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Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

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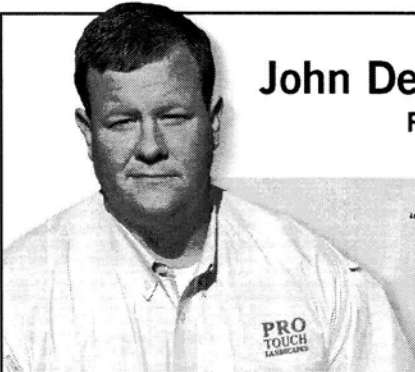
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NFL and MLB Groundskeepers Create a Field of Dreams at an Inner-City Phoenix High School

Jan 22, 2005 Athletic Turf News

Phoenix, AZ — The day before the kick off of the 16th Sports Turf Managers Association Annual Conference, more than 50 professional athletic field managers from the NFL and MLB participated in a joint community service project to renovate the baseball field at North High School (NHS) in central Phoenix.

"This is probably the most exciting thing that's happened here in 15 years," said NHS Principal Zack Munoz. Munoz was previously the school's athletic director. NHS is an inner-city school of approximately 2,500 students.

The school has only one baseball field and due to the high traffic and low maintenance budget, and despite the efforts of both coaches and players, the field conditions had seriously deteriorated.

Using equipment and materials provided by Toro, Turface Athletics and Covermaster,

the highly skilled volunteers dragged and raked the infield, leveled the playing surface, rebuilt the batter's box and pitchers mound, and mowed, edged and striped the turf.

"This really gives us the opportunity to work together, and we don't usually get to do that," said Bob Christofferson, head groundskeeper for the Seattle Mariners and one of the organizers of the event. "Since we have NFL and MLB guys here, we'll definitely learn a lot from each other."

At the end of the day, the field's lines were all perfectly straight, the turf expertly groomed and the base paths were absolutely immaculate.

"The biggest thing was to give back to the community," said Christofferson. "We have a team of talented professional working together here to make this field better than it was before."

On Saturday, January 22, STMA Conference attendees visited the newly renovated field to attend a series of hands-on seminars and workshops on pitcher's mound maintenance and repairs, infield preparation,

field logo painting and stenciling, line painting and field layout, game day cosmetics and other topics. The North High School staff also attended so they could learn how to maintain the high-quality playing conditions.

"The groundskeepers who helped rebuild North High School's field are the elite of the elite," said Charlie Vestal, Turface Sports Field Manager at Profile Products. "By getting 'in the dirt,' these industry leaders are showing their commitment to the industry by giving back to a deserving community."

"Toro is extremely proud to be a part of this great event," said Dale Getz, national sports fields and grounds sales manager for Toro. "Grounds managers take immense pride in their work and often have to face the reality of fields weary from over use. By pitching in to renovate this field, we will not only improve the field, but the community pride of the athletes and spectators that use the facility. The field managers and sponsors really teamed up in a big way to make this school's dream a reality." ♦

Continued from page 1

Field Manager. We are proud to have Don as a part of our team.

When ask, "How did you prepare for the test?" Don replied

I joined STMA in late 2003 and sent away for the CSFM packet soon after because I admired Jim Herrmann CSFM, I wanted to better myself professionally and I wanted to see how I measured up to the professional standards. After reviewing the 20 page detailed list of CSFM competencies, I saw my strengths and weaknesses and began a yearlong study to prepare myself. In Delaware, to apply fertilizers and nutrients, one must have a certification, much like a pesticide license. I prepared for the highest, most stringent nutrient management certification, the Delaware Nutrient Consultant Certification, which allows me to write nutrient, fertility and soil improvement programs for others as well as apply nutrients for paid compensation. I also took an online college course from the local community college in soil and water management. I purchased and read some of the STMA recommended books and subscribed to most of the trade magazines. I attended

field days and short courses, wore out a computer surfing the web looking for articles and research findings. I talked with many people who manage sports fields and asked them what worked for them.

Finally, in December 2004, I sent in my application, was approved to sit for the exam that was being given at the STMA conference in Phoenix. The exam consisted of 100 agronomic questions (including warm season grasses), 100 sports specific questions, 50 pesticide questions and 50 administrative questions in a multiple choice format. The questions were well written, real life problems that one encounters all of the time. The test took me 4 1/2 hours to complete.

Now that I have the certification, I have to continue taking courses for continuing education credits as well as earning industry service points for community service in order to keep it. There are only 52 CSFM's at the present time, and I am proud to be part of this elite group.

If anyone would like to reach Don with questions about this important program email him at donsavard@msn.com or call at 302.293.2693 ♦

Selecting a Field Marking Paint

Don Savard CSFM

We all use it in one form or another, and I think that we all agree that it works for most of our purposes, which is marking a boundary or a zone. Field marking paint comes in various forms, from aerosol spray cans, to bulk containers of paint that must be mixed. So which is best? All claims by manufacturers and salesmen aside, the one that is best is the one that works best for you and suits your needs. Here are some hints for selecting the product or products that are right for you.

How much painting do you do? If your answer is just little, (maybe only one or two fields) you might get by with spray cans and a four wheeled inverted can applicator. The inverted aerosol spray paint can makes a nice, bright line. (Consider using water based acrylic, as it is less injurious to the

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grass.) This set up is fast, convenient and inexpensive, especially if you buy multiple cases of paint cans to get the best pricing. Just be sure to store it in a cool dry place and keep it from freezing. A soccer field might require about six (17 Oz) cans, a baseball field about four cans, depending upon how fast you walk, and how bright you mark the lines. This set up is also convenient and economical to keep as a backup if your powered paint-spraying unit breaks down, or if you need to do a quick touch up and don't want to mess up and have to clean your powered unit.

If you are painting multiple fields, you might consider using latex field marking paint that comes in five-gallon buckets. The thickness and consistency of these paints range from ready to use right out of the pail, to thicker paints that must be cut with water to your desired consistency. There are some manufacturers who sell their paints in the form of a paste, which is then cut with water. Make sure that whatever form you buy is easy for you and your people to mix and handle and that it is

compatible with your paint spraying equipment.

Some manufacturers claim that their paints are the brightest and show up best under stadium lights. If your field is a high profile, high visibility site, it might be worth the extra cost, but if you are painting practice fields, consider using a less expensive product, as long as it meets your criteria as quality paint.

When choosing an athletic field marking paint supplier, look for a supplier who stocks the product and can deliver your product to you when you need it. If storage is scarce, consider a supplier who will drop off smaller shipments frequently.

Quality paint is never injurious to turf when used according to the label directions. Quality paint is of a consistent viscosity without particles that clump or clog the sprayer apparatus. Quality paint cleans up easily. Quality paint, when dry, does not dissolve in the rain.

Remember that whatever the game, clear, visible lines help everyone do their jobs. ♦

A Sports Field Managers Point of View

By Don Savard, CSFM

Sometimes when people ask me what kind of work I do, I tell them that I am a problem solver. I say that not to diminish the professionalism of growing and managing sports fields, but because it really describes how I spend my days. You see, a problem can be defined as the difference between what you want and what you have. As professional sports field managers we are constantly helping people get what they want. Whether it is getting the soccer ball to roll faster or getting that skinned area of the baseball field dry and playable after that sudden downpour, we find ways, often creatively, to fix the problem.

We work outdoors, in an

Continued on page 10

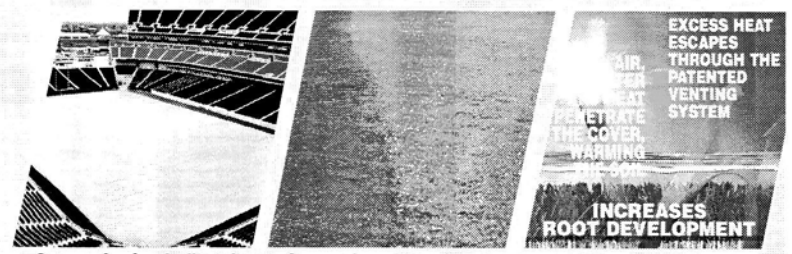
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“Field Tip” – Let’s start training! Training makes all the difference.

By: **Boyd Montgomery, CSFM**
Jan 1, 2001 Athletic Turf

Once you have all this information, what do you do with it? This is when your knowledge and expertise become evident. Break down the information, field by field, and prepare maintenance requirements for each field. This provides the building blocks for your training program.

For example, one of the requirements might be to maintain your soccer fields at the facility at a 1 1/2-in. cut with a reel mower. You set up your operators’ training for that facility to include reel mower operations and maintenance (daily, monthly, and yearly), safety issues, and also include cultural practice to maintain grass at 1 1/2-in. cut.

Another example would be if your staff is also responsible for cleaning the surrounding (non-field) facilities, areas such as restrooms, stands and trash. Your training program would then need to include training on infectious diseases, safety and health concerns, and hepatitis vaccinations along with the proper way to accomplish these tasks.

Who’s to blame?

Now that you have this information and have identified how your program should be set up for each facility, let’s start training.

Don’t be guilty of “throwing them to the sharks” - giving your staffs minimal instruction and turning them loose to learn from their mistakes. Your only hope is that their mistakes are minor, inexpensive problems. How many times will that be the case? I would wager not very often.

Who is to blame when this happens, the employee who makes the mistake or the supervisor who failed to train the employee? Can you honestly blame someone that has not been properly trained? No!

The blame falls on you and your training practices. Maybe when you hired your new staff member, your trainer was busy with another project and you were buried under a mountain of paperwork. Does that sound like an excuse for not properly training? No! The simple fact is that if you do not

take the time to train, you will spend more time than you can believe fixing the mistakes or a poorly trained crew member.

You’ve done the basics

What should be done? Keep going. You’ve already established the basis for your program by collecting and

Continued on page 14

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Whatever product we sell, our staff takes the time to know about our products through education, training and seminars so that we can recommend the right products for the customers' needs. It is then up to the weather to cooperate, which makes all the difference whether or not a product works well.

With the help of distributor and manufacturer reps, we have taken the time to meet on field locations. We talk about the field and make a recommendation on how to best schedule product application. We understand the challenges you face today.

I invite you to stop by or call one of our stores. Get to know us, so we can get to know what your needs are! We can help!

Thank you,
Douglas Loth

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Contracting for Athletic Field Services - Do it with a Plan

By Ron Hall
Jan 22, 2005 Athletic Turf News
Bill Sturgill, City of Scottsdale

Phoenix, AZ — As the demands on our youth sports fields grow, the people in charge of managing and maintaining them often look to outside contractors to help keep the fields safe and attractive. They realize that their in-house staffs either don't have the time or the expertise to perform certain necessary tasks. Or, in some cases, these tasks require the use of specialized and often expensive equipment.

Bill Sturgill with the City of Scottsdale explained how he handles contracted services for the city's athletic fields to approximately 50 sports field and facility managers at the STMA Conference. His presentation, peppered with personal observations, offered practical advice on negotiating and managing contracts.

On the surface it would seem that you see a certain job that needs to be done, one that your staff, burdened with its day-to-day chores, can't get to, so you find and hire a contractor. It's not that easy. Not by a long shot.

First of all, your customers are children, and their safety is a huge responsibility, stressed Sturgill. Then there is a whole series of other steps you must consider and implement if you want a successful completion to a contracted service, any contracted service.

It starts, said Sturgill, with "writing a good solid contract." Ask and get answers to the following questions:

Why do we want this contract?

What is it expected to accomplish?

What are we going to ask for?

What are our contingency plans?

When are these contracted tasks going to take place?

How will we pay for it?

How are we going to manage it?

How do we introduce the need for the contracted service to our staff?

Crucial to the process, he emphasized, are the twin "Cs" — communication and cooperation "between all the entities involved. This includes governmental, school staff, contractors and parents," he said.

That is one reason why the person in charge of managing the contract (and all

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 7

environment of constant climatic change. It is difficult to predict with any certainty what the weather is going to be like next week, but we try to be decisive, make plans and manage our enterprise with confidence. Our sports fields have unique characteristics which challenge us. It seems as though there is always something new to learn and to explore. Whether the problem is the soil, drainage, compaction, weeds, insects or disease, we find the solution by attending field days and short courses, reading the publications and networking with our peers. We might be limited by our resources, but we seem to find creative and new ways to use the money, tools and materials that we do have.

We get to wear many hats- turf grower, soil scientist, repairman, surveyor, equipment operator, budget manager, engineer, salesman, coworker, psychologist and trash picker upper. Whether we stay on one site, or move about multiple sites, we have the capability to touch the lives of many people, from the people who own the field, to the player athletes, to the fans, with all the coaches, administrators, contractors, vendors, and sponsors in between. It seems like we have hundreds of bosses, all of whom give us the opportunity to solve a problem.

Sometimes the problem is not what we think it is. Is it a turf problem, a people problem or maybe it is not our problem at all? We try to understand what the problem is. Turf problems seem easier to solve than people problems. That is because people problems begin when we want them to change something. People are resistant to change. We begin to solve people problems through communication. ♦

SFMANJ Heads South for Fun in the Sun April 6th Field Day

By Jim Hermann

Join us April 6, 2005 at Hammonton High School for a tour of their new facility. After a brief introduction by Eleanora Hermann, president SFMANJ, Frank LaSasso, field manager for Hammonton High School will begin the tour with an overview of the new complex featuring a wide range of athletic fields & construction related problems.

As we move on to the Softball & Baseball fields, Frank will share with us his infield maintenance program, the results of which will be seen in the quality of his infields. Brad Park, Rutgers University, Cook College will review the results of a physical soil analysis performed on the infield mix and how their infield mix compares to the ASTM (American Society of Testing Materials) standard. Jim Hermann, CSFM (Certified Sports Turf Manager), Total Control Inc. will review ten points in a safe and playable infield

Learn first hand from Frank, the day-to-day problems and challenges he faces with his newly constructed football field. Dr. Henry Indyke, Turfeon will discuss understanding and implementation of effective construction specifications and the profound effects they have as seen in the Hammonton complex.

Dr. James Murphy, Rutgers University, Cook College will be on hand to discuss soil characteristics and

turfgrass selection & establishment. Don Savard, CSFM, Salesianum School will demonstrate and talk about the proper use of "turf blankets", and the potential benefits to be had through correct application

Brad Park, Rutgers University, Cook College will discuss implementation of IPM practices utilized in an effective pre & postemergence selective weed control strategy.

All in attendance will have the opportunity view first hand the inputs and outcomes of proper turf and athletic field management and receive valuable recertification credits.

After the conclusion of the tour we will proceed a couple miles down the road to Tuckahoe Turf Farms Inc. growers of fine turf sod. There we will enjoy lunch provided by Tuckahoe Turf Farms. Immediately after lunch and a brief introduction by Don Savard we will have the opportunity to meet with our respective SFMANJ district representatives to discuss the objectives and desires of the individual districts. If you have ideas or requests for workshops, seminars or field days in your neck of the woods, this is your opportunity to express your thoughts.

The district meetings will be followed by a guided tour of the sod farm. You will have the opportunity to view Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue in various stages of development and learn production, harvesting and installation practices from one of the most reputable growers in the industry. Pesticide credits will be offered at the conclusion of the day.

Join us for this unique opportunity to learn from the experiences of other professionals in the industry and network with sports turf managers in your district. You can find a registration form on our website at www.sfmanj.org or call 908-730-7770 if you did not receive a flier in the mail.

**Jim Hermann, CSFM is on the Board of Directors of SFMANJ and President of Total Control Inc. ♦*

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