
President

