

# SPORTS TURF MANAGER

... for safe, natural sports turf

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## STA FIELD DAY COVERAGE

- 3 President's Message
- 4 Coming Events
- 5 Late Fall Fertilization
- 7 Irrigation System Tips
- 11 Field Day Coverage
- 18 Field Drainage Examined



## STA ANNUAL FIELD DAY PHOTO GALLERY...

More photos than ever! Turn to pages 11-13 and 17 to catch a glimpse of who was present at this year's event. We also are proud to publish two articles from popular Field Day speaker Dr. Andrew McNitt. His second begins on page 18.

## OTS 2007 KEEPING IT GREEN...

February 19-20 in Guelph. Stay tuned for more details in the winter issue of the *Sports Turf Manager*!

## Prioritizing Your Sports Field Maintenance

DR. ANDREW MCNITT, PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

**A**s the end of the season approaches, it may be a good time to evaluate the condition of your athletic fields. "What," you say? "They're not in the best of condition!" How could they be with the constant demand for fields, regardless of weather conditions, tight budgets, and you being spread too thin with your many commitments?

I've visited hundreds of high school athletic fields over the past couple years and I have a few comments on common mistakes, misconceptions and misdirected efforts. I'm going to suggest spending a little more money and in most cases, I really do mean a 'little more.' Your administrators should remember that the local taxpayers view the sports facilities more than any other physical item in the district other than the façade of the buildings and one lawsuit over an injured player may

cost the district a hundred times the cost of some additional maintenance inputs.

### Good Drainage is Necessary

So let's get started. First and foremost is drainage. If the crown of the field is worn out and the athletes are playing in a soup

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If the crown of the field is worn out and the athletes are playing in a soup bowl, you need to fix the drainage.

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bowl, no maintenance procedure is going to help until you fix the drainage. Don't be fooled into installing some expensive underground drainage system – they usually don't work in native fields. I've seen school districts waste hundreds of thousands of dollars this way with less than desirable results. Sand-slit trenching can help if the sand trenches are installed... **cont. page 14**