

Preparations for World Cup '94: A Retrospective

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The following is the first article in a two-part series by Dr. James Watson, Vice President of The Toro Company, based on Dr. Watson's keynote address at the 1996 Ontario Turfgrass Symposium. We find the information to be particularly relevant, especially with respect to Chris Mark's "bid" to host the next World Cup (see the President's Message on the preceding page).

Preparation

Preparation for an event like the World Cup begins after the host country is selected some four to six years before the Games are to be played. Site selection depends upon size and configuration of the stadium; length and width of the playing field; access to the stadium from airports, train depots, bus stations, and highways; and local civic, financial, and volunteer support. Then, some 18-24 months before the Games begin, security, media outlets for world-wide radio and television broadcasts, housing facilities, electrical outlets (often additional power must be brought in), and broadcast towers must be provided. Planning for field conditioning also must get underway. This, of course, begins with planning and design.

- Seedbed preparation: reserve and starter fertilizers, settling procedures, and grading.
- Irrigation system design including pipe sizes, sprinkler heads, water taps (including size of inlet pipes), gallons (litres) per minute available, pressure at inlet, and type of backflow prevention valve and its location.
- Location of goal sleeves and posts, players' benches, coaches' boxes, space for cameras and photographers, and security.
- Electrical outlets.

In short, design blueprints and specifications included the many and varied details that such documents require for bidding and installation. In addition, specifications detailing the kinds and amounts of materials included soil texture, depth, methods for grading, seedbed preparation, and qualifications of the sod—how it was to be cut, trucked, delivered, and installed.

Specifications also included type, grade, analysis, and amounts of fertilizers to be incorporated at various stages of seedbed preparation and maintenance over a given period of time. In the case of the Meadowlands, the contractor was employed to maintain the field throughout the scheduled games. *And* to dismantle and remove the field within three days of the last game—the Eastern semi-final game.

Special Situations

There are a number of special and unexpected situations that occur and develop before and during the games and often between games. Emergency situations arise that must be handled quickly and expeditiously. Suffice it to say that responses from all parties must be decisive and implemented immediately. For

many, there is no room for delay or time to discuss. Among those that involve planning a year or so in advance are:

- Contracting for sod. Should be done at least one year in advance. This includes sod for modification, rebuilding, and emergency replacement. We specified sod must be mature, at least one year old at the time of harvest.
- Determination of scheduled events.
- Evaluation of facility personnel (their capabilities and training).
- Determination of availability of facility crew for key maintenance programs during period of time games are played.
- Irrigation system performance—the type and its capability.
- Number and location of quick coupling valves.
- Evaluation of the type, number, and condition of facility equipment.
- Availability of *back up* and *rental* equipment and time required to get it to the stadium.
- List of emergency supplies and materials that will be needed and that the facility must provide. Includes fertilizers, pesticides, iron and other trace elements, topdressing material, seed, paint, and dye.
- Availability of rain tarps which also may substitute for warming the soil.

These are only a few of the details that must be planned and organized well in advance of the year the Games are scheduled.

Because the games are played in June and July, and because most stadia must host various events including other sporting events and concerts to support the facility financially, it is likely to be spring before final field preparation can begin. This was the case of USA World Cup '94. Other than planning, actual work did not begin until April on any of the fields.

Emergency Situations

Anything that may damage the turfgrass usually happens either just before, during, or after a game. Some of the situations I remember are:

- Forty horses prancing around Foxboro Field just *inside* the field boundaries. Most of the game had been played in light rainfall and the field was *wet*. Severe cupping resulted!
 - Syringing hot spots just before a game, at half time, and between rehearsals.
 - Replacement of severely damaged areas in the goal zones a few days before the Games.
 - Graduation ceremonies eight days before the opening game. Some 10,000 square yards of sod had to be replaced.
 - 2,000 dancers and entertainers moving in repetitive patterns in practice just before the opening games.
- The rule of thumb is to be prepared for *any* possible situation!◆