

# UPDATE

July/August, 2006 • Vol. 6, No. 4 • e-mail:  
hq@sfmanj.org • www.sfmanj.org



## GEORGE TOMA: "Do The Job. . .And Then Some"

Brad Park\*



*"I've been in the game 64 years and I'm still learning." George Toma, field consultant for all 40 Super Bowls addressed attendees at SFMANJ's 2006 Summer Demonstration Field Day held at the County College of Morris, Randolph, NJ.*

The phrase, "Do the job ... and then some" was among the words of advice offered by George Toma, longtime Super Bowl consultant and universally-known sports field manager, in delivering several talks during Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey's (SFMANJ) Summer Demonstration Field Day held at the County College of Morris, Randolph, NJ on June 28, 2006.

Toma began the day's program by recounting his time growing-up in blue collar Northeastern Pennsylvania. While working on a sports field in Wilkes-Barre, PA, he noted that the best weed control he ever encountered came by way of workers from a local streetcar barn who came to his sports field with knives and "controlled" the dandelions. The broadleaf delicacies would later be part of a salad.

As his resume blossomed, Toma recalled being given an offer by the New York Yankees, "The Yankees always wanted me to come to New York ... but New York was too big." After Yankee management suggested he could live in Tenaflly or Teaneck to avoid the hustle and bustle of NYC and simply cross the George Washington Bridge to go to work, Toma responded, "I didn't want to pay the 50-cent toll."

Nicknamed the "Marquis de Sod", Toma has witnessed many changes in the sports field industry. In 1957 in Kansas City, the local sod farm

consisted of a cow pasture, Toma recalled. Later in his career, Toma oversaw the sodding of the Superdome in New Orleans with 40 ft-long by 8 ft-wide strips of sod that individually weighed 4000 lbs.

Noting that, "People expect too much from natural grass and give too little", Toma shared his insight on the agronomics of sports field management. He emphasized the need for seed-to-soil contact during establishment and encouraged people to aerify, specifically developing a deep tine aerification program. He suggested using the popular Aera-Vator once per week in heavily trafficked goal mouth areas with the PTO disengaged to aerify and apply seed using the seed box attachment. On the issue of mowing, Toma wisely asserted, "If you don't have the time to check the sharpness of a [mower] blade, you don't have time to cut grass."

To the groundskeepers in attendance, Toma ended with, "You're unsung heroes. You're my idols."



*The SFMANJ Board of Directors with the "Marquis de Sod", George Toma. Pictured (l-r): Craig Tolley; Don Savard, CSFM and SFMANJ Vice President; Ken Mathis, SFMANJ President; Joe Warner, CSFM; George Toma; Karl "Chuckie" Singer; Jeff Cramer, El Hermann, SFMANJ Past President; Brad Park, Editor, SFMANJ Update; Fred Castenschild.*

\* Brad Park is Sports Turf Res. & Ed. Coord., Rutgers Univ.; SFMANJ Board member; and Editor, SFMANJ Update

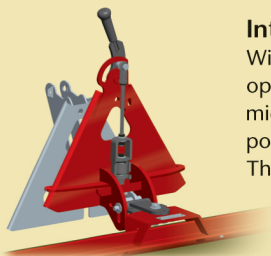


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Currently we have 319 new & renewed members. In the beginning of November 2005, SFMANJ mailed invoices for 2006 membership dues to all current members. If you did not receive an invoice, please contact us at 908-730-7770 or download the 2006 membership 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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DeFelice, Mike	Mendham Borough DPW
DePriore, Darren	College of Staten Island
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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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 Sports Turf Managers Association

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Email: [stmainfo@sportsturfmanager.org](mailto:stmainfo@sportsturfmanager.org)

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Please pay membership dues directly to SFMANJ. Do not send SFMANJ dues to National STMA.

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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

Brad Park, Rutgers University  
 Email: [park@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:park@aesop.rutgers.edu)

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



# Rain Could Not Washout SFMANJ's Summer Demonstration Field Day

Brad Park\*

Overnight rain and soaking morning showers could not washout Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey's Summer Demonstration Field Day held at the County College of Morris (CCM), Randolph, NJ on June 28, 2006 – although it did force the SFMANJ Board to make some slight adjustments to the program in what President Ken Mathis appropriately called, "Plan B."

The morning program, scheduled to be completed outdoors and to include trade show time, was moved inside and featured Super Bowl consultant George Toma. Toma displayed his versatility as a public speaker by giving back-to-back 1.0-hour presentations and fielding questions from attendees following both talks.

Craig Tolley, Professor, CCM and SFMANJ Board Member as well as the CCM staff are graciously acknowledged for hosting the Summer Demonstration Field Day as well as arranging the fine lunch that followed George Toma's presentations.

The timing of the day's weather could not have worked out better as the skies cleared and sun broke through for the afternoon outdoor activities. Attendees flowed from booth to booth to visit with the vendors individually as part of the tradeshow. Additionally, attendees were gathered in a group and each vendor was allotted time to describe his or her products and services. As an incentive for attendees to spend time with the vendors, vendor door prizes were eligible only to those attendees who visited a vendor booth and filled-out a ticket available at the booth.

Following the tradeshow, it was time for vendors to demonstrate the latest and greatest sports field equipment. A meeting between representatives of New Jersey equipment giants Storr Tractor and Wilfred MacDonald, as well as CCM personnel, determined that the skinned infield surface was too wet to demonstrate infield grooming equipment. Those vendors demonstrating equipment included: Aer-Core, Inc., Bobcat of North Jersey, Levitt's LLC, Storr Tractor Co. and Philadelphia Turf Co., and Wilfred MacDonald.

The day ended with a talk delivered by Dr. John Grande, Director, Rutgers Snyder Research and Extension Farm. Dr. Grande's presentation titled, "Calibration of Granular Pesticide Application Equipment" allowed those certified pesticide applicators in attendance to receive one NJ DEP Core credit.

A significant portion of this issue of *SFMANJ Update* includes photo highlights of the trade show and equipment demonstrations. When making purchasing decisions, please give extra consideration to those vendors who support SFMANJ, as this organization could not exist without their continued participation in SFMANJ events.

*\* Brad Park is Sports Turf Res. and Ed. Coord., Rutgers Univ.; SFMANJ Board member; and Editor, SFMANJ Update*



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*Fred Castenschiold, Storr Tractor Co., discussed the latest Toro Infield Pro.*



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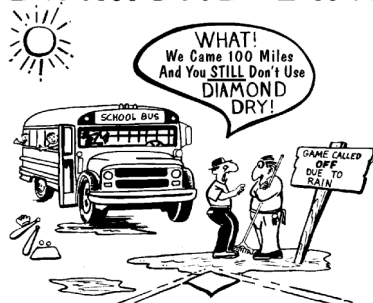
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*Dennis DeSanctis, Aer-Core, Inc. describes a Wiedenmann  
deep tine aerification unit.*



*The Smithco Sweepstar 60 is offered by Wildred MacDonald and  
was described by Bernie White during the 2006 Summer Demonstration Field Day.*

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*The Toro Groundsmaster 4100 was brought to the County College of Morris by Storr Tractor Co. and the details of this mower were communicated by Kevin Hoban.*



*Bobcat of North Jersey was on-hand at the 2006 Summer Demonstration Field Day. The A300 Bobcat skid steer loader was demonstrated for the attendees.*

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# SFMANJ STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE.

A \$500 SFMANJ Student Scholarship will be awarded at Expo 2006 in Atlantic City (December 5-7, 2006). To apply, email or send via US Mail a 500-word essay on "Why you deserve this scholarship." The student must be member of SFMANJ in good standing. Please include:

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**Dr. Henry W. Indyk**  
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Turfgrass Science

As many of you know, the turfgrass industry lost a dear friend and colleague in September 2005. We will all miss Henry very much and would like to insure that his legacy lives on. The Indyk family would like to establish a memorial fellowship to support graduate students interested in applied turfgrass science. This fellowship is being created to help assure that tomorrow's graduate students have the financial resources to get an advanced degree in turfgrass science at Rutgers University. To fund a full graduate assistantship each year in Henry's name, we will need to raise a total of \$400,000. Your generous support at this time will bring us closer to reaching this goal.

To make a tax-deductible contribution today, please send a check payable to the Rutgers University Foundation, 7 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Be sure to indicate "Indyk Fellowship, Turfgrass" in the memo portion of your check. If you desire, you may provide a donation in the form of a pledge payable over several years.

For information on other ways to support this fellowship, please contact Dr. Bruce B. Clarke, Director - Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science (732-932-9400, ext. 331; or [clarke@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:clarke@aesop.rutgers.edu)) or John Pearson, Director of Leadership Gifts at the Foundation, by calling (732) 932-7899 or email: [pearson@winants.rutgers.edu](mailto:pearson@winants.rutgers.edu)



*Pete Caruso, Levitt's LLC, provides Field Day attendees with the details on the PrizeLawn Turf Tracker*



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# FIELD OF THE YEAR CONTEST 2006

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) is announcing its annual FOY contest. Individual awards will be presented to the school, FOY and parks/recreation FOY.

## ENTERING is easy, send to:

SFMANJ Contest, Po Box 370, Annandale, NJ 08801  
Entries must be received by September 30, 2006

## ELIGIBILITY:

- Two categories; School or Parks/Recreation fields only
- Current member of SFMANJ
- Natural grass fields only

## 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 Turfgrass Expo 2006 (December 5-7, 2006) and be interviewed for a feature article in SFMANJ Update newsletter (also receive a two-night stay at Taj Mahal, Atlantic City and three days of education).

## NOTE:

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



Diagram of a baseball field showing dimensions and bases.

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# SFMANJ CONGRATULATES OUR NEWEST CSFM

Don Savard, CSFM\*

On February 1, 2006 Joe Warner became our newest Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM). Joe sat for the exam at the recent Sports Turf Managers Association conference in Orlando at Walt Disney World (January 17-22, 2006). I caught up with Joe for coffee soon after and we talked about the CSFM program.

**D. Savard:** So, Joe, *why did you become a CSFM?*

**J. Warner:** Because it was there! I always believed that it epitomized an ideal, and shows the industry that someone is on top of the newest things in our industry. Passing the testing procedure is an achievement.

**D. Savard:** *How long did you prepare?*

**J. Warner:** About thirty-five years (laughs). I spent 6 months reading all my books to help prepare, but really, the test was really the compilation of all my years of experience in the field. The hardest thing about the exam was sitting down and thinking about how I was going to answer the questions. The test asks practical questions about practical situations or problems. Somebody could be book smart and not pass; it truly was a test of my experience.

**D. Savard:** *How did you get into Sports Field Management?*

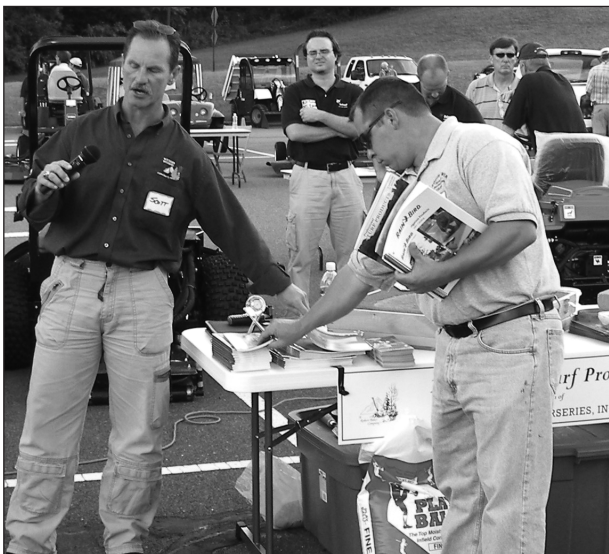
**J. Warner:** I was in my own landscape business for 25 years and got out. Somehow I was drawn back in and began working with the DVH Group. DVH was involved

with commercial and residential turf and we eventually got into sports fields. We knew turf care, but we found that sports fields were a horse of a different color. I found that there were lots of people in the landscape business bidding themselves out of business and on the sports field side there were few qualified people out there and lots of shoddy work. What I wanted to do was to distinguish our company from the rest; besides, I wanted to make a difference.

**D. Savard:** *How is that?*

**J. Warner:** By educating the public and becoming more professional, we can do a better job of creating safe, playable fields. It starts by having a professional attitude, acquiring knowledge and by delivering professional results. The CSFM program is an avenue for the professional to improve him or herself.

\* Don Savard is a Certified Sports Field Manager; Director, Athletic Facilities and Grounds, Salesianum School; and SFMANJ Vice-President



*A Field Day attendee picks-up literature on the turfgrass products described by Scott Bills, Northern Nurseries.*



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Excellent References

# TOURNAMENT TIME - A GROUNDSKEEPER'S ACCOUNT OF PREPARATION FOR A BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

Rich Watson\*

Hosting a tournament is a lot of work, however it is a good opportunity to showcase your facility. There will be people seeing your field for the first time, so make them remember it for the right reasons. We were informed this year that we would be one of three sites hosting the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Joe Hartman Diamond Classic. The tournament brings together the top 16 baseball teams in South Jersey. On May 13, 2006 Overbrook High School hosted two games, but the preparation started weeks earlier.

The call informing us about the tournament came in mid-April, so we had a good amount of time to prepare. First, we checked our baseball team's schedule for possible conflicts. Next was to check our field maintenance program. As luck would have it, a fertilizer application was scheduled the week before the tournament as well as spraying Roundup on our skinned areas. Timing is everything. The grass looked great and our skinned areas were free of weeds.

With two weeks to go, we started cutting-in our pattern for the games. We cut the outfield in three directions at 2 inches every other day. The infield was cut in two directions at 1½-inch every other day. We use an Exmark Lazer Zero Turn mower (with a striping kit) to cut our outfield and an Exmark walk-behind mower for the infield. Sharp blades are very important, so we change them at least once a week.

The week of the tournament was very challenging. We had two games of our own in addition to the final prep for the big games. The day before the tournament is very important. We tried to do as many things as possible to make game day a little easier. Bullpen mounds were repaired, extra bleachers were moved, trash cans emptied, the infield was edged, and a sound check was done on the sound system. We made final cuts on the infield and outfield because there is no time the day of the games. Our mound and home plate areas are made of Hilltopper mound clay. Both areas were repaired and covered. The infield was scarified, graded smooth, and then lightly rolled. The automatic irrigation system was used to wet down the infield at night, setting the stage for game day.

When the day of the tournament finally arrives, it's payday for all of the hard work. The day started with a light dragging of the infield, followed by another good soaking of the skinned areas. Next, foul lines and batters boxes were painted and chalked. At the last minute we decided to stencil the name of the tournament and the team names on the grass behind home plate. This was a nice touch that the teams and

fans really seemed to appreciate. Finally, we painted the bases, pitching rubber, and home plate. It was game time.

The tournament was a great success. In between games we repaired the mound and plate, smoothed the infield with stiff drags, and touched up the chalk and paint. We wanted to make sure the second game played the same as the first. The coaches, players, and fans were very complimentary about our facility. That makes all the hard work worth it.

Putting together the maintenance end of a baseball tournament takes a lot of planning and hard work from a lot of people. My crew of Greg Bunting, Tom Crosby, and Kevin Shipman were outstanding. Their professionalism and hard work really showed in the playing condition of the field. Also, I would like to thank Dave Lalena of Philadelphia Turf for letting us use a Toro Workman with a Rahn groomer and a Toro Groundsmaster 3505d for the tournament.

Tournament time is an opportunity to show off your field, while giving the teams a fair, competitive surface to play on. If you get the chance, step up to the plate and be remembered for the right reasons.

\* Rich Watson is Grounds Supervisor, Pine Hill Public Schools, Pine Hill, NJ



*Greg Bunting, Pine Hill Public Schools, applies water to the baseline prior to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Joe Hartman Diamond Classic held at Overbrook High School, Pine Hill, NJ.*



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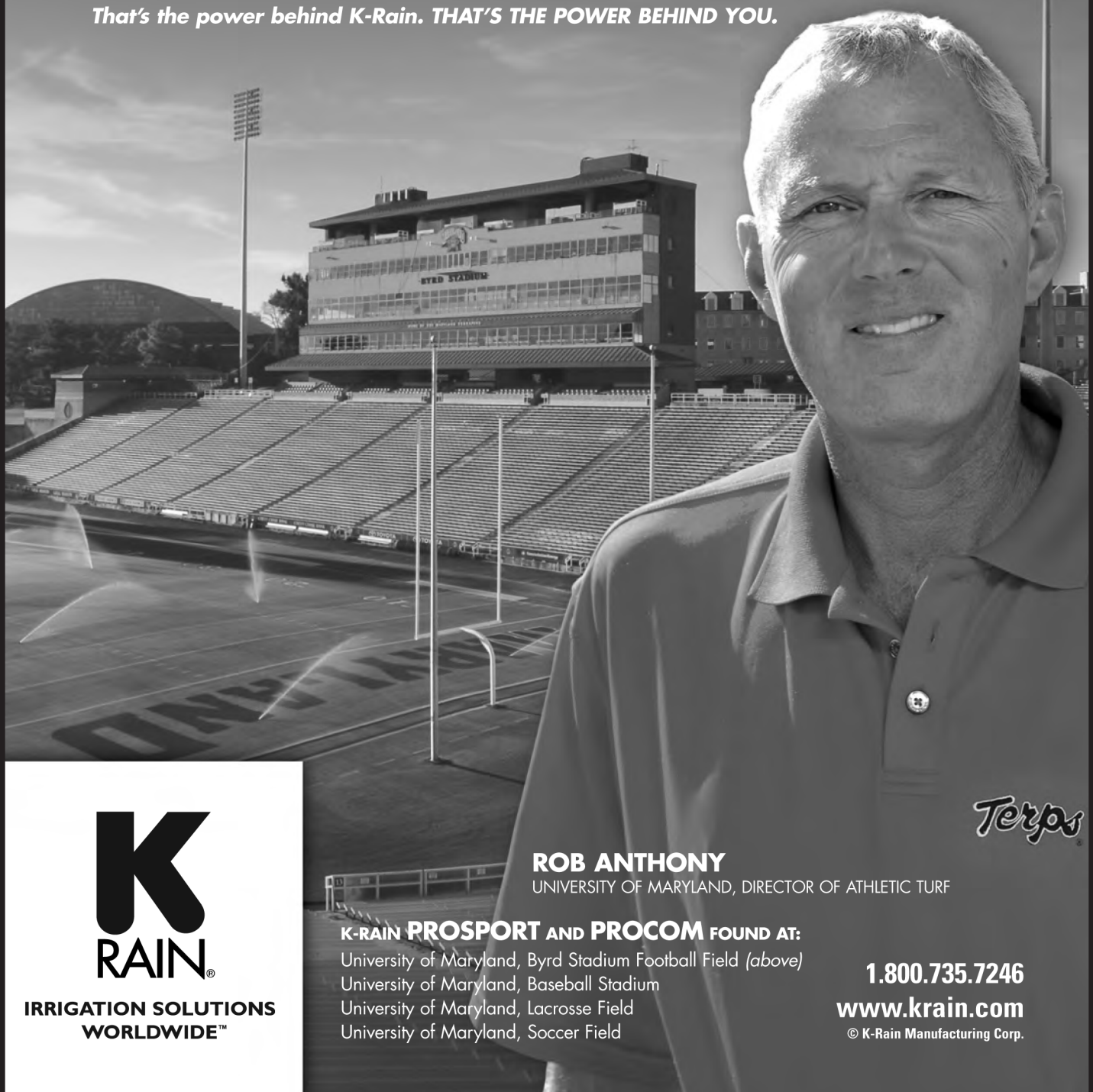
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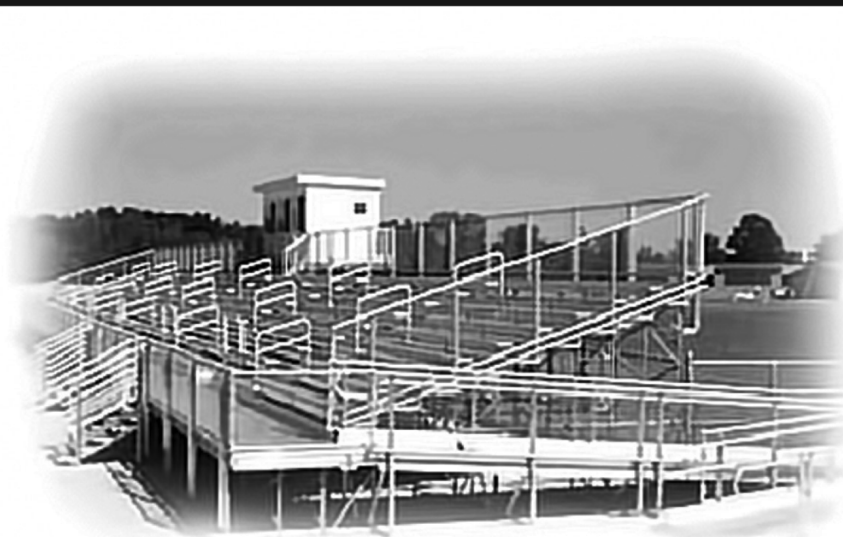
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*Tony Gentile represented the Terre Company during the trade show portion of the Summer Demonstration Field Day.*



*Marie Pompei, Past Present, New Jersey Turfgrass Association, describes turfgrass seed products offered by F.M. Brown's Sons, Inc.*



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*Mike Viersma elaborates on the sports field construction and renovation services provided by Bob Viersma & Sons, Inc.*

*Dr. John Grande, Director, Rutgers Snyder Research and Extension Farm shows proper granular material application techniques at the 2006 Summer Demonstration Field Day.*



## DID YOU KNOW?

New York City received 0.80 inches of precipitation between March 1 and 31 in 2006.

In June 2006, the Big Apple was drenched with 8.55 inches of rain.

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# TIPS FOR ATHLETIC FIELD CARE

Dr. David D. Minner\*

**Use higher than normal seeding rates.** In most cases, facilities are needed for play before seeded grass has completed a full year's growth. Higher seeding rates allow for faster ground coverage and provide better competition with weeds, especially crabgrass. Higher than normal seeding rates that provide faster coverage are Kentucky bluegrass 3 to 4 lbs/1000 sq. ft., tall fescue 8 to 12 lbs/1000 sq. ft., and perennial ryegrass 10 to 15 lbs/1000 sq. ft.

**Deeper seeded grass that is still able to germinate survives traffic better.** Drill seeding and seeding after hollow coring is preferred. Plants that develop crowns deeper in the soil are more protected than those that are on top of the soil and are easily damaged.

**When renovating, keep existing turf if there is at least 30 to 50% grass cover.** Mature grass plants, even in a thin stand of grass, have better traffic-tolerance than a thick stand of seedling turf. Unless there is good reason, avoid non-selective killing of all grass in high-traffic areas. Keep the grass you have and overseed with coring and slicing to fill in bare spots.

**Use a combination of nitrogen sources.** Quick release in the fall, slow release in early summer, and organic nitrogen in the spring or summer.

**Use equal N and K** for traffic and drought tolerance.

Always **have at least one showcase field.** Reallocate resources so that you have at least one field that lets your boss and the public know that you are capable of producing quality turf when given the proper resources and control of the field. Even if resources are limited, don't spread them out so that all of your fields are average-to-poor or your reputation as a grounds manager may be perceived as average-to-poor. Document what it takes to have at least one good field, and use the information to justify an increase in resources to improve the rest of the fields that are in poor condition.

Build **a repertoire of instant solutions** that you can count on in time of need. For example, thick-cut sod, pre-germinated seed, water removal products, smoothing and rolling. Like any good ball team, you should practice these procedures before you try them in game situations.

## SOME COMMON MISTAKES

### Non-irrigated areas

Using 100% ryegrass for fall repair of summer "burn out". Each year you will be doing the same thing over and over. Continue to use the ryegrass but add 30% Kentucky bluegrass, especially those from the low-maintenance and drought-tolerant categories.

It is a mistake to anticipate that tall fescue can be used as a substitute for an adequate irrigation system, especially on soccer fields where a smooth ball rolling surface is desired. Even with its excellent drought and traffic tolerance, tall fescue's bunch habit can cause a clumpy and uneven playing surface when water is lacking and traffic is intense. Should clumping become a problem, interseeding with more tall fescue and temporary watering with a portable rain gun will be needed to regain adequate turf density. If Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass have failed because of limited water then give tall fescue a try. The key point here is not to discourage you from using tall fescue, but instead to encourage you to provide at least temporary irrigation. Watering as little as five times during the summer may be sufficient to maintain an adequate stand of tall fescue.

Close mowing and heavy nitrogen applications of any non-irrigated turf, especially Kentucky bluegrass. This combination of mowing, watering, and fertility is the best way to predispose Kentucky bluegrass to summer patch and loss of turf during summer drought dormancy.

## IRRIGATED AREAS

Over watering – too much, too often, too shallow. As a general rule, turf should be allowed to slightly wilt before irrigation. At this stage of wilting, soils are well-aerated because air has replaced the water that was removed from the soil pore space by the roots. Roots need water to grow, but they also need air-filled pore space. Excessively wet soils become anaerobic and have a distinct sulfur odor of rotten eggs. Root growth is poor in anaerobic conditions. Allow the turf to slightly wilt and then apply about an inch of water. Wait until the turf just begins to wilt before watering again. About 1.0 to 1.5 inches of water per week is sufficient for soil-based fields. Sand-based fields may require more frequent watering.

Mid-day watering of grass. This increases humidity and free moisture near the plant that results in increased disease.

No plan for watering the skin on baseball/softball fields. Don't forget to install separate heads and valves for watering just the infield dirt. Don't place the heads so that they water both the dirt and the grass. Watering the skin portion of an infield is just as important as watering the grass. A separate station is needed for watering the skin infield because it is managed differently than grass.

\*Dr. David D. Minner is Extension Turfgrass Specialist,  
Iowa State University



*Down the stretch they come! Thoroughbred racing commenced in June on the turf course at Monmouth Park, site of SFMANJ's Spring Field Day 2006.*



*Don Savard, CSFM and SFMANJ Vice President, Ken Indyk, Storr Tractor, and Bernie White, Wilfred MacDonald (l-r) inspect the skin infield surface at the County College of Morris during SFMANJ's Summer Demonstration Field Day.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Major League Baseball record for a consecutive games hitting streak is 56 games set by the New York Yankees' legendary Joe DiMaggio from May 5 - July 16, 1941.



*Tina Marie Brown details the latest advancement in irrigation offered by Rain Bird Corp.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

Tear-out and disposal costs for infill systems have been estimated to be \$1.75 to \$2.25 per ft<sup>2</sup>; therefore, to tear-out and dispose of an 80,000 ft<sup>2</sup> surface, it is conceivable to budget between \$140,000 and \$180,000.

*\*Cost range provided by Tony Strickland, CSFM, Athletic Construction, Inc., Oakwood, GA.*



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