

UPDATE

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SPRING FIELD DAY 2006: Sports Fields & Monmouth Park Turf Course

Brad Park*

What would April be like if it were not for SFMANJ's annual Spring Field Day? We won't know this year, as a day has been planned similar to last year's format in which education at two facilities is incorporated into one day.

Sports Field Managers Association of NJ is inviting everyone to attend its Spring Field Day on Thursday, April 13, 2006. The day will begin with a 7:30 registration at the front lobby of Shore Regional High School, West Long Branch, NJ. Coffee and donuts are sponsored by Northern Nurseries and Storr Tractor.

As part of indoor morning education, Marco Oliveira, Facilities Manager, ARAMARK Corporation, will describe his role in maintaining the sports fields at Shore Regional. The session will continue with a panel discussion on synthetic fields as well as pesticide education.

The program will move outside where Scott Bills, Northern Nurseries, will show proper techniques to construct a pitcher's mound and home plate areas. This is a hands-on demonstration where attendees are encouraged to participate in the construction process. Northern Nurseries is graciously acknowledged for donating materials for this demonstration. Infield skin surface grooming education and demonstrations will follow.

The day will then move down the street to what has been called, "The Shore's Greatest Stretch" – Monmouth Park Racetrack, Oceanport, NJ.

Lunch will be provided at Monmouth Park, sponsored by Storr Tractor Co. and Northern Nurseries.

In anticipation for the 2007 Breeders Cup, Monmouth Park embarked on a goal to fully reconstruct its turf course which had been plagued by poor drainage, inconsistent turfgrass cover, and poor traffic tolerance. Situated inside a dirt oval (editor's note: "dirt", as opposed to "soil", is a perfectly acceptable term in reference to thoroughbred tracks ...), the Monmouth Park turf course is a 7/8th mile natural turfgrass racing surface which annually hosts in excess of 100 races from late May through September each year.

A team of agronomists, engineers, irrigation specialists, and a world-renowned turf track specialist was assembled by Rutgers University to provide design parameters, consulting, and construction supervision of the project. In its final stages of completion, the project entailed removal of the topsoil, installation of drainage, importation of subgrade material, replacement of the topsoil, installation of a new irrigation system, and sod installation. Additionally, a second interior racing chute was constructed and existing turf course banking was increased to facilitate better surface drainage. Afternoon education at Monmouth Park will be provided by Dr. James Murphy, Rutgers University and the Monmouth Park staff. For more information contact SFMANJ at 908-730-7770.

You do not want to miss this opportunity to gain practical sports field education and get a behind-the-scenes tour-of-the-turf at one of the Northeast's premier thoroughbred racing facilities!

*Brad Park is Sports Turf Res. and Ed. Coor., Rutgers Univ.; SFMANJ Board member; and Editor, SFMANJ Update



*The "Clubhouse Turn" at Monmouth Park Racetrack
(August 2005)*



*The "Clubhouse Turn" at Monmouth Park Racetrack following
turfgrass and hedge removal (September 2005)*

Additional photos on page 17



Management of infield skinned surfaces is always a popular topic at SFMANJ's annual Spring Field Day. Here, Frank LoSasso, Hammonton Board of Education and SFMANJ member, describes the techniques he employs during the SFMANJ 2005 Spring Field Day.

*Traffic Management: Thoroughbred Style!
A movable inner rail allows the Monmouth Park staff to spread-out racing across the turf course; thus, allowing certain racing lanes to recover from damage while other lanes accommodate racing.*



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