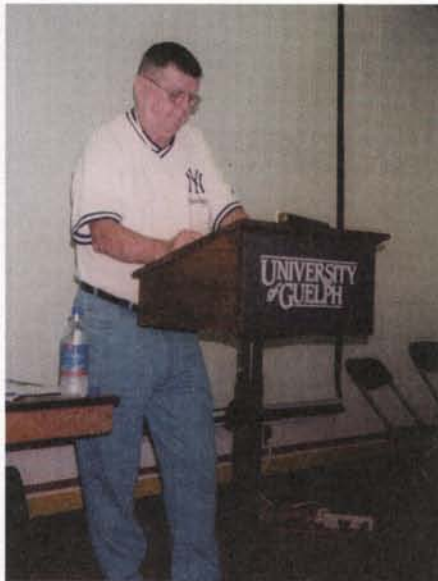


STA 13th Annual Field Day Coverage

HELD AUGUST 16 AT ALUMNI STADIUM, UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH. ARTICLE BY MIKE BLADON

The STA 13th Annual Field Day was very well attended with 90 delegates and another 25-30 turf industry suppliers. Although windy, the day was perfect for showing and testing the various turf equipment and all suppliers were given a chance to talk about their various wares.



Groundskeeper Ed Miller

On the speaker program, Ed Miller, formerly of the New York Yankees, entertained with baseball stories and suggested many ideas on how to best maintain a baseball field like the pros.

Some of his tips related to diagramming different mowing patterns (the outfield can be mowed in five different ways) and for the infield, changes in dragging patterns. Many do not remove the bases when dragging. This is poor procedure. Ed suggests to always rake the base paths lengthways. When re-establishing the infield grass, use a line from the back of third base over to the middle of second base and then to the back of first base. Then use a sod cutter to get good straight lines. Ed also talked about the use of Turface to help dry the infield and using a piece of fire hose filled with water to drag water off the diamond and onto the outfield grass.

In the majors, the infield grass edge is swept with a corn broom so no mound will build up. Likewise, the warning track is

Painted for a guide to run the sod cutter then dragged to remove any weeds, particularly when no spraying is allowed. Ed installs a pipe behind third and first base to mark foul lines rather than measuring each time. He finished his talk with videos on pitching mound construction and the installation of home plates and advised turf managers to wear hats and to use sun block – skin cancer is a growing concern in the turf care profession.

Barrie Community Sports Complex

Due to an emergency, the scheduled speakers were unable to attend, however, Ken Bannerman, a long-time Field Manager with the City of Barrie, and Gordon Dol, STA Director and private contractor who is doing the construction of the fields in this complex, were on hand and gave a very interesting talk.

The 118 acre site is an old forestry station which the city purchased from the government. Blocks of trees that originally protected young seedlings grown at the forestry station have been retained.

While a city-owned facility, the Barrie complex has been designed with input from various user groups who will eventually take over the complex. It is situated on a sandy well drained loam and comprises two quad or pinwheel diamonds, a championship diamond, and several soc-

cer and football fields. It is fully irrigated with work done by Vanden Bussche Irrigation. Although originally scheduled to be completed in four phases, it will now be done in two. Total cost is estimated at \$11 million – the city has put in \$6-8 million and user groups will contribute the rest. Gerry Ray, Executive Director of the complex, has a passion for the job and has contacted school boards and worked with other user groups and the general contractor. Included in the plan will be a banquet hall and a 5,000 seat stadium with change rooms, administrative offices, washrooms, etc.

Gord Dol mentioned that all fields have been graded to a fall of 1/8" in 2,500 feet with no under drainage due to almost all of the complex being sand with some clay at the top end of the property. There is an irrigation pond of 2-1/2 acres with two 50 HP pumps pushing water through 10-12" mains. There is 4-6" of topsoil on the fields and all were seeded rather than sodded. Pickseed Sports Turf Mix was used containing a 25% rye and 75% bluegrass blend. Fescue was used around the parking areas. Ron Martin of Mar-Co Clay Products amended the soils on the championship infield. There has been minimal clearing of trees and fence height has been kept at 1-1/2 metres to allow the passage of deer.



Pest Diagnostic Clinic

Marilyn Dykstra, Director of the Laboratory Services Division, University of Guelph, gave a brief but informative talk on the Pest Diagnostic Clinic located at 1 Stone Road in Guelph. She and her staff process samples of food and pesticides and do research on the identification and diagnosis of woody plants, vegetables, greenhouse crops, turf and soil diseases and fungi. The lab will give background information on the problem and will do a microscopic exam. They will then do a culture of the problem if needed. Usually, physiological problems are due to some form of stress.

Charges are \$50 for a turf sample with a 24 hour turn around – a visual is done in 24 hours with a follow-up call to the sender. Cultures require more time. Samples of turf should be 10 cm square and uniform with the whole root system. Submit the sample before you spray. Send it when the problem develops – do not send dead grass! Wrap it in newspaper to prepare it for courier shipping or delivery. Make sure you indicate time of year, type of weather, and any other pertinent infor-

mation. Don't water the sample or send it regular mail – prevent decay with fast delivery.

Dave Smith, DCS Agronomic Services

Dave spoke on soil characteristics in general detailing factors such as light, water, air and organic matter which comprise 95% of the composition of a plant. While discussing exchange capacity, he used the analogy of a bicycle tire and a tractor tire both inflated to 50 lbs. of pressure as it related to clay soils versus sandy loams. He believes it is useful to test soils at least once per year. His company specializes in this and will set you up on a program of nutrient application if required.

DCS Agronomic Services interprets approximately 2,000 soil tests annually. In addition to standard soil reports, they also utilize saturated soil reports, physical analysis and irrigation water analysis to develop recommendations for clients.

This concluded a very worthwhile and informative day. Lunch provided by the University was tasty, however, it has been

discovered that turf managers do not like banana bread with their coffee in the morning! In all seriousness, thanks to the university for providing a great venue – it was ideal for lecturers and distributors alike. ♦



Far left: Former New York Yankees groundskeeper Ed Miller entertains delegates. Bottom: Gord Dol of Dol Turf Restoration Ltd., STA Board member and exhibitor. Above: Exhibitor George Bannerman.

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