

# 11th Annual STA Field Day

MICHAEL BLADON

The 11th annual Sports Turf Association Field Day was held at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute on August 18. A large crowd was treated to an interesting group of speakers, a tasty lunch, and finally, a bus tour of the University of Guelph playing fields and Hastings Stadium, home of the Guelph Royals baseball team.

Field Day proceedings were chaired by Paul Turner, Director of the Sports Turf Association. Chris Mark, STA President, began the morning by announcing the two STA scholarship winners, Perry Davie and Duncan Graham. He then thanked the suppliers for not only their participation, but also for their support of the Field Day in the form of donations and gifts in kind—all were much appreciated and helped to keep costs to a minimum. Lastly, he thanked Dr. Ken Carey of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute for his assistance with computer problems and for setting up email and a website for the Association.

## '98 Ontario Summer Games

The first speaker of the day was Tim Mau, General Manager of the '98 Ontario Summer Games held from August 13-16 in Guelph, Ontario. His talk focused on the logistics involved in organizing such a major event.



- A bid was put in for the Games in 1996.
- In March, 1997, the City of Guelph was awarded the venue.
- Funding came from a grant from the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture, and Recreation, the City of Guelph, gifts in kind, and from many corporations. A total of \$1 million dollars was raised for the four day event.
- Office space was donated in a mall at an estimated cost of \$60,000 for seven months.
- Tim Mau had two co-chairs and an office manager.
- Some 1,800 volunteers, approximately 1,400 athletes (ages 14-17), and 1,500 coaches and officials participated in the Games. Each athlete was charged a \$60 entry fee.

## Committees

1) Volunteer committee: service organizations (including sports associations) were approached because of their expertise in the field. One company even gave their staff time off if they volunteered for the Games.

2) Administrative committee: responsible for entering computer data on the athletes as they registered; faxes and other general office activities; and volunteer assignments. The latter was difficult because organizations were slow to report in with the names of volunteers recruited.

3) Finance committee

4) Student services (University of Guelph): they were indicated as a partner when the bid for the Games was entered. They were responsible for food, water, accommodations, and transportation. Food services included the supply of breakfast and dinner menus for 3,000 people and the organizing and delivery of box lunches to competitors at numerous scattered venues. Deliveries were all tied to Game's schedules so that athletes, coaches, and officials would receive their meals during gaps in competition between 11 am and 2 pm.



Left: Chair Paul Turner presides over the morning session. Above: The 11th annual Field Day was held at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute.

5) Souvenirs committee: souvenirs were available from the University Bookstore. Based on previous Games experience (the City of London had a surplus of memorabilia in 1994), companies who supplied the souvenirs were given a 24 hour turn-around notice. Orders placed in the morning were delivered the next day. Only 100 items were kept on hand at a time and only 20 T-shirts were left at the end of the Games.

6) Protocol committee: responsible for the opening and closing ceremonies, both of which were spectacular, and a reception held at the River Run Civic Centre. Dancers who took part in the ceremonies came from all parts of Ontario, and the stage was brought in on a transport truck at a cost of \$10,000.

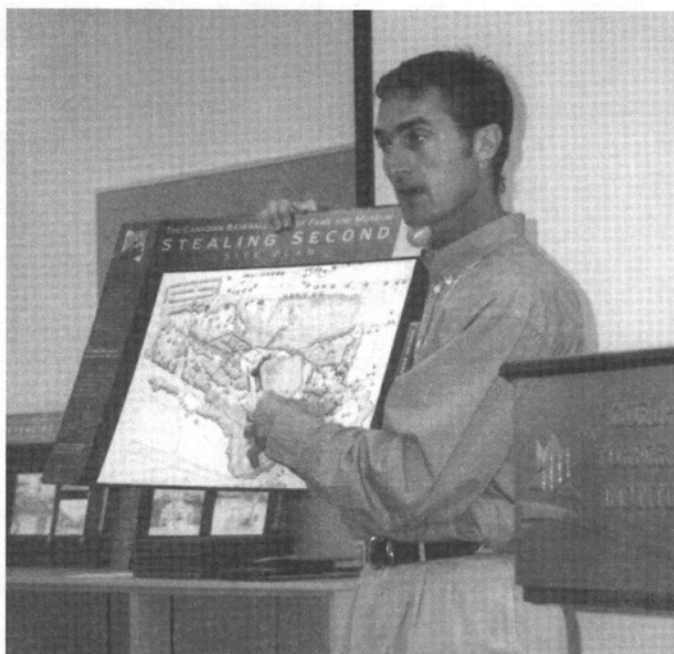
7) Media promotion: handled by the Predator Group, Kitchener, Ontario. They made up press kits for newspapers and

designed radio and TV commercials. Rogers Cable and CKCO did most of the local broadcasting so the Games could be watched on TV.

#### *Athletic Fields*

The City of Guelph began inspecting fields in the spring of 1997 for grades, holes, etc. The playing fields were then aerated and overseeded with 100% perennial ryegrass and topped with composted material at a rate of 50 cubic metres per hectare. They were sprayed for weeds and soil tests were done in the fall of 1997 before fertilizer was applied. All work had to conform to Game standards.

In closing, Mau stated that the Games provide an opportunity for the development of up and coming athletes since they are generally their first exposure to major competition. Extensive planning paid off with an extremely successful Summer Games.



*Above: Arthur Lierman describes the ballpark at the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. Right: Avid participants take in the morning session.*

### **Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame**

The second session of the morning was presented by Richard McPherson and Arthur Lierman. They discussed the history and field construction of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame.

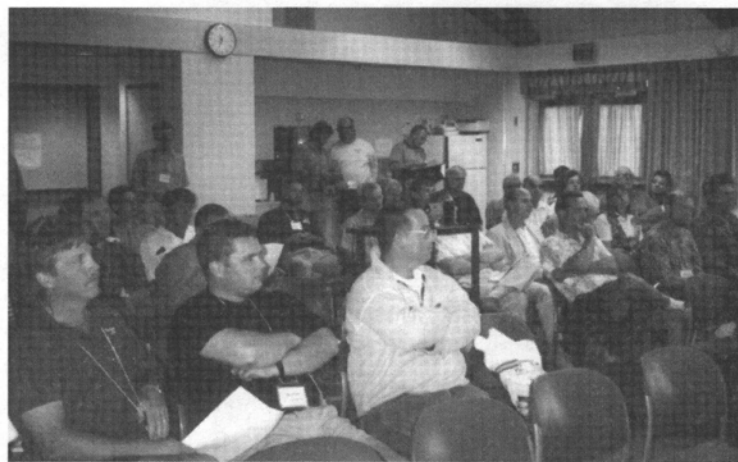
#### *History by Dick McPherson*

Originally housed at Ontario Place, visitors had to pay a separate fee (on top of the entrance fee for Ontario Place) to tour the Hall of Fame. Attendance dwindled, and the artifacts were catalogued and removed for safekeeping in Metro Toronto until a new home for the Hall of Fame could be found.

St. Mary's put in a bid for the new Hall of Fame in 1994 for a variety of reasons: it is located approximately 20 km from Stratford, a major tourist destination; the St. Mary's Cement Com-

pany donated 30 acres of land and an old stone building; the first recorded baseball game was held 160 years ago in Beachville, just down the road from St. Mary's; and the town has a long history of manufacturing sports equipment (including Hespeler hockey sticks and Cooper bats).

The local rotary club donated \$1,000, and a video to promote St. Mary's as the future site of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame was produced. The provincial NDP donated \$50,000 toward the project, and 24 local people pledged to give \$250,000 over a five year period. Thus far, all money donated (with the exception of the NDP) has been from local efforts. Presently, a new campaign is underway to raise another \$750,000 and again, the campaign has a local focus.



#### *Field Construction by Arthur Lierman*

Lierman, a landscape architect, typifies the extent local effort has contributed to the Hall of Fame dream. Although he has been paid for his work on the project, as a baseball buff, he has logged many volunteer hours as well. Throughout the field construction process, he called on the expertise of many people to ensure a quality product.

Initially, the whole site was pruned and various unwanted trees were removed. Many large spruce, white ash, cedar, and Manitoba maple were retained for the future addition of a theme park.

On the field site, some 40,000 cubic yards of earth were moved and berms were designed to create sitting areas. The premier field will be capable of hosting semi-professional baseball games. A second field will be a peewee diamond. The juveniles, juniors, minor leagues, and intercounty clubs will play on the fields, but the facility will not host major league games.

Great emphasis has been placed on the drainage system and the 1% grade which drains to the lowest point in right field. Rough grading was completed in October, 1997. Following the installation of the drainage system, large rolls of sod were put in place just three days before the June 4, 1998 opening. Water and screenings were supplied by the St. Mary's Cement Company. Finally, red clay products were added to the infield skinned areas.

The Field Day was both interesting and informative. Due to space restrictions, the remainder of the presentations will be published in the December issue of the *Sports Turf Manager*. ♦

*— all pictures except the GTI by Michael Bladon*