

UPDATE

Sports Field

Managers Association of New Jersey



Spring 2017
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P.O. Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070 • 856-514-3179 • www.sfmanj.org • e-mail: mail@sfmanj.org

SFMANJ Spring Field Day

Wednesday, April 19, 2017

Harold Docherty
Memorial Park
Hillsborough, NJ

See Inside:

Recap: STMA Convention

2016 Field of the Year Winners

CSFM Application Funding

The Intelligent Use of Water

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Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members

Currently we have 171 new & renewed members. Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey mailed invoices for 2016 membership dues to all current members. If you did not receive an invoice, please contact us at 856.514.3179 or download the membership form available at www.sfmanj.org. Mail membership dues direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070.

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MISSION STATEMENT

Committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers 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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National Organization
Sports Turf Managers Association
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This newsletter is the official quarterly publication of the
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SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.

A Message from the President

There are times of the year that are busier than others.

By Bernard Luongo



For turf managers, spring and fall are our busiest. Summer, not so much, depending on the weather; still fall season is just around the corner. Spot marking, lining the fields, goals assembled, bleachers and team benches put into place. Depending on the weather, slice aerating and early fall fertilizing take up some time. Don't forget mowing, again depending on weather, and overcoming vacation schedules.

Winter holds a grip most times on any field prepping, which brings us to the next potential testy issue: the importance of working baseball skins during the October-December time frame. I'm sure everyone in the business has heard this at one time or another. Why is the grounds crew working on baseball/softball fields/skins in November? They are not going to be using these fields until March.

Well, if you have been around for any length of time and been around athletic directors and coaches for the same amount of time the first sunny 45 degree day, snow has melted, they want to know why that field is not ready (usually early March).The only way that is going to happen folks is late fall work. It will certainly take the pressure off of your grounds crew and take the pressure off administration to have to answer certain questions.

It's ok if you only have 2-3 fields that need getting ready. If you have 8, 10 or 12 fields, that is a lot of weeding to start the process in March. Too many variables at play, most of all, weather. The last thing any groundskeeper wants to hear is everyone else's fields are in the same predicament. Not a good excuse, if you want your district to be the leader and have the least amount of games cancelled as possible. That's the reward in the spring for a district's grounds crew...whether anyone is paying attention or notNo worries, the grounds keeper is.

So to change the topic completely as my mind wanders through this rant, I was able to attend Green Expo again this December; never a disappointment. Actually, every year it gets better. I commented to a fellow board member on the trade floor that I would take ten steps, meet someone I knew and have a meaningful conversation. Take another ten steps and the same thing would happen, before you knew it four hours were up. As mentioned before, it was not that way seven years ago. You keep on going, meeting people and networking has created lasting friendships with knowledgeable people in the industry. You can't put a cost on it.....it's invaluable. I miss it already, sad to leave.

Next, I had an opportunity in January to attend the Sports Turf Managers Association National Convention in Florida. The excitement and angst leading up to it (it was my first time attending) brings back memories of Green Expo's first attendance. I felt I would be out of place, you know, not knowing anyone. Not so, I was wrong, from all the conventions and all the SFMANJ field days I attended, there were so many familiar faces. From speakers to vendors and

members, they remember you, you remember them - all this before noon on the first day.

When folks say it's all about the networking, the importance of that statement is being extremely modest. If during your turf career an opportunity arises and you are able to attend a national convention, don't hesitate - jump at the chance. If only you get to attend one time, it is worth it. Bite the bullet and just do it. A lasting memory will be created. New contacts new friends, sharing the same passion of wanting to learn more. There's always more. PhD's and researchers from around the country eager to share their knowledge and most current research. How could you not want to attend? The impression that is made could make you a yearly attendee. It's that awesome!

During the convention there was a venue to meet other chapter officers. Like SFMANJ there are other chapters scattered across the country. The chance to exchange ideas in a social setting was enlightening. To get an understanding of how other organizations operate during the course of the year.....invaluable!

As far as shows go, STMA puts on quite an extravaganza. STMA board members lined up on either side of the aisle for a welcome reception, shaking all members hands as they entered the banquet hall just reeks of class and appreciation. The annual meeting and luncheon highlighted with a keynote speaker, excellent, doesn't give it merit. The trade show in the afternoon was the largest I have ever attended. There were lots of new toys on display to peak one's imagination. The one thing that stood out most in my mind was the level of their careers that these turf managers were at. The places they toiled at, major universities and professional complexes to speak of. The complex nature of their questions to the panels that were presenting leaves no question in my mind that they were on the cutting edge and looking for more. At one presentation there was a gentleman sitting next to me, asked a question about mixing Kentucky Bluegrass into a Bermudagrass field. He was the head groundskeeper at the Rose Bowl.....Just awesome!

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2016 Field of the Year

By Scott Bills, CSFM

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) received six applications for 2016 Field of the Year.

The entrants included Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools (3 fields), Toms River South High School (Ken Frank Baseball Field), Keansburg Borough Board of Education (Titan Football Field) and Hammonton High School (Varsity Baseball Field).

Following a similar process that was initiated in 2013, the SFMANJ Board of Directors established a committee to evaluate the applications. Debbie Savard, Executive Secretary, SFMANJ distributed the applications to the committee members who then met with the applicants at their facilities. Members of the committee included Rich Watson (Vice-President), Sean Connell (Treasurer), Scott Bills, CSFM (Secretary), Don Savard, CSFM (Past President), Matt Olivi (Past President) and Bernard Luongo (President).



Honorable Mention Frank LaSasso and Scott Bills, SFMAN Secretary

Several committee members physically inspected each field and interviewed the applicants. In addition to the overall health and appearance of the fields, the committee also looked at safety,

playability, and maintenance programs. The applicants were asked about the amount of play each field received, improvements made to the fields, the overall turf care program and why they think their field warranted consideration for Field of the Year.

Once the field inspections and interviews were completed, the committee had a conference call to discuss each member's thoughts and to vote on a winner, runners up and honorable mention.

Hammonton High School, Mr. Frank LaSasso, Keansburg Board of Education, Mr. Vincent Papa, Piscataway Vocational School and Perth Amboy Vocational School, Mr. Ryan Radcliffe were awarded with 'Honorable Mention' plaques for their efforts. All four fields were of high quality and clearly demonstrated the efforts of each groundskeeper. The committee was impressed with the thoughtfulness, attention to detail and dedication to providing their players a safe, playable field.

Mr. Frank LaSasso of Hammonton High School is the epitome of dedication. Frank not only manages the athletic fields, but also coaches and mentors other less experienced groundskeepers.

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SFMANJ to Offer Funding Assistance for Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) Candidates

Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

The Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) Board of Directors has voted and approved to offer financial assistance for SFMANJ chapter members who would like to become Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) candidates. The CSFM program costs for application and testing has been a barrier to some sports field managers who are not supported by their employers and do not have the personal resources to afford application and testing. Our Chapter is making available a \$300 grant available to qualified members to help meet this need.

The CSFM program offered by Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) requires candidates to pay certain fees.

These fees include:

Application fee:	\$250 STMA member	\$350 non-member
Testing fee:	\$100 STMA member	\$100 non-member
Annual renewal fee:	\$100 STMA member	\$100 non-member
Retest fee:	\$45 STMA member	\$45 non-member

Here are the steps outlining this proposed financial assistance program:

1. Sports field managers seeking the CSFM credential must first meet the 40 point matrix outlining education and work experience qualification shown below:

Education

Associate Degree:	
Non-turf	2
Turf or Related Plant Science.....	8
Bachelor's Degree	
Non-turf	8
Turf or Related Plant Science.....	16
Advanced Degree - Masters or Doctorate	
Turf or Related Plant Science.....	24

STMA-Approved Educational Programs vary (see the current STMA list of approved programs) Note: These points may be in addition to the below listed points. The below listed education points are not cumulative. In other words, an applicant can only receive points for the highest educational level achieved. Experience points are cumulative.

Experience

Activity Points/year*	
Formalized Internship Program worked.....	1 per 100 hrs.
Sports Turf Crew	2.5
Supervisory Sports Turf	
(Assistant, Foreman or Lead position).....	4
Sports Turf Manager (Top Position).....	6
Experience as an assistant golf course superintendent.....	1 1/2
Experience as a golf course superintendent.....	3

NOTE: no more than 50 percent of total experience points can be earned on a golf course

*a minimum of 1500 hours must be spent on the job to qualify for each claimed year.

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The Intelligent Use of Water

By Heath Traver

The door creaks open and I take my first steps out into the cold morning air. My breath is visible and gravel crunches under my shoes as I make my way to the field house. The daffodil sprouts poking through the soil tell me that spring is coming. It is the perfect time of the year to begin strategizing the irrigation season. Here are a few start-up tips to get you off to a strong spring:

1. Identify and repair leaks and broken equipment.

It is relatively simple to locate and replace broken heads, but it is the less obvious issues that can often lead to larger problems. Small leaks in irrigation systems can go unnoticed for years. The EPA estimates that a leak about the thickness of a dime can cause water waste of 6,300 gallons per month. Systems are now available that allow you to detect and fix these leaks before they become very costly. We now have the ability to monitor real-time flow and react to any issues (broken heads, ruptured pipes, etc.). The system can identify the issue, isolate and shut down the problem zone and generate automated alerts that will allow the system manager to react proactively before smaller issues get out of hand.

2. Water at the appropriate times.

There are a few reasons to water overnight, besides the obvious point that nobody is around to be inconvenienced. Watering during the extreme heat of the day can be harmful to plant material. These hot conditions can also cause the irrigation water to evaporate before it has the time to infiltrate the soil. This is very inefficient. In addition, watering too early in the evening can also be harmful. Allowing the soil to remain moist for extended periods of time can promote fungal growth (mushrooms, moss, etc.). The "sweet spot" would be to schedule the irrigation to complete its cycle at around 6 AM (give or take, depending on the needs of the individual property). If this approach to scheduling is made difficult due to a high number of zones on the property, there are controllers available that have the ability to run as many as 8 zones simultaneously. This will significantly shorten the watering window, allowing us to irrigate the entire property in less time.

3. Monitor your system.

The most common way to manage an irrigation system is to set the controller up in the spring, and maybe make an adjustment in the summer depending on temperature and rainfall. This is a very inefficient way to irrigate. New technology is available which gives us the ability to monitor local weather conditions, and adjust the amount of irrigation water on a daily basis depending on how much water is needed. The EPA has estimated that this approach to landscape irrigating can cut down on water usage by 30-35%.

4. Check System Efficiency

Setting up intelligent schedules is not the only thing to consider when it comes to smart watering. System performance must also be taken into account. If we have an area which doesn't get as much water as the rest of the property, this weak point will get stressed out first. Typically, we would increase the zone times to make sure that

the entire property looks healthy. By watering to that weak point, we are more than likely overwatering other parts of the property. Another issue which would affect efficiency is irrigation water that does not end up finding its intended location. At high pressure, water tends to mist as it exits the sprinkler head. Wind can easily carry this mist away from its intended target. By using pressure regulated heads, we can ensure that the heads are putting out the appropriate amount of pressure as specified by the manufacturer. The appropriate pressure will ensure larger water droplets, which are less susceptible to wind. Another way to increase efficiency is to use drip irrigation, which applies the water directly to the intended area. Drip is the most efficient way to irrigate, and is now being used in sub-surface applications (even in lawn areas). If you feel that your irrigation system is underperforming, an audit may be the correct course of action. A qualified irrigation professional would have the ability to go through the system, check scheduling and efficiency, and make recommendations on ways to improve the system. Water is our most valuable resource, and it is our responsibility to use it intelligently.

Heath Traver (htraver@rainbird.com) is an Area Specification Manager for Rain Bird in the Northeast US.

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2016 Field of the Year

Frank is no stranger to the Field of the Year program, having won the award in 2011 for the varsity football field.

Mr. Vincent Papa of Keansburg Board of Education has made great strides improving the playing surface of Titan Football Field. Vincent has been able to meld both school and outside contractor resources into a successful program.

Mr. Ryan Radcliffe, Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools has the daunting task of managing the school districts athletic fields on 5 separate campuses throughout the county. The multi-purpose field at the Perth Amboy campus has improved dramatically. Prior to Ryan joining the grounds staff this field had less than 50% turf cover and was not a safe, playable surface. The baseball field at the Piscataway campus is approximately 3 years old. The field was designed and constructed following specifications normally used for a professional field. Ryan's experience with the strict standards of this type of field has protected the school districts investment and continues to be one of the best high school baseball fields in the state.

Keith Fisher, athletic field grounds manager for the Toms River School District was honored with the 2nd place plaque for the Ken Frank baseball field. Keith took the position at Toms River South High School two years ago, after many years working as a groundskeeper in professional baseball for the Atlantic City Surf, Lakewood Blueclaws and most recently the New York Yankees. The baseball field at Toms River South High School has a storied reputation as its namesake; Ken Frank is the winningest high school baseball coach in New Jersey. The Ken Frank baseball field is also where many of the world champions Toms River Little League team played high school ball, including current major leaguer and 2015 home run batting champion Todd Frazier of the Chicago White Sox.



Field of the Year Winner Ryan Radcliffe, SFMANJ Pres. Bernard Luongo, Runner Up Keith Fisher

Keith immediately brought his knowledge and expertise to the field. In his first year, Keith was able to re-grade the infield skin surface to better shed water, rebuild the pitcher's mound to provide the proper table and landing area, rebuild the batter's boxes to provide stable footing, clean up the grass edges by removing elevated lips and repairing the irrigation system. This past year Keith improved the bullpens, completed the irrigation improvements, and continued to tweak the infield skin surface into 'Pro-like' condition.

In addition to his duties at the Toms River School District, Keith also teaches at the 'Infield Skin Surface' half day course at Rutgers, speaks at many industry events, serves on the SFMANJ board, and helps any groundskeeper who asks for his advice. Keith is a great asset to our industry.

The 2016 Field of the Year winner is Ray Cipperly Memorial Baseball Field, East Brunswick Campus, Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools. Mr. Ryan Radcliffe and his staff have continued the tradition of excellence established by Ray Cipperly over 20 years-ago. A true labor of love, Ray poured much of his own blood, sweat, tears and money into the varsity baseball field. The result was arguably the absolute best high school baseball field in New Jersey.

Ray was the baseball coach and eventual Athletic Director for the school district. If that wasn't enough, Ray established himself as an authority on ball field groundskeeping and eventually became the long-time Head Groundskeeper for the Somerset Patriots. Looking forward to retirement, Ray knew he couldn't risk leaving the baseball field or the remaining athletic fields in the hands of an inexperienced grounds staff. Ray wisely sought out Ryan Radcliffe.

At the time, Ryan was the head groundskeeper for the Lakewood Blueclaws. Eleven years earlier Ray had met Ryan during his first year in Lakewood and welcomed him to New Jersey. Previously Ryan had worked as an intern for the Reading Phillies and on the Penn State grounds crew. Luckily Ray convinced Ryan come to the school district because he knew the fields would be in good hands. As Ryan readily admits, transitioning from private industry to a public-school district was no easy task. With a little mentoring from Ray and much of his own fortitude, Ryan has figured out the rules and regulations that are inherent to public school districts.

Unfortunately, we lost Ray Cipperly in the fall of 2015. However, we know Ray would be proud of Ryan and the grounds staff at the Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools as they have continued a tradition of providing quality playing fields that the administration, coaches, athletes, parents, and fans can be proud of. It is only fitting that The Ray Cipperly Memorial Baseball Field on the East Brunswick Campus is the winner of the 2016 'Field of the Year'.

In 2015 the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey honored Ray Cipperly (groundskeeper, baseball coach and athletic director) with the inaugural Dr. Henry Indyk Founders Award. Ray's

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Photo Recap: STMA National Convention

Orlando Florida - January 24-27, 2017

Everyone wanted a picture with George Toma.



Debbie Savard and George

Elizabeth Holmes, Brad Park and George



Don Savard, James Surica and George



Fred Castenschiold and George



County College of Morris Students



SFMANJ President Bernard Luongo, Secretary Scott Bills, Rutgers Students James Surica and Elizabeth Holmes, and SFMANJ Board Member Fred Castenschiold at the Welcome Reception.



Bernard, Don, Brad and Scot at Welcome Reception



SFMANJ Board Member and newsletter editor Brad Park giving his talk with SFMANJ Advisor Don Savard looking on.



STMA Princesses, Leah Craig and Kenzie Jay



SFMANJ Vice President Rich Watson giving his talk as Board Member Craig Tolley looks on.



James Surico, Elizabeth Holmes, Brad Park, Rich Watson, Bernard Luongo, Sally Loungo, Scott Bills and Don Savard at the Awards Banquet



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Infield Soils and Topdressings – PART 1

by Paul Zwaska

Editor's Note: The following article is the first in a two-part series and was written in 1999 when the author was Head Groundskeeper, Baltimore Orioles.

Baseball is a unique sport in grounds management. It's the only major sport that is played on a field that has both turf and exposed soil for a playing surface. Ballplayers scrutinize the playability of your skinned areas more closely than you're turf areas. Your reputation as a groundskeeper will depend on the skin you keep.

This is not to say that the turf areas on a baseball field are unimportant. But if you think about it, 75% or more of the game occurs on the skinned areas of the field. Unfortunately, this crucial subject is avoided by the academic institutions that teach many of today's up and coming athletic field managers.

With no written guidance, new groundskeepers must resort to trial and error if they haven't been lucky enough to learn from another groundskeeper in the business.

Goals for a quality infield skin

Traction: Most players desire the same quality in an infield skin: traction. That's the reason for the spikes in their shoes.

Nothing makes a player happier than a firm infield skin that is moist and cork-like, not hard and baked dry. The cleat should penetrate the skin and leave a perfect imprint. Very little soil should be disturbed or displaced. When players plant their feet to throw, field the ball, or run, the soil should not give way under them. The traction in your infield skin comes from its base soil. Choose your mix carefully. Many companies that sell infield skin mixes know nothing about their proper function.

Many mixes are too sandy. Soils that don't firm up (high sand content of 75% or higher) are more mobile. This creates low spots in high-traffic areas (around bases and fielders' positions) more quickly, especially as the field dries out. The loosened material is more likely to be carried to other portions of the field to create high spots and huge lips at the infield skin/turf interface.

These sandy infield mixes increase infield skin maintenance problems. The loose soil also causes unstable footing for ballplayers, increasing the risk of foot, ankle, and hamstring injuries.

Drainage: The proper drainage on your infield skin dictates how quickly you will resume play after a rainfall. About 95% of the water that falls on the skin should run off the surface.

Good surface grade and proper maintenance techniques will give you the best results. Your infield skin should have a minimum 1-1/2-inch fall from the front of the skinned area to the back. Percolation rates on a good, firm infield skin should be 0.03 to 0.05 inches of rain per hour. Only in rare, special problem areas should a sandy infield mix be used to help drainage problems.

Drainage lines installed under the infield skin are a waste of time. If you use the proper soil for the skin, it will never perk enough rain to reach the drain tile. A drain line is more appropriately positioned five to 10 feet behind the infield skin in the shallow outfield. Here it will capture water that runs off of the skinned areas.

Amending infield soils with various miracle materials to enhance drainage throughout the skinned area usually proves unsuccessful. At best, these amendments provide a very short-lived remedy.

Topdressing: Choose the proper topdressing to work with your base mix. Think of your skin as a two-tier profile: the top 1/4- to 1/2-inch consists of your topdressing, and the remainder consists of your base infield mix.

The topdressing on the skin provides a cushion for the players. It creates a buffer zone between the players' cleats and the moist base soil mix, and prevents the soil from sticking. The topdressing layer also helps you endure light rain showers during games.

Don't go any thicker than a 1/2-inch layer of topdressing on the surface of the skin. A deeper layer will cause the ball to skid under infielders' gloves instead of taking the proper hop. It can also drastically influence a ballplayer's traction.

Infield base soils

Testing: If you don't know the percent breakdown of sand, silt, and clay in your skin base mix, have it tested to give you a reference point for comparisons. Send a sample of your soil to a private testing lab or county extension office that performs particle size analysis or soil texture analysis work. These labs will give you the composition percentages, and they'll show you where your soil fits into the soil texture triangle. A simplified home version of the test is also available. It can give you a ballpark figure of your percentages.

There is a simple way to get an estimate of the percentages of sand, silt, and clay that are in your base mix. This experiment provides a nice, cheap way of checking soils if you are looking around and can't afford to do a lot of testing.

Determining Soil Texture

Step 1. Obtain a quart mason jar with a lid, like the ones used for canning. Fill it a little more than half way with the soil you wish to test. Fill the rest of the jar with water, and attach the lid tightly.

Step 2. Shake the jar vigorously for a couple of minutes to fully separate and wet the soil. There should be absolutely no lumps of soil left when you're finished agitating it.

Step 3. When you feel that the soil is fully dispersed in the solution, set the jar down and begin timing. After 45 seconds, mark a line on the side of the jar with a grease pencil or White-Out where the top of the layer of sand has settled out in the jar. Next, put a mark at the top of the next layer after three hours have passed; this is your silt layer. After 24 hours, your clay will have settled out as well.

Step 4. Measure the total depth of soil in the mason jar. Then measure the thickness of each of the three layers using your marks on the jar.

Continued on page 17

Welcome New and Renewed Members 2017

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| Brian Gjelsvik | Seeton Turf | Michael W O'Connor | Bergen County Technical Schools |
| Fred Goble | Washington Township | Erik Ortiz | New Jersey City University |
| Dennis Granahan | Dryject New Jersey | Zach Owen | Fisher & Son Co., Inc. |
| Ken Griepentrog | Jersey Seed | Mark Ozoroski | City of Summit |
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| Pamela Griffin | New Jersey Recreation & Parks Assoc. | Bradford Pastrick | North Brunswick Township |
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| Michael Mccann | Caldwell/West Caldwell Board of Education | Walter Tucker | Retired |
| Gregory S Moore | US Pitchcare | Kyle VanHaasteren | Paramus Golf Course |
| Glenn Morrell | Bio Works | Julia VanSciver | Northern Burlington County Reg. School |
| Michael Morvay | Lakewood Blueclaws | Jack Warner | Township of Freehold |
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| Ron Norman | Central Jersey Nurseries | Bill Wisbeski | South Hunterdon Regional High School |

2017 Calendar of Events



2017 SFMANJ Spring Field Day

April 19, 2017
Harold Docherty Memorial Park
Township of Hillsborough, NJ
856.514.3179
www.sfmanj.org

Rutgers Turf Research Golf Classic

May 8, 2017
Fiddler's Elbow Country Club
Bedminster, NJ
973.812.6467
www.njturfgrass.org



Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Days

Golf & Fine Turf
July 25, 2017
Rutgers Hort Farm No. 2
North Brunswick, NJ

Lawn, Landscape, and Sports Turf Includes SFMANJ-sponsored Trade Show & Equipment Demonstrations

July 26, 2017
Rutgers Adelphia Research Farm
Freehold, NJ
973.812.6467
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New Jersey Green Expo

December 5-7, 2017
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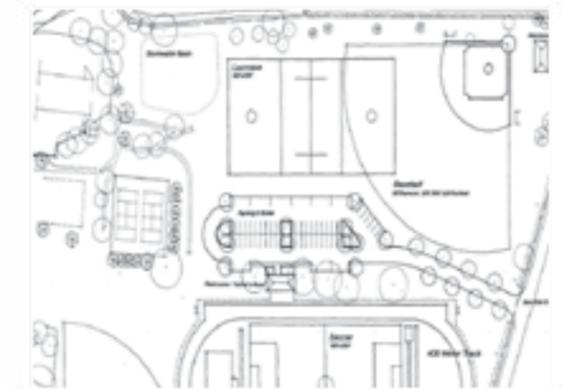


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2016 Field of the Year



Fred Castenschiold Indyk Award Winner & Ken Indyk

accomplishments and service to the sports field industry warranted his receiving this award. In 2016, the SFMANJ awarded long time board member and Storr Tractor salesman, Fred Castenschiold the second annual Dr. Henry Indyk Founders Award. Fred has served with a 'what can I do' attitude from the associations inception. Fred continues to serve as Vice President of the SFMANJ and is always first to volunteer for a committee or offer support anyway he can. Thank you, Fred.

The SFMANJ Field of the Year program recognizes the efforts of member sports turf managers throughout New Jersey. Applications for the 2017 Field of the Year are due by September 30, 2017 and will be awarded at the 2017 Green Expo in December. In addition to a plaque, the winner will receive a complimentary registration to the conference, one night accommodations and dinner.

If you have any further questions regarding the program please feel free to contact the SFMANJ office.

Scott Bills is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM), Field of the Year Committee Chairman, and SFMANJ Board Secretary

TURF VS. TURF

By Bernard Luongo

It came to my attention quite a bit ago
Of a species that stay dormant and one that likes to grow.

One that will never see the likes of this little imp
That in the club of turf keepers is affectionately called land shrimp.

But for a reason unbeknownst to me - equal name they do share
Yet there's such a difference; but they're within the same odd square.

What is this stuff that's always called Turf?
Was it ever given its proper birth?

To most of us in the industry turf has a special meaning
One that needs caring, attention, and weaning.

One that needs water, food and grooming
One that needs medicine when disease is looming.

But what of the other that's given the same name
That's thrown around as a ball in a game.

It's called many things-heard once mentioned fantastic
By now you've guessed, it should be called just plastic.

Don't get me wrong it has its place
Many a debate to defend its case.

Don't be shocked there's a cost factor involved
As this field of plastic starts to evolve.

Twenty four seven you can play
But after a while things start to fray.

It seems the seams start to get worn
They come apart they become torn.

So a grounds keeper goes out with some glue and some bricks
To fix that seam with his bag of tricks.

More crumb rubber, a machine with a brush
Make's that plastic stand up with lush.

It's not the same...we all know
As our favorite pet that does grow.

It's now two weeks into a cycle of fert
When that plant takes it in and it shows it's pert.

It flexes its right to be fully alive
Waiting for an athlete to give it a dive.

So Turf is Turf and plastic is plastic
What circle you're in they are both called fantastic.

Bernard Luongo is Lead Groundsperson, Northern Burlington County Regional School District, Columbus, NJ; and SFMANJ President.

Infield Soils and Topdressings - PART 1

Continued from page 13

Step 5. Calculate the percent of sand, silt, and clay in your soil sample with the following procedure:

1. Divide the thickness of the sand layer by the total depth of the soil in the jar.
2. Follow the same instructions for both the silt and clay layers.
3. Multiply each of the three figures by 100, and you will have the percentages of sand, silt, and clay in your sample.

Step 6. You can now check the soil texture triangle to see where the intersection of the three values places you on the triangle (see Figure 1). Remember that this is an estimate. If you need a more precise test, it is worth your while to have a professional test done by a private lab or a county extension office.

Soil testing labs use a couple of different quantitative methods to determine relative amounts of soil separates. Once the relative amount of sand, silt, and clay are known, you can determine the soil's textural class using the soil texture triangle provided. Each side of the triangle represents the relative content or percent of one of the three soil particle size classes.

General Guidelines: Remember that soils differ greatly around the country and they react differently to many things. The following gives generalizations as a guide for base mixes. Soils in your area might not always fall into these guidelines.

You want to keep the sand fraction of your base soil between 50% and 75% (normal base mix). Soils with higher sand content normally become too loose and mobile. The soil becomes loose with play and is transported to other areas of the skin by the dragging process or by play.

You may think you'll gain drainage if your base mix has high sand content. In fact, it creates more maintenance headaches.

The mobile soil rapidly develops high and low spots in the skin, and lips at the skin/turf interface. Those low spots and high lips interfere with the surface flow of rainwater draining off the skin, and large puddles develop.

In base mixes with higher sand content (>75%), there is not enough binder (clay and silt) to hold the soil firmly together. As a game progresses, the skin becomes more loose in the high-traffic areas. This reduces traction and increases risk of injury to feet, ankles, and hamstrings.

Soil texture affects many properties of soil. Compactability, porosity, bulk density, water-holding capacity, and drainage are all affected by the makeup of the soil.

Soils high in sand normally hold very little water and drain rapidly. Soils high in clay normally hold large amounts of water and can drain variably, depending on structure.

Soil texture refers to the percentage of sand, silt, and clay particles in a soil. These particles are defined by their size.

To tighten up a high-sand base mix, till in a nice clay loam soil. Add several tons at a time, till it, work it, let it settle, and pack and see how it reacts before you add more.

High-clay and high-silt soils create a different problem: compaction and hardness. Generally speaking, the combination of these two materials should not exceed 40% to 50% of your soil mix. Too much

of either of them can inhibit intake of water into the skin due to lack of pore space from compaction.

The result is a hard field that is unable to take up moisture to help soften it. The best solution is tilling in calcined clay to help reduce compaction and increase pore space. But be careful not to blend in too much material.

Again, add your calcined clay by a couple of tons at a time. Till it, work it, let it settle, and pack and see how it reacts before you add more. The alternative is to replace the base mix with a new mix.

Rocks and pebbles in an infield base mix can be a major problem. Your base soil should be able to pass through a 1/4-inch screen, or at the very least a 3/8-inch screen, to eliminate any rocks or pebbles.

For Oriole Park at Camden Yards, I use a 60% sand, 20% silt, 20% clay base mix. This translates to a borderline sandy loam and sandy clay loam. I've used it since the day we moved here. It's a very stable soil with little mobility. Low spots on my infield are rarely a problem, but that is also partially due to the management of the skin.

The lesson to be learned here is don't just pick any old soil for your base mix. Know what you are getting by asking for a soil particle size analysis.

And whatever you do, don't purchase a mix just because some salesman says that he has "x" ballclub and "y" ballpark using it. Most of those people have zero knowledge of what kind of soil creates the best infield skin.

Paul Zwaska is Director of Education & Strategic Initiatives, Beacon Athletics, Middleton, WI.



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SFMANJ to Offer Funding Assistance for Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) Candidates

Continued from page 6

The Application and resume will be evaluated to determine eligibility for Certification.

Please note: If any of the BASIC REQUIREMENTS are not fulfilled at the time of application, the application will be returned to the applicant (NO EXCEPTIONS).

- The candidate contacts any member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors about the financial assistance program. The SFMANJ Board of Directors recommends the candidate to the panel of CSFM members of SFMANJ.
- The Candidate is briefed by a panel of CSFM members of SFMANJ about the technical competency requirements of the CSFM test to determine their level of knowledge prior to making application for the CSFM program. The CSFM panel shall make recommendations for remedial actions to the candidate where necessary.
- Industry service is an integral part of the CSFM program. The candidate shall be expected to attend SFMANJ BOD meetings (as an invited SFMANJ member), participate in SFMANJ committee work, assist at SFMANJ events and write articles for our newsletter; Update.
- Once the CSFM panel determines the candidate's readiness for the exam, the CSFM panel shall make recommendations to the SFMANJ Board of Directors to proceed with the financial assistance program for the candidate. This funding can be used for application, testing, proctoring, travel or lodging costs associated with the CSFM program.

Certification demonstrates that successful sports field job applicants have the knowledge to deliver safe, playable and attractive sports fields. It also demonstrates to employers a significant commitment to career and competence. Quite simply, in an increasingly competitive and changing work environment, certification is an essential investment in one's professional future.

When you become a CSFM, it means that you have taken your professionalism to the next level. This exam is considered by many to be one of the most difficult in the industry to pass, which is one of the main reasons that those who do pass, display their credentials with pride. The sophistication of the exam development process also contributes to the preferred status of the credentials. Overseen by industry experts, the CSFM exams are specifically based on "real world" responsibilities of sports field management professionals. The program also requires that the CSFM stays current with trends and new development pertaining to sports field management through continuing education as well as an industry service obligation.

Don Savard is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) and Certified Grounds Manager (CGM); Director, Athletic Facilities and Grounds, Salesianum School; and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors.

Continued from page 4

A Message from the President

To end the ceremony an opportunity was given to attendees to applaud their peers for going above and beyond in pursuit of their passion. For the student challenge award winners, Congratulations!

With everything being said in the previous paragraphs a thought was left that needs to be said with all the great things that are going on in our industry it would be selfish not to share. I would like to invite administrators, facilities directors, athletic directors and coaches to as many events as their schedules permit and that they should do likewise to invite turf managers to their events. Therefore, both entities can understand both views and work together for not only better facilities and safer playing fields but a better understanding of issues that each encounters every day. In the bigger picture it will build a better work environment and a stronger relationship amongst all stake holders and a great environment for the children.

So administrators come to turf conferences and turf folk go to administrator's conferences. Could it be any simpler? Both contingents would be on the same page of when, where, how and why things work the way they do. The district that takes on this concept could be the leader that other districts emulate. The district that steps up can be the leaders of the leaders.

Well, I just came back from Disney World - guess I'm just dreaming, but dreams sometimes come true. Work together and see what gets accomplished! Till next time.....Keep dreaming.

Bernard Luongo is Lead Groundsperson, Northern Burlington County Regional School District, Columbus, NJ; and SFMANJ President.

It's not too early to start thinking about the SFMANJ Field of the Year Contest

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