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Sports Turf Manager

FOR BETTER, SAFER SPORTS TURF. AUTUMN 2012.

Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower. ~Albert Camus



Inside this issue...

REGULAR COLUMNS, DEPARTMENTS & SMALL FEATURES

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- 6 Our roots run 25 years deep.** A look at Field Days and Scholarships
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- 20 25th Annual Field Day.** Recap of the day in words and photos.

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

Deadline for Winter 2012 Sports Turf Manager: October 27

WHAT'S ONLINE www.sportsturfassociation.com

Sports Turf Manager

Searchable online digitized archive to complete backfiles of the magazine. In the "Publications" section.

Turfgrass Information File

Michigan State University via the Michael J. Bladon Link. In the "Members Only" section.

Events

Check the calendar often for current updates!

Sports Turf Manager

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President's Desk

BY PAUL GILLEN

WOW – that was one hot summer right across the country. Aside from the burden that high temperatures and low rainfall placed on maintenance personnel, it appears that many areas are now going to have to deal with exceptionally low watertables into the foreseeable future. Let's all hope that Mother Nature will bring the balance back into our environment through the winter.

You have probably read about it before now, but I want to personally welcome our friends at the Western Canada Turfgrass Association (WCTA) into the STA family. The strategic partnership signed earlier this summer will result in substantial benefits to both organizations in the educational opportunities for the production and maintenance of safe and playable sports turf. It was a pleasure to host WCTA President Tab Buckner and Executive Director Jerry Rousseau

at our 25th Annual Field Day in Vaughan, Ontario. The following day our visitors toured the University of Guelph sports fields with Facility Manager Bill Clausen and the Guelph Turfgrass Institute research plots with Eric Lyons, Associate Professor of Turfgrass Science.

Speaking of the Field Day, our sincere thanks to the sponsors, exhibitors, speakers and the organizing committee for your support, without which none of this could



Founding and current STA Presidents Michael Bladon (L) and Paul Gillen at the 25th Annual Field Day

happen. Look for highlights of the day in this issue.

The STA Robert W. Sheard Scholarship for 2012 has been awarded to Ross Baron. Ross hails from Vancouver, British Columbia and is currently entering his second year in the University of Guelph's Associate Diploma in Turfgrass Management Program. Ross has just completed a summer internship with The Washington Nationals. His scholarship essay submission *Natural and Synthetic Sports Surfaces: A Comparative Discussion* is included in this issue.

The scholarship is one tool that your association uses to recognize excellence in the next generation of sports turf managers. In addition, we are currently working on a "Sports Turf Manager of the Year" award, the details of which will be rolled out in 2013. Stay tuned for further information.

You will by now have received your invitation to our 25th Anniversary Banquet scheduled for October 25 in Guelph, Ontario. The committee has planned an affordable and entertaining evening and we hope that all members, past and present, will make every effort to come out and see old friends and associates. Please contact the STA office for any additional information you may require.

The Atlantic region is hosting the STA's four day Sports Turf Management & Maintenance Course October 29 to November 1 at the Moncton Coliseum, Moncton, New Brunswick. It will also be delivered April 29 to May 2, 2013 at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario.

Our planning for the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium in February is well underway – the dates are February 20 and 21, 2013.

Visit the website for up-to-date information on all of our events and programs. We hope to see everyone on October 25!



WCTA President Tab Buckner, Executive Director Jerry Rousseau, Advisor to the STA Board of Directors Eric Lyons, and STA Director Bill Clausen at the University of Guelph

NEW & RETURNING MEMBERS

Lana Rizzuto
Lakehead University
Thunder Bay, ON

Wayne Lauzon
City of Cornwall, ON

Michael Ross
Rain Bird International

Rob Van Wees
All Green Sod Growers
Hampton, ON

Jerry Rousseau
Western Canada Turfgrass Association
Hope, BC

Tab Buckner
Township of Langley, BC
Western Canada Turfgrass Association

Ross Baron
University of Guelph, ON
Robert W. Sheard Scholarship Recipient

Chuck Judson
Sean Dougherty
Town of Lincoln, ON

Mel Milanovic
Nathan Robinson
Town of Innisfil, ON

WCTA and STA Announce Strategic Partnership

GUELPH, ON. The Western Canada Turfgrass Association (WCTA) and Sports Turf Association announced in July the formalization of a partnership agreement between the two organizations.

The WCTA mandate includes the promotion of further education, turfgrass research and the exchange of information related to turfgrass management and recognizes within its membership a Sports Turf Managers Group. By partnering with the STA, these members will now have greater access to specialized education, professional development and resources in this sector niche.

The Sports Turf Managers Group will be able to complement the benefits offered by their regional association by enjoying reduced membership rates in the Sports Turf Association, the non-profit professional association dedicated solely to the promotion of better, safer sports turf. Moving forward, the WCTA will be the conduit for STA membership originating in the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. The associations will explore joint educational and professional development opportunities.

The agreement recognizes the Sports Turf Association as the national body for the promotion of better, safer sports turf in Canada and the Canadian International Affiliate Organization of the USA-based Sports Turf Managers Association.

WCTA President Tab Buckner is enthusiastic about the new partnership stating, "This is a major step forward in uniting Sports Turf Managers across the country and will undoubtedly have a positive effect on everyone in the industry."

Paul Gillen, STA President, concurs, "The synergy created by this relationship will result in better educational and training opportunities for all associated with the industry".

About WCTA

The WCTA is a not-for-profit association founded in the late 1950's by a small group of turf managers who were interested in becoming better at their profession. Today, over 700 members represent a diversity of sectors such as golf courses, sports fields, school boards, municipalities, sod farms, nurseries, landscapers, lawn bowling greens, mechanics, horticulturists and industry suppliers, all supported through a variety of member services and education delivery programs. One of the WCTA's primary mandates is to raise and distribute funds for a variety of turfgrass research projects.

About STA

2012 marks the quarter-century milestone of the Sports Turf Association. Its roots go back to 1987 when after a brain storming session at the University of Guelph a broad segment of the turf industry endorsed its need. Of particular concern at that meeting was the need to minimize and avoid injury to participants using athletic fields where they relate to sports turf. Twenty-five years later the Sports Turf Association continues to promote better, safer sports turf through innovation, education and professional programs.



Our roots run 25 years deep.

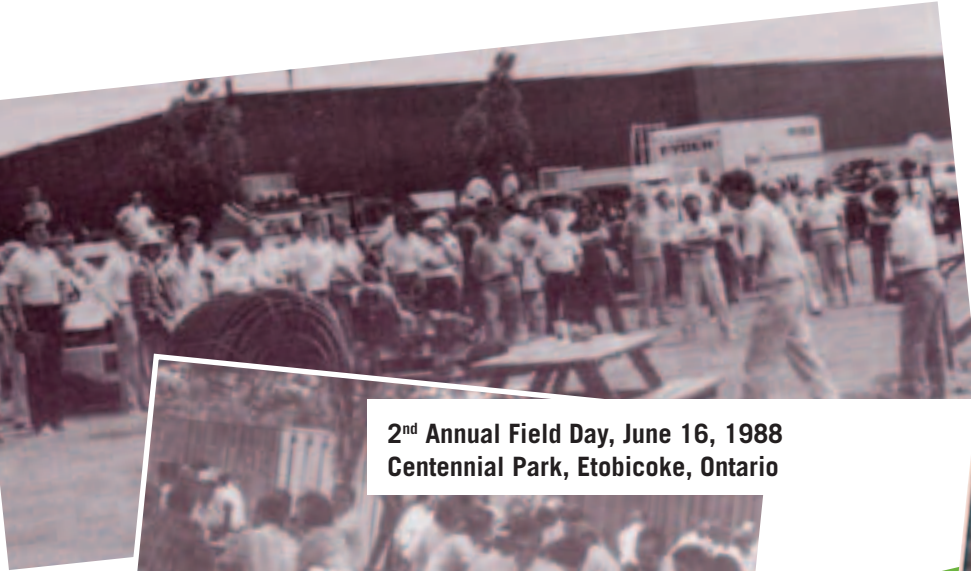
“Education is learning what you didn’t even know you didn’t know.” – Daniel J. Boorstin

Supporting Sports Turf Managers... be they new or tried and true!

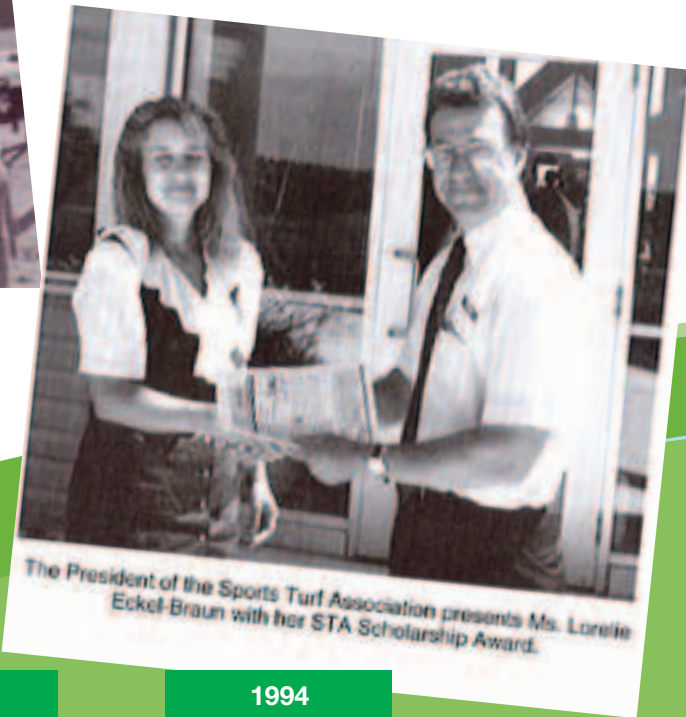
The Sports Turf Association is dedicated to the promotion of better, safer sports turf through innovation, education and professional programs. In order to further this goal and to encourage, support and provide leadership to those considering a career in the sports turf industry, the STA established a scholarship program in 1993 and has since awarded 30 scholarships.

The STA Scholarship was renamed the STA Robert W. Sheard Scholarship in 2007 in recognition of Dr. Sheard’s immeasurable contribution and support provided to the association over two decades.

Visit the STA website for Scholarship Policies, Application Requirements, and the Application Form. Deadline for applications is May 1.



**2nd Annual Field Day, June 16, 1988
Centennial Park, Etobicoke, Ontario**



The President of the Sports Turf Association presents Ms. Lorelie Eckel-Braun with her STA Scholarship Award.

1987

1st Annual Field Day, June 18, at Alumni Stadium, University of Guelph, Ontario.

1988

1993

Establishment of the STA Scholarship program.

1994

Presentation of the first STA Scholarship to Lorelie Eckel-Braun, City of Kitchener, graduate of the University of Guelph Turf Managers’ Short Course.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS



2011

1st Atlantic Field Day July 21, at the Moncton Coliseum and CN Sportplex, Moncton, New Brunswick.



2012

25th Annual Field Day, September 20, at The Soccer Center, Vaughan, Ontario.



2012

Ross Baron, student in the University of Guelph Diploma in Turfgrass Management Program, recipient of the Robert W. Sheard Scholarship, the 30th such award.

Sports Turf Association Scholarship Recipients 1994 – current

University of Guelph

Turf Managers' Short Course

Lorelie Eckel-Braun (1994)
Tommy Joe Coffey, Jr. (1995)
Gordon Noble (1995)
Stuart Roberts (1996)
Kim Nihls (1996)
Robert Crump (1997)
Derek Jazic (1997)
Perry Davie (1998)
Gordon Bruce (1998)
Howie Kumagai (1999)
Karen Richter (2000)
John D'Ovidio (2001)
John Peek (2002)
Tennessee Propedo (2003)
(No recipient in 2004)
Jeff Fortune (2005)

University of Guelph

Ontario Diploma in Horticulture

Kevin McLeod (1997)
Duncan Graham (1998)
Brian Brown (1999)
Robert Gill (2000)
Gerald Rees (2001)
Craig Hinschberger (2002)
Glen Kralka (2003)
Randy McCord (2004)
John Marshall (2005)
Wayne Wong (2006)

Robert W. Sheard Scholarship

Ian Ferguson (2007)
Timothy Armstrong (2008)
(No recipient in 2009)
Bradley H. Young (2010)
(Robert) Guy Mackie (2011)
(John) Ross Baron (2012)





Event Calendar



ASSOCIATION EVENTS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN

October 25

Sports Turf Association 25th Anniversary Banquet
Guelph, Ontario 519-763-9431
www.sportsturfassociation.com

October 29 – November 1

**Sports Turf Association
Sports Turf Management & Maintenance Course**
Moncton, Coliseum, Moncton, New Brunswick
519-763-9431 www.sportsturfassociation.com

2013

January 8 – 10

Landscape Ontario Congress, Toronto, Ontario
www.locongress.com

January 28 – February 22

University of Guelph Turf Managers' Short Course
Guelph, Ontario www.tmsc.open.uoguelph.ca

January 15 – 19

**Sports Turf Managers Association
Annual Conference & Exhibition**
Daytona Beach, FL
www.stma.org, www.sportsturfassociation.com
Note: STA members can register at STMA rates!

February 20 & 21

Ontario Turfgrass Symposium "Cultivate Your Mind"
University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario www.turfsymposium.ca

March 3 – 5

**Western Canada Turfgrass Association
50th Annual Conference & Trade Show**
Penticton, British Columbia www.wcta-online.com

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Cultivate Your Mind

Wednesday, February 20 and
Thursday, February 21, 2013

Rozanski Hall, University of Guelph

www.turfsymposium.ca



Problems Facing Sports Field Managers

Continued from page 1

OTS HIGHLIGHT

Presented February, 2012
Guelph, Ontario.

cultural practice but can play a primary role in the management of high traffic sports fields. Regular overseeding of field centers and goal creases can often “make or break” the presence of turf cover in these locations; thus, the practice of overseeding is arguably an additional primary cultural practice for high traffic sports fields.

Mowing

Unfortunately, there are institutions mowing large, multi-acre sports fields and adjacent grounds locations with rotary mowers equipped with single 5 ft wide mowing decks. During spring and early summer months when turf growth is most rapid, it can be extremely challenging to mow frequently enough with small mowers at a desired cutting height without scalping. Removing too much turfgrass leaf tissue in one mowing weakens the turf and results in excess clippings left on the surface, which if not physically removed (a labor-intensive process), can lead to severe turf thinning and weed encroachment. Turfgrass that lacks density and is infested with summer annual weeds tends to be less traffic tolerant.

Wide-area, multi-deck rotary mowers with cutting swaths ranging from 11 to 16 ft are available and can greatly improve the efficiency of mowing large expanses of turf. It is unfortunate to observe some institutions ready to invest in new equipment pass on acquiring larger mowing equipment for the reason that “the maintenance department already has a mower” albeit a 5 ft wide machine. Investment in wide-area mowers can reduce the labor time spent on mowing and allow these resources to be allocated to increasing the frequency of overseeding, fertilization, or other cultural practices.

Fertilization

School and municipal sports fields are commonly under-fertilized and subsequently exhibit limited growth and poor recuperative capacity, attributes that do not favor good turf cover under high traffic.

Public agencies often rely on contractors to apply fertilizers to sports fields. Following a public bidding process, landscape and sports field firms are awarded contracts to perform various tasks, including the application of a defined quantity of nitrogen (N) per unit area, typically over multiple applications. In some cases, fields scheduled to receive an ample supply of N display insufficient growth and have an off-color appearance, classic indicators of turfgrass in need of N. While not all contractors will “short” the school or town on N quantities, many contractors apply N as liquid applications and it is difficult for school and town representatives to fully audit what is in the contractor’s spray tank.

Granular-formulated fertilizers can allow for better auditing of contractor-applied fertilizer applications as well as allow for more N to be applied per individual application with lower potential for turfgrass leaf tip burn compared to liquid fertilizers. For example, to apply 0.75 lbs N/1000 ft² to an 80000 ft² football field and surrounds using a fertilizer that is 25% N (e.g. 25-0-0), it will require 240 lbs of fertilizer (e.g. five 50 lb bags of 25-0-0). Bags can be counted following the application to ensure that the appropriate quantity of fertilizer has been applied and thus, high traffic sports fields are better able to recuperate from damage.

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Figure 1. High traffic sports fields are prone to severe turf loss particularly in locations such as the area between the hash marks on a football field.
Photos: Brad Park



Figure 2. Mowing at too low of a cutting height too infrequently will lead to turf scalping, excessive clippings, and ultimately unacceptable sports field conditions.

Irrigation

Automatic irrigation systems are an important tool in the management of sports fields and are highly preferable to water reels and certainly non-irrigated sports field and grounds sites.

Too often, however, automatic systems are simply set on a program and then ignored resulting in some fields becoming saturated with water and a subsequent loss in turfgrass traffic tolerance. Water-saturated sports field soils may be a result of irrigation programs being allowed to run immediately following rain events or systems set to deliver a quantity of water that the sports field soil does not have the capacity to accept. In either case, the sports field manager must regularly assess soil moisture (i.e. buy a soil probe!), view weather data, and know the ability of his/her sports field to accept varying quantities of rainfall and irrigation in order to program the automatic irrigation system accordingly.

Cultivation

Poor design and construction methods can accelerate turf loss on sports fields. If designed with inadequate surface pitch and/or manipulated when wet, even those soils that may have supported agronomic crops will be prone to poor drainage and compaction, conditions that are not conducive to growing healthy, traffic tolerant turfgrass.

Deep slicing and deep tine cultivation are methods to alleviate compaction at deeper soil depths, often a result of poor construction procedures. Severely compacted soils may not readily allow a tine to penetrate to a soil depth greater than several inches. In these cases, it can be advantageous to first perform deep slicing. These tools are equipped with heavy-duty rotating knives that cut through and fracture the soil.

Cultivation in turfgrass is more routinely performed with machines equipped with tines (hollow or solid) capable of

penetrating to a depth of 3 to 4 inches. Use of hollow tines allows for the removal of a core and can be useful to alleviate shallow soil compaction, manage thatch accumulation, and following core re-incorporation, create seedbed at the surface in preparation for overseeding.

Too often tow-behind, drum-type cultivation units are used across dry compacted sports fields with little or no impact on the surface. Albeit more expensive to purchase and maintain, reciprocating tine coring machines powered by a tractor (i.e. attached to the PTO) equipped with 0.75 to 1.0 inch tines positioned on a tight centering pattern are most effective in alleviating compaction and bringing soil to the surface.

POOR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION METHODS CAN ACCELERATE TURF LOSS ON SPORTS FIELDS.

Overseeding

During the course of a traffic-intensive sports season, turfgrass cover in goal creases, field centers, and penalty kick areas will inevitably thin. As turf cover begins to decline, it is important to initiate an overseeding program to introduce new plants. All too often sports field managers wait for nearly 100% bare soil to appear prior to introducing seed. While overseeding at this point is better than taking no action, the process should be started prior to severe damage becoming apparent.

Choosing the appropriate seed for an overseeding program is critical. Many seed mixtures are marketed as “sports turf mixtures” leading field managers and purchasing agents to buy these products for use in overseeding. These mixtures typically contain Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue and are better suited for establishment projects where there is ample time to wait for the turf to fully establish before use.

Perennial ryegrass seed blends (i.e. two or more varieties of the same turf species) are the best choice for routine overseeding of high traffic field locations as this species will germinate more readily in cooler soil temperatures compared to Kentucky