

Sports Turf Manager

FOR BETTER, SAFER SPORTS TURF. WINTER 2016. VOL. 29. NO. 4.

Helping to Close the Loop in Organic Waste Management through the Incorporation of Compost into Athletic Field Management

Katie Dodson, Research Scientist, Olds College Prairie Turfgrass Research Centre

In 2010 Canadians generated 936 kg of waste per person. Of this total, 729 kg went to landfills, while 207 kg were recycled (Giroux, 2014). In the *State of Waste Management in Canada* by Giroux (2014), it was noted that while great strides have been made in moving towards a zero waste producing society in the previous two decades, waste management programs have become stagnant over the past decade. For example, from 2000-2010 composting of food and yard waste increased 125%, while only 40% of the materials composted came from curbside collection nationally (Giroux, 2014). In general, between 28-52% of waste generated is suitable for composting which includes food waste and yard waste (soil, leaves, and wood) (Tetra Tech, 2016; Edmonton, 2010; Alberta Environment, 2005; Decima Research et al., 1991). Composting facilities can mitigate the flow of compostable material from landfills which plays an important role in extending the lifespan of landfills. As space becomes increasingly limited for landfills, due to population growth and expansion within

urban areas, composting and recycling will ensure the longevity and viability of our current landfill systems. The diversion of compostable materials from our landfills into composting facilities will decrease the methane gas produced in landfills, while creating a soil amendment that can be used on our urban greenspaces.

Compost is used as a soil amendment to: help increase the cation exchange capacity of the soil through the addition of organic matter; and to stimulate soil microbe population through the addition of microbes and by creating a conducive environment that encourages microbial population growth. The addition of compost can improve a soil's tilth and friability which will improve drainage. On soils with heavy clay contents, compost can help to loosen the heavy clays making the area more conducive to plant growth. A good compost source will not have an offensive odour to it, rather it will have an earthy smell and will be crumbly to the touch. The material should not have any recognizable feedstock in it, and should look dark in colour. Two simple tests have been

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Sports Turf Manager

Volume 29, Issue 4, ISSN 1201-3765

is the official publication of

SPORTS TURF CANADA™

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SPORTS TURF MANAGER

is published quarterly by Sports Turf Canada™ for free distribution to its membership. Please direct advertising inquiries to Anne Baliva at the STC office.

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CANADA POST PUBLICATIONS MAIL SALES AGREEMENT No. 40031883

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At other times, a message may be left on the voice mail system.

Please include the vital information of name, telephone number with area code, and time of calling.

The office may be reached at any time by faxing (519) 766-1704 or via e-mail.

Farewell...

I have, for this issue, appropriated from Tab Buckner the column normally reserved for his President's Message. For this edition only it will be the Past Executive Manager's Message.

For the past nineteen years I have served Sports Turf Canada in its administrative role. It has been rewarding on so many levels.

It has provided me the opportunity to serve the community by serving you, the members of Sports Turf Canada and our sector, as we have worked together towards better, safer sports turf. This, for the benefit of our sports field users – all genders, ages, and skill levels, from the children kicking around a soccer ball on the neighbourhood sports field to the athletes who participate at an elite level of play and of all of those in between.

It has provided me the opportunity to work with a dedicated group of professionals. Within the association, your volunteers who serve on the Board of Directors and committees are some of the most knowledgeable, experienced, and dedicated in our industry. There have been many in my nearly two decades and they have each brought something special and unique to Sports Turf Canada.

Looking outwardly, I have been privileged to work with countless specialists and service providers; from lawyers, accountants, banking and insurance professionals, to consultants, graphic designers, printing and mailing experts and countless more. They have all been a part of the behind the scenes Sports Turf Canada team.

We have partnered and worked with a number of associations and stakeholders from coast to coast. There are those with whom we have a formal affiliation and many, many more with whom we liaise frequently and when the opportunity arises. Working together towards a shared goal is extremely gratifying and provides us all with a more expansive vision for continual growth, improvement and ultimately, service to our members and our communities.

As the association has grown and spread its wings my role has provided me with the opportunity to do the same. I am so grateful for the support I have always received from the Board of Directors. To say I have learned a great deal from all of you and from my years at Sports Turf Canada would be a colossal understatement.

When I refer to "members", "board of directors", "committees", "specialists", "service providers", "affiliates", and "stakeholders", I am, of course, speaking of people. Without a doubt, the best part of my position has been getting out of the office and meeting and speaking with you. There are also those whom I have gotten to know only through telephone



*Lee Huether, Past Executive Manager,
Sports Turf Canada*

Continued on page 8



Event Calendar

Association Events are Highlighted in Green

November 1 to January 31, 2017
Sports Turf Canada
New Member Referral Program
sportsturfcanada.com (page 9)

January 15, 2017
Sports Turf Canada
Sports Turf Manager of the
Year Award
Nomination Deadline
sportsturfcanada.com (page 22)

January 24 to 27
Sports Turf Managers
Association
Conference & Exhibition
Lake Buena Vista, FL
stma.org
Sports Turf Canada members
can register at STMA rates
login to sportsturfcanada.com

February 1 to 26
University of Guelph
Turf Managers' Short Course
Guelph, ON
turfmanagers.ca

February 15 to 17
Western Canada Turfgrass
Association
Conference and Trade Show
Penticton, BC
wcta-online.com

February 22 & 23
Ontario Turfgrass Symposium
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON
turfssymposium.ca

May 1 to 4
Sports Turf Canada
Sports Turf Management
& Maintenance Course
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON
During the Annual Professional
Development Program
of the Ontario Recreation
Facilities Association
sportsturfcanada.com

May 30
Sports Turf Canada
Robert W. Sheard Scholarship
Deadline
sportsturfcanada.com

NEW & RETURNING MEMBERS

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Mike Forsythe
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Sports Turf Manager

FOR BETTER, SAFER SPORTS TURF. WINTER 2016.

"No one thinks of winter, when the grass is green." - Rudyard Kipling



SPORTS TURF
CANADA

Inside this issue...

REGULAR COLUMNS, DEPARTMENTS & SMALL FEATURES

- 3 EXECUTIVE MANAGER'S GOODBYE.** We'll miss you Lee!
- 4 New and Returning Members:** Welcome!
Event Calendar: Awards, Courses and Conferences

Opinions expressed in articles published in Sports Turf Manager are those of the author and not necessarily those of Sports Turf Canada™.

Deadline for Spring 2017 Sports Turf Manager: March 3

WHAT'S ONLINE
SportsTurfCanada.com

Login to the Members Only Section

- Registration form for STC members for the Sports Turf Managers Association Annual Conference & Exhibition in January
- 2017 Board of Directors Slate of Nominees and information for the STC Annual General Meeting as it becomes available



Vermicompost being applied using a tractor mounted topdressing unit at Inland Athletic Field Park, Calgary, AB. June 9th, 2016. Using a power-driven topdresser ensures an efficient, uniform application of compost to the field. If the compost source is too wet the compost will clump and cause problems during application. If the compost is too dry the dust levels coming off the unit can be problematic for the applicator and any structures that may be covered in fine dust.

Continued from cover

developed to determine if the compost is suitable for incorporating into a landscape system. The first test is to simply put some of the compost into a bag and seal it for a few days. When you open the bag there should not be any offensive odour. If there is an ammonia smell then the compost needs to age further and the addition of dry high carbon material, like leaves, should be added to the pile. If there is a putrid or sulfurous smell it indicates the pile is not quite finished and should be turned before using. The second test is simply a germination test. Planting seeds in both potting soil and the compost source side by side and measuring germination rate will allow you to assess if the compost is suitable for plant growth. Compost can be high in salts, therefore it is best to look for composts that are sourced from leaf and yard wastes rather than steer manure, as manures tend to be higher in salt which can be detrimental to plant growth. Incorporating compost into greenspaces can be done with relative ease in areas that are tilled annually, such as in flower gardens, however in perennial systems it can be more problematic.

Currently, there is limited research on the use of compost topdressing for athletic fields and home lawns. Two studies investigated the use of manure compost topdressing (Johnson et al., 2006) and biosolid topdressing (Garling and Boehm, 2001). Both found that the spring and fall topdressing events improved turfgrass quality; however they did not measure overall playability of the tested swards, so there is no indication if their procedures can be translated to in-use sports fields. The best advice for compost topdressing is to start with a good friable compost source that has been screened through a 6.4-9.5 mm (0.25-0.375") screen. This will ensure that material will be more easily swept through the canopy. A compost source that is too high or low in moisture content will be problematic when it comes to topdressing. Ideally

for topdressing, Landschoot (2013) suggests the compost source should be:

1. 30-50% moisture content
2. Organic matter > 30%
3. Ash content < 70%
4. C:N ratio < 30:1
5. pH 6-8
6. Phosphorus > 0.2%

Some practitioners have begun using compost teas as part of their turfgrass maintenance program. The use of compost teas is currently being promoted in both agricultural and turfgrass systems, however there has been limited research that exemplifies the benefits of incorporating a tea program into cool season athletic field programs. Pant et al. (2011) found that vermicompost tea extracts increased plant nutrient status and the biological activity of the growth media in a hydroponic system, but like many of the studies investigating the use of compost teas/extracts, they are performed in greenhouse or laboratory settings and never on in-use actively worn turfgrass systems. Interestingly though the two best compost teas were teas that were sourced from vermicompost and thermophilic compost sources (Pant et al. 2011). The incorporation of compost teas into a turfgrass program is thought to help add beneficial microbes to the soil solution and onto the surface of the leaves which can help with disease prevention, and nutrient cycling in the rhizosphere. How compost teas/extracts improve the soil activity of actively worn turfgrass systems is an area in the literature that warrants further investigation.

The Prairie Turfgrass Research Centre (PTRC) in Olds, Alberta is performing a study that investigates the practices of compost topdressing and compost tea applications. The specific objectives of the study are to investigate the practice of topdressing with either

vermicompost or municipal thermophilic compost and determine ideal topdressing volumes and frequency of applications. Our goal is to determine an ideal topdressing volume and frequency that will help prevent the seasonal wear that Canadian sports fields are plagued with throughout the growing season. The second objective of the study is to investigate the use of compost teas for improving turfgrass health and overall wear tolerance. The third and final objective is to take the plot work results and practice them on in-use playfields in Alberta. The plot work is being performed at the PTRC research station on Kentucky bluegrass turf that is being maintained at 50.8 mm (2") height of cut and is actively worn several times per week using a Brinkman wear simulator. All plots are being fertilized biannually (spring and early fall) at a rate of 5g N/m² (2.2 lbs N/1000 ft²)/year to ensure there is an appropriate amount of nutrients available for the system, as the composts being used have very low nutritional content. Year 2 of the plot-work study, and the first year of the in-use field applications have just been completed. The plot work results have shown that topdressing with compost three times per year at 10-20 L m² produces good quality Kentucky bluegrass that is more resistant to wear. The one-time application of 40 L m² also produced good season-long

quality turf; however the first two weeks after application the turf would not be suitable for play as the application left the sward very muddy. Other parameters we are investigating include: moisture retention at 38.1 mm (1.5") and 76.2 mm (3") depths, surface hardness, ground cover, and greenness. As the study is currently ongoing, we can only give guidelines on what the first year results have displayed thus far. At the end of 2017 the study will be completed and we will be publishing some best management practices for incorporating compost topdressing on cool-season athletic fields in Canada.

One important observation that we are seeing here at the PTRC and Landschoot (2013) mentions in his compost review for athletic field use is that core aeration plays an important role when the adoption of compost topdressing is being practiced. Pulling cores biannually (spring and fall) when the weather is cool and the turf is actively growing will help to eliminate any potential layering in the rhizosphere. When aeration is not practiced we begin to see superficial rooting in the thatch-mat interface which will reduce the play fields' resiliency and capability to recover from long periods of play. •



Compost tea application at Lethbridge Sports Park, Alberta July 12, 2016. Compost teas are best applied during cloudy days when rainfall is expected, or early in the morning before the intense UV radiation of the day occurs. Compost teas were applied at 75L m². Teas were brewed 24 hours before application using an aerator to extract the microbes from the compost feedstock.



Evaluation of In-Use Athletic Field in Edmonton, Ab. Using FieldScout Green Index + Turf App Board to monitor plant health after compost topdressing and compost tea applications on a non-irrigated field. July 29th, 2016. Using a quantitative method to determine if cultural practices being implemented are beneficial will help to monitor the effectiveness of a maintenance program.

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and email conversations. If I have any regret it is that I didn't get to meet you all.

Being the only staff member for Sports Turf Canada for most of my tenure could have been somewhat isolating and it is here I must mention my Guelph Turfgrass Institute family. I have seen many of you almost daily for approaching twenty years. We have shared so much.

I am hesitant to thank people by name because you are so many. Please know that you have all touched my life both professionally and personally. Drop me a line sometime; I'd love to hear from you! leehuether@gmail.com. I do however wish to mention and express my appreciation to Michael Bladon, Sports Turf Canada's founding father and Bob Sheard, one of its strongest pillars. I admire you both so much. You have been my mentors; you have become my friends.

I encourage you all to consider becoming involved in Sports Turf Canada if you have not already. You have much to offer and this is the place for you to do so. With Anne Baliva, your new Executive Manager and Colleen Hopkins, Administrative Assistant, you are in very, very good hands. Continue the vision, further the path, share the passion for better, safer sports turf.

Our community newspaper, The Guelph Mercury, ceased publication this past year. Its final message closed with – 30 –, which in journalism circles means “end of copy”, “the end.” I like it; short, concise, and no (visible) emotion. Wishing you all the best.

– 30 –

lee



Read more about Sports Turf Canada's new Executive Manager, Anne Baliva on page 12 in this issue.

A SIMPLE, COST EFFECTIVE RECIPE FOR TIRED GOAL MOUTHS...



+



+

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- Student membership is not eligible for this program.



Sports Turf Canada Member Norley Calder, City of Calgary. Norley hosted the inaugural Alberta Sports Turf Field Day earlier this year. Photo: Jerry Rousseau

Help to grow Sports Turf Canada!



A “Field of Dreams”

Nicole Caissie, CET, Technical Assistant, Parks & Leisure Operations, City of Moncton

This field has been a dream for many people for a long time. In 2014, the committee who calls itself the “Field of Dreams”, presented this concept of an accessible baseball field to the City of Moncton and the Province of New Brunswick.

The Field of Dreams program provides an opportunity for children of the Greater Moncton area with cognitive or physical disabilities to enjoy participation in baseball at a level structured to their abilities.

The program is in its seventh season; affiliated with Challenger Baseball Canada in 2013, and has grown in participation and awareness with children with special needs. The Challenger Baseball program’s philosophy is very simple, “Play, just for fun!”

In 2014, the merger of two senior baseball teams resulted in the formation of the Moncton Fisher Cats who have helped the Field of Dreams committee continue to become stronger than ever.

Early in 2016, a decision was made to retrofit one of the baseball fields at Moncton’s CN Sportplex into a fully accessible field. An existing Mosquito field was chosen due to its proximity to the existing parking lot and washrooms. The City of Moncton joined the Field of Dreams committee along with the Province of New Brunswick in a joint partnership to each commit \$167,000 towards this project.

The CN Sportplex is the largest recreational facility in Moncton which consists of 10 baseball fields – 4 Mosquito, 3

Peewee and 3 Bantam ballfields. It also consists of six soccer fields, four indoor ice rinks and a large air supported structure which offers paintball, golf, soccer and football.

The CN Sportplex is a success story on its own. Up until 1988, it was the home of a large Canadian National Railway facility. The land remained vacant until 1997, when its owner, Canada Lands Company, decided to develop the site into a useful community facility. This was the beginning of a massive cleanup operation to transform the site into an award winning recreation facility. It has hosted many national and provincial events and is now going to be the proud owner of an accessible baseball field.

The field will first and foremost allow kids with disabilities an area to play without limitations, but when not in use by the Field of Dream players, the field will continue to be used by the local Minor Baseball program.

The concept design was created by Viridis Design Studio Ltd. and in January 2016, they started to design the tender drawings. The fact that we were retrofitting an existing field and didn’t want to limit the field for other users was the reason we thought that the best product to use was artificial turf. The infield would be fully replaced with artificial turf and the outfield would remain as natural turf. An existing senior league field that the Challenger Program had been using has an artificial infield with clay based running track. This combination proved to be less accessible for those with

mobility challenges as well as being arduous to maintain with migrating clay mix onto the artificial turf surface.

Reconstruction of CN Sportplex Ballfield #3 began on July 4, 2016. Turf Masters Landscaping Ltd. of Nova Scotia was awarded the contract and work began immediately on the infield renovation.

The original design of the field consisted of a centre crown throughout the entire field with a grade of 1.67% slope on both sides to enable top-drainage. That was an initial challenge as the outfield was going to remain but the infield was going to be retrofitted with artificial turf which should not have a slope of more than 1%. Also, the infield had lost some of that shape due to grooming practices and wind erosion. The artificial turf requires minimal grade as it relies on underground drainage systems.

The infield mix was removed to expose the original subgrade. The subgrade was regraded at 0.8% slope. A drainage pattern was designed in order to capture the water coming through the turf. A 200 mm layer of 6-31.5 mm drainage stone was added throughout the infield area over top of the drainage field. Then a 25 mm layer of 6-13 mm stone was placed over that. A rubber curb including a flexible edge from SportsEdge was used to separate the artificial turf from the natural grass in the outfield or the crusher dust in the warning track.

Then came the artificial turf.

The entire infield was replaced with either green or rust coloured artificial turf including inlaid turf in white for the foul lines, bases and the catcher/batter box. The artificial turf that was chosen was Field Turf's Classic slit-film fibre system. The turf fibres are responsible for comfort and safety of the players, durability and a natural, grass-like look with soft and pleasing grass-like feel and resilience.

The infill system within the turf fibres was made up of a mix of rubber crumbs and silica sand. This provides appropriate cushioning to absorb impact as well as offers the hardness required for wheelchairs while still providing traction for all players.

In order to make this an accessible field, the field was built with a flat pitcher's area rather than with a mound. When the field is used by the minor baseball teams, the City of Moncton will purchase a removable mound made of artificial turf on a fibreglass base.

The warning track in the outfield which was originally made of infield mix, wasn't a great surface for wheelchair use, not to mention difficult to maintain weed growth. It was dug out to 150 mm deep and the infield mix was replaced with compacted 0-6 mm crusher dust. This provides a good rolling surface as well as keeps grass growth at bay.

The original dugouts were removed and new accessible ones were installed on concrete pads. The openings were made wide enough for wheelchair access and fold-up benches inside the dugouts make it that much more convenient for all levels of abilities.

New accessible bleachers were also installed on concrete pads. These bleachers provide designated areas for wheelchairs as well as a railing going up the centre of the bleachers. It also provides more safety with a chain-link fencing around it.

To add to the comfort of the spectators, beautiful canopies will be installed over the bleachers. Two 2.5 m deep piers were poured in behind the bleacher pads to secure the cantilevered fabric canopies.

Wrapping both bleacher and dugout concrete pads with asphalt created a seamless pathway all around the backstop. An asphalt trail continues from this area to a circular drop-off zone where people will have a shorter walk to the baseball field. Baseball stitching patterns will be painted in the centre of the roundabout to enhance the theme.

Alongside of the drop-off zone is a handicap-only parking lot, an addition of seven parking stalls to the site. The asphalt trail continues to the existing accessible washrooms.

One of the Field of Dreams committee's future goals was to have a scoreboard added to the field. As it happened, the City of Moncton had a scoreboard on the CN Sportplex site that had been acquired but had never been used. It was decided that it would be donated to this field ... after all, it was blue in colour which perfectly matched the canopies and dugout roofs!

Due to some delays, the field was not ready for the expected September 2016 Grand Opening. Instead, the Grand Opening will be postponed to May 2017 in order to have all components completed. Details like banners and signs which will be designed this winter will be able to be

part of the Grand Opening.

Additional enhancements to this project in the future may include having an accessible playground beside the field, with seating areas and picnic tables, also being accessible. After officially announcing the project in May 2016, the Field of Dreams committee was awarded three grants, one from the Blue Jays Care Foundation of \$125,000, one from President's Choice Children's Charity of \$165,000 and one from Pita Pit of \$10,000, totalling \$300,000 so far towards the project.

But the goals for all who are involved with the team – players, their parents, sponsors and volunteers, have always been to remove some of the obstacles that make everyday living a challenge and to provide these players the ability to enjoy playing baseball just like all the other kids.

The kids who love the game will be able to play here, no matter what their abilities are. And even though we set out to build a fully *accessible* baseball field, it should be noted that we have in fact built a fully inclusive baseball field, as no one is left out. •



Transitions in Turf at Sports Turf Canada

Lee Huether, Sports Turf Canada's Executive Manager, has announced her retirement effective the end of the year, 2016. Lee has held the chief administrative position of the association since 1997.

"I am somewhat in disbelief," said Lee, "that nineteen years have gone by since I first joined Sports Turf Canada. During that time both the association and I have grown together in a changing landscape."

Anne Baliva will succeed Lee in the position. Anne, a Certified Association Executive, comes to Sports Turf Canada from the water environment sector. She has a wealth of experience in association management at both the provincial and national level.

STC President Tab Buckner commented, "Lee will be truly missed and all of us at Sports Turf Canada wish her

the best as she turns the page on a new chapter. At the same time we welcome Anne. We are confident she will continue to provide leadership excellence for Sports Turf Canada as we celebrate thirty years of dedication to the promotion of better, safer sports turf."

Lee will work with Anne until the end of the year for a smooth transition.

"The association has been under the direction of some of the most knowledgeable and dedicated volunteers in the industry through its board of directors and committee participants. It has been so rewarding to work with them, together with our members from coast to coast, for the benefit of our communities. It's going to be hard to say good-bye!" stated Lee•



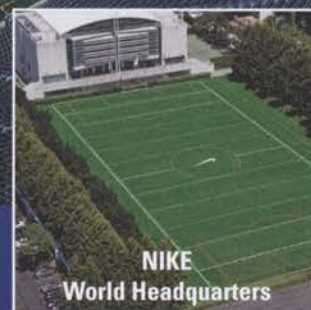
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Member Profile

SEAN GAULT, SENIOR MANAGER RACING SURFACES, WOODBINE RACETRACK,
WOODBINE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, TORONTO, ON

An Interview with Sean Gault



What is your role with the Woodbine Entertainment Group (WEG)? WEG presents two types of horse racing. Thoroughbred (horses carrying a jockey) and Standardbred (horses pulling a sulky with a driver) racing at Woodbine Racetrack in Toronto, Ontario and Standardbred racing at Mohawk Racetrack in Campbellville, Ontario. I am the Senior Manager for Thoroughbred Racing Surfaces at Woodbine Racetrack. Our team maintains the turf, Tapeta (synthetic), dirt, sand and traprock surfaces that the horses race and train on throughout the year.

What kind of team do you work with? I report to Irwin Driedger, Director of Racing Surfaces and Fleet in the Property Services Department. Those who report to us include: Manager Mike McQuade, Supervisor Ryan Stafford, four lead hands, 30 full and part time

staff and four students. The full and part time staff are members of the SEIU Local 2, BGPWU. This group includes 15 labourers, one irrigation maintenance mechanic, 10 drivers and two grader operators.

What are you and your team responsible for? We are responsible for the daily maintenance and upkeep of the seven racing and training surfaces and associated horse roads at Woodbine. Tracks for Thoroughbreds include: a 1 mile (1.6 km) Tapeta (synthetic) track with 1 - 2 furlong (0.4 km) and 1 - 7 furlong (1.4 km) chutes; the 1 ½ mile (2.4 km), 22 acre (8.9 ha) E.P. Taylor turf course; a 1 mile dirt training track; a 7 furlong, 9 acre (3.6 ha) turf training course; a ¼ mile (0.4 km) sand track and the 3/8 mile (0.6 km) Bakers Acres gallop. The track for Standardbreds is a 7 furlong traprock track.

The Thoroughbred season begins with the opening of the dirt and sand training surfaces in early February. The racing season on the Tapeta runs from early April to the first week of December. Turf training and racing, depending on weather, is targeted to start mid-May and continue to early November.

Woodbine is home to over 2,000 thoroughbreds. Thoroughbred racing takes place every Wednesday evening, Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoon and all holidays within the racing season.

The dirt, sand and Tapeta tracks are open for training 7 days a week from 6 to 10 a.m. with the sand track open till noon. The driver and grader operator shifts are scheduled to cover 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. They are responsible for the daily cultivation, gallop mastering, harrowing, grading, watering, sealing, material replacement,

snow removal and final surface preparations prior to and during training and racing programs.

The turf training course opens for training sessions every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday for horses preparing for specific turf races. Depending on weather, an average of three turf races will take place within each racing program. The labourers and irrigation maintenance mechanic are also scheduled to cover seven days per week and all race programs. Ten of the labourers are responsible for: divot replacement during race programs and after training sessions, soil and seeding operations, mowing, fertilizing, seeding, aeration, topdressing, irrigation, portable rail movement and track rail repairs. Five of the labourers are focused strictly on the function of racing. They clean and prepare the thoroughbred paddock and parade routes before and during the races, remove manure from the Tapeta track after training and during race programs, open, close and move track rails between races to allow for the movement of the horses, jockeys and trainers.

What are the biggest challenges in your job? Maintaining the tracks is labour intensive. To meet our goals the number one challenge is having the personnel who understand the detail that is required to complete tasks, and the commitment to see those tasks through to completion regardless of the weather or the time of day.

Our goal is to provide consistent and safe surfaces every day for horses on which to train and race. We need to provide these surfaces whether it's the third week in February and it is minus 15 heading into a snow storm, or 30 degrees Celsius in mid-August during a drought, or a cold rainy day in October. When tracks are available to train on, horses are ready to race and perform to their best ability. If race days are not lost due to weather conditions and surfaces are ready to be raced on, we have a product for our customers.

When tracks are ready and racing happens there is a trickle-down effect. Owners make money to pay for training; and employees gain income from work opportunities.

Our most immediate customers are the horse owners, the trainers, exercise staff and the jockeys that train and race on WEG's tracks every day. Our customers are also the patrons and handicappers who come to watch and gamble on WEG's product.

With respect to Turf racing, the challenge is to maximize the number of turf racing opportunities for our customers while providing safe surfaces on which to train and race.

What is the most satisfying part, what makes the job worthwhile for you?

Being part of the team as we see a project through to a successful completion is very satisfying. Our recent conversion of the main track from Poly to a Tapeta racing surface is an example. Months of planning by our WEG team, a very professional supplier Tapeta Footings and a dedicated efficient contractor in KCM combined to make a potentially difficult project run smoothly and with a little help from Mother Nature, finish ahead of schedule.

What makes my job worthwhile is being part of major race days such as the Ricoh Woodbine Mile and the Pattison International when we have some of the best horses in the world competing. Going into the day with confidence, I know how much work our staff has invested in the turf through the season to ensure the course is at its best. I know the focus will be on the horses, where it should be. With the purses high, the races competitive, the excitement of the crowd, when the races are over and all the horses and jockeys have pulled up safely, I know it's been a good day.

What is the biggest misconception about your job? The biggest misconception is that we are overly protective of the turf course. Naturally, horse people like more turf racing and they may feel that races are taken off the turf too soon after a minimal amount of rain. Our goal is to race; that is the whole focus of the operation. If the moisture level in the track is border line, then the recommendation will usually be to race. The damage done by one race early in the week is easier to fix. With each additional race the damage gets worse and more difficult to patch. The wellbeing of the horses and riders is paramount. Once the jockeys don't feel safe to ride, it is too late. Sometimes it's better for all concerned to transfer a race from the turf to the Tapeta and wait for drier conditions.

What is your educational/employment background? I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Guelph in 1977, with a major in Animal Science and a minor in Business. At sixteen I spent my first summer on a race track working for Keith Waples Standardbred Racing Stable as a groom at Garden City Racetrack in

Continued on page 18



If you are interested in being featured in this column, please contact Anne Baliva at the Sports Turf Canada office, info@sportsturfcanada.com.

Facility Profile

WOODBINE RACETRACK – PART OF WOODBINE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP
555 REXDALE BOULEVARD, TORONTO, ON



General Facility Information

Grounds

- Area of site: 650 acres (263 ha)
- Parking capacity: 14,700
- Total seating capacity: 12,000
- Track side dining: 680
- Other dining: 1,000
- Closed circuit monitors: 500 plus
- Dining areas: several, from fine dining to concession areas

Stable

- Barns: 40
- Stabling capacity: 2,170

Main Tapeta Course

- 1 mile (1.6 km) banked oval (2 furlong (0.4 km), 7 furlong (1.4 km)) chutes 85' (25.9 m) wide
- 4% banking on turns

Tapeta Surface

- 7" (17.8 cm) Tapeta
- Silica sand, fiber and wax
- 3" (7.6 cm) of Macadam below cushion
- Vertical drainage system

E.P. Taylor Turf Course

- 1-½ miles (2.4 km) with a 1-1/8 mile (1.8 km) chute
- Home stretch 100 feet (30.5 m) wide
- Backstretch 120 feet (36.6 m) wide
- 4% banking on turns
- Turf Kentucky bluegrass
- 12" (30.5 cm) sandy growing medium
- 4" (10.2 cm) drainage layer
- Clay base

Standardbred Track

- 7/8 of a mile (1.4 km)
- 85' (25.9 m) wide
- Crushed limestone base, traprock surface

Additional Training Facilities

- 1 mile (1.6 km) banked dirt oval (2 furlong (0.4 km), 6 furlong (1.2 km) chutes)
- 4" (10.2 cm) dirt cushion
- 7/8 mile (1.4 km) turf course
- Sandy loam growing medium turf – Kentucky bluegrass
- ¼ mile (0.4 km) sand track
- 3/8 mile (0.6 km) field gallop

How many employees are involved with turf care on this site? The turf racing and training surfaces are maintained by 11 full time, 2 part time staff and up to 4 students in the summer months. They perform all cultural practices on the turf with the exception of some spraying treatments or aeration functions that are contracted.

The Grounds Department employs 11 full time staff and up to 10 summer students to maintain the lawns and gardens around the property. Many flower beds are being converted to perennial beds. The planting of annual flowers is contracted out as are some of the aerification, spraying and irrigation start-up and shut downs. Two hundred acres (80.9 ha) of the property are annually planted to soya beans.

The Stable Department also employs about 10 full time staff. A portion of their time is scheduled for mowing lawns around the barns and maintaining gardens in the stable area

How many acres of turf are maintained at this facility? How many acres of sports turf?

Thirty-one acres (12.5 ha) of sports turf are maintained. Approximately three to four acres (1.2 to 1.6 ha) of lawns around the grandstand are also maintained.

What percentage of this acreage is irrigated?

100% of the sports turf is irrigated. Approximately 50% of the lawns are irrigated.

What is the primary type of turfgrass? What is the name of the varieties. Kentucky bluegrass is the primary turf grass. A straight bluegrass mix includes: 20% Armada, 40% America, 20% Blue Velvet and 20% SR 2100.

A divot mix would include the above varieties in smaller percentages along with 15% Double 4N perennial rye and 15% Fiesta 4 perennial rye.



Is yearly overseeding part of your sports turf maintenance program? Overseeding is done with a slit seeder at a rate of 2.5 – 3 lbs/1000 sq. feet (1.25 – 1.5 kg/100 m²). The training course is overseeded with the divot mix during the annual August renovation and again in November with the straight bluegrass mix. The E.P. Taylor course is overseeded in November if time permits with the straight bluegrass mix. If this application is missed an overseeding with the divot mix will be done in the spring. During the racing season individual racing lanes (usually in the turns) will be overseeded after the lane has been used for a full week of racing.

The divot mix blended with a 60-20-20 (sand-soil-peat) is applied by hand daily to the racing lanes and heavy wear areas on the training turf course.

How many times do you fertilize? The main course receives 5 to 6 lbs of N/1000 sq. ft. (2.5 to 3 kg/100 m²) in 5 to 6 applications. The training course will receive 1 to 2 lbs. less per 1000 sq. ft. (0.5 to 1 kg/m²) We have been using a 28-3-7 80% Polyon in April and September with a 21-0-21 100% Polyon application in the summer. The major turf races take place in

September and October therefore an application of 31-3-8 or MAPP may be applied in early October. Gypsum is applied three times a year at 10 lbs 1000 sq. ft. (5 kg/100 m²). Soil tests have been increased to four times per season along with occasional tissue testing.

Do you aerate? Topdress? Core aeration along with thatching is done in the spring and again when the racing season has ended. During the August renovation break the training turf course will be thatched and aerified with either core or solid tines. On the main course, racing lanes in the turns are thatched and aerified immediately after a week's use if the damage is above average. It is important in both areas that the turf is given enough time to recover before horses are allowed to gallop over it. Compaction can also be an issue. Deep tine aerification was used last year and will be used more frequently going forward.

Because of the large acreage of the main course, topdressing was always limited to smaller renovations. I had always relied on core aerification to bring up enough sand to mix into the thatch and help level the surface. This year, however we have started a major topdressing program on the main course and are topdressing weekly through the season.

Continued on page 20

St. Catharines and Greenwood Racetrack in Toronto. The following summers were spent doing landscape and yard maintenance projects on my own or working at racetracks grooming and exercising horses for my father, ponying horses for other trainers or working as an outrider for the Ontario Jockey Club at Woodbine, Fort Erie or Greenwood racetracks. In 1978 I took a job as a clerk with the Racing Office at Woodbine. In 1977 the Marshall Turf Course at Woodbine was rebuilt as one of the first all sand turf race courses in North America. Around 1980, I was given an opportunity to change my career path and set up a crew to maintain the turf race courses. Having accepted the position I attended the annual Turf Short Course in 1981. From here my education really began. Other than a couple of years in the mid 80's when I was Superintendent of Greenwood Racetrack, and even times when Grounds and Fleet were part of my responsibilities, my career has always revolved around the racing surfaces with the main focus always being on the turf courses.

Tell us about your family. My side of the family comes from western Canada. I was born in Calgary. My father's work took us through Vancouver and Winnipeg before landing in Toronto in 1963. My wife, Helen's family resides in London, Ontario. We met while attending the University of Guelph and were married in 1981. We have two sons. Corey is 30 and works as a firefighter with the Kitchener Fire Department. Jesse is 27. After obtaining his Red Seal in Carpentry, he decided to go back to school and is now studying at the University of Toronto.

What do you enjoy doing outside of the workplace? Hobbies, favourite past times? Work days have always been long, often including weekends and evenings so time off has always been centred on family activities. I always enjoyed participating in the boys' activities as they grew up, whether it was helping as a coach in hockey or lacrosse when they were younger or just being a parent in the stands when they were older. Each summer we try as a family to go back to Alberta and spend a week or two hiking or relaxing in the mountains.

How has the industry changed and in what direction(s) would you like to see the industry, as a whole, move towards? Horse racing has changed greatly over the last 40 years. Instead of several short meets through the year rotating amongst different tracks, races are run consecutively at one or two tracks within a geographical area. Running from April to December, Woodbine now runs the longest thoroughbred meet without a break in North America. Technology allows racing to be simulcast around the globe and similarly races from around the globe to be brought into our facilities for our patrons to view and wager on. The market is both the onsite patrons and the global market.

Horse racing is a dangerous sport performed by elite equine and human athletes. Changes to make the sport safer have been many. The installation of safety rails on thoroughbred dirt and synthetic tracks reduce injuries if a jockey is thrown from his mount over the inner rail. The replacement of hub rails on Standardbred tracks with pool noodles as markers reduces accidents from horses tripping over the rail. The rule change dictating thoroughbreds are to wear flat horse shoes with minimal toe grab reduces damage to turf courses and reduces injuries to horses on synthetic tracks.

The movement from dirt, and in some cases turf, to synthetic racing surfaces has been controversial, but when compared to dirt has shown an immediate reduction in catastrophic injuries. Synthetics have shown themselves to be comparable to turf in this respect.

In the last 10 years there has been a distinct increase in the demand for turf racing. Statistical analysis shows that races run on turf when compared to those run on dirt will have on average $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 horse more per race. When one looks at the amount gambled per horse this increase becomes significant. Handicappers prefer larger fields to wager on.

Similarly, when weather conditions dictate that races are taken off grass and run on a synthetic track such as Tapeta instead of a sloppy dirt track, there will be fewer scratches from the races and a financial benefit.

The increasing demand for turf racing is very encouraging. If the opportunity comes to expand the amount of turf courses available for racing it will have a positive impact, especially when combined with the opportunities on the Tapeta track during inclement weather.

Increasing demand for turf racing is very positive for the turf industry. It puts added emphasis on good cultural practices, the need for better equipment, better grass seed varieties, better use of fertilizers and above all a need for more staff skilled in turf maintenance. With this still comes the cautionary note, "turf isn't synthetic; it still needs time to heal and grow".

What do you consider to be the biggest benefit of being a member of Sports Turf Canada™? Certainly receiving the regular copy of the Sports Turf Manager is important to me. Horse racing is such a small portion of the turf industry and the STM helps introduce me to other areas of the industry, new products, research papers, cultural practice reviews and people within the industry. It would be rare not to learn something or get a reminder on something I should be looking at from each issue. The field days and the symposium provide excellent educational opportunities. The symposium especially gives me the opportunity to touch base with most of the suppliers I will use through the year and just as importantly, meet people within the industry that I am looking to for advice. •

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What is your maintenance regimen for synthetic turf? We don't have synthetic turf, but we do have Tapeta which is a synthetic sports surface for equine sports. The type of grooming the surface receives will vary depending on the temperature and the amount of activity. Cooler temperatures require deeper more frequent cultivation with an agricultural style cultivator. Warmer temperatures require shallower and less frequent cultivation. In some conditions power harrows will be used to mix and level the Tapeta. Gallop masters are used to groom the surface. Tines set to a shallow depth will take out the hoof prints and tire marks while rollers on the front and back of the gallop master will control the depth and give the Tapeta a uniform compaction and pattern. Watering is not required, but during very hot conditions will cool the wax. Depth measurements are taken weekly and the track graded to maintain a consistent surface level.

How many hours per year are the fields permitted? Who permits them? Are the fields ever closed during the season to give them a rest? How much input do you have in the amount and timing of use? Training sessions on the turf training course are limited to three times per week. Special sessions can be added at the

request of the Director of Racing. A trainer that wants to train a horse on the turf must obtain an access slip from the Race Office and present that slip when entering the turf course. The horse must be eligible to enter in a turf race listed in the current condition book. Horses must record a timed workout when training on the course. They are not permitted to gallop. Turf training is only allowed on the main turf course for horses entering Grade 1 Stake Races.

The number of turf races run per day is limited to three on a regular day and four on a major race day. Evening race cards are limited to two turf races because the turf course does not have lights and there is not a turf maintenance crew available to repair the course between races. This year a fourth turf race was run on several days. These were called Euro turf races, run in the opposite direction to North American style racing. This was an experiment to increase the number of daily turf races by using a section of the course that sees fewer turf races and therefore less wear.

One thousand horses trained on the turf training course this year. This would be equivalent to about 100 races. The course was given a three week break in mid-August. The main course

will have over 231 races this year. It does not receive a scheduled break during the season. Training sessions may be cancelled due to rain and turf races may be moved to the Tapeta track if too much rain is received. The course is evaluated daily and is measured with a Going Stick which measures the firmness of the growing medium and the shear of the roots. The measurements are averaged, providing a numerical rating for the course. A higher rating indicates a firmer course and a lower rating will be a yielding or soft course.

The Director of Racing Surfaces and I will provide input and recommendations for all activities that impact the turf courses. •



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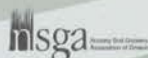
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Sports Turf & Recreational Facilities Sessions

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

10:30 – 11:00am

Insect Management on School Sports Fields

– Dr. Pat Vittum, University of Massachusetts

11:00 – 11:30am

Irrigation Design and Operation to Optimize Turf Quality

– Gary Taylor, GT Irrigation Services

11:30 – 12:00pm

Daily Light Integral of Cool Season Turfgrass in Indoor Stadia

– Jordan Constant, University of Guelph

1:30 – 2:00pm

Transportation Regulatory Open Forum

– Andrew Brown, Ministry of Transportation

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

9:30am – 10:30am

Developing Best Fertility Practices for Maximum Turf Performance and Cost Effectiveness

– Dr. Kevin Frank, University of Michigan

11:00am – 11:30am

Weaknesses in the Prostrate Knotweed Life Cycle

– Francois Tardif

Early Bird Deadline ends January 6, 2017!

General Sessions

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

9:00 – 9:45am

BMO Field, A Brief History – Robert Heggie, Head Groundskeeper, Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment - BMO Field, Toronto

9:45 – 10:15am

Perception Versus Reality – Dispelling the Misinformation with Scientific Reasoning – Dr. Paul Giordano, Green Solutions Specialist – Canada, Bayer CropScience Inc.

2:00-2:30pm

The Importance of Creating a Drought Emergency Plan and How to Create a Water Budget – Adam Moeller, United States Golf Association

2:30-3:00pm

Water Management in a Drought – Capitalizing on Stormwater – David Kuypers and Bill Green

3:00-3:30pm

Soil and Turf, BMP – Dave Smith, DCS & Associates

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

1:30 - 3:00pm

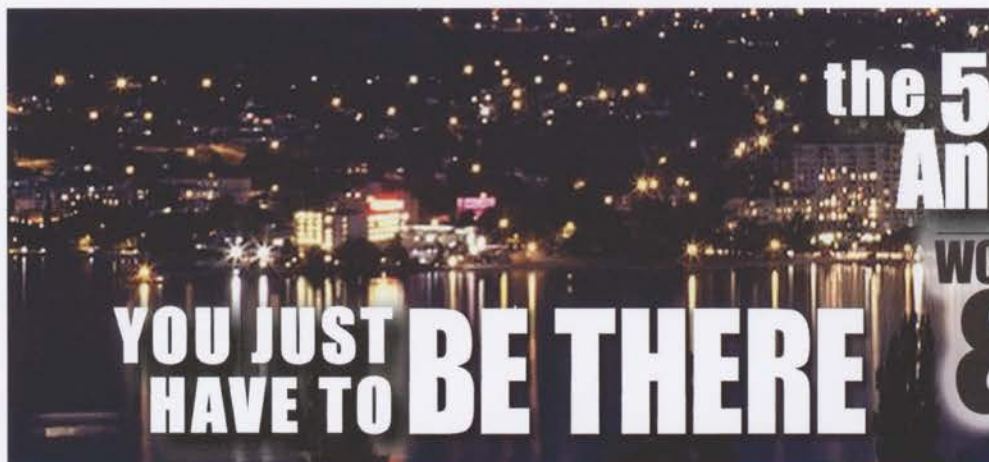
Selling Your Turf Maintenance Program on a Shoestring Budget – Sports Turf Canada Panel


1:30 - 2:10pm and 2:15-3:00pm

The Diagnostics Process – Turfgrass Case Studies – Dr. Katerina Jordan, University of Guelph

1:30 - 2:10pm and 2:15-3:00pm

Turfgrass Case Studies – Abiotic and Environment – Dr. Eric Lyons, University of Guelph



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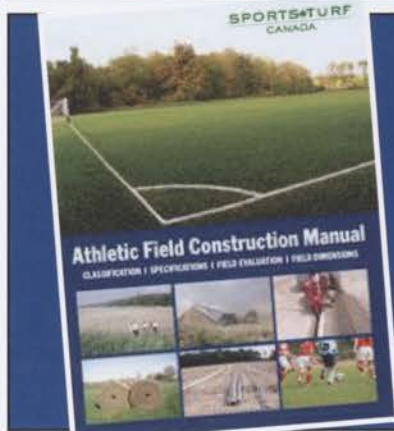
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GTI Relocation Update – Construction Currently Underway

The Guelph Turfgrass Institute (GTI) will soon have a new home in the Arboretum at the University of Guelph.

As a result of discussions with the Province of Ontario, the current facilities of the GTI will be moved from Victoria Road to a portion of land in the Arboretum on the north side of College Avenue East and adjacent to the Cutten Fields Golf Club. Additional land will be developed at the Elora Research Station for larger-scale projects.

The proposed site plan includes a new G.M. Frost Centre, turfgrass research plots and greens, trial gardens, an irrigation pond, two storm water retention ponds and an upgrade of existing Arboretum facilities at the site.

Site development commenced in late September with site surveying and installation of silt and tree protection fencing. More recently earth moving operations began to facilitate grading and drainage installation and research plot construction. The research plot construction process will be completed in spring 2017 with seeding and turf grow-in maintenance to follow. Ground breaking on the new G.M. Frost Centre building and maintenance facility is scheduled to follow. The relocation project is expected to be complete in late 2018.

For more information on the GTI construction project, please contact John W. Vanos, Project Manager, Physical Resources at 519-824-4120, Ext. 56079 or jvanos@pr.uoguelph.ca
For general inquiries please contact: gti@uoguelph.ca



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