

Sports Turf Manager

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School Sports Field Trials: Year One

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A joint project involving Dol Turf Restoration, the Simcoe District School Board and Sports Turf International, together with supporting partners DCS Agronomics, Vanden Bussche Irrigation, FS Partners, and Sylvite took off in full flight during the 2011 growing season. There is a dearth of data which demonstrates the relative effectiveness of varying aeration methods now used by the industry.

The objectives of the trials were to analyze the effectiveness of aeration methods on two different sites, and evaluate the results of applying several slow release nitrogen materials at varying rates.

Site 1 was Bradford District High School, where a new field was constructed and completed in the spring of 2009. Site 2 was Banting Memorial in Alliston, an established field that was renovated in 2005. Both sites have similar

Category 3 soil root zones. The major difference was the presence of organic matter, where the existing Banting site had double the amount due to its longer time since establishment.

The challenges school sports fields face are well known. Often with no down time, these fields are used five days a week,

THE CHALLENGES SCHOOL SPORTS FIELDS FACE ARE WELL KNOWN.

as well as evenings and on weekends. Physical education classes usually take place outside as soon as weather allows, long before the time when a field should be opened to allow for adequate drainage from winter precipitation and frost.

To add insult to injury, summer permitting by sports groups compounds the damage and pressure.

The aeration equipment, supplied by Dol Turf Restoration, included a large and small Verti-Drain, Verti-Quake, mechanical core aerator, shatter tine and sport tine units, aeravator, pull type core aerator, and a Waterject unit.

As a side demonstration on the new Bradford site, a Veemo dethatcher was run over a section of the newly sodded field with one to three passes.

OTS HIGHLIGHT

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The fields were sectioned off into plots 3000 ft² in size, running from goal post



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