

## Congratulations to our Newest CSFM!

Donald Savard, CSFM (Certified Sports Field Manager) has been a dedicated member of SFMANJ for the past two years and now serves on the Board of Directors as Vice President. He is the Athletic Facilities and Grounds Manager at the Salesianum School, a private high school for boys in Wilmington, Delaware. Delaware does not have a Sports Chapter so Don travels each month to chapter meetings and to all the field days and Rutgers courses.

His responsibility as an Athletic Facilities and Grounds Manager includes operational management of the 20 acre urban campus that includes the safety, playability and aesthetics of an intense use, natural turf grass athletic field, high profile landscape management, snow operations, fiscal management, purchasing, and contractor relations.

Don has worked in the green industry since 1979. His professional affiliations include STMA, SFMANJ, Delaware Grounds Management Association and Delaware Nursery and Landscape Association. His professional certifications include Delaware Department of Agriculture Commercial Pesticide Applicator, Delaware Department of Agriculture Certified Nutrient Consultant and now a Certified Sports

*Continued on page 6*



*Don Savard, CSFM*

## Inside This Issue

Welcome New & Renewed Members .....	3
Membership Form .....	3
SFMANJ Board of Directors .....	3
Did You Know? .....	4
Groundskeepers Create Field of Dreams .....	5
Selecting a Field Marking Paint .....	6
Sports Field Manager's Point of View .....	7
Field Tip: Let's Start Training .....	8
Contracting for Athletic Field Services .....	9
Sponsor in the Spotlight .....	9
SFMANJ Heads South .....	10
Sports Field of the Year .....	11
Question & Answer .....	11
Rutgers Corner .....	12
Are Your Goals Secure? .....	13
Calendar of Events .....	14
Play Ball .....	16
Proud Sponsor Directory .....	18
Synthetic Turf Council Certification Program .....	18

*This newsletter is the official bi-monthly publication of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey.*

For information regarding this newsletter, contact:

SFMANJ at 908-730-7770

*Co-editors:*

Jim Hermann, CSFM and

Eleanora Murfitt-Hermann, CRS

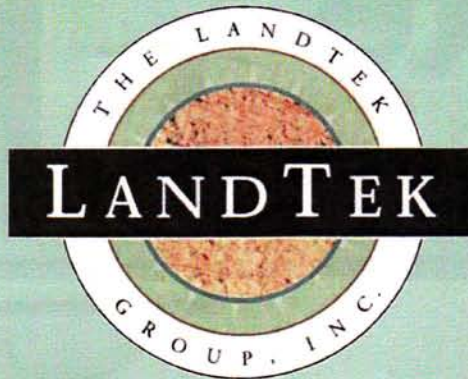
*SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.*

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Start  
Training!*



## SFMANJ Business

Next Board of Directors Meeting –  
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## Welcome New & Renewed SFMANJ Members

Currently we have 357 members. In the beginning of November, SFMANJ mailed invoices for 2005 membership dues to all current members. If you did not receive an invoice, please contact us at (908) 730-7770 or download the 2005 membership form available at [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org). Remember to mail your renewal/payment direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 370, Annandale, NJ 08801. ♦

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# 2005

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### Mission Statement

Committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers in New Jersey 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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Web Site – [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org)

E-mail – [hq@sfmanj.org](mailto:hq@sfmanj.org)

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*Continued on page 4*

Continued from page 3

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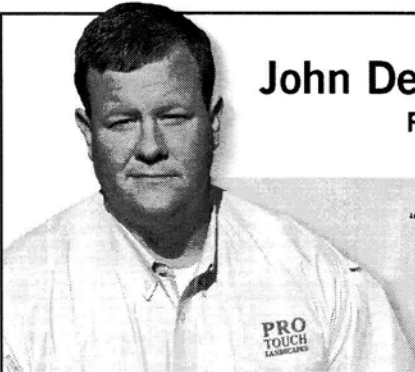
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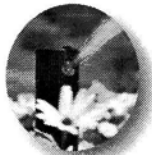


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## NFL and MLB Groundskeepers Create a Field of Dreams at an Inner-City Phoenix High School

### 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 asked, "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](mailto: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*

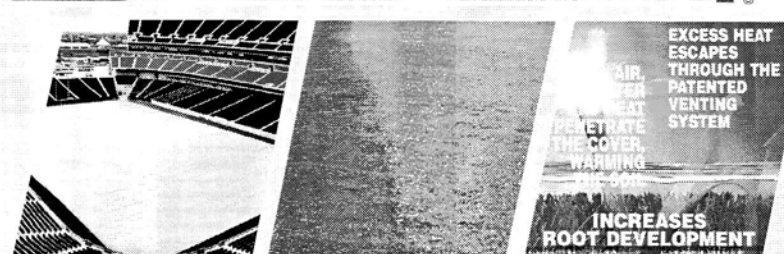
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## “Field Tip” – Let’s start training! Training makes all the difference.

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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Thank you,  
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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](http://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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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 fields only
- \*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 not be returned and may be used on SFMANJ website and promotional settings. ♦

*Continued from page 9*

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 ♦*

## 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](http://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/1000ft<sup>2</sup> 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 decision-making 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-in-mind 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 decision-making 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.

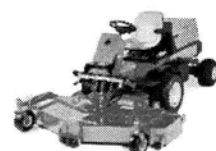
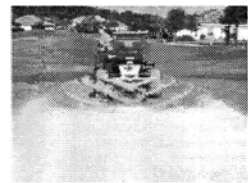
In 2002, the city reached a \$140,000 Canadian (approximately \$114,000 US) settlement with the mother of Shane Diabo.

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

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### 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

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*Continued from page 8*

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-on-one 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,

*Continued on page 18*

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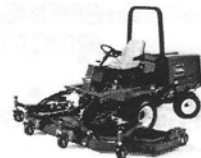
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# “Play Ball” Don’t let them give you any lip

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 *e v e n* 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. ♦

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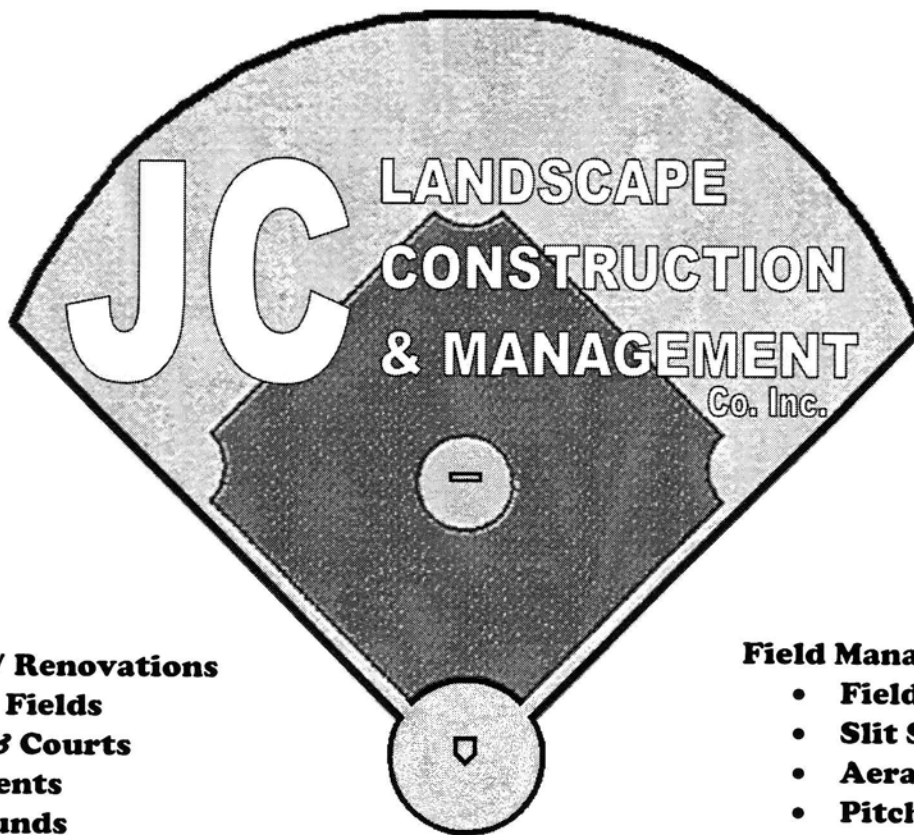


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## Synthetic Turf Council Creates Certification Program

### 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. ♦

*Continued from page 14*

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, on-going 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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