

RUTGERS STUDENT RECAP....

By Justin Sadowski and Jeffrey Antoniewicz

First of all, we would like to thank Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ), Rutgers University, and the Rutgers Turf Club for making our trip to Austin, TX possible. Without these supporters, we would not have had such an opportunity.

The STMA Conference in Austin was one of the most incredible experiences of our lives. We came down to participate in the Student Challenge, attend the trade show, and hopefully meet and talk to some of the best in the business. We left with a feeling of satisfaction and reassurance that we wanted to be a part of the sports turf industry during our careers.



The Rutgers Student Challenge Participants received a tour of the Toro Booth during the trade show at STMA in Austin, TX. (l-r) Jeff Antoniewicz, Eric O'Toole, Kevin Rundstrom, and Justin Sadowski, Rutgers Undergraduate Students; Brad Park, Rutgers and Editor, SFMANJ Update; Jill Dunning-Harris, The Toro Company; Jim Heinze, The Toro Company.

The first day was a day to get acclimated. In the convention center, there was a meet-and-greet for students, where the proctor asked us some questions, and then students participated in an open-floor discussion on various topics, ranging from turf management techniques to simply talking about our individual goals.

One aspect that separates this conference from most other conferences was the STMA members at the welcoming dinner who talked with us students. These people welcomed us, asked us a little bit about ourselves, and asked us if there was anyone in particular that we wanted to meet. We thought this was one of the more unique portions because it gave students a networking opportunity that some of us have never had. Just having a chance to talk with some of these STMA members was rewarding because they offered us advice and wanted to know what

was important to us. It was a great thing to see them take an interest in each of us.

The trade show was interesting. In size, it was not as large as some other trade shows, but we feel like this was an advantage to the students. The vendors at STMA were very willing to talk to us at all times, gauging our interests. They did not seem to care whether we were currently in a position to purchase their products; rather they were interested in what we were looking to do, and were very enthusiastic in answering all of our questions. Having a slightly smaller trade show allowed for more personal contact for all.

We were given a personal tour of the Toro booth on the trade show floor where we were introduced to new and innovative products that the Toro Company has to offer. This included, but was not limited to their computer control systems, mowers, utility equipment, and sprayer technologies.

We sat-in on Weather 101 with Brad Jakubowski for a half hour before attending a series of three student sessions. The talks directed towards student attendees were great. The first was, "So You Want to be an NFL Sports Field Manager?" with Mr. Darian Daily, Head Groundskeeper for the Cincinnati Bengals. The second talk was "Field Maintenance is Only a Third of Your Job" delivered by Ms. Amy Fouty, CSFM, and Director of Grounds at Michigan State. The final session was "25 Years as a Sports Turf Manager - What I Wish I Had Known" from Bob Campbell, CSFM, and former Director of Grounds for the University of Tennessee. These three unique talks all focused on different challenges posed sports field managers, but the underlying theme was the importance of family and maintaining a healthy relationship with family and friends outside of the workplace.

The awards banquet was a night to remember. We could all feel the vibe and unity of STMA within the walls of the banquet hall. Each award winner, regardless of the award, had a lot of pride and prestige. Our favorite part of the banquet was the slide show at the end. We thought that we were going to see pictures of groundskeepers and sports field managers in action. Instead, it was a compilation of photos of sports field managers and their families, nailing home the main message that no matter what we decide to do in life, we need to make time for our families and friends. We thought this was a great message for students, and was a great ending to a phenomenal conference. We cannot wait to attend the 2012 STMA Conference in Long Beach, California.

Justin Sadowski and Jeffrey Antoniewicz are Rutgers undergraduate students; participants in the 2011 STMA Student Challenge; and Student Members, SFMANJ

OF THE 2011 STMA Conference and Exhibition

January 11-15, 2010, Austin, Texas

Dear Mr. Savard:

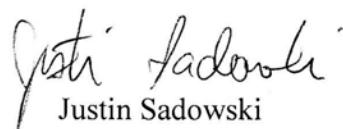
The Rutgers Turf Club would like to thank you and the members of SFMANJ for your donation of \$1,000 towards our attendance at the 2011 Sports Turf Managers Association Conference and participation in the Student Challenge in Austin, TX. We greatly appreciate your contribution to our club.

The Rutgers Turf Club is an organization comprised of four-year undergraduate and graduate students as well as students in the two-year Golf Management School. Our club's mission is to gather turfgrass students together to network, discuss and explore turf-related issues while working with faculty, alumni, students and turf-related businesses. SFMANJ's donation to our club allowed us to participate in the 2011 STMA Student Challenge. It covered many of our costs associated with traveling to and staying in Austin, TX for the STMA Conference and Student Challenge. While attending the conference we were able to make some great contacts with a lot of professionals in the sports field management industry. Our trip to Austin would not have been possible without your generous donation and we are sincerely grateful for your contribution.

Sincerely,



Jeff Antoniewicz


Eric O'Toole
Kevin Rundstrom
Justin Sadowski