

# A RUTGERS' STUDENT RECALLS HIS EXPERIENCE AT STMA

By: Eric Koch

As a student at Rutgers University striving towards a degree in the turf industry, it is extremely hard to find time to see the innovation and evolution of the turf industry in the real world. This year's Sports Turf Manager Association 2009 conference was a wonderful thing for me to experience because I was able to see how competitive and innovative the turf industry really is. Along with all of the great new things I saw at the trade show, the people I met at the STMA conference were all knowledgeable and may become a great asset to me in the future as I strive toward my career in the turf industry. Set in beautiful San Jose California, the conference was an experience that I will never forget.

The networking that I was able to do at the STMA conference was priceless. I was able to meet many very well known people in the turf industry and discuss some of what they do to manage and improve their particular sports field. Meeting some of the speakers after their very educational talks also allowed me to gain a deeper insight into what they do as individuals and hold more in depth discussions regarding some materials they discussed. I enjoyed the talks that were given as they were all very informative and extremely interesting to me. When I came back from San Jose, I had a tighter grasp on how the turf industry operates and how each individual helps one another to better the overall playability of all sports fields.

At the trade show, it was incredible to see all of the innovative designs and ideas that companies have created. All of the employees of each company were fascinating people with which to talk and listen. After looking around the entire trade show for a couple of hours, it was amazing to see the different routes sports field managers take and how

they choose specific products to manage their own fields back home. Each exhibit had something new and improved that I had learned about in books, but until the conference, had not seen in person. It was great to get a hands-on look at everything that is new and upcoming in the turf industry.

The student challenge examination was a comprehensive test of everything a sports field manager would need to know within the turf field. This exam consisted of turfgrass identification, disease identification, weed identification, irrigation formulas, physiology, calibration of turf equipment, writing 2 essays, and many other concepts within the turf field. The examination itself took a few hours of hard work and thinking but really showed the vast amount of information that is involved in managing a sports field.

The experience at the San Jose STMA conference was a real treat for me, and I think it is safe to say, for anyone else who was there as well. The food was delicious, the people were interesting and extremely polite, and the atmosphere was perfect. This conference really showed me how people from all over the world can come together to learn and celebrate the turf industry.

*Eric Koch is an undergraduate student, Rutgers University, and member of the Rutgers' team that competed in the STMA Student Challenge in San Jose, CA in January 2009*



*California dreamin' at STMA (l-r) Brad Park, Rutgers University, Editor, SFMANJ Update; Eric Koch, Rutgers University, STMA Student Challenge participant; Stephanie Alea, Rutgers University, STMA Student Challenge participant; Will Reardon, Rutgers University, STMA Student Challenge participant; Don Savard, CSEM, CGM, SFMANJ President.*



*The 2009 STMA Annual Conference included a tour of the sportsfield facilities at Stanford University, Stanford, CA*

# THE POLITICS OF SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT

## PART 2 OF A SERIES

*When discord strikes, both sides own the problem. Let's look at the part we own.*

By Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

When Sports Field Managers and their customers have disagreements resulting in communication breakdown, there are no winners. Let's look further into the dynamics of Human Relations.

Good Human Relations skills begin with Respect. The American psychologist Abraham Maslow described human self esteem needs — the need for respect from others and the need for self-respect. Without the fulfillment of these needs, Maslow suggests, an individual feels discouraged, weak and inferior. Self respect begins with honest self knowledge and self awareness. Respect from others often entails recognition, acceptance, and appreciation. Respect from others must be earned. Self respect, on the other hand, is an inside job.

Self respect begins with self care. Good self care results in good self control. Occasionally, we all find ourselves hungry, angry, lonely or tired. When we feel any of those ways, we are emotionally vulnerable and our self control can be compromised. It is good to take care of ourselves. If our needs are neglected, we are not at our best. And if we are not taking care of our interests, how can we take care of others?

Respect for others is based on self-respect and follows the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." It is the value that makes the world a more decent and civilized place.

But this is where it starts to get sticky. The world is not always a more decent and civilized place. Things happen. People disagree. Conflicts occur.

Have you ever had this happen to you? You are in the middle of preparing your field for an event. A team comes out and starts using your field while you are working on it. You approach the coach and explain what you are doing. In spite of what you say, not only does the team stay, but they damage the field as well.

The natural reaction to this type of conflict is ANGER and the anger could take the form of:

- Retaliation
- Us against them
- Negativity
- Poor Attitude
- Defensiveness
- Distrust
- Passive aggressive behavior
- Despair

These feelings are none other than good old fashioned Self Righteous Anger. If you look at this anger closely you might find that it is driven by good old fashioned self centered fear.

Self centered fears include:

- Being made look foolish or be embarrassed.
- Being made to something that you don't want to do.
- Being afraid that it will cost you something.

*(continued on page 14)*

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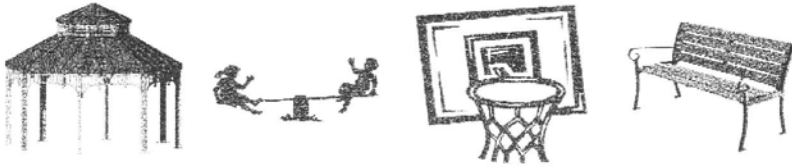
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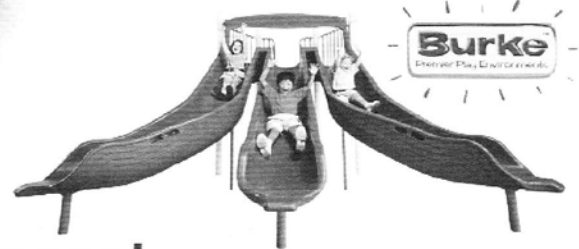
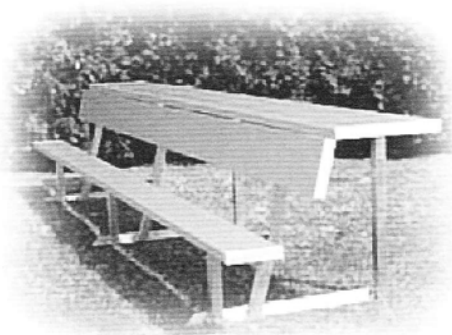


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# THE POLITICS OF SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT PART 2 OF A SERIES

(continued from page 12)

- Being afraid that you will lose something.
- Being afraid others will be mad at you.
- Being afraid that you will lose your personal power or control.
- Being afraid that you are not enough.

The more you think about it the angrier you could become. You could take it out on somebody, the coach, or a coworker or family member. Or, you might internalize your feelings only to have them come out another way. Have you ever indulged in a supersized portion of self pity or plotted how to get even? These behaviors waste a great deal of personal time and energy.

Ask yourself what could have done first to have avoided the situation? Did you do your part first by:

- Checking a schedule to see if anybody else had a legitimate right to the field?
- Communicate properly to the stakeholders your plan to be on the field?
- Properly request that they stay off the field?

The issue is not what the coach or the team did; the issue is how you handled it and how you will handle it next time. Remember, being the victim is tiresome.

**Next issue: Power and Control –Does anyone really have any?**

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

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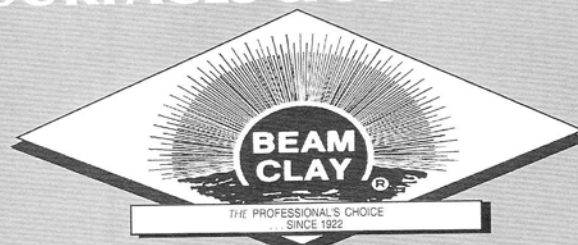
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## SFMANJ Field of the Year Contest 2009

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey is announcing its annual  
Field of the Year (FOY) contest.

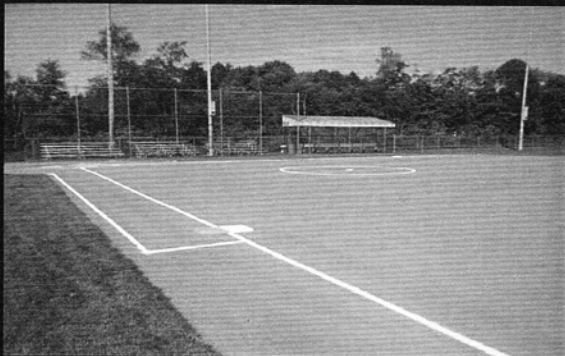
### ELIGIBILITY:

- Must be a current member of SFMANJ
- Only school and parks/recreation fields are eligible
- Must be a natural grass field/fields

### CRITERIA:

Award will be presented basis:

- Playability and appearance of the playing surfaces
- Describe your maintenance program and what you did to improve your field
- Describe yearly budget used for this field
- Feel free to have sports groups in your photo



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### SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY:

Entries are to be submitted by mail and must be received by September 30, 2009. Entries are limited to 10 color photos. Please include the name, location and owner of the facility, along with your name, position, and contact number.

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SFMANJ 2009 FOY Contest  
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### AWARDS:

Winner will be honored with a plaque at New Jersey Turfgrass and Landscape Conference & Expo in December 2009 and will be featured in an article in SFMANJ *Update* newsletter. The winner will also receive a two-night stay at the Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City and three days of education and trade show admission at Expo 2009.

### NOTE:

Photos will not be returned and may be used on SFMANJ website and promotional settings.

# Update: New Jersey Investigation of Artificial Turf and Human Health Concerns- August 2008

Source: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services

## Background

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) found lead in the artificial turf fibers and turf fiber dust at a sports field in Newark, NJ, while investigating a nearby metals scrap yard. In order to find out if lead in turf fibers was common or unique to this field, the NJDHSS conducted a limited (12 fields) investigation of other artificial turf fields in the state. Ten of the fields in the follow-up investigation were made of polyethylene and had very low or undetectable levels of lead in the fibers. The other two fields were made of nylon, as did the field in Newark, and had very high levels of lead in the fibers and dust. There is no standard for lead in artificial turf, so the

NJDHSS used the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Residential Direct Contact Soil Cleanup Criteria (RDCSCC) of 400 mg/kg in soil as a basis for determining whether any artificial turf sample had an elevated lead concentration.

No one knew if the lead that was in artificial turf fibers or the dust that forms when those fibers break down from age and weathering could be absorbed by a child or adult who swallows them. In order to find that out, the NJDHSS performed laboratory testing that mimicked the human digestive system. The testing found that lead can leach out of the turf fibers and dust during digestion, and could therefore enter a person's blood.

The NJDHSS also requested that the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) consider these findings and conduct a larger study of artificial turf for lead. The CPSC did so, and released their findings on July 31.

## What did the CPSC find?

The CPSC findings were similar to the NJDHSS findings. The CPSC found elevated lead levels in some artificial turf fibers. It also found, as did the NJDHSS, that as artificial turf fields age the fibers can break down, forming lead dust that was present on field surfaces.

## Are there differences in the two agencies' findings?

The CPSC predicted how much dust a child might swallow, through an assessment that looked at potential exposures to lead dust on artificial turf surfaces. The NJDHSS's laboratory evaluation was done to find out if lead could get out of the fibers and dust, and into the stomach and blood. These findings are more complementary than different.

## Has the NJDHSS changed its conclusions about the safety of artificial turf fields that contain lead?

We are pleased that the CPSC has asked the synthetic turf industry to reduce or eliminate nonessential uses of lead in artificial turf products.

NJDHSS believed, and still believes, that lead from the artificial turf fields alone would not result in lead poisoning among children who played on the high lead fields. However, the NJDHSS remains concerned about cumulative lead exposures to children from all lead sources and whether lead from artificial turf, particularly at older, worn fields, adds to those exposures. CPSC's findings confirm that lead from artificial turf can contribute to the overall cumulative lead exposure to children.

## Does the NJDHSS have any new recommendations?

No, the NJDHSS continues to recommend that artificial turf field managers and consumers who use residential turf products determine if their product has lead in the fibers. If fields are found to contain lead, the most conservative approach is to limit access to fields that contain lead, especially by children under age 7.

If fields are used, the individuals should perform aggressive hand and body washing after playing on the field, and clothing used on the field should be washed separately. These recommendations are consistent with those of the CPSC.

We are grateful to the CPSC and their involvement in looking at the issue of lead in artificial turf. Presently there are additional studies of artificial turf planned in the future by both state and federal agencies. As only limited information has been available for review, the NJDHSS looks forward to reviewing future reports involving lead in artificial turf before we can make additional informed conclusions and recommendations.

*This Fact Sheet was authored by the New Jersey Dept. of Health and Senior Services, Consumer and Environmental Health Services, Epidemiology, Environmental and Occupational Health, PO Box 369, Trenton, NJ 08625-0369*

It can be found at:  
[www.state.nj.us/health/artificialturf/documents/turf\\_factsheet\\_update\\_aug08.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/health/artificialturf/documents/turf_factsheet_update_aug08.pdf)

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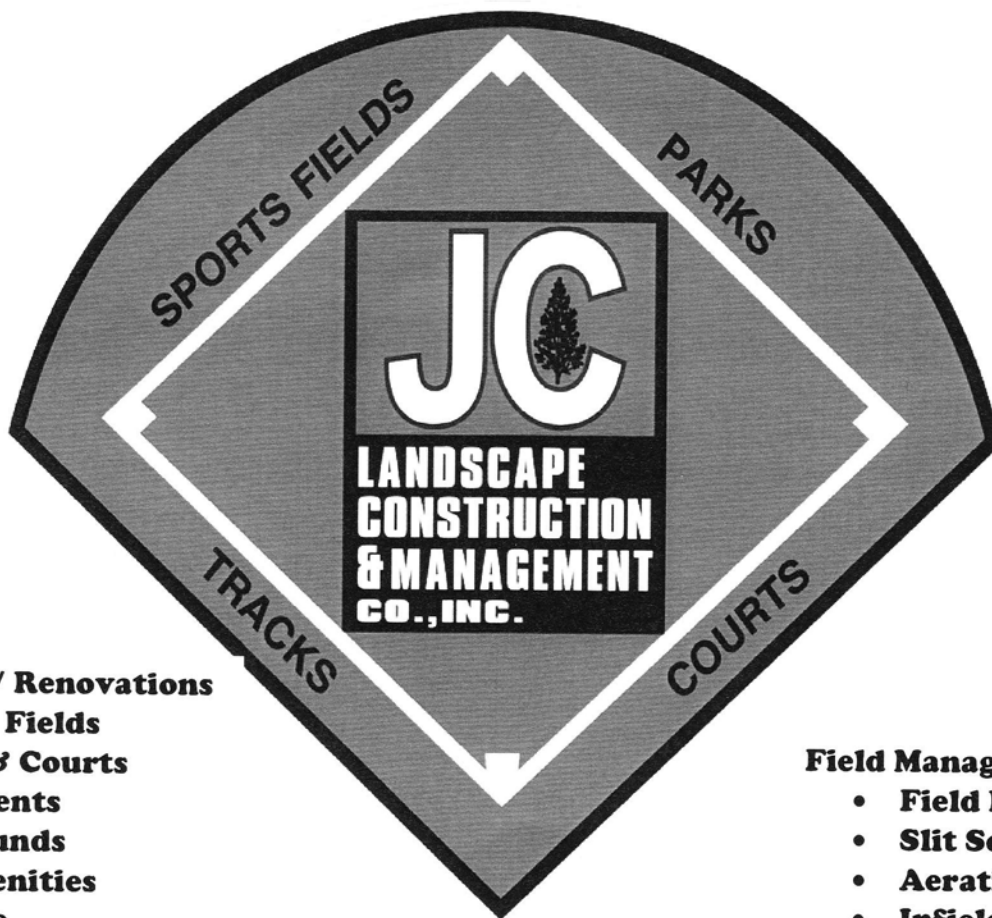
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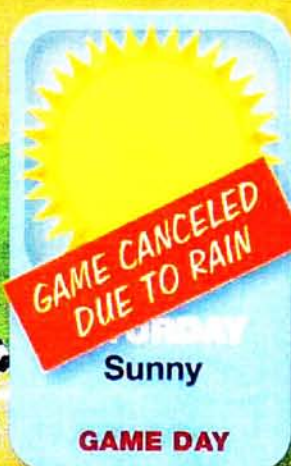
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