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Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members

Currently we have 203 new & renewed members. Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey mailed invoices for 2013 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. Mail membership dues direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070.

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Continued on page 4



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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.

Contact us at:

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National Organization

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*This newsletter is the official quarterly publication of the
Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey.*

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



A Message from The President

by Matt Olivi

The recent Sports Field Managers Association of NJ (SFMANJ) Spring Field Day held at the Northern Burlington County Regional School Facility in Columbus, NJ turned out to be another great event. Despite blustery conditions, we had a great turn-out of both attendees and vendors. Special thanks go to our commercial members Northern Nurseries and Green Pro Materials who donated materials for demonstrations and seminars. Our thanks go to Turf Trade for sponsoring early morning refreshments. Also, sincere thanks go to all of the vendors who took part in this years' Spring Trade Show. As always, your support of SFMANJ events is greatly appreciated.

The next event we are looking forward to is the annual Rutgers Research Field Day which will be held July 31, 2013. There will be a change of venue for this year's Research Day. The usual Rutgers Adelphia farm will not be able to host the event this year as an infrastructure upgrade project will be taking place over the summer. The alternative site for this year's program will be Rutgers' Hort Farm II Research Facility located in North Brunswick, NJ. This temporary change in venue will require SFMANJ to scale back the trade show to a tabletop only event. Although we're breaking the tradition of incorporating turf equipment demonstrations into the educational program, SFMANJ wanted to continue to give its commercial members an opportunity to have face time with attendees and continue to support Rutgers Turf Research. Keep an eye out for registration information through mailings and website updates.

SFMANJ is currently working on revamping its Field of the Year Program. The FOY program is a great tool for recognizing our members' efforts in maintaining the playability and safety of their fields. Maintenance efforts often go unnoticed by the majority of people that use the fields and/or those who finance maintenance resources. This recognition program can be a great tool for bridging the common gap between organization leaders and field managers. Over the summer months, a committee will be analyzing the current criteria and guidelines for the Field of the Year program and how to best implement a new system of localized district representation to help with the application and selection processes. Contact the SFMANJ office if you would like to serve on the field of the year committee. It's one of the many ways to get more involved in SFMANJ business and provide directors with valuable feedback. We hope to hear from you soon and look forward to seeing you in July.

Matt Olivi is Sports Turf Manager, Piscataway Board of Education, Piscataway, NJ; and SFMANJ President

Continued from page 1

Rutgers Lawn, Landscape and Sports Turf Field Day:

SCHEDULE:

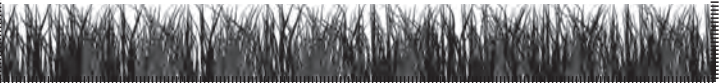
6:30 AM	Vendors may arrive & set-up
7:30 AM	Attendee Registration & Trade Show Opening
9:00 AM	Education Tours Begin
1:00-2:00 PM	Lunch / Open Trade Show
2:00-3:00 PM Training	Basic Training for the Professional Fertilizer Applicator (OPTIONAL)
3:00-4:00 PM Exam	Fertilizer Certification Exam (OPTIONAL; \$75.00 exam fee)

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

Attendees may register online by visiting the NJTA (website) www.njturfgrass.org;
(o) 973.812.6467;
(email) execdirector@njturfgrass.org

Those vendors interested in reserving a table top for the trade show are encouraged to contact SFMANJ for more information and appropriate paperwork
(website) www.sfmanj.org;
(o) 856.514.3179;
(email) mail@sfmanj.org

Brad Park is Sports Turf Research & Education Coordinator, Rutgers University; Editor, SFMANJ Update newsletter; and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors since 2003.



Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members

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Frank Ravaschiere
Charles Rogers
Heather Rohde
Edmund Rohland
Michael Ryan
Brandon Schmidt
Dianne Scolamiero
Jack Shannon
Matt Shearon
Daniel Shemesh
Kevin Shipman
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Keeping Your Edge

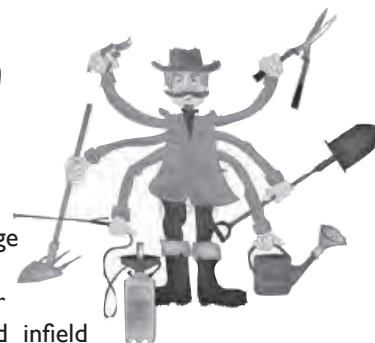
By Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

It's hard work staying sharp on the job! Finding time and funding for job related training can be challenging. Sometimes, when the traditional forms of sports field education, (i.e. seminars, field days and clinics) seem to cover the same old topics consider trying something different. Something like going to another facility and helping out for a day as a guest member of the crew. I did that recently!

It all started when Rich Watson, Sports Turf Manager for the Pine Hill Board of Education invited me to help out during a Saturday baseball tournament. Nothing was scheduled at my facility that day, so I was free to go. The weather was not looking promising, though. Thunderstorms overnight and threatening skies in the morning made me wonder if Rich Watson's crew could make things happen and get the games in. After breakfast I called Rich and he said, "Come on up!"

When I arrived at the Overbrook High School baseball field, teams and fans were patiently waiting (despite a 1 hour delay) while the Overbrook grounds crew was hard at work putting the finishing touches on the playing surface. It would have been understandable to have called off the games because of the wet conditions, and for many sports field managers it would have been a no brainer. Rich Watson and the Overbrook grounds crew (Bill Loftus and Carmelo

Anguila) are not your average K-12 groundskeepers. They were on the job 5 hours earlier raking in drying materials and infield conditioners to their expertly maintained infield skin. I helped set a couple of bases and the game was ready to begin.



The "40th Annual Joe Hartman Diamond Classic" is a premier baseball tournament in South Jersey. The top 16 teams play a Round Robin single elimination tournament. The Overbrook field is a sought after venue for this matchup.

I like visiting another facility because I can see all the things that they do right. I get to tour their shop and see the tools and materials that they use. From the way bulk dry mound clay is reconstituted to the right consistency with a scant amount of water to repair a mound or a batter's box to the way they have configured a small trailer to convey all of the tools and supplies necessary for infield maintenance. I have long admired an infield drag they use to groom their infield (I hope I can get a copy of the plans so I can build one). Between their homemade and their store-bought equipment, I get some inspiration for tools that I would like to have. I even share with the Overbrook crew tales of some of the tools that I use such as the big rubber mallet and the small squirt bottle of water used

Continued on page 18

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FOOTBALL FIELD MAINTENANCE FOR NATURAL TURF FIELDS ABOVE THE TRANSITION ZONE: PART 1

By Rich Watson

As I am writing this article, winter is starting to wind down and attention to spring sports is about to begin. Baseball, softball, track and field, tennis and lacrosse will be in full swing shortly just as the weather becomes bearable for outdoor sports. As conference season comes to a close, I can recall many great talks about baseball field maintenance for all different levels of competition. There are many sources of information about the craft of maintaining baseball fields. However, when it comes to the sport of football, I don't recall any talks or articles about maintaining a high school field or any other type of football field.

I recently spent some time talking with Tony Leonard of the Philadelphia Eagles on our way back from the STMA conference in Daytona. Even at the highest level of completion, Tony is often asked "why can't you grow grass on that field"? During our discussion, I found out that there are many reasons why it is difficult. Sharing the stadium with Temple University, dealing with shade issues, hosting many non-football related events and a very narrow set of hash marks are just a few of the hurdles that Tony and his crew face. In addition, the Pro game is played by the largest athletes in all of sport. The fact that they play the bulk of the game in a very small area of the field causes a variety of maintenance problems.

Tony has adjusted by changing his field over to bermudagrass. This allows him to get through most of the season on a very durable surface. As the weather cools the bermudagrass is removed to the depth of 1.5 inches and thick cut Kentucky bluegrass sod is installed to finish out the late season schedule with good turf cover. This process has been very successful for Tony and the Eagles.

While this may be a good answer on the professional level, what about those of us on the high school or park and recreation level. Are there answers to the problems we deal with on our football fields or are we facing a future with plastic football fields as the solution? I don't claim to have all of the answers, but we have had a lot of success with the maintenance of our football fields at Overbrook High School. Our maintenance program doesn't begin and end with the football season but rather focusses on a yearlong approach. The new season begins as the old one ends.

Enjoy an Early Spring

Spring is a very important time for football fields. The fall season really wears out most fields and springtime is usually the time that significant recovery can take place. This process can be slowed by lacrosse but recovery must be taken into consideration regardless. March 1 in NJ is the first day you can apply fertilizer legally and we do. At least 0.5 lbs of nitrogen (N) per 1000 square feet are applied as ammonium sulfate. This provides food for the new turf planted at the end of last season and promotes growth of established turf also. In addition to an early application of N, there must be a concentrated effort made to begin mowing to remove dormant turf and promote new growth. It is tempting to allow football fields to lie dormant in early spring. There are a lot of other things going on and football is not one of them. Don't fall in to this trap. The quicker your turf is actively growing, the quicker it has the ability to establish and endure the stress of drought and pest pressures that are coming later in the spring and summer. Fertilizer is provided on an as-needed basis during the spring with the intention of not applying more than 0.5 lbs N per 1000 square feet per month.

Aeration

Aeration is something that is very important but commonly overlooked. In our case, we have a core-aerator but have no good way to clean up the messy cores. In addition to the mess, coring during the football season may not always provide the results you are looking for. Problems occur during the season if you open up a worn field by coring. Sometimes because of a busy schedule there is not enough time for the field to heal before the next game is played. This can cause a poorly rooted field to suffer damage even though that was not the intention. At Overbrook we have found a nice window of opportunity right after Memorial Day. Early June is after our spring season and usually before the weather gets too hot. The fields seem to really respond well

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at this time of year. The turf is actively growing and our activities are limited. We try to make up for the few coring opportunities that are available by using our slicing aerator when we are seeing signs of compaction. This aerator provides us the ability to open things up without disturbing the playing surface. It is a very valuable tool that also aides us in our fall over seeding program by providing a nice seedbed. Another added benefit of slice aerating is the ability to find grub damage quickly during August and early September. It is much better for us to find grub damage and treat it, rather than an injury occurring due to field conditions. Ultimately, it is up to the turf manager to find the right time and aerator for your site.

Summer Stress

Summertime is a time of rest for our football turf. We are lucky that there is very little activity during the summer months until football camp opens around August 15th. Our cutting height is raised to 3.0 inches and mowing frequency is set at 3 to 4 times per week. The thinking is that I don't want to put any extra stress on the turf than is necessary. Last year we went away from applying N during July with some success in suppressing dollar spot. Replacing it with an application of 0-0-62 worked well as we had very little dollar spot last summer as compared to past years. This year we may make an additional application in August to see if it reduces our susceptibility to brown patch. Fungicides are not part of our maintenance program so we are constantly making adjustments to see if we can suppress disease without their use. With that in mind, our irrigation routine is based on need not schedule. This sounds

like common sense but it gets complicated with tricky summer weather. The fields are checked daily for soil moisture and then irrigated or not based on this information. I have found that it is ok to get a little dry over the summer. Proper water management is crucial for surviving summer heat and humidity. Please don't set your timer box and forget it.

Part 2:

Preparing for the Season, Game Prep and Repair, Putting the Field to Bed - In our next issue.

Rich Watson is Sports Field Manager, Pine Hill Public Schools, Pine Hill, NJ; and member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors



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Perspective from a Field of the Year Participant

By Bernard Luongo

My name is Bernard Luongo and I am employed at Northern Burlington Regional School District in Columbus, NJ as a lead groundskeeper. I would like to take a moment to let membership know how entering the Sports Field Managers Association of NJ (SFMANJ) Field of the Year contest and winning runner-up for two years in a row has meant to me, our grounds staff and the administration. First, it gives the staff involved with maintaining the grounds recognition. In an educational institution where recognition is hard to come by it means a lot. Most of all it gives you credibility. Now when you are in a meeting and start talking to administrators about field maintenance, conditions, playability, safety, and wear, they pay attention and take you seriously. They now take a sense of pride as to how the facilities look and notice that you care and take your job seriously. Now that the Board of Education sees this they want to participate in your success also. They accomplish this by investing in your program. They purchase the equipment that you recommend – seed, fertilizer, etc. Everything that you need to keep producing a better product. As long as you keep producing results they will continue to keep investing in your program and your crew. Obviously this doesn't happen overnight. It takes several years a plan and goals to incrementally increase the quality of your fields. SFMANJ will help you develop a plan. Don't just be a member. Be an active member. Get to know your Board and Officers. You will be surprised that we all share the same highs and lows of our profession and the elements that sometimes work against us. So stay active ask a lot of questions and be humble. This is what SFMANJ and being in the Field of the Year contest means to me. Keep on turfing.

Bernard Luongo is Lead Groundskeeper, Northern Burlington County Regional School District, Columbus, NJ; and SFMANJ member.

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THE BASICS OF MAINTAINING SYNTHETIC TURF

By Jim Cornelius, CSFM

Editor's Note:

This article first appeared in the Summer 2012 issue of *Between the Lines*, the official publication of Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization

Let's begin by acknowledging that synthetic infill fields are NOT maintenance free. No matter what anyone says, these fields require routine maintenance. Secondly, what comes out of these fields must be replaced, meaning that the infill material disappears from the field as it is carried off by players, wind, rain, snow, snow removal, routine maintenance, etc.; being that the infill material is the supporting substance of these fields, it will need to be replaced.

When we service a field we typically find that most fields are lacking infill material whether it's all crumb rubber or rubber/sand mix; we also find the turf fibers are laid over with minimal support causing them to prematurely break-off. The worst enemy of the fibers on a synthetic turf field is the sun's ultra violet rays that the field must endure day after day. By maintaining a proper amount of crumb rubber and allowing only approximately a 1/2 to 3/4-inch of fiber exposed you are preventing the fibers from folding over and lessening the amount of material breakdown due to ultra violet rays.

On average an athlete or end user will carry off 3 to 4 pounds of infill material during a playing season. This needs to be replaced annually to support the fibers and provide longevity for the playing

surface. To calculate your needs, you need to measure the amount of crumb rubber in a variety locations within the synthetic field boundaries (we measure 10 locations using the ASTM 1936-10 guidelines for Gmax testing as our test points) to determine what you have. If your turf is 2 1/4 inches tall and you have less than 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 inches of infill, you need to add more. Most crumb rubber infill calculates to 0.55 pounds per square foot for a 1/4-inch lift. Most rubber/sand infill systems will not need additional sand as it tends to stay stable within the turf. There are rare occasions when the sand is removed due to operations (snow plowing) or torrential down pours that cause flooding; if this happens, sand will need to be added to the mix.

Grooming the field is an essential maintenance task that needs to be understood. It is highly recommended to use a good groomer designed for synthetic turf. When using any groomer, the best results will be achieved by adjusting it so that it lightly touches the fibers. Do not lower the entire weight of the groomer onto the turf unless you are trying to level out the crumb rubber or fill an area such as a lacrosse goal crease. When tickling the fibers with the groomer's brushes, the intent is to stand the fibers up to minimize lay over from resulting from field use.

Continued on page 12

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Photo Recap: SFMANJ Spring Field Day

By Debbie Savard and Brad Park



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