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### Mission Statement

Committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers in New Jersey by improving the safety, playability and appearance of athletic fields at all levels through seminars, field days, publications and *networking* with those in the sports turf industry.

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## Looking For an Engineer Experienced in Building Athletic Fields?

by Eleanor Murfitt

As I began interviewing engineers for designing my township's 60-acre site, I wondered how many engineers write effective specifications for athletic field construction? How many use broiler plate **DOT** specifications? How many directors's like myself know the difference? What are effective specifications? When looking at previous projects the engineer was involved in, would I be able to determine who was

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require frequent irrigation to minimize dust and to provide a firm surface.” Whereas, “... the presence of clay is desirable from the standpoint of providing both a firm and stable surface for good footing ... top mixes 11 to 20% silt/clay [80-89% sand] will drain more slowly but will retain more water. Frequency of irrigation will be less. These mixes will be more cohesive and will be more difficult to loosen when they compact.”

Sports field managers should consider their budgets, availability of labor, and typical environmental conditions (dry climate vs. moist climate) when choosing an infield mix.

Infield mix maintenance has often been considered as much an “art” as it a “science.” While the ASTM standards provide a starting point from which to choose a particular mix, and we effectively demonstrated three mixes that are not acceptable (Mix 3, 4, and 5), the quality of an infield playing surface is most significantly affected by the actions and decisions made by the sports field manager.

*“It has often been observed that the skills of the grounds manager are a greater contributing factor to high quality skinned areas than the materials used to construct these areas. Successful grounds managers must select management practices that are appropriate for the field at hand, or modify field conditions to match a given maintenance program.” – ASTM Standards F 2107-01 ♦*

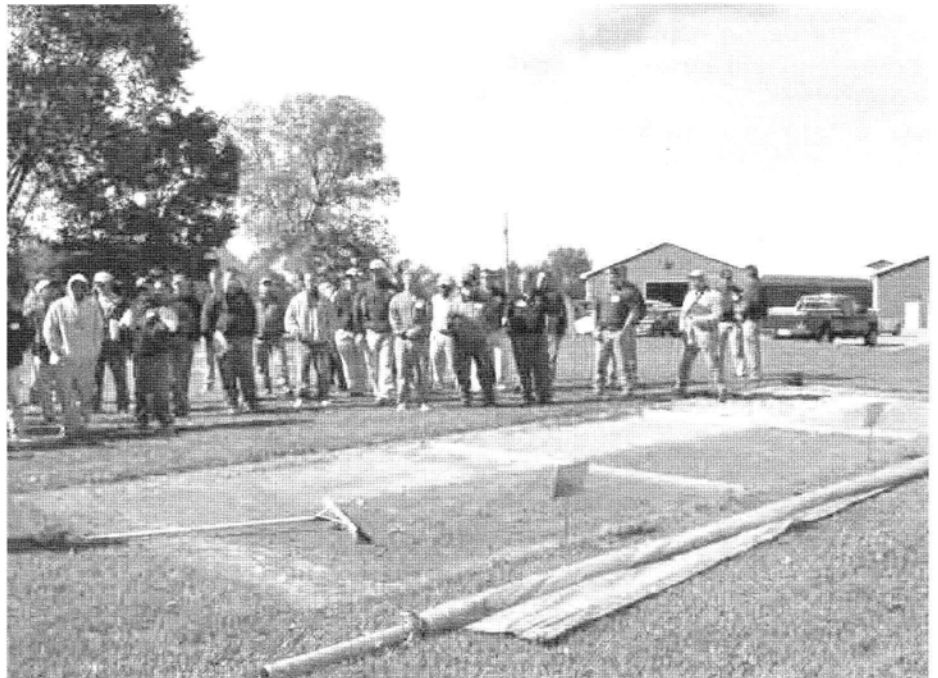
#### Acknowledgements

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Additionally, the authors would like to thank Geo. Schofield Co. Inc. and Partac Peat Corporation for donating materials used in this demo.

#### Literature Cited

ASTM. 2002. Standard Guide for Construction and Maintenance of Skinned Areas on Sports Fields. Volume 15.05: Designation F 2107-01.



*A 30 minute presentation on the installed infield mixes was part of the October 2, 2003 Sports Turf Workshop at the Rutgers Snyder Research and Extension Farm located in Pittstown, NJ.*

*continued from page 2*

responsible for the outcome? Did the engineer oversee and enforce the contract properly? Did the contractor follow the specifications to the T? Did the administration cut corners to save money and meet their time-line?

How many of you have asked yourselves these questions? How many of you have had great projects or ones that were not so great? Tell me about them. I would like to hear from directors, contractors, engineers, administrators and the sports field manager. I do not need names or company’s just successes or failures we can all learn from. You do not have to give your name if you do not want it revealed. E-mail or

write to the SFMANJ address in this newsletter. ♦

*\*Eleanor Murfitt is the director of Parks/Recreation & B&G for Washington Township (Morris County) Long Valley, NJ*

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