

New field layout tool works for 1-man crew

LAYING OUT A FIELD is often times one of our biggest challenges, not only to make it right, but also to have all of them marked in the same day,” says Peter Thibeault, CSFM, turf manager for the Noble & Greenough School, Dedham, MA. “In New England, like colder areas, one of our challenges is getting all the fields marked the moment the snow melts. I use a method of having permanent markers in the corners of the fields, which can sometimes take a little while to find and usually requires a metal detector. After finding them, we then have to check to make sure frost and aeration hasn’t moved them around. This process alone can take a day or two.

“Last year Norm Paquette e-mailed me his software and method for layout that simplified the process completely; not only does it help with regulation size field layout but it also allows for you to scale dimensions down to make mini fields for camps and practice spaces,” says Thibeault.

» **PETER THIBEAULT,** CSFM, right, and Norm Paquette lay out a field at Noble and Greenough School, Dedham, MA.



“From season to season I will generally move my playing surfaces around from side to side or end to end. Norm’s method of layout allows you to spin the field so that your new center of traffic runs diagonal to traditional layout. This has saved me lots of time in laying out fields; I have managed to get my layout time for girls’ lacrosse down to less than 2 hours, completely painted.

“The tool gives step-by-step instructions on where to walk next. We all know to layout on 8 1/2 x 11 paper no problem but to walk it out on 2 acres can be tiresome, especially if you’re making lots of extra steps,” says Thibeault. “The software is simple to use and can do conversions from feet to meter and vice versa. You can print the diagram and use it to follow along; I feel as though this software can help anyone no matter what their background to layout the perfect field.”

“Ultimate Field Layouts (www.ultimatefieldlayouts.com) was conceived to provide professional turf managers, sports camp counselors, municipal grounds crews or first time field maintenance volunteers the tools necessary to layout athletic fields that will have perfect 90-degree corners, meet very specific requirements for each sport, and do it all on their very first attempt,” says Paquette, inventor of the method.

“You begin with an Excel spreadsheet that is specifically designed for each sport. For example, for soccer you would place dimensions in a table that would define the overall width and length of the field, the size of the penalty and goal boxes, the center circle, corner radii, etc. Once you have defined your field size, all the diagonal distances and specific points are calculated for you,” says Paquette.

“Now that you have the calculations, you are ready to stake the field using the suggested sequence instructions included. A stringing sequence is also included to help establish the process for the inexperienced.

“This process has been defined assuming that just one person will be laying out the field. If a second person is available, the process flexibility allows for a

second person to concurrently stake the other half of the field. This would save half the time needed during that operation. Additional layout efficiency includes the ability of a second person to follow right behind the person stringing the field and striping the line concurrently, thereby saving additional time as well. Having assistants dramatically reduces the time required to layout a field using this process," says Paquette.

"In addition to a more streamlined approach to field layouts, the software will calculate paint requirements based on industry standards (300 ft/spray can, 400 ft per diluted gallon of paint) and upon the size of your field. You can choose to input meters, yards or feet and have the option to read the dimensions in meters or feet-inches with the click of a button. Links are provided to the ruling organizations for each sport. Where appropriate, links to international


ruling bodies are supplied, as well as their subtle field differences, all with the click of a button," he says.

Sample field sizes are offered based on recommendations from ruling organizations such as soccer (U12, U10, U8, & U6), women's lacrosse (Level "A," "B" & "C"). On these sample fields, all the appropriate input boxes are automatically filled in for you, but the program allows you the ability to change any or all of the input dimensions so that you can customize your field based on your organizations requirements and or real estate constraints.




Thibeault thinks one of the best features is the paint use. "We are all on tighter budgets than ever, this will help to figure paint use based on type and size of field. With that being said this software will also help you better use the not enough space you

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have to manage by being able to scale things more consistently," he says. "We all know our athletes need consistency and if we could all be more consistent on how we scale things for the younger groups the better off they would be." ■



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