

Diverse Educational Topics Covered at September District Meeting

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

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey held a District II meeting on Wednesday, September 28, 2005 at the Somerset County Parks 4-H Fairgrounds. Sixty-six attendees, including several from out-of-state, came to Bridgewater to learn information that will enable them to become more effective sports field managers. The half-day program was an illustration of the benefits of being an SFMANJ member as there was no registration fee for members of SFMANJ. A special thanks goes out to Storr Tractor Company for participating as a sponsor for this meeting and providing morning coffee and donuts and a post-meeting lunch.



Don Savard, CSFM, explains stenciling techniques that can be utilized to make a sports field standout.

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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 or Brad Park at 732-932-9711 x127

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

The day got started with two SFMANJ Board Members and Certified Sports Field Managers (CSFM's) discussing practical information on important aspects of sports field management. Jim Hermann, CSFM, Total Control, Inc., shared his knowledge of skin infield construction and management followed by Don Savard, CSFM, Salesianum School, who described various line painting and stenciling techniques.

The program moved to a softball outfield where Brad Park, Rutgers University, discussed preventative and curative white grub control methods and techniques that could be used to re-establish turfgrass on areas devastated by white grubs in Fall 2005.

Continued on page 4

SFMANJ Business

Next Board of Directors Meeting -
Wednesday, January 4, 2006, 4:30PM
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Currently we have 371 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. Remember to mail your renewal/payment direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 370, Annandale, NJ 08801. ♦

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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.

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National Organization
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Did you know?

One acre is equivalent to 43560 ft² and one football field (including endzones) consists of 57600 ft²; therefore, the total area of a football field is equal to 1.3 acres. ♦

Continued from page 1

Fred Castenschoild, an organizer of the District meeting, followed by demonstrating various pieces of equipment offered by Storr Tractor Co.

Great education, cooperative weather, enthusiastic attendees, and a fine lunch helped to make this District meeting a success. ♦



Attendees examine a tilled area created by the Rotadairon and demonstrated by Fred Castenschoild, Storr Tractor Co. ♦



Damage caused by white grubs was the turf topic of the day at the September 28, 2005 District Meeting. ♦

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Maximizing A Minimal Budget

By Nicole Sherry

Ah yes, it is that time of year again when all turf professionals sit in front of their computer and fret over how they can spend their budget. With fuel costs rising and freight charges climbing, it is hard to imagine how we can still maintain our sports fields the way they ought to be maintained. Let's not stress too much yet! There are many ways we, as professionals, can live up to our own standards. I know that many people in this industry think that just because I work on a professional field I have a budget that is ample enough to complete the task at hand. Well, that is far from the truth. Fact is, many of you probably have more money to spend on field maintenance than I do. When I worked in Major League Baseball I was taught to stretch our budget as far as it could go. That included taking the time to brainstorm ideas that could help us stay away from purchasing things that were too expensive. Instead, we made a lot of our equipment by looking at pictures of expensive tools in trade magazines and copied them. For instance, it is really important to nail drag our infield. We went to the store, purchased wood and nails and constructed our own drag. We saved almost one hundred dollars by doing so. The labor was not an issue either because we saved the project for down time during games or rainy days. We also created level boards the same way. It is easy to find scrap wood or even things you have left over in your shop to use. When I first started at the Thunder I hardly had any hand tools. I was surprised how much they cost at retail prices. They cost more than what I budgeted for. So, I called my dad and asked if he had any he wanted to give away. Whatever he gave-up, I gladly took. Then I went around on weekends looking for yard sales or moving sales and seized some more tools that way.

In managing a professional field I dump most of my budget into my machinery, fertilizer, chemicals, clay, and infield skin topdressing. Shopping around and comparing prices can almost cut these costs by 15%. Some companies' policies allow you to purchase quantities before a certain date in order to pay last year's prices before they raise them for the new year. Also, just because you buy them now, does not mean you have to accept delivery now. You can wait and have them delivered at your convenience without paying extra. Some of us suffer from "name brand syndrome"! If you can get away from brand names and shop around for prices, you will be surprised how much you can save and how alike these products are. For example, ABC drying agent for infields costs almost \$11.50 per bag. I found that I can purchase XYZ for \$8.00 a bag and it is exactly the same thing.

In Closing, I am not saying that these ideas are going to save you thousands of dollars. However, if you shop around for lower prices and try to make your own equipment, you will be able to use the savings to put back into your big-ticket items like machinery or chemicals. In this business you never know what the weather is going to bring, so putting an extra \$500 dollars into another item can save you in the long run. Network with other professionals in your area. Ask what they do in certain situations and where they purchase products. Maybe you could borrow a piece of equipment you do not have in exchange for one they do not have. We are all in this together for good and bad. We are such a small industry that helping one another maintain safe, playable, and aesthetically pleasing facilities should be everyone's number one goal.

Nicole Sherry is the Head Groundskeeper for Trenton Thunder, Double-A Affiliate of the New York Yankees. ♦

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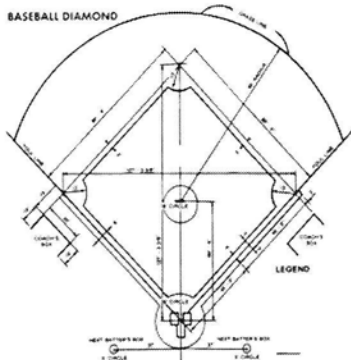
February 28, 2006

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March 7, 2006

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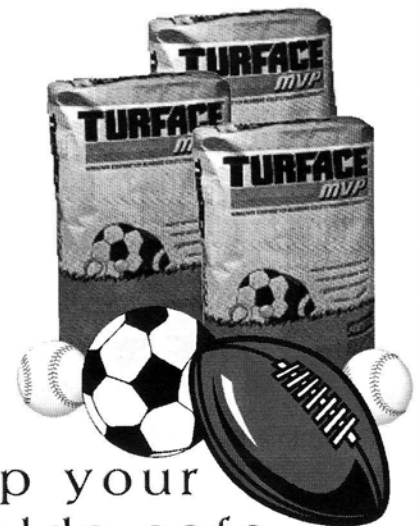
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'Business is Picking-Up'

By Don Savard, CSFM

For years I had been providing trashcans around my sports fields with the expectation that the players and spectators would use them. I would end up with full or half empty trashcans that needed to be emptied. There was always litter and trash in the vicinity of the cans and elsewhere that needed to be picked up. We put out more trashcans and even signs politely asking people to use the cans. Still more trash and litter.

Across the road from our School there is a State Park. I rarely notice a trash problem there. It is a "Carry in-Carry out" park, which means they do not provide trashcans. They have signs to the effect and even provide bags if you need them. And the program seems to be effective. Hmm, I thought.

This past spring, I tried an "experiment". I didn't put out trashcans. I said nothing to the coaches. Baseball

and Lacrosse teams played games and practiced daily. No trash problem, very little litter. Summer camps used the field's last summer, same results no trash, almost no litter. I told the Athletic Director. He seemed skeptical. This fall - football and soccer. Big programs, many kids. Lots of paper cups. We provided the Athletic Trainers with plastic bags to accompany the big orange water containers. We convinced the teams that it was their responsibility to pick-up and haul away the trash bags when they return the orange jugs to the equipment room after practice. While the football teams throw the cups at the bag trying to toss them in and the soccer players still throw the cups on the ground during practice, they do pick up their litter before they leave and do a pretty good job most of the time. The Athletic Director was impressed.

We still find some litter in the spectator areas after events. Nothing

is perfect I guess! But our campus is staying cleaner, and we spend fewer man-hours picking litter, hauling trash and washing trashcans. Best of all, nobody has said anything about our "experiment". ♦

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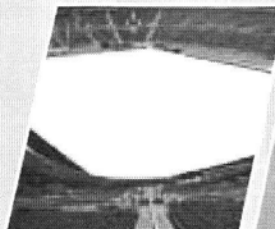
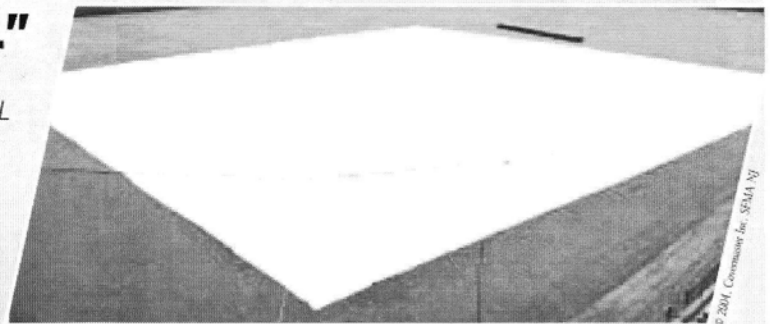
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Rutgers Corner – The Rutgers Turf Club pays a visit to Yankee Stadium

By Brad Park, Rutgers University

It's been called many things: The House that Ruth Built; The Big Ballpark in The Bronx; The Stadium; and names uttered by Red Sox fans that are not fit to print in this article ...

Regardless, the Rutgers Turfgrass Club was given an opportunity to take a tour of the Yankee Stadium playing field on September 23, 2005 followed by attending the Yankees-Toronto Blue Jays game that evening where the Yanks won 5-0 behind Shawn Chacon's fine

8.0-inning performance in which he only allowed 3 hits.

Yankee Stadium Head Groundskeeper Dan Cunningham provided great insight on turfgrass and infield skin management necessary to maintain the playing surface of the 26-time World Champions. Cunningham discussed his methods for maintaining the infield skin and pitcher's mound including utilizing a unique "drip-type" irrigation system that exists underneath

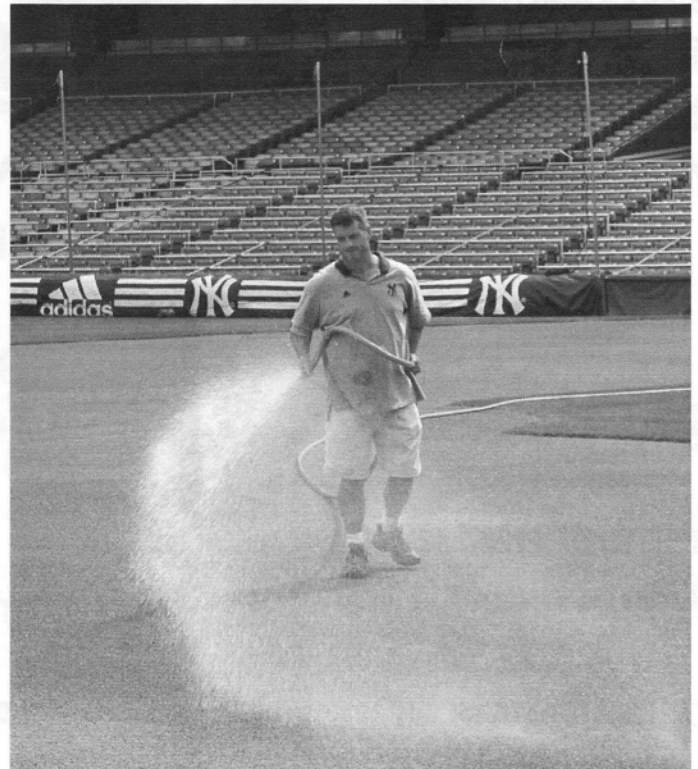
the infield skin.

Cunningham described the paints he uses to create the famous interlocking NY logo behind home plate, the maintenance of his warning track, and the challenges of storing equipment and sand topdressing in a truly urban sports venue completely surrounded by city streets.

Many thanks go out to Dan Cunningham for providing the tour and Dr. Bruce Clarke, Director, Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science, for arranging the visit. ♦



The Rutgers Turf Club was given the opportunity to examine the pitcher's mound as part of a visit to Yankee Stadium in September. ♦



The Yankee Stadium infield skin is kept moist prior to the Yanks' night game against the Toronto Blue Jays. ♦



A Yankee employee shows the Rutgers Turf Club his 1998 World Series Ring. ♦



The meticulously maintained home plate area at Yankee Stadium. ♦



Dr. Bruce Clarke (left), Director, Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science and Dan Cunningham (right), Head Groundskeeper, Yankee Stadium. ♦



A rotary spreader is used to apply calcined clay to the Yankee Stadium infield skin prior to the evening game. ♦

Building a Better Toolbox - Tools you can use!

By Don Savard, CSFM

(Editor's note: In the next few issues, I will be reporting on some topics that I have found helpful making my job easier. I use these ideas and actions as tools which help make the job easier. For example: COMMUNICATION TOOLS-building an understanding with all of the people we work with so that we all know what we are trying to accomplish; INFORMATION TOOLS-gathering the facts so we plan or make informed decisions; PRACTICES TOOLS- actions we do, or techniques we use to get an outcome; INPUTS TOOLS-materials we use to get an outcome.

Remember that that like the hardware variety, no one tool is useful in every application, but these tools do work. Use these tools to save time, money and get better results. The toolbox is open, help yourself, and if you like them and they work for you, pass them along.)

Communication as a tool

The growing season is coming to an end. As we prepare out sports fields for winter, it is the time to enjoy a change in the seasons, and think ahead towards the next. Now is a good time to consult with the people we work for and try to find out what their ideas and expectations are. What was good in the past year, and what might be better in the next? All of these people (employers, associates, colleagues, vendors and clientele) have expectations of what you are trying to deliver. So do you. Frequently, these might differ from your own. For example, I recently took the decision maker where I work on a tour of our sports fields. This decision maker commented favorably on the appearance and improvements of our site. I asked him if he was interested in upgrades for our facility. After hearing some options (and finding out how much they would cost), he said that our facility was more than adequate for our needs at this time, but he would consider upgrades in the future.

This was a very productive conversation! As desirable the idea of bringing our facility to a higher level was to me, after discussing his ideas with him, I now have a clear understanding of the "big picture" and his vision of the

facility for the coming year. It will be easier for me now to create a strategic plan and a budget for the next year. My communications with my clientele, vendors and the people who work for me, will be more effective because I know exactly where I stand. Rather than wasting time, writing proposals that might never be considered (and feeling resentful), I can move ahead.

Properly set expectations are a great tool for everybody (including me). By discovering what the expectations (of all of our people) are and setting them at realistic levels, we increase our credibility with those around us. Customer satisfaction will be maintained or increased.

Learning to set realistic expectation begins with listening to what the other person is saying or asking for. People sometimes have difficulty communicating what they want. By asking some probing questions, we can uncover what they are really mean. Empathize with that person and respect

what they want and why.

Know what your capabilities and limits are. Sometimes it is good to understate your predictions. Remember you can only promise what it is that you can control. Be honest with your clientele (and yourself). Deliver on time what you say you will deliver.

Documentation is a tool. It protects you and your credibility. Document everything that you do, keep notes of conversations, record important data, expenses, time spent, weather data. Create a history, a paper trail and definitely take before and after pictures. Neatness counts. Ask how your customers want to be kept posted and how frequently, then do it.

Credibility is also a tool, much like personal credit. Credibility must be earned; it needs to be maintained and it can move mountains for you.

When the time to upgrade our facility finally comes, if I use the tools, I will have an easier time developing a credible, workable plan. ♦



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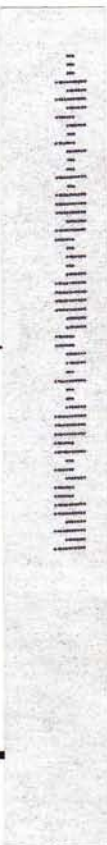
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