

# UPDATE

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Sports Field  
Managers Association of New Jersey



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

## LONGING FOR WARMER WEATHER

Photos by Brad Park, Rutgers University

## THIS WINTER?

Past STMA Conference Turf Tours have visited sunny January destinations in Northern and Southern California – San Jose/San Francisco in 2009 and Long Beach/Los Angeles in 2012.



### Check inside for information on:

- Importance of Sharp Rotary Blades
- Importance of the Sports Turf Manager
- School IPM
- Turf Blankets
- Field Days
- Upcoming Events

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# Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members

We ended 2019 with 319 new and renewed members. Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey mailed invoices for 2020 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](http://www.sfmanj.org). Mail membership dues direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070.

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Don Savard CSFM, CGM	Salesianum School
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## Welcome New Members from the 2019 SFMANJ Fall Field Day

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Mike Frednedberg	Toms River Twp.
Derek Gieschen	Rancocas Valley Reg. HS
Craig Ginda	Manchester BOE
Angel Gonzales	South Orange/Maplewood BOE
Steve Hall	Rancocas Valley Reg. HS

Continued on page 14

## 2020 SFMANJ BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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.

### PO Box 205 • Pennsville, NJ 08070

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### National Organization

Sports Turf Managers Association  
[www.stma.org](http://www.stma.org)

## Make plans to attend the STMA National Conference in West Palm Beach, FL

call 856-514-3179 for info

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SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.



*A Message from the President*

**Wow,**  
another year has flown by!

*By Zach Holm, CSFM*

Wow, another year has flown by. Before looking ahead to 2020, I wanted to take a moment to say, "Thank you". Thank you to all of the members for the support of our organization. Thank you to our commercial partners for supporting us, and a special thank you to Bernard Luongo. Bernard has spent four years as SFMANJ President and has done a fantastic job leading our Association. Thank you, Bernard, for your leadership and for trusting in me to lead the association onto the next chapter.

Your board recently completed our first strategic planning meeting at the conclusion of Green Expo in December 2019. We were able

to share, develop and look forward to executing many great ideas to better serve you, the Sports Field Manager. I can not stress enough how committed your Board is to our members. If you find yourself needing advice on an issue please pick up the phone and call; all of us on the Board want to help in your success. If you have any ideas or thoughts on how we can better serve you please reach out and let us know. Have a happy and healthy 2020 and I look forward to seeing you at the Spring Field Day!

*Zach Holm, CSFM is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM), member of the New York Red Bulls sports turf management team, and SFMANJ President*

**See you at the SFMANJ Spring Field Day!**  
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# Is It Reel-y Necessary at Your Facility?

Fred Castenschiold, SCPS



In my many years of working in the turfgrass sports field industry, I can't help but to notice a wonderful trend. That trend is to improve the after-cut appearance of athletic fields. Aesthetics!! During my 43 years in this industry I have experienced many new products come down the pike for both the golf and sports field markets.

In the past, to achieve that professional after cut look the only answer was to go in the direction of a reel-type mower. To fully benefit from the advantages a reel-type mower both agronomically, as well as aesthetically, sharpness and proper adjustment of the cutting unity are critical. While grinding reels and bedknives multiple time per mowing season and making daily/weekly adjustments to maintain proper quality of cut might be reasonable for some, is it feasible for you? After all a poor quality of cut over time can increase disease occurrence and severity, increase sensitivity to environmental factors, and ultimately decrease aesthetic value.

Dull Blades



Sharp Blades



For a number of years, manufacturers have been addressing this need with three, five or seven deck rotary mowers striving to achieve the same results. These new deck designs have brought rotary mowers to the next level. These mowers have full width rear rollers which achieve the same striping patterns we are aiming for. Air inlet pockets aid in lifting the grass leaf blades. The big benefit of this type of mower is that the cutting is done with a rotary blade which requires the normal sharpening and easy maintenance we are accustomed to.



The relatively low cost of rotary blades means that facilities have extra sets to install while back-up sets of blades are sharpened! Simply put, sharper cutting implements result in higher quality of cut, healthier turf, and better aesthetics. Which system is easier to keep sharp at your facility? The results would be as the picture indicates taken recently. Can you tell the difference between what passes the reel mower provided vs. the rotary mower in this picture? This industry has come a long way!

*Fred Castenschiold is a Certified Professional Salesperson, Storr Tractor Co.; longest serving member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors; and recipient of the SFMANJ Dr. Henry Indyk Award.*

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# The importance sports turf managers for schools and municipalities

By Brad Park, Rutgers University

*Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the January 2019 issue of SportsTurf (Volume 35; No.2; p. 10-12).*

Trade magazine articles and educational presentations frequently address solutions to agronomic and skin surface management problems faced by sports turf managers. An infrequently addressed problem involves the lack of trained sports field managers at the school and municipal level – sectors of the turf industry that comprise the vast majority of sports field acreage and are used by athletes of all ages and skill levels. General grounds, including common areas and lawns, planting beds, and even trees and shrubs are routinely within the purview of personnel working at schools and other public sector entities. While the job title, “sports turf manager” will be used throughout the remainder of this article, “sports turf and grounds manager” is likely a more accurate description of the position.

The author frequently performs site visits to sports fields in a University Extension capacity and has made the following anecdotal observation concerning schools and municipalities with high quality sports fields: These institutions have personnel that include a sports turf manager with a high level of autonomy and significant decision-making authority (including purchasing) and a crew whose primary responsibility is the management of outdoor assets. This position may exist as a Foreman or Parks Superintendent and report to a Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, Public Works Manager, or Recreation Department Administrator.

Among the most challenging visits are those made in settings where there is a high expectation level for sports field quality but limited investment in personnel and resources to meet those standards. Playing surface quality expectations should be lowered in the absence of an experienced, trained sports turf manager. Administrators, coaches, and athletes are often uncomfortable with the concept of having to accept less-than-ideal field conditions; however, sub-par playing surface conditions are a nothing less than a reality where field use is high and trained personnel and adequate resources are not present.

The correlation between poor playing surface conditions and the absence of experience sports field management staff is so prevalent at the school and municipal level that the author will frequently incorporate the following verbiage (or similar) into his follow-up report writing:

Athletic Directors, coaches, athletes and others with a vested interest in playing surface quality must understand that the delivery of such a surface will be most likely achieved by an experienced sports field and grounds manager who is onsite on a daily basis and can react and adjust to changes in the surface as they occur. As such, expectations for playing surface quality must take into

account the current turf management model that does not involve such a position.

Sports turf managers can play many roles within municipal and school organizational structures; the entirety of roles are too numerous for the scope of this article. The objective of this article is to highlight several key roles played by sports field managers to illustrate the importance of this position.

## **Communicating field conditions and managing high traffic surfaces**

The proliferation of synthetic turf at schools and municipalities has provided administrators/event schedulers significant latitude in moving events from natural turf fields to synthetic surfaces when natural turf conditions necessitate such a move. Few public entities will ever have the resources to have a 100% synthetic sports field inventory; natural turf surfaces will always be part of the equation and require active management, including the implementation of time-sensitive cultural practices and traffic management.

Among the most high profile sports fields in any school system is the varsity football ‘game’ field. North American football is played late into autumn, a time of the year turfgrasses in many regions of the United States are highly susceptible to damage caused by traffic. Bare soil (i.e. muddy surface when wet; hard surface when frozen or dry) is the end-of-season norm for those school systems that do not invest in quality sports field management personnel or do not value the judgement of their existing experienced staff. A sports turf manager is likely to anticipate field damage and proactively overseed prior-to and in-season to offset the inevitable loss of turf. He/she is better able to anticipate the need for end-of-season re-sodding or strategic core cultivation, seeding, and covering with a winter turf cover compared to a passive or nonexistent grounds department.

While a coach or administrator may ask the question, “How many events can be held on a natural turf sports field?”, and the answer is never black-and-white, an experienced sports turf manager is an authority on the durability of his/her field(s). Coaches and administrators should view a sports turf manager with a track record of providing quality playing surfaces as a valuable resource on the question of field durability; that sports turf manager is in a prime position to communicate the ‘costs’ associated with holding an event on a field when weather/field conditions could adversely affect playing surface integrity. His/her attempts to negotiate moving an event to a lower priority field in order to protect the higher priority field or perhaps advocate for pushing back a game time

*Continued on page 16*

# HOW TO CONDUCT AN IPM SCOUTING EXPEDITION

by Don Savard, CSFM, CGM



Let's suppose your facility follows an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program and has in place a written an IPM policy. This policy which describes how the plan will be implemented, offers a guideline for what the thresholds are for insect populations, disease pressures, even damages such as traffic wear or drought stress. These thresholds might be based on economics (the cost of treatment vs. the cost of the pest damage) or aesthetics (when it looks bad enough). The document might even specify what control measures will be utilized or when and how they are to be implemented. Now it is your job to scout the landscape for pest problems. Where do you start?

## The site survey and inventory.

Before you begin scouting, you must develop a site map showing prominent features such as buildings, pavement, turf areas, trees, and bodies of water. Indicate where North is and show how water drains on to and off the site. This map will help you see the big picture especially if you are trying to diagnose a problem that doesn't have any easy to find clues. All of the prominent features can have a direct or indirect effect on plant health. Shade, heat from pavements, and bodies of water all influence microclimates which have an effect on plant or pest viability.

Next, identify and list all of the plant materials on your site including those that have been installed and those growing naturally. Indicate their location on your map. Note the age and condition of the plant material. You really have to know what you are looking at, it's culture and especially know what healthy is supposed to look like. Obtain the square foot measurements for the turf, tree and planting areas as this information will be useful in case you must take some kind of corrective action. Begin to record the local weather conditions such as temperature, humidity, precipitation, wind speeds and cloud cover. Keep before and after pictures of your site for additional documentation.

## What are you looking for?

You will be looking for abnormalities in the plant growth or health. If you know what healthy (for a particular plant) is supposed to look like, finding the abnormalities will become more apparent for the observant IPM scout. Abnormalities in plant health can be triggered by either (or a combination of) biotic or abiotic factors. A Biotic factor is any living component that affects another organism. Biotic causes of damage include insect (or other organism pests), bacterial, viral and fungal diseases. Abiotic factors are non-living chemical and physical components in the environment. This would include soil problems, weather related causes of damages (such as heat, cold, wind, sun, shade, drought and flooding), mechanical injury (such as traffic, wear, cultivation and other physical phenomenon).

## How to scout for problems.

First, step back and consider the "big picture" of the site as a whole and observe whether or not it is well cared for and healthy or not. For every observation made, pose the question "why or why not". As you begin to examine the plant materials, look at its micro environment and be sure to examine the plants from all angles including both sides of the leaves. If you subscribe to a weekly IPM scouting publication offered by your local cooperative extension services, you can zero in on specific targets and pests for that time period. The idea is to move systematically and efficiently through the site. Record what you see. Because your IPM plan should include economic or aesthetic thresholds, your records will provide quantifiable data to support whether or not an action should be taken.

## Don't be fooled!

The presence of insects does not necessarily indicate that there is a problem. In a balanced ecology, there is a place for all of the creatures, both predators and prey. When this delicate balance is disturbed plant health will eventually become compromised.

Are you sure that the insect that you observe is not a beneficial insect. For example, big eyed bugs (*Geocoris* spp.) are a beneficial predator often confused with the chinch bug (*Blissus* spp.), which is a pest in turf. Capture, identify and confirm that the moths flying over the turf in a zigzag pattern are indeed sod webworm adults laying eggs in the turf and not some benign flying insect.

*Continued on page 15*

## UPDATE

Update is published quarterly, Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. The Newsletter is edited by Brad Park., Sports Turf Research & Education Coordinator, at Rutgers University and SFMANJ Board Member. The design, layout, distribution, and advertising sales are currently managed by Debra Savard, SFMANJ Executive Secretary.

Past issues of Update, dating back to 2001, can be assessed through the Michigan State University Libraries.

To access this archive, visit:

<http://archive.lib.msu.edu/tic/updat>

[www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org)

# TURF AND A BLANKET

By Bernard Luongo

Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the Winter 2014 issue of SFMANJ Update



Turf in a Blanket sounds like a meal, "Pigs in a Blanket". "Grubs in a Blanket".

When I first started in this business I knew absolutely nothing. I watched as fields we tried to take care of get utterly destroyed. What do I do now? I thought to myself, "Look at this mess".

So I attended classes at Rutgers and read how other turf managers managed their fields. In addition, I also attended Field Day events, while there I picked-up some great tips from vendors, contractors and turf managers. I was instructed how to aerate and fertilize.

So what about all those worn spots your fields have? I learned to overseed and when the best time to do so.

What about late season sports? For example, football that sometimes extends into early December and can really destroy a field. Growing grass in the northeast in the extreme winter months without help was truly impossible. I tried for two years without any success. Although, the birds that were still around relished in it. In the spring the grass that was there grew but the bare spots were overtaken by clover and weeds; another sub-par year for our football field.

Five years ago I attended the Green Expo in Atlantic City and found my magic cure, "Growth Blankets". I asked the Rep many questions and got the answers I to which I was looking. I felt awesome on the drive back home - but that was the easy part. I was convinced that it would work but I now had to sell it to "The Powers to be," to invest the money. This took another year!

Finally after another sub-par football field season and many field visits by the "Powers to be", they finally were willing to give it a shot. Not the whole field mind you, just between the hash marks (considerably less costly this way). Since it was an experiment, they were not going to invest a lot of money. But no pun intended, "the seed was planted,".... I got my turf blanket. I was excited!

We core aerated that football field, tore-it-up some more, laid the seed down, covered it with the blanket and secured it with the

sod staples that came with the blanket. We were all very proud of ourselves that we were going to grow grass in the winter. However, the following week I was on the phone with the factory to order the heavy duty stakes, since, we had to gently pull one of the blankets out of the bleachers and one out of the woods. Hey, it was our first year with them, still experimenting...what did we know? Also, we didn't know that we would have to deal with snowmobiles which damaged a section of one of the blankets. So FYI, for your first purchase order the heavy duty stakes, another learning experience.

So, through the winter we would take a peek under the blankets and it was amazing, it felt like we were beating nature, it just grew and grew. During this time, we did take the blanket off once to mow it put the blanket back on and it grew even more. We left the blanket on until late March at which time we brought the facilities director and business administrator to view the results, it sold itself, solid turf.

After that it was easy. Now we have two full football fields covered, a third field covered between the hash marks, and on a fourth field we have certain areas targeted. Yes, we have four football fields all being utilized. Also, we purchased smaller blankets for our goal mouths for soccer, lacrosse and field hockey. It's great, it takes the pressure off seeding during that small window of opportunity that you have to seed. Also, depending upon the seeder you have it sometimes disrupts the playing surface and it can look a little messy with Coaches, kids, parents, and even geese complaining.

Ultimately, you can see that I am a huge fan of Turf Growth Blankets, they really work and it takes a lot of pressure off your grounds crew. Let's face it, we are all very busy between August and October. These blankets buy you an awful lot of time and a jump start on a healthy and safe athletic field. We are now into our fourth year of purchases, implementation and successes. Again, it all started with a trip to Green Expo. Till next time.....Keep Your Turf Warm.

*Bernard Luongo is a retired sports turf manager and immediate past-President, SFMANJ.*



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# PHOTO RE-CAP

# SFMANJ FALL FIELD DAY

Photos by Debbie Savard

October 23, 2019 - Drum Point Sports Complex, Brick, NJ



More Photos on page 13



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December 10-12, 2019 - The Borgata, Atlantic City, NJ

Photos by Debbie Savard



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# More From SEMANJ FALL FIELD DAY

Photos by Debbie Savard

continued from page 10



*Hope you were able to make it!*

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# Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members for 2019

Continued from page 3

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John Hussey  
Andy Jones  
Andrew Knight  
Tony Kowal  
Tim Kwiat  
Phil Lavoie  
Daniel Lawrence  
Jon Lonergan  
Joseph Macchi  
Cris Mates  
Mark McNamara  
Brian Meola  
Jason Miller  
Mike Mongon CGM  
Steve Nitahra  
William Painter  
Witold Pazdan  
James Peluso  
Kevin Ponte  
Thomas Purvis  
John Redman  
Andrew Remm  
Andy Rocco  
Bill Romano  
Frank Russo  
Kevin Rutan  
Tom Sadowski  
Norman Schwartz  
Todd Shaw  
Pat Spezza  
Cory Stockert  
Jim Sweeney  
Brian Taylor  
Richard Thompson  
John Trancucci  
Joe Trangore  
Luigi Tulipani  
Rob Waller  
Chris Wellborn  
Greg Witt  
Don Wood  
Danny

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Manalapan-Englishtown BOE  
Washington Twp. DPW  
Mt. Olive BOE  
Monroe Twp. BOE  
South Jersey Turf Consultants  
Morris Twp. Parks dept.  
Twp. of Evsham  
Toms River Twp.  
City of Jersey City  
Hammonton Public Schools  
Pt. Beach BOE  
Washington Twp. DPW  
Monroe Twp. BOE  
Bergen County  
Nothern Burlington School Dist.  
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Borough of Rumson  
Middlesex County Parks  
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North Brunswick Twp.  
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Manchester BOE  
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Lakewood Twp.  
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Middletown BOE  
Toms River Twp.

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# HOW TO CONDUCT AN IPM SCOUTING EXPEDITION

Continued from page 7

Very often unhealthy looking turf and plant materials appear to have insect or disease damage when in fact the damage was of an abiotic cause. For example, the irregular off color patterns in turf may not be a fungal disease but rather an indication that an irrigation head might be functioning improperly. Finding the real source of the problem is your objective. Keep in mind that plants may not necessarily succumb because of just one cause of death, but often to secondary and tertiary causes. Keep an open mind and be observant!

## Essential tools you will need for IPM investigation.

### For examination:

- 10X Hand lens, (Binoculars for looking into trees)
- Flashlight
- Thermometers, (soil and ambient air)
- Measuring tape
- Sharp Knife and Pruning shears
- Soil probe, Spade or Trowel
- Bucket, Soil screen sieve

### For sample collection:

- Sweep net and shake cloth
- Traps
- Plastic specimen bags and bottles
- Sturdy cooler, Bubble wrap
- Rubbing alcohol for preservation and disinfection

### For documentation:

- Camera and Notebook
- Portable voice recorder

### For Reference Materials:

- Text books
- Field Guides
- Weekly IPM scouting reports from your local university Cooperative Extension Service.

## Responsible stewardship is “the name of the game”.

It is unlikely you would return to an automobile mechanic who made repairs on your car based on guess work rather than careful investigation and diagnosis of the problem. Skilled IPM practitioners who scout properly and follow their program protocols face fewer plant healthcare problems and manage their sites safely, cost effectively and with fewer inputs. At this point you will prepare a scouting report and compare your findings to your IPM Threshold Policy. This will influence the decision of what actions will be taken.

*Don Savard is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM), Certified Grounds Manager (CGM); Grounds and Athletic Facilities Manager, Salesianum School; and SFMANJ Past-President*

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## New and Renewed SFMANJ Members for 2020

Kathy Bauer  
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Gary Brick  
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Joes Castoro  
Bruce Clarke, Ph.d.  
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Rick Deleon  
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Dennis DeSanctis, Sr.  
Michael Disko  
Keith Disko  
Barry Draycott  
Kenneth Gentile  
Tim Gerzabek  
Ken Griepentrog  
KJ Griepentrog  
Kyle Grover  
Guy Gurney  
Randy Heller  
Tom Hennessy  
Doug Higgins  
Kevin Hoban  
Patrick R. Hoelz, Jr.  
Bruce Hoffman  
Zachary Holm, CSFM  
Ronald S. Holt  
Harold Jones  
Dave Junkerman  
Rich Kalish, CTP  
Bob Kaufman  
John Kavanaugh  
Reese Kerlin  
Richard K. Kerr, Jr.  
Scott Klein  
Lee Kozsey  
Dave Kuczynski  
Judson Lalonde  
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Barry Levitt  
Adam Lieb  
Timothy J. Lomerson  
Bernard Luongo  
Kevin Malone, CSFM  
Dylan Martin  
Michael Massi

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Somerset County Park Commission  
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Hopewell Valley Reg. School Dist.  
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## The Importance Sports Turf Managers for Schools and Municipalities

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to allow surface conditions to improve through drying or active preparation should be taken seriously by those with field scheduling authority.

### Managing contracted services

For many municipalities and school systems, contracted sports field and grounds services involves little more than a public bidding paperwork exercise. There is typically little understanding on the part of municipal or school administrators concerning fertilizers and pesticides, particularly as it relates to what is being applied, why it is being applied, and at what rate. Complicated applicator licensing requirements, confusing state-level regulations, product storage issues, expensive application equipment, and insufficient in-house technical knowledge are frequently cited reasons for outsourcing pesticide and fertilizer applications to a contractor. In many instances, the application of one-size-fits-all fertilizer and pesticide programs to institutional sports field and grounds properties may be the only source of turf nutrition and necessary weed and insect control these surfaces ever receive; elimination of these services could result in the deterioration of sports fields and grounds over time. Other routinely contracted services include custom cultivation (e.g. deep tining and slicing), and field renovation projects that may involve surface milling, laser grading, and seeding and sodding.

A sports turf manager can play a key role in the school/municipality-contractor dynamic by establishing relationships with contractors such that the contractor becomes a contractor-partner. The end result is better matching of facility needs with contractor services.

The hiring of a sports turf manager, and performing more tasks in-house, can provide greater facility-level control of functions otherwise outsourced. For example, performing fertilization in-house can give schools and towns greater control over product selection (e.g. nitrogen source; nutrients and lime relative to soil test results, etc.), rate, and application timing relative to rainfall and field use. In instances where fertilizer applications are outsourced and taking the operation in-house is simply not an option, a qualified sports field manager is routinely in a much better position compared to a business administrator to communicate the needs of the property to a contractor-partner and guide or author site specific application specifications.

It is recognized that broadcast liquid pesticide applications are not feasible for many schools and towns to complete in-house. A sports turf manager with appropriate pesticide licensing is capable of using a backpack sprayer to perform spot spray applications and/or chemically trim using nonselective herbicides. In many states, a pesticide applicator is required to obtain continuing education credits to maintain his/her license; the ongoing credit accumulation process requires license holders to remain up-to-date on new and existing herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides and how/when to appropriately apply these materials within the scope of applied,

Continued on page 18

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# Field Day at Your Place

By Bernard Luongo

Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the Summer 2015 issue of SFMANJ Update

I remember my first field day, it was springtime and I had just joined Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ). I was hoping I would be able to learn something that would help me to not only do a better job, but to try to understand what I was trying to accomplish.

I was only a few years into my stint, coming in totally green (no pun intended). Now, what I am about to say might be amusing to some of you who know me, but I was a little timid not knowing anyone. Once I heard the speakers spewing their knowledge, I then immediately realized a major fact – “I knew nothing at all!” There was one thing that caught my attention and that was that this venue was definitely an educational one. Then the attendees started asking questions to the guest speakers and I learned there wasn't a single foolish question to be had. Everyone seemed very accommodating. All who attended the event not only seemed to belong there, but were eager to share their experiences. They shared tips on how to help you through your adventure. At the time, it left quite an impression on me. Come to find out, it has been an everlasting impression for me.

I left that day wondering what I had just experienced and who these people were in this group. The gentleman who hosted this Spring Field Day Event was Mr. Kevin Shipman, who is a SFMANJ Board Member.

As my adventure continued, I attended more field days. Every event was different from the previous event, always learning and bringing something back from the day. These events give you the opportunity to meet new people in our industry; I believe that the high tech word is “Networking”. I like to refer to it as life experiences, always sharing. That is what I feel SFMANJ is all about, sharing the ups, downs and all arounds, no strings attached. You show up at a field day, it's free, education, credits but most important – the side bar conversations. All day long. Sharing, today, yesterday, last week, 5 years ago – at your first Field Day. You have memories, laughs, smiles,

tears from laughter, usually at the expense of yourself, but that's what makes it fun.

I hung around long enough in the turf world to host an SFMANJ Field Day at Northern Burlington County Regional School District. This was quite an experience – all the planning leading up to the main event, the nervousness, of being in the spot light. SFMANJ Board was there every step of the way for us at Northern.

Now as a Board Member, I am part of the team that helps plan and alleviate a host's anxieties of a field day. It all feels good. The business and personal relationships that have developed over the years is just awesome. Seeing people at our events and shouting out, “Hey, how ya doing? How are your fields? Bad winter, wet spring? Hey, how did you make out with that dry spell in the middle of fall sports? Did your irrigation system hold-up? Did you have a safe trip visiting your family? How was Expo for you? How was STMA?” These are all bonds that are developed over years.

Being a part of SFMANJ, hosting and attending field days, being involved, putting yourself in the way of opportunity to meet people that share your same interests. Being engaged. No one knows what is going to happen when you show up. No one knows what is going to happen if you show up and be engaged. So, it is in your control. Just show up, be engaged and be a part of what happens, you just might be the cause of it.

*Bernard Luongo a retired sports turf manager and immediate past-President, SFMANJ.*



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## The Importance Sports Turf Managers for Schools and Municipalities

Continued from page 16

practical sports field and grounds management. A sports turf manager with an active pesticide applicator license is a valuable resource even for those schools and municipalities that outsource all pesticide applications. A sports turf manager can work with his/her pesticide contractor-partner to adjust application programs such that appropriate control materials are applied to specific sites when pest thresholds are exceeded. This is a fundamental Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy that can ultimately reduce school/municipality-wide pesticide use.

### Industry involvement and knowing where to find help

An additional anecdotal observation entails those sports turf managers who regularly attend Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Chapter-affiliated events and/or state level University-partnered turfgrass association field days and conferences: These managers have higher quality sports fields compared to disengaged grounds departments. Industry-engaged sports turf managers have an extensive network of fellow turf managers, University personnel, and vendors to call upon for assistance. The network expands even further for those sports turf managers who serve on the board of directors for state or regional STMA Chapters, regularly attend the STMA Annual Conference and Exhibition, or have achieved Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) accreditation.

It is critical that administrators and supervisors support the continuing education and industry involvement of their sports field and grounds staff by providing the resources and paid-time away from the workplace to attend conferences and meetings and acknowledge that this engagement ultimately enhances sports field and grounds quality.

While the sports field management priorities differ widely among individual schools and municipal cultures, where playing surface expectations are high and a qualified sports field manager is not present, a resourceful administrator (e.g. Athletic Director, Business Administrator, Mayor, Councilperson, etc.) is the most probable person within an organizational structure to recognize the importance of a sports turf manager and potentially making the position a reality.

Among the many resources available on the STMA website are sample job descriptions for the role of Sports Turf Manager and Assistant Sports Turf Manager. These documents can serve as templates for the hiring of a new position or re-titling of position vacated by someone who has retired or moved on to a different role.

*Brad Park is Sports Turf Research & Education Coordinator, Rutgers University; a member of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) Board of Directors and SFMANJ Update Editor; and 2016 recipient of the New Jersey Turfgrass Association Recognition Award.*



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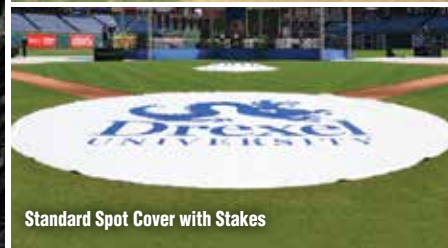
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