

have a full tank of gas left and do not want to burn if unnecessarily, you can add a fuel stabilizer and run the engine for about 10 minutes to ensure that the stabilizer has been mixed with the fuel

Change the oil and the oil filter (if equipped). True, the fresh oil will just sit over the off-season, but it will provide you and opportunity to examine the oil system for any contaminants. If you see anything unusual, you can have the problem repaired during normal downtime and prevent a slow start to the next mowing season. When changing the oil, if you notice milky oil or a shiny sludge in the filter, it is a sign of coolant leakage. If the oil smells burned, it is a sign of overheating. Put a dab of oil on a paper towel: A lighter stain "halo" around the darker stain indicates fuel in the oil. You may also be able to smell the fuel in the filter.

Servicing the air filter system at the end of the mowing season is especially important, if you plan to also use your mowing equipment for fall-cleanup activities such as mulching leaves. Using a mulching mower or a vacuum system makes leaf cleanup quick, but it's also a very tough environment for

continued on page 12



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An example of an accomplishment: It Can Be Done.

As a Northern Michigan University student in the late 1980's, Heather Nabozny tuned in Detroit Tigers radio broadcasts to remind her of home, family and the excitement shared during the team's championship 1984 season. While that World Series run may seem particularly distant for fans of a franchise that lost 119 games in 2003, the 33-year old Milford, Mich., native has never felt closer to the franchise. Armed with a turf-management degree from Michigan State and a track record of success as head grounds keeper for the West Michigan Whitecaps, Nabozny became the first (and remains the only) female head groundkeeper in Major League Baseball history when the Tigers hired her in 2000. Paul Steinbach asked Nabozny how she groomed her own path to the bigs. She is also a Certified Sports Field Manager.

Q: What led you to consider this profession?

A: At NMU, I thought I wanted to do social work. Then in the summertime, I worked for my father's lawn-care company and he would send his

employees to turf-management seminars. Michigan State was at the one of them talking about its turf-management program, and the light bulb just went on: "Wow, you can go to school for that?"

Q: What about turf management appealed to you?

A: I am not much of an office person. I do what I have to do here to keep everything organized, but I love to be outdoors. And the reason I steered toward athletic fields is I like to be athletic myself. I run on the warning track during batting practice when the team is in town.

Q: Why has groundskeeping traditionally been a male-only field?

A: Athletic fields have just come into the forefront as an area of study, and until I took this position there really weren't any women doing athletic turf. I don't think young women really even know anything about managing turf.

Q: Do you avail yourself to women wishing to learn?

A: There have been women who have called at he suggestion of men: "Hey, call Heather up. You'll probably feel

comfortable talking to her about how to break into the I business and how to move up." To be completely honest, being in the minority gives us a better chance of being remembered. But it's also very important that we do an excellent job. If you're in the spotlight, there's extra pressure.

Q: How did you react to the launch of the Unofficial International Heather Nabozny Fan Club?

A: It kind of cheeped me out at first. They'd day, "Yeah, we're in your fan club. Can we get our picture taken with you?" Being kind of a private person, it's a little odd to me, but it's also an honor.

Q: What kind of player feedback have you gotten for your efforts?

A: The younger players who come up are real complimentary, and the others are just kind of out here to do their job. To me, if there's no news, that's good news.^{2c}

Person to Person

Athleticbusiness.com, Dec. 2003. ♦

continued from page 11

engines. The powdery residue, dust and debris can clog the air filter and prevent the machine from working at optimum power. When checking the air filter at such frequent intervals, special care needs to be taken not to break the seal and allow dirt and debris into the engine. To reduce the risk of additional contaminants, watch the air restriction indicator and wipe the area thoroughly before opening the system. Once the system is open, take advantage of the opportunity to inspect for any possible problems. Check intake hoses and the fill canister. Look for cracks, missing washers, seals and loose connections.

It's also recommended to service the spark plug. Remove the spark plug and put 1 ounce of oil in each cylinder. The oil creates a barrier to protect the cylinder wall and makes for easier starting next mowing season. Reinstall the plug, but leave the plug wire off. Then crank or turn the engine over five to six times to ensure that the oil coats the cylinder walls evenly.

Additionally, make sure to remove the battery, if applicable. Clean and charge as necessary, then store in a cool, dry place where it will not freeze.

Removing the battery reduces sources of unintentional engine ignition and will help prolong battery life. If you have a hydrostatic unit, relieve the hydraulic pressure to prevent leakage.

Before putting your equipment away for the season, take time to do a thorough inspection of all safety shields, belts, hoses and hardware to make sure all are present and in good repair. Lubricate all cables and linkages to prevent seizing over the cold season. You can wait to sharpen or replace blades on mowing equipment until the next mowing season. A freshly sharpened blade can rust, requiring yet another sharpening at the beginning of the next season. Clean debris from around the engine cooling fins and then wash. Paint any scratched or roughed up areas to prevent rust. Coating exposed areas with a protective spray such as Fluid Film is also recommended. Then store the equipment in a dry place, or cover the unit(s) to protect from the weather.

Not only can taking the time to store your outdoor power equipment properly add longevity to your equipment fleet, but it can also help identify potential problems that can be corrected in the off-season. ♦


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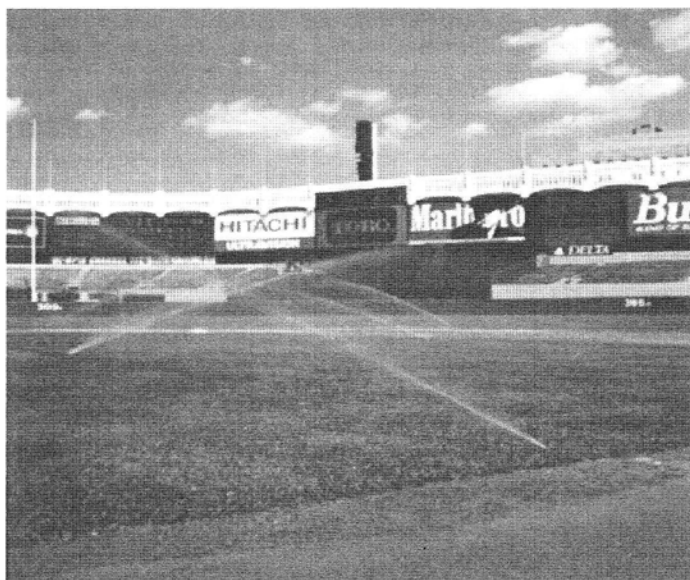
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First Annual District #2 Infield Symposium:

by Jim Hermann, CSFM

Our first annual infield symposium was held November 6th at William Warren Park in Woodbridge, NJ. The Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the Middlesex County Parks Department for providing this location. Storr Tractor Company of

Somerville, New Jersey sponsored the day. During and after lunch we had the opportunity to inspect infield-grooming equipment provided by both Storr Tractor Company and the Middlesex County Parks System.

Approximately 30 sports field managers attended the symposium.

Managers traveled from as far as Delaware to participate. Although the weather didn't permit access to the playing fields, the indoor facilities allowed for a slide show presentation provided by Fred Castenschiold. The presentation was a step-by-step documentation of the spring preparation for a skinned infield at Delaware Valley Regional High School. After the presentation, we discussed the priorities in infield maintenance. Jim Hermann, CSFM, monitored the discussion. Many in attendance contributed a lot of good information and all who attended viewed the program a success. ♦

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Field Tip

Shoot first and ask questions later. When grading or renovating your infield, use a transit level to shoot elevations of turf perimeters, base paths, base inserts, home plate, pitchers mound etc. Document these elevations to use as a reference any time drainage or other problems arise. Water typically requires a 1% slope (1/8" per foot) to flow freely off an infield. Try to maintain a minimum of 1% slope on all skinned areas.

Note: Whenever shooting elevations, always shoot a benchmark. This is the elevation of a stationary object in the close vicinity of your infield such as a catch basin, head wall etc. This benchmark can be use as a reference to correlate changes in field elevations caused by wear, erosion, lip buildup etc. If your benchmark reads 4' this time and 5' the next time you are taking shots, all you need to do is add 1 foot to all your documented elevations and they will be relative to your new shots. ♦

SFMANJ Shirts For Sale

If you are a member of Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey, you may be interested in owning a collared knit shirt with our logo. To purchase one of these fine shirts just send a check for \$25.00 to SFMANJ

When to Play & When to Fold

By Karl Danneberger, The Ohio State University

Editors note from Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association : I ran across an appropriate article, for this time of year, on the Ohio State University's sports turf website-<http://bcs.osu.edu/sportsturf>. The article is being reprinted with permission from Pam Sherratt, website editor and sports turf extension specialist, OSU.

The weather the last few weeks has been like a yo-yo. For example, this past Sunday (November 23rd) temperatures were in the 60's and people were wearing shorts. Conversely, on Monday (November 24th), the high temperature was in the 30's with snow showers. The up and down weather pattern can cause problems if people are continuing to play on green or athletic fields. At the moment, conditions have been OK to

have play on golf greens and athletic fields if they are well drained. This time of the year and through winter, questions always arise about when to allow play, and when to use temporary greens or limit use of fields.

I have ranked the various winter situations from least to worst damage. I would say that any play on frozen turf (leaf blades, plants) should be avoided. Immediate damage will occur to the plant similar to playing on a frosted turf. A problem with winter play is that in areas of concentrated traffic, wear is a potential problem, with recovery slow due to lack of growth. If possible, use temporary greens and prevent play on athletic fields to protect them from wear injury, and compaction.

Possible Scenarios: (Ranked least to worst damage)

1) *Play on dry unfrozen soil* – Although wear injury is always a potential problem, this situation will result in the least damage.

2) *Play on frozen soil* – Most likely will result in wear injury to the turf but little soil compaction.

3) *Play on wet, unfrozen soil* – The potential damage under this scenario is soil compaction, but less wear injury. At the moment, this has been the most common situation.

4) *Play on a thawing soil (unfrozen-wet on the surface), that is frozen below* – This is the worst situation to have play, because both wear injury and soil compaction can occur.

Note from this editor: Number 4 only reaffirms my belief that soccer and lacrosse should not play on the athletic fields until after April 15. Lets all get together, from central jersey to the north, to put a ban on playing on athletic fields until April 15 (of course this can only stand for grade schools and municipalities). My town and surrounding towns have. ♦

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