

pany less than a month. This told the company they were not doing a good job of orienting new people. Why some may ask – it's only a grocery store ...

Finally, each company sets the standards which employees must comply with. The orientation process is not an optional program – optional programs do not work and they protect neither the worker nor the company. You cannot prove you have taken every reasonable precaution with an optional program. You have to show you are enforcing it. Bob's final emphasis was on hazard reporting – documentation is a must. This is where many companies fail. An employee discovers a problem, repairs it and moves on without documentation. This is a key item. Remember that orientation is an opportunity to get the necessary information to the required personnel as well as getting their careers off to a safe start.

*Editors note: Bob's talk was most entertaining in the process of making an important but dry subject interesting.*

### Seed Selection

John Rector, National Sales Representative/Turfgrass Consultant, Turf-Seed, Inc. of Oregon

John spoke to the group on seed selection and talked about the different specialty grasses that can be used in your seed mixes to give you one more tool to work with in high traffic sports turf areas where one needs wear tolerance, aggressive growth and winter hardiness.

### Shade Star

Shade tolerant grass coming from northern Europe commonly referred to as crested dogtail or comb grass (*Cynosurus cristatus*), variety Shade Star is rated higher than the fescues for shade tolerance. Used in grass parking areas and around goal mouths, its biggest attribute is that it is winter active and its high turf density makes it ideal in sports turf blends. In a fall 1998 traffic study to simulate six weeks of soccer games, Shade Star outperformed the top perennial ryegrasses for wear tolerance and turf quality. Another

trial containing 60% perennial rye, 30% Shade Star, and 10% Kentucky blue is being conducted at a soccer facility near Portland, Oregon, to determine its capabilities in both goal areas and sidelines – both extremely tough areas to keep turfed. Its primary weakness, as with most cool season grasses, is that it will struggle in periods of prolonged heat even with irrigation. This is why it is recommended to use with the bluegrasses, ryegrasses and tall fescues. It is most useful in high traffic areas that are shady. For example, turf managers have many areas that are shady with traffic problems on football stadia and there are not many grasses out there to solve the problem.

### Shade Champ

John also talked about *Deschampsia caespitosa*, variety Shade Champ. Referred to as tufted hairgrass, *Deschampsia* is a versatile genus comprised of some 40 species. A 'circumpolar genus,' the *Deschampsia* range from the Arctic to throughout the northern hemisphere. Shade Champ originated in Sweden and

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was developed for outstanding shade tolerance and excellent turf quality. Its sports turf use is primarily a function of its quick establishment, rapid tillering, and good traffic tolerance. It tolerates mowing heights of 1/2 inch and mixes well with Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, fine fescue, tall fescue and Shade Star crested dogtail. Irrigation is necessary through the warm summer months.

#### Bluegrass Seed Mixes

Turf-Seed has 125 acres in the northwest and another 40 acres in North Carolina involved in research with all the post season species. The company has a complete research program that addresses the sports turf industry through to the homeowner and everything in between. Their research tries to show how different seed mixes perform.

Turf-Seed has tried mowing bluegrasses as low as 1-1/2 cm to check wear tolerance. In contrast, ryegrasses, with their high lignin content, are extremely wear tolerant. In areas where bluegrasses get beaten up, you need

grasses with strong rhizomes that are aggressive and have early spring green-up. Some mixes are great going in to the winter but very slow coming out in spring. Sometimes variety green-up can vary up to a month between getting colour, mowing and playing on it, versus the grass just sitting there. The NTEP program for bluegrasses is good – look at the data and use it as a guideline (see Vol. 14 (1), March 2001, *Sports Turf Manager*, "Guidelines for Using NTEP Data").

There are two research sites in Ontario, one at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute. Results from these sites are not an authority on what to use on your particular fields, so use the information as a guideline only.



Excellent safety standards displayed at RIM Park in Waterloo include a 6 foot fence in front of the players' bench and an overhang and high screen that protects spectators.

Pick and choose, remember that when you're using bluegrasses, you want to blend for strengths and weaknesses. When dealing with sports turf mixes ideally you want grasses that will take a lower cutting height. Blend aggressiveness with heat tolerance and spring green-up. Blue tags on seed bags guarantee that whatever is on the bag is in the bag (see Volume 12, Issue 2, June 1999, *Sports Turf Manager*,



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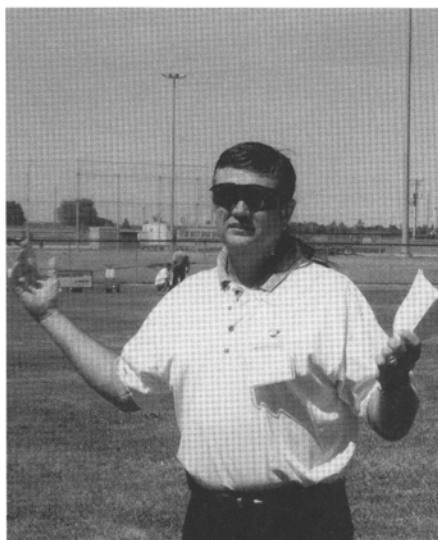
“Seed Label”). Remember all certified seed that comes out of the production field is tested via random samples. The cleaner selects a pound at random and it is sent to a state laboratory.

### **Sports Turf Irrigation**

Dean Cormack, Service Manager, Vanden Bussche Irrigation & Equipment Limited

#### *Design*

Design looks at the greatest amount of irrigation coverage keeping in mind budget restraints. Dean advises going to more than one person with your design and compare. Every design, whether a golf course or a sports field, is site specific. The design is also dependent on where the water is coming from. VBI does not design so that sprinklers are at their maximum. Many companies will do a design at no cost but make sure it meets your specific irrigation needs.



#### *Installation*

It is extremely important to use qualified contractors for installation. Landscape Ontario has a good program for training installers. There is no certification required in Ontario to put equipment in the ground although it is required in other parts of the world. You will sleep better at night with a qualified installer. Ask around to check on systems irrigation companies have installed in the past. Whether you are a village, town or region, you need an on-site supervisor who will ensure quality workmanship, no short cuttings and that the specifications are being followed.

#### *Equipment*

As a customer, you want after-care support. Have a competent person come out and train you on the system – nine times out of 10 the contractor will say here are the keys to the pumphouse and leave. Make sure the company you select for your equipment has people to train you and your staff to ensure you get the most for your money. There are many cases where the contractor left the keys to the irrigation system and the superintendent did not even know how to turn on the computer, repair a sprinkler, valve or controller! It is up to the distributor who has the responsibility to see that this happens. If you are not getting support, get in touch with the distributor and say I need some training on this system.

#### *Irrigation Goals*

As turf managers, you are all working toward the same end – consistency of turf, consistency of the playing surface regardless of the equipment used so people are not breaking legs or turning ankles, consistency of bounce off the infield and ball roll or bounce on the soccer field. Points to consider include:

- Spacing is important. With a wind of 5 mph, in 65 feet you are losing 12% of your performance.
- Correct soils and proper turf – we don't want water on the warning track.
- How much water is at the source?
- Set the system properly so that you only get water where and when you need it.
- Scheduling for events and drying out for the big event.
- Replace only the amount of water lost through evapotranspiration – evaporation lost through the sun and transpiration lost through the plant.
- Set the controller for seasonal use – less water needed in the spring and the fall. In summer, more water may be needed. Re-calculate the controller for the time of the year and weather conditions.

Employees should be trained to check sprinklers to make sure they are not plugged, that they are turning, are installed at the right height and are working perfectly. It's easy to put a gauge on the controller. For around \$35, you can check if your system is losing pressure and if you have a leak somewhere. No matter how well you have prepared your system for winter in fall, when you start up in spring

don't turn on a single sprinkler until you can turn on as many quick couplers as you can and flush the system for at least a day, because in the winter all the corrosion and algae inside the pipe dries out and falls down. As soon as you turn on the first sprinkler, all that material will head to the first sprinkler or valve. There's a chance you will have trouble with them all season unless you take them apart and clean them.



#### **Fertilizer**

Julie Glendinning, Marketing Coordinator, Nu-Gro Corporation, Professional Turf Product Division

Julie stated that what fertilizer you buy will depend on the kind of analysis you get for your crop. Proper fertilization enables turfgrass to maintain good colour, density and vigour, and allows it to resist diseases, weeds and insects more successfully. There are 16 different mineral elements essential to the growth of turfgrass – nitrogen is by far the most important. It has a dramatic impact on turfgrass colour, growth, density, tolerance to stress and recuperative power. Yet nitrogen is the mineral that is most often in short supply. If turfgrass doesn't have enough nitrogen, it will stop growing and turn pale and yellowish. That's why turfgrass benefits from a fertilizer with a reliable nitrogen source.

In general, synthetic nitrogen falls into one of three categories: 1) quick-release, water-soluble sources; 2) slower-release, coated surfaces; and 3) controlled-release reacted sources. Distribution of the fertilizer product is dependent on granule size,





which also affects the nutrient dispersion.

Quick-release nitrogen sources are soluble in water; can be used immediately by the plant (thus plants show a rapid initial response); have high potential for foliar burn; require applications at low rates and frequent intervals to sustain growth; and leach readily. Urea is an example of one of today's most widely used nitrogen products which is water soluble. Overall, quick-release nitrogen fertilizers are not highly efficient.

Coated slow-release sources of nitrogen are slowly soluble in water; can be applied less frequently; reduce fertilizer losses from leaching; produce a more uniform growth response; are economically sound for general turf applications but are susceptible to breaking/damage with handling. Two common types of slow-release fertilizers are sulfur-coated urea and polymer/resin-coated urea. The granules have pinhole sections that wear down the coating which means nitrogen is released in the form of ammonia and hydrolyzed. Different coatings vary the length of time to release the nitrogen.

Reacted, controlled-release nitrogen sources have controlled solubility in water; supply nitrogen gradually; result in little fertilizer loss through leaching; have a low salt index and produce little burning and their performance is not affected by a coating. No matter the size of granule, these fertilizers will still release over a longer period of time. The release pattern on Nitroform (produced by Nu-Gro) can be from 12-16 months. Control release

products are pricier but more consistent, particularly for fine turf areas.

Nitrogen sources can be used alone or in mixed fertilizers, or even in combinations of quick- and slower-release sources. By understanding each source and its benefits and drawbacks, turf managers can adjust their fertilizer application programs to get the most benefit out of each turfgrass treatment.

### **Topdressing**

Dr. R.W. (Bob) Sheard, STA

Bob was the last to speak and the program was running late so he decided to be brief in his remarks on topdressing. Some of the reasons for topdressing are to help control thatch, to modify soils, to level a sports field, and for covering seed during overseeding practices. He explained that the most important rule is to always topdress with the same material as was used in the original construction of the field or green. Experiments in the past have shown that by taking a profile of a golf green, it could be observed through the different soil layers what materials each superintendent used and how many years he stayed at the course. Particle size is also very important to retain the same type and size of sands. Otherwise it is impossible to predict water transmission and retention values that may develop with the addition of different soil/sand mix builds. ♦

— summarized by Michael Bladon

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### **Words of Wisdom**

The great things you intend to do some time must have a beginning if they are ever to be done, so begin to do something worthwhile today. — Grenville Kleiser

# From the GTI Advisor

## ROB WITHERSPOON SPEAKS OUT ON PESTICIDE BANS

**F**urther to my columns on pesticide bans, I would like to touch briefly on pesticide bans and their potential impact on sports fields. As the majority of fields in Canada are managed by public agencies like municipalities and school boards, sports turf managers are probably at the leading edge of managing turf with minimal inputs. Many cities and school boards have cut back or eliminated pesticide use, in many cases for budgetary reasons as opposed to environmental concerns. I feel for the sports turf managers who have the knowledge and expertise to manage their fields but lack the budgetary support to do the job.

As a result, the state of many publicly operated sports fields is less than ideal. Goal mouth areas are mud holes and prostrate knotweed is the predominant plant species on the field. Although I have not seen the results of any studies in this area, I would speculate that the safety risk to children of poorly maintained sports fields is exponentially greater than any potential health risk associated with pesticide

use. In the absence of pesticide use, many of these fields do not even receive a minimum of good cultural practices such as fertilization, aeration and overseeding.

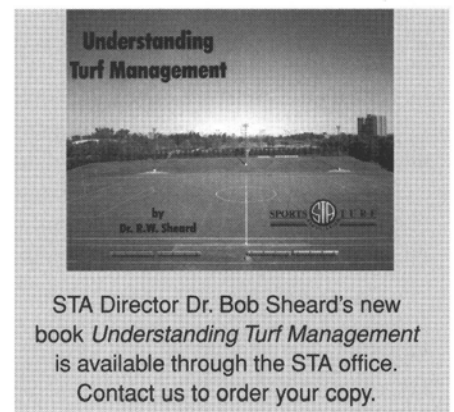
Hopefully the current drive to improve the safety of playground equipment will extend to the playing fields. Investment in good construction and maintenance of sports fields can only provide positive impacts such as improved recreational opportunities for youth and improved fitness which I suspect would also lead to better performance in the classroom and a healthier society placing less demands on our health care system.

The challenge is finding resources at a time when the need for classroom materials and municipal infrastructure upgrades are competing for the same resources. Perhaps alternative sources for support can be found in the private sector. Many companies already provide land and recreational facilities for their employees that are shared with the community. A number of large sports complex developments are already being built utilizing a public-private

sector shared funding model. We certainly have the knowledge and expertise to provide safe and healthy sports turf with a minimum of pesticide use. Hopefully pesticide bans will not become another excuse for poorly constructed and maintained sports fields. ♦

— The GTI Advisor, Vol. 6 (13), Aug. 27

GTI Director Rob Witherspoon can be reached at 519-824-4120 ext. 6886 or via e-mail: [robwith@uoguelph.ca](mailto:robwith@uoguelph.ca).



STA Director Dr. Bob Sheard's new book *Understanding Turf Management* is available through the STA office. Contact us to order your copy.

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# Striping and Lining

MIKE ANDRESEN, CERTIFIED SPORTS FIELD MANAGER, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

**S**triping, lining and logos are the finishing touches on your playing field. Safety and playability must come before aesthetics, but aesthetics are a very important aspect of a sports turf manager's job.

## Accuracy

In striping and lining, accuracy is essential. Games are won or lost by inches, and many of those inches are marked by what you've painted, and how precisely you've painted it.

If you're getting a new logo stencil, put the extra time and money into getting one that's detailed. Invest in quality paint and quality painting equipment, it will pay for itself in the long run. Don't be afraid to try out new paints and to work with your paint supplier to get the paint you want.

Logos are more than a pretty design. They project the image of your organization and your team. They're also a marketing tool. A great logo sells those shirts, hats and other paraphernalia that help fund the program.

## Speed

After accuracy, your second priority is speed, because crew time is precious. The biggest factor in fast and accurate field painting is in-ground markers. Placed at strategic points, these markers eliminate the need to establish base measuring points each time you paint. They may be purchased or made, and the type required will vary with the game.

For football, all of our in-ground markers are located off the playing area of the field. We cut 1-1/2-inch PVC pipe into sections six to eight inches long. We sink these into the ground with the top of the PVC pipe approximately 1/4-inch below the grass line.

For soccer, the in-ground markers are located within the playing area. We use a store-bought, ground-socket marker that has a cap on top. When sunk into the ground, the top of this marker is right at the soil line.

The covered top eliminates the chance of a player sinking a shoe spike into the open center of the marker. The cap comes

off so we can slip in a purchased peg that has string on it to run the lines. The sleeve is also used to hold the flags that mark the field corners.

## Football

When painting the lines on our football field, we set our string lines and run the painter right down the center of the string. We paint two inches on each side of the string. Others paint a four-inch band at the edge of the string. Overall, their lines will each be two inches 'off' of our lines, but it's the consistency within the field that's important.

We paint the white lines on the field with a Jiffy model 8,000 self-propelled, walk-behind line painter with a 12-gallon tank. We mix our paint with water to a 1:1 ratio, and it takes approximately 50 gallons of mix to paint the lines.

When temperatures drop in late fall, we add a little alcohol to the paint. The ratio differs depending on weather conditions. The alcohol sucks the moisture out of the paint and allows it to dry before it freezes. Alcohol is hard on the grass, but our turfgrasses are dormant before we need to use it, and the rates are very small.

We paint all of the five-yard lines first, and then paint the sidelines so the painter won't run over fresh paint. An in-ground marker is located at each five-yard line on both sides of the field. They are placed just outside the three-foot border that the NCAA requires around the field. The string line is stretched across the field from marker to marker.

The NCAA requires a four-inch gap between the yard lines and the sidelines, so the sideline string lines need to be stretched out when the yard lines are painted. We place a four-inch piece of aluminum beneath the "X" made by the sideline string and the yard-line string to set the space.

The sideline markers are located outside the three-foot border. They are placed at the end of the field to set the horizontal line, and at the end of the endzone to create the vertical line.



Once line painting is complete, we break into two crews: a logo crew and a field crew. Our field crew goes straight to work on the inside hashmarks. We have an in-ground marker on the back side of each endzone, and we run a string from endzone to endzone to prepare the line for the hashmarks. We use an aluminum stencil and paint with an airless sprayer placed on the back of a small golf cart. 100 feet of hose allows the cart to run off the field, along the sideline. The angle of the slack in the hose keeps it from dragging through the paint.

Once the hashmarks are painted, we move the two string lines to the top point of the newly painted lines to position the numbers. An in-ground marker nine yards off the sidelines verifies the placement. We use NFL style number stencils made of heavy vinyl. They're mounted on an aluminum frame to keep them stretched out and in good condition. The crew starts at one end of the field and works to the opposite endzone.

Once the numbers are painted, the field-painting crew brings the hashmark stencil back out and paints the sideline hashmarks. They proceed to paint the kickoff "X" on the 35-yard line and on the three-yard Prescription Athletic Turf (PAT) hashmark line. This completes the white paint on the field.

The sideline strings remain down until the paint is dry. They are then moved out to paint the white three-foot border on each side of the field. There are in-ground markers at each end of the field on both sides to set these strings three feet out from the sideline.

While those two strings are down, we take the shorter sideline string and measure to make the coaches boxes and team areas. We don't have in-ground markers in those areas, because wear is extensive and we don't want any exposed PVC pipe.

Now the field-painting crew switches to an airless sprayer with an 18-inch-wide nozzle. They fill in the white paint in the three-foot border, and in the six-foot-wide team area and coaches box.

Our logo crew's motto is: "measure twice and spray once." Rules require a

four-foot space between the sidelines and painted areas. Because the endzone is 30 feet deep, we've designed all of our logos 22 feet high. The center endzone logo is 71 feet long.

We draw a tape measure across the back of the endzone from sideline to sideline and run a string line. We measure and put a string line on the center of the endzone lengthwise. To get the exact center of the logo's dimensions, we measure and run a string line perpendicular to these lines, from the front of the endzone to the back of the endzone. This method is more accurate than measuring from the goal post.

Our logo stencils are made of vinyl and have small holes punched in them. The appropriate color paint is sprayed through the hole to create a dot of paint on the field. With the vinyl removed, outlining the logo becomes a connect the dots exercise.

We start at the center of the logo and work out. In the heat, the vinyl will stretch. We don't want the stencil to be on the field any longer than necessary to avoid building up excessive heat beneath it and yellowing of the turf. We work on one logo at a time, and finish it completely before starting the next one. Logos are complex;

most are copyrighted, and all must be accurate. We keep a copy of the logo on the field as we paint.

We start by using aerosols of each of our colors to paint any unique features or small details prior to coding out our logos. Then we paint with the airless sprayer equipped with a 4-inch wide tip.

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When temperatures drop in late fall, we add a little alcohol to the paint. The ratio differs depending on weather conditions.

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We select one color first and paint all of that color before moving on. We always finish with white, so we can repair any mistakes. We only cover the tip of the grass plant with paint. Up close on the field, you can see green under the paint. That's what we want to maintain for the health of the turfgrass.

Lowering sprayer pressure won't keep the paint from pushing the grass down and working down into the turf. It's better to raise the pressure. You will get finer drop-

lets that dry quicker and stay in place.

We paint all the endzone logos first, and then move to the field logos. For each one, we establish a center point using the crossed string line method to ensure accurate placement.

When we installed a natural grass field, we changed from a center logo to two side logos to reduce additional stress on the high-traffic zone. It has been effective.

Rules state that you can paint over the line markings – if the referees can see the lines clearly. The 25-, 30- and 35- yard lines bisect our on-field logos. We don't paint over the lines. Instead, we paint our logos around them. It's our subtle way of emphasizing that the field exists for the game.

Our field-painting crew finishes by stringing and painting the yellow restraining line for the press. It runs six feet outside of the three-foot border on the sides, and nine feet beyond the endzone. It extends all the way around the field. It's there for the safety of the players and the working crews – the chain gang and the referees.

We try to paint on Wednesday and Thursday, and touch up on Friday for Sat-

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**SEEDS**



urday games. The team has a 2-1/2-hour Thursday afternoon practice, so any paint must be dry by noon. If weather conditions look poor for drying, the painting schedule is moved forward.

### Soccer

On a soccer field, one in-ground socket is placed at the very center point of the field. We remove the cap, drop in the string peg, and run the string out to the correct distance. We walk around this string 'circle,' dotting the line with an aerosol can of paint. Then we go back and connect the dots.

Other in-ground sockets are placed at the corners of the field, at the lengthwise sideline center points, and at the outer point of the penalty area on the sidelines. We don't put in-ground markers around the goal because it's a high-traffic area, so we must measure and line for the goal arcs and square out from the goal mouth.

### Keep the Perspective

If the press and the public see that your field looks great, they'll think it is great. That's one bonus of aesthetics. You can consciously use this to your advantage to draw the eye to the logo instead of the hashmarks and other wear areas. Damage isn't quite as noticeable.

We do tend to think of field presentation as primarily a "fan thing" or a "media thing," but don't discount the effect it has on the team. They do notice that presentation, and they do appreciate it. ♦

— *Sports Turf Topics 1998-1999, A Compendium of STMA Articles*

Mike Andresen is athletic turf manager at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. He is a board member for the Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association and is chapter relations chair of the national STMA.

"Inside-Out" means to start with yourself. If you want to be trusted, be trustworthy. If you want to have a friend, be a friend. If you want more latitude in your job, be a more responsible employee.

# Cricket's Fields of Dreams

## EXTENSIVE WINTER DAMAGE FIXED FOR BIG TOURNEY

Imagine the shock Ron Aldridge and the other International Cricket Council Trophy organizers felt when the snow melted last April and uncovered pitches in horrible shape.

The Toronto winter was harsh. Damage to the grass was extensive and with only three months before some 400 cricketers from more than 20 countries were to descend on the Toronto area to play in the tournament – the world's biggest gathering of national teams – it would take a miracle to get the fields ready in time.

"It was a monumental task," said Aldridge, chairman of the organizing committee. "We had a winter where it froze and thawed and it froze again. When we eventually got a view of the wickets, they were in disastrous condition."

Many doubted the fields would be ready in time. Countries scheduled to compete in the tournament would send spies to scout the grounds and they would return with negative reports.

Even the ICC, the world governing body of cricket, was worried. "It would

be fair to say that there was a bit of concern earlier in the year because of the weather they had," said Clive Hitchcock, the ICC's manager of cricket operations.

So Aldridge and his crew called in experts from England to rebuild the lawns. They sought out an extra venue to decrease wear and tear on the existing fields and they got some help from Mother Nature in the form of warm, wet weather. The 10 fields were green, groomed and ready for the matches, which started June 22.

"Those people that came here to do reconnaissance in March and April are now just shaking their heads because they really didn't believe it could come back the way it has," Aldridge said. "The wickets are exquisite and the grounds look beautiful." ♦

— *excerpts from Tim Cook, The Globe and Mail, June 23, 2001*

Editor's note: What a shame that the governing bodies of cricket in Canada could find no one qualified and experienced enough in turf management that they had to bring in people from England.

## Industry News

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