Sports Field of The Year

(F.O.Y.)

Proud of Your Field?

Want to Show Off Your Hard Work?

SFMANJ is inaugurating an annual New Jersey "field of the year" contest.

Individual awards will be presented to the school, **"F.O.Y."** and parks/ recreation **"F.O.Y."**

ENTERING is easy, send to: SFMANJ Contest, Po Box 370, Annandale, NJ 08801 Entries must be received by September 30, 2005

ELIGIBILITY:

*two categories; School or Parks/ Recreation <u>fields only</u> *current member of SFMANJ *natural grass fields

SEND:

*color photos of your natural grass field (10 maximum)

*name of facility and location

*name of owner

*your name, position and contact number

CRITERIA for awards:

*playability and appearance of the playing surfaces

*based on photos and a site visit by the SFMANJ Award Committee *feel free to have sports groups in your photo

AWARDS:

Winners will be honored with a plaque at New Jersey Turf Grass Expo in December 2005 and be interviewed for a feature article in SFMANJ "UPDATE" (Also receive a two-night stay at Taj Mahl, Atlantic City and three days of education)

NOTE:

*photos will <u>not</u> be returned and may be used on SFMANJ website and promotional settings. •

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contracts must be "managed") has to be available at almost all times. For this reason, he said he is rarely without his cellular telephone.

Sturgill, whose job it is to negotiate contracts with vendors and service providers, said the process of getting a deal done often takes four to 12 weeks and involves a lot of paperwork and approvals.

"Insurance and money drive the world, especially the world we live in," he concluded

Ron Hall is Editor-in-Chief of Athletic Turf, to contact Ron email him at rhall@advanstar.com \blacklozenge

Question and Answer

Q: How can I get fact sheets for seed varieties for sports fields? A: New Fact Sheets for Sports Turf are Available on the Web at www.rce.rutgers.edu. You will find Tall Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass & Perennial Ryegrass Varieties for NJ Sports Fields.

Tall Fescue Varieties for New Jersey Sports Fields (FS544). Available at http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/pubs/pdfs/ fs544.pdf

Kentucky Bluegrass Varieties for New Jersey Sports Fields (FS545). Available at http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/pubs/ pdfs/fs545.pdf

Perennial Ryegrass Varieties for New Jersey Sports Fields (FS546). Available at http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/pubs/pdfs/ fs546.pdf



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"Rutgers Corner"

Have you Examined your Turf Management Program and Considered Synthetic Inputs Before Making the Jump to an Infill System?

By Brad Park, Rutgers University park@aesop.rutgers.edu

While boards of education and municipalities are finding resources to install the newest generation of synthetic surfaces, in many cases, little is being accomplished to improve the conditions of existing natural turfgrass fields. The installation (and eventual replacement) of a new synthetic surface does not come at a cheap price. Powell and Andresen (2004) note that the initial cost of constructing a new synthetic infill turf system is approximately \$600,000. With an outlay as sizable as this, those considering purchasing a synthetic surface should review their current turfgrass management program and determine if deficiencies exist. An attempt should then be made to remedy those deficiencies prior to spending significant resources on an artificial field. Additionally, the costs associated with the maintenance, replacement, and potential disposal challenges of synthetic infill surfaces should be factored into the decision-making equation.

This installment of Rutgers Corner will highlight several turfgrass management strategies that this author believes should be examined in detail and implemented as part of a basic management plan. Included as well is discussion related to synthetic infill system inputs and costs necessary when considering installing such a field.

Mowing - Much has been written in this newsletter about the importance of proper mowing. Budgeting for and implementing more frequent mowing can help to alleviate the ragged appearance associated with excess clippings and scalped turf that result from either mowing too low or too infrequently. Adjustments in mowing frequency are often needed in spring and fall when cool season turfgrasses are actively growing. Increased inputs in water and nitrogen fertilizer will accelerate the growth rate of turfgrass and thereby increase the need for mowing.

The inability to manage mowing practices on natural turfgrass fields is arguably a poor excuse to justify installing a new synthetic infill system as these artificial surfaces require labor inputs and specialized equipment to perform infill management regimes such as periodic grooming to mix the infill and regular brushing to stand the synthetic fibers upright.

Water - Irrigation provides any number of benefits for turfgrass; most notably it supplements water to fields when weather does not provide enough rainfall. Irrigation is critical to ensure rapid turfgrass establishment. Irrigation should be timed following fertilizer and some pesticide applications in the absence of rainfall to water-in these applications.

Similar to a natural turfgrass field, a synthetic infill system does not come maintenance-free. While natural fields require irrigation for turfgrass growth, a consideration for irrigation should be made for a synthetic surface for the purposes of cooling the field, particularly if intended field use includes daytime hours in the late spring, summer, and early fall. For example, Williams and Pulley (2004) found the surface temperature of an infill field system at Brigham Young University to be 112.4° F on an October day when the air temperature was 80° F. In the extreme, the authors noted a 200° F surface temperature recorded on a 98° F day.

Fertilization - An inadequate nitrogen (N) fertilization program will hinder the ability of turfgrass to recover from damage, which is extremely important when dealing with intensively used fields. It is reasonable to budget for 4-5 lbs. N/1000ft2 on an annual basis for high traffic sports fields consisting of perennial ryegrass and/or Kentucky bluegrass grown on a native soil. In addition to N fertilization, soil pH should be corrected as needed and appropriate phosphorous (P) and potassium (K) levels should be maintained. Lime, P, and K requirements can be determined through soil testing.

While it is obvious that a synthetic infill field does not require fertilization inputs, unlike natural fields, these surfaces may require the application of disinfectants to counteract human saliva, blood, vomit, etc. and the application of fabric softener to manage static that may develop. It has also been suggested that nonselective herbicides such as glyphosate can/should be used to control weed problems that may develop in the infill of a synthetic field.

Core cultivation and overseeding

One approach to solving the problem of turfgrass deterioration in natural

fields is the continuous introduction of turfgrass seed to fields. Core cultivation is an ideal process for not only alleviating soil compaction but also bringing soil to the surface and subsequently creating a seedbed. Using a slit-seeder allows for good seed-to-soil contact and uniform seed placement. If core cultivation and slit-seeding is not feasible on a regular basis, broadcast seeding with a rotary spreader prior to a scheduled game and allowing athletes to "cleat-in" the seed is a minimal labor, low-cost approach. Perennial ryegrass is the best species choice for overseeding due to its rapid germination and establishment rate. Although numerous perennial ryegrass varieties have displayed susceptibility to the disease gray leaf spot, Rutgers testing has shown that the following varieties have improved Gray leaf spot resistance: 'Paragon GLR', 'Palmer IV', 'Repell GLS', and 'Protégé'.

The inputs and costs required to introduce turfgrass seed (or sod) to a natural field for the purposes of maintaining turfgrass cover should not necessarily be a means to justify purchasing a synthetic field. Synthetic replacement costs should be considered as part of the decisionmaking process and as a means to maintain turf "cover" in the long-run. While the longevity of a new outdoor infill system is not known at this point, bear-inmind that the typical warranty for a new synthetic infill is 8 years. Additionally, the disposal of the crumb rubber infill is one item often overlooked in the decisionmaking process. Simply sending crumb rubber to a landfill may not be a viable disposal option as car tire (the composition of crumb rubber) disposal is subject to regulatory oversight.

Literature Cited:

Powell, A.J. and M. Andresen. 2004. Managing rubber infill fields. Sportsturf 20(11): 24, 26-31, 34.

Williams, C.F. and G.E. Pulley. 2004. Synthetic surface heat studies. Sports Turf Mngrs. Conf. 20-25 Jan. 2004 San Diego. •

Are Your Goals Secure?

City of Montreal settles with the family of critically injured teenager Jan 6, 2005, Athletic Turf News

Montreal, Canada — The City of Montreal recently settled with the father of a teenager who died of head injuries in 2001 when an unanchored soccer goalpost he was swinging on collapsed.

The goalpost was in a city park and the city admitted its liability, but a trial was held to determine the amount of the penalty.

In 2002, the city reached a \$140,000 Canadian (approximately \$114,000 US) settlement with the mother of Shane Diabo. Diabo was 14 when the accident happened. Her estranged husband, Keith Myiouw, recently received an award of \$30,000 Canadian (approximately \$25,000 US). Myiouw had originally sought damages of nearly \$1 million Canadian (approximately \$800,000 US).

Georges Bossé, a member of the city's executive committee said it was a "very hard lesson to learn," and that all the city's soccer nets were firmly anchored the day after the teen's death.



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Calendar of Events

SFMANJ

April 6 Spring Field Day – 8am to 3:30pm - \$10 members, \$35 non-members

Hammonton High School and Tuckahoe Sod Farm. See article in this newsletter for more info. Or call 908-730-7770 if you did not receive a flier in the mail.

NJRPA

May 5-7 Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course & Exam Middletown, NJ May 11 Professional Aquatics Safety Seminar Westfield, NJ For more information call NJRPA at 732-568-1270

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listing the schedules for each facility and staffing requirements. You've also, through your discussions with your supervisors and user groups, established expectations that you're required to meet.

Is your staff mostly full-time or seasonal? Or, perhaps, a mixture of

both? This will determine what type of training you can offer.

Also, do you know what motivates your staff members? The motivation for each one may be different. Is it money? Advancement? A sense of appreciation? Leadership? Part of your job is to motivate every staff member to attend and learn from the training experience. Get them to contribute to the process and make your training even better.

For fulltime staffs, your training program may be fairly simple, perhaps two or three structured sessions a year to go over equipment safety and maintenance, personal and public safety, public image and staff development.

If you have a staff member that has been through the training session a couple times and his/her motivation is leadership, encourage this individual to run some of the training sessions.

For seasonal or mixed staffs, it is a bit harder. For one thing, some of you may start at different times during the season. Consider using one-onone training, assigning experienced employees with newcomers. Monitor this closely. When your complete staff is in place, plan a staff-wide training session, too.

Foremost in any sports turf training program is safe and proper equipment operation. Don't allow staff members to run power equipment until they're trained to use it properly. This will motivate some workers who want to try out a new piece of equipment. Demonstrate equipment operations,

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"Play Ball" Don't let them give you any lip

by Jim Hermann, CSFM

As a sports field manager it is your job to keep your field safe, playable and available to the local teams in your area. The ages range from little guys to the over thirty league.

All teams, with no exceptions, have the same credo; play at any expense. If your patient and very quiet you can sometimes observe them early on a Saturday morning in March. Sometimes parents, sometimes the over thirty league, making their somber, methodical trek from the parking lot to the infield. It's an age-old custom. It's the camaraderie of the game. It's their destiny.

Shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows, shirts untucked, sneakers untied, slightly disheveled appearances, coffee in hand.

You have to understand this is an inherited tradition that is passed on from father to son, from generation to generation, and so on.

As nature calls them to their destiny a curious and sometimes comical ritual can be observed. The "spreading of the mix" as it is sometimes referred to has roots that go back as far as the game itself. Some say this phenomenon evolved from a time when there was an actual need for additional infield mix. Others say this phenomenon is caused by the increase in daylight hours.

If you are very quiet in the early morning hours of a typical Saturday in April, you can sometimes hear the faint sound of nature as it beckons ever-increasing numbers of individuals whose competitive nature requires the sound of that timeless phrase "Play Ball"

When spring breaks and nature calls, if you don't have that field ready, these weekend warriors will make it ready. That water and mud at first base. Right on the grass. What happens then? The depression gets deeper and the lip gets higher. Then, as if that's not bad enough, two bags of conditioner are used to fill the depression. The next rain, that gets dumped on the grass, and so on, and so on, and so on. I once saw 20 bags of conditioner used to play one game. These guys were actually proud of themselves after the game. That's when the conditioners were locked up.

Now, in addition, you can receive information on the proper way to remove



the water from that depression and make that depression ready for play. What's wrong with that picture? Remove the lip. Regrade existing material into the depression. (Only use additional material if absolutely necessary. Be done with it and move on.

Talk about forethought; I once saw a guy use sawdust to dry up the home plate area. He knew there was a problem before he even went to the field, and single-handedly came up with a solution without even being asked. Talk about dedication.

I could go on and on. It is not my intent to make light of or pass judgment on the determination and dedication of the leagues and parents. Only to draw attention to a perpetual problem which needs to be addressed. If I didn't laugh, I would be cursing. I truly have a great deal of respect and admiration. I commend them highly for their perseverance and effort. But, enough is enough.

Many people have a way of thinking that has been inherited from a time when baseball was played in the corner of a cow field. Try to acquire equipment or manpower to improve the safety and playability of your fields. What do you sometimes hear? "You don't need Yankee Stadium. We didn't have it back when I was a kid. Why I remember one time right after I broke my leg rounding first base..." How can you argue with that?

If you can educate the leagues, they will in turn become your allies. They will be the additional manpower you need to improve the quality of your infields. What is needed is education, guidance and communication to go along with this ambition. The situation didn't get this way over night and it won't change over night.

Every employee that walks through your doors typically goes through a period of training before he or she is considered a competent productive employee. The leagues that use your fields should be given the same consideration.

Many leagues have a coach's meeting in the spring prior to the opening of the season. Become a part of the process. If your leagues don't have a coach's meeting, maybe it's time they did. This is an ideal time to impress upon them the need for proper maintenance and safety. Provide the leagues with an infield maintenance plan based on the individual needs and problems of your infields. Include the basic principles of effective infield maintenance. In addition have a sign posted in a conspicuous location at each field that lists the steps necessary to keep the infield in good condition.

As the leagues begin to see the improvement in the quality of your fields, they will in turn take more pride. \diamond

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Synthetic Turf Council Creates Certification Program

STMA

The Synthetic Turf Council (STC) announces a certification program that is designed to benefit users and providers of synthetic turf surfaces and systems. Officially called the Synthetic Turf Council Certification Program (STCCP), it is designed to identify companies who have voluntarily committed themselves to a higher standard.

To attain certified status, the company must adhere to the STC "Suggested Guidelines" document, delivering as declared in the job specification, agreeing to utilize the program resolution process, abide by the STC Code of Ethics, and promote the quality and innovative characteristics of synthetic turf. To become certified, companies also must meet the program's prequalification experience requirements of satisfactory performance. Its performance record of continued customer satisfaction (or not) will be tracked on the STC website. The listing will continue on the website even in the event of decertification.

A large "C" logo will identify those companies that have voluntarily agreed to adhere to the program. The STC will begin awarding certification on Jan. 1, 2005.

The STC is the trade association for the synthetic turf industry and represents more than eighty percent of the volume of synthetic turf produced in North America. Members of the STC are landscape architects, professional engineers, designers, buildings, contractors, manufacturers, suppliers, testing laboratories, maintenance and other specialty services. ◆

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safety and maintenance.

Include some instruction on public image at each session. Crew members are in contact with the public on an almost daily basis. Set guidelines for uniforms and proper work apparel. Establish proper crisis notification and how to deal with questions from the public.

And, never, ever forget safety. You can't stress it enough. Cover all the bases - equipment safety, first aid and CPR training, public safety and occupational hazards. Invite outside experts to help you.

Keep on going

Staff training goes beyond giving your crew members a manual and asking them to read it. It should be an active, ongoing process within your operation. As you strengthen your training program, you build efficiency and safety into your program as you instill a genuine spirit of teamwork and cooperation.

View staff training as money well spent, as an opportunity to build a better organization - not as a burden. •

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