

UPDATE

January/February, 2008
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e-mail: hq@sfmanj.org
www.sfmanj.org

Sports Field
Managers Association of New Jersey



EXPO 2007 - ANOTHER GREAT SHOW IN ATLANTIC CITY!

By Brad Park



Dr. Mike Goatley, Virginia Tech, spoke at the New Jersey Turf and Landscape Conference and Expo in December 2007. In January 2008, Sports Turf Managers Association awarded Dr. Goatley the Dr. William H. Daniel Award, acknowledging an individual who has significantly contributed to the sports turf industry through research, teaching and extension outreach.

The 32nd Annual New Jersey Turf and Landscape Conference and Expo was held December 4-6, 2007 at the Trump Taj Mahal. Presented by New Jersey Turfgrass Association (NJTA) and New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association (NJLCA), cooperating organizations included Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey (GCSANJ), Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ), and Rutgers University.

Expo 2007 featured talks by Dr. Mike Goatley, Extension Specialist, Virginia Tech on “*Management Strategies for High Traffic Fields*” and “*Elements of Sports Field Construction*”. Dr. Goatley was recently awarded the prestigious Dr. William H. Daniel Award at the Sports Turf Managers Association Conference in Phoenix, AZ (January 15-19, 2008). The award acknowledges an individual who has significantly contributed to the sports turf industry through research, teaching and extension outreach.

Kevin Trotta, Grounds Manager, North Rockland School District, delivered his talk titled, “*Environmental Turfcraft for Sports Fields*” in which he encouraged those in attendance to consider the environmental impact of those decisions one makes as part of their work-related responsibilities.

Synthetic infill fields were again addressed in 2007 as Ken Mathis, Superintendent Brick Township Parks described his own experiences in the process selecting a synthetic infill field. Kevin Malone, CSFM is the Turf Manger

at Columbia University in New York City. He discussed the important subject of managing synthetic infill fields.

Other out-of-state speakers included Rich Watson, Turf Supervisor for Belvedere Property Management on Long Island and Mike Kelley, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, Polytech High School, Woodside, Delaware. Rich elaborated on the turfgrass IPM methods he employed while previously working in a Board of Education setting in New Jersey. Mike described the methods he used to establish Bermudagrass on his football field situated in what is typically classified as the “transition zone.”

Members of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) Board of Directors also spoke at Expo 2007. These Board members included: Don Savard, CSFM, CGM; Jim Hermann, CSFM; and Brad Park, Editor, SFMANJ *Update*.

The Expo 2007 trade show proved to be an excellent location to investigate the latest product offering from green industry vendors, network with other industry professionals, and take advantage of the complimentary food and drink. Similar to 2006, this year’s trade show brought new vendors to the trade show floor and subsequently introduced attendees to new products and services resulting from the NJTA-NJLCA partnership.

As this January/February issue of *Update* is being assembled, printed, and mailed, Expo 2008 is already in the early stages on planning. SFMANJ and other organizations involved with Expo hope to see everyone in Atlantic City in December 2008 for 33rd Annual New Jersey Turf and Landscape Conference and Expo.

* Brad Park is Sports Turf Res. and Ed. Coord., Rutgers University; SFMANJ Board Member; and Editor, SFMANJ *Update*



Brad Park, Rutgers University, Editor, SFMANJ *Update*, and SFMANJ Board Member (l) presents Rob Shortell, Rutgers Graduate Student and SFMANJ student member (r) with the 2007 SFMANJ Student Member Scholarship.

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(continued on page 4)

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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

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

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(continued from page 3)

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MAKING THE EXPERIENCED OPERATORS OF TOMORROW

By Scott Beachy

Think about your starting day at your first job in this industry. You did not have any experience and never used any of what seemed like large equipment, whatever it was, dedicated mowers, sprayers, and tractors with different attachments or even loaders, backhoes or dump trucks. You were either one of two types: scared and unsure of yourself as far as running equipment or you were over confident and thought, “where are the keys?”

Now, jump ahead to today. Every year seems to bring one or two new employees to our department and at least half have no experience, yet they are still unsure and overconfident. So, how do you train them? First, I would check with your insurance company. Sometimes they will have training available that is at least partially relevant (usually the safety aspect) to the equipment you use. If not, ask them for any recommendations.

At our department, we do a blended program. We have employees attend classes and in-house training. Also, do not forget about continuous training. We try to send employees to some of these classes every one to three years to keep them safe and current. A lot of factors come into play when it comes to deciding when a person is ready to run a piece of equipment. It may be a time factor or if you have one, it may be a union issue. Once all the other issues involved have been satisfied, it is important to point out that you have to feel comfortable with an employee using a piece of equipment. I try to get through these issues to get at least one training session done as early as possible. I find that once a person starts to learn the controls and operation of a piece of equipment while watching other operators they will be able to learn a lot faster. They will ask themselves, “How is that done?” and pay close attention to that particular operation. They will pick-up on things that they would not have without that first training.

The first thing I say to a new trainee is, “This

is the most important thing I am going to tell you.” Then, I say slowly and clearly, “TAKE YOUR TIME.” That also means when you train someone make sure *you* have plenty of time and are not in a rush. You want to give this person a sense that he/she has all day. I start by explaining the controls and what they do. I also strongly encourage them to ask questions. When I am done explaining something I ask them if they understand and have them repeat back to me the functions of those particular controls. I give them an open area where they cannot do any damage or hurt anyone. I have them perform one function at a time and if I seem them doing something wrong I will stop them right away to prevent them from forming any bad habits. If it is a complex piece of equipment I may only teach them a portion of the equipment’s operation. Once they are comfortable with that, I will teach them the remaining portion.

We never put a maximum on the number of training sessions. We always want to do a minimum, but are willing to do more. Even if I think they are ready I will want them to feel comfortable and vice versa. Again, I do not want them to feel rushed in any way because being rushed is how accidents happen.

Finally, when they start using the equipment on their own, do not give them jobs that precision or speed are necessary. That is what your experienced operators are for. Let them get enough time under their belt before expecting these things out of them. After all, **experience is the best teacher.**

*Scott Beachy is Crew Chief,
Department of Public Works,
Township of Millstone, N.J.*



**Dr. Henry W. Indyk
Graduate Fellowship
in 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) or John Pearson, Director of Leadership Gifts at the Foundation, by calling (732) 932-7899 or email: pearson@winants.rutgers.edu

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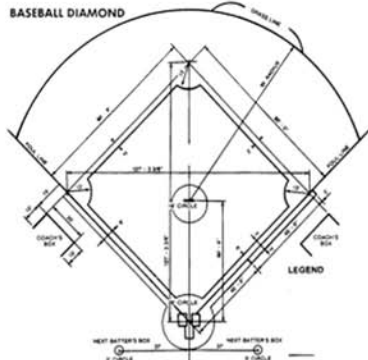
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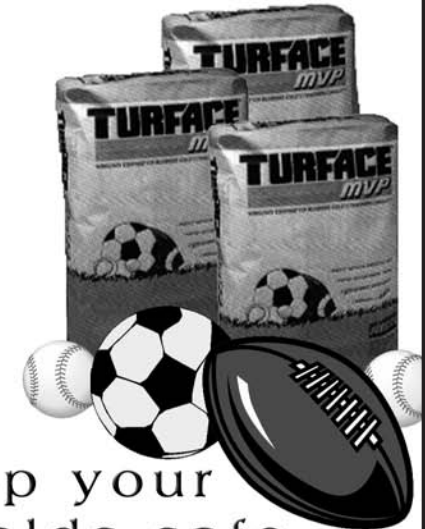
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Always Consider the Environment

By Jim Hermann, CSFM

As students of the turf industry we try to read as many articles as we can find on the subject of turf management. We use the information we receive from these articles to help formulate the management programs we implement on the fields we maintain. These articles often times include topics such as aeration technique, selection of topdressing materials, yearly maintenance programs, athletic field renovation etc.

When you evaluate an article, always make sure you consider the similarities and differences in the environment of the field you are reading about and the environment of your own field.

I trust that many of you have found your selves in the following situation. You are trying to decide how to deal with a problem on your field. Not having had personal experience with this particular problem, you base your decision on an article that was written about a similar situation, or so it would seem.

Let's assume your soccer field is constructed on heavy textured native soil. The chemical soil analysis has determined that you have an acceptable pH of 6.5 along with adequate amounts of available phosphorous (P) and potassium (K).

It's September and the soccer league is tearing your field up and you're in a quandary over what to do first. You go to your mailbox and what do you find but the new issue of *Sportsturf*. By sheer coincidence the main article is written about how some facilities management company maintains a world-class soccer field. After you finish reading the article, you commit to a fertilizer program consisting of 8.0 lbs of nitrogen (N) a year along with an obscene amount of P and K and micronutrients you never heard of before. In addition to this you purchase a trailer load of sand from the local supply house to use as a topdressing material. What's wrong with this picture?

The field you are reading about is more than likely constructed on a sand-based root zone. Water is most certainly supplied by an automatic irrigation system. It

is more than likely mowed every other day with a reel mower. It has a slit drainage system, and employs a maintenance crew the size of a small town.

Sand-based root zones have notoriously low water and nutrient holding capacity as compared to heavy textured root zones. A more complete and intensive fertilizer program typically including micronutrients is necessary to supply the turf with what it needs. Nutrients are typically supplied at lower rates and at more frequent intervals than are most heavy textured native soil New Jersey fields.

The sand-based topdressing is supplied with a sieve analysis "compatible" (the key word when discussing topdressing) with the root zone.

Although sand may be indicated as a topdressing material for many fields, its use should never be contemplated without first consulting an agronomist well versed in soil science. The risk of causing more harm than good is extremely high.

If the environment of the field you are reading about differs greatly from your own, the maintenance program is going to differ from your own.

As you enter into decisions concerning maintenance and renovation procedures of your sports turf always ask yourself this question, what am I trying to accomplish? Here is an example. Modification of heavy textured soil with sand is often times recommended as a means of increasing the drainage qualities. What many fail to realize is that in order for drainage to occur, there needs to be a place for the water to go. If your field is not equipped with underground drainage, this procedure may not work.

Whenever making maintenance decisions, "always consider the environment".

*Jim Hermann, is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM);
President, Total Control Inc. and member of the
SFMANJ Board of Directors.*

DID YOU KNOW?

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Rutgers University – Office of Continuing Professional Education
New Brunswick, NJ

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Baseball/Softball Infield Skin Construction and Management

March 12, 2008

Rutgers University – Office of Continuing Professional Education
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732-932-9271 • www.cookce.rutgers.edu

Sports Field Management Workshop

April 16, 2008

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Weequahic Park, Newark, NJ

973-228-2210 • email: zientek@njaes.rutgers.edu

2008 Rutgers Turfgrass Research Golf Classic

May 5, 2008

New Jersey Turfgrass Association and Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science
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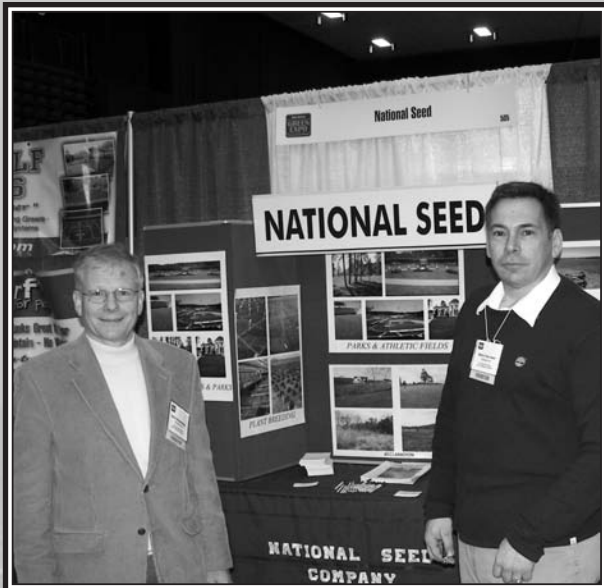
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EXPO 2007 TRADE SHOW PHOTO RECAP

Brad Park, Rutgers University and Editor, SFMANJ Update



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Ken Griepentrog (l) and Barry VanSant (r)



Storr Tractor Co., Somerville, NJ
Fred Castenschiold (l) and Ken Indyk (r).



Wilfred MacDonald, Inc.
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Bernie White.



Aer-Core, Inc., Pottstown, PA
Dennis DeSanctis, Sr. (l) and
Bill Mast (r)

GETTING BACK TO BASICS

By Jim Hermann, CSFM

By this time of year New Jersey sports field managers are patiently awaiting conditions which allow them to start infield preparation for the spring baseball and softball season. They are checking their arsenal of specialty products to be sure inventories are at their peak.

The sports field manager needs to know what product dries up the puddles, what product firms up the base paths and maybe what products can get him or her through the fifth inning of an otherwise rained out game. These products are all effective tools at the disposal of the sports field manager and a thorough understanding of these materials is essential. In addition to these tools, the most useful and effective tool available to the sports field manager is the site specific experience and basic understanding he has for his fields.

Experience dictates which fields to watch for the perpetual problems of the game and the problems brought about by rain and other environmental conditions. One field may hold water at 3rd base due to a lip buildup. Another field may require attention because water inevitably funnels down the base paths and washes them out every time it rains.

Only the experienced sports field manager can predict with certainty the day to day challenges of each infield. Only the experienced manager can react to these predictable problems and maintain the infields in a safe and playable condition with some degree of effectiveness.

A primary challenge to every sports field manager is to use the experience and understanding gained over time to manage his infields in a “proactive” rather than “reactive” manner.

Many fields have perpetual problems. These problems can be caused by poor design, poor construction or years of improper maintenance. By identifying these problems and correcting them the sports field manager can minimize the day to day maintenance requirements of an otherwise difficult infield.

In some situations it may not be a case of poor design; it might just be that another design would be more efficient. An example of this would be a baseball infield with the baselines running down the middle of a 6.0-ft base paths. When designed in this fashion, only 3.0-ft of skinned area lies between the baseline and the turf perimeter. Aggressive play inevitably causes a buildup of material on the outside of 1st and 3rd base in the turf. With this buildup of material in the turf comes a depression in front of the base. This situation has the potential to cause water to pond in these areas. The “reactive” manager can get out on the field early and utilize the most effective products and procedures to transform an otherwise unplayable infield into an acceptable condition.

The “proactive” sports field manager on the other hand has dealt with the problem before the season began by making some basic adjustments. He may have realigned the baselines to favor the inside of the base path by positioning them closer to the inside turf perimeter or he may have constructed a radius around the 1st and 3rd bases which allows a groomer to pass to the outside of the base paths. In any event, the objective is to allow more distance between the bases and the turf perimeter. At a minimum he removed the lip to allow positive surface drainage to help manage potential water problems.

Many of those involved in the planning stages of a new field desire their own little Yankee Stadium. They want no more a than a 0.5% slope extending from behind the pitchers mound in all directions. They may desire a mix that is 60% sand and 40% silt and clay because someone said it works for them. They may even go to the expense of a complete gravel blanket under the infield to help evacuate surface water that ponds within the infield when positive surface drainage is not maintained.

For some, this might be the perfect infield. For others it can evolve into a maintenance nightmare. It is the opinion of many, myself included that a 0.5% slope is not sufficient to evacuate water from a moderately maintained infield skin. It requires more intense maintenance than a 0.75 or 1% slope. A 0.5% slope is not sufficient to effectively evacuate surface water from a turf infield constructed on a heavy textured soil. Turf Infields constructed with less than 1% slope rely heavily on internal drainage characteristics consistent with a lighter textured soil, a bypass drainage system of an effective design or both to efficiently evacuate surface water.

Unless the infield skin is watered on a regular basis, the 60–40 mix will more than likely turn to hardness similar to that of concrete. If the mix happens to contain more than 10 or 15% silt this infield mix could have the potential to become mucky when overly wet and extremely dusty when dry.

Although typically not a negative influence, the gravel blanket under the infield skin will be extremely inefficient in the evacuation of surface water, even though it is an effective means of managing a high water table beneath the infield. The proactive sports field manager will educate himself, start with an effective design and take the action necessary to manage and maintain the playing field in a safe and playable condition.

It has been my experience that a very difficult challenge to the sports field manager is to adapt design or reconstruction criteria to site specific conditions. An infield with a slope that radiates outward from a center point in the vicinity of the pitcher’s area could be more expensive and more problematic than an alternative design, depending on site specific conditions.

*Jim Hermann, is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM);
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PLANNING NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET- *Do You Know Your Costs?*

By Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

It's that time of year again and sports field and grounds managers are planning the Operating Budget for the next fiscal year. Unlike a Capital Budget which is for the purchase of major pieces of equipment, or a Program Budget which is for special projects such as a major field renovation or construction, an Operating Budget is a financial plan for managing the day-to-day operations of a sports field or grounds maintenance operation. We are talking about things like grass seed, mowing and marking paint. Whether you have been given a dollar amount to work with or are starting from zero and must justify every expense, your must mission is to learn what your costs are and estimate what you expect to spend. If you don't know where to begin, here are some tips to help you get started.

Track your historical data. Collect receipts, and all records pertaining to your facilities grounds or sports field operations for the last fiscal year. A ledger book or a computer spread sheet program will be very helpful for organizing this data.

Find out what is expected. You must know exactly what the site will be used for. For example, is it an open space used for a variety of activities, or will it be used for a single purpose such as exhibition baseball games? What are the expectations of the owner? Will certain rules or conditions apply such as the amount and severity of use, use during inclement weather? Different sites will have different budgets based on their maintenance levels. Find out the expectation of the owner first. Without the support of the owner, it will likely waste your time to budgeting for a higher level than what your owner envisions. Consider the following differences in maintenance levels.

Maintenance Levels:

Level 1 Showpiece facility (professional sports facility)

Level 2 Comprehensive stewardship (College facility or high end sports facility)

Level 3 Managed care (well maintained high school or park)

Level 4 Reactive management (minimal care, mowing, no irrigation, occasional fertilizer)

Level 5 Crisis response (neglected, occasional mowing)

Inventory the Site. Take measurements of the area, identify weed and pest pressures and grass types and have a complete chemical and physical soil test performed. This information is necessary for designing a turf maintenance program. Perform an irrigation audit to quantify the effectiveness of the irrigation system and the drainage of the soil. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current maintenance system. Determine the thresholds for acceptable wear damage, weeds or pest pressures that you will tolerate before corrective measures will be taken? Think about what can go wrong and how you would respond.

Conduct an inventory of your resources. Who will do the work? What equipment, materials, and time will be needed to get the work done? You will also need to find out how much money was spent in the past and whether it was adequate to meet expectations.

Make a list of all the activities in your program. For each activity list:

1. The frequency of each activity
2. Number of people and the man-hours required and the cost
3. Time constraints
4. The equipment needed and cost
5. Materials needed and the cost

(continued on page 17)

~Impacting an Industry through Professionalism~

Sports Turf Managers Association Editorial Staff

Demands on the profession continue to rise. Environmental regulations, personnel management, changing technology, resource utilization, athlete and fan safety ...the list of areas for which a sports turf manager has responsibility continues to expand in complexity. Obviously, doing a great job at your sports facility is paramount to your career success, but it takes more than doing a great job to garner respect and recognition.

Your abilities as a sports turf manager will form other's opinions of the profession, but your personal professionalism speaks volumes to your staff, your employer, your colleagues, the athletes who use your fields and the fans. Sports turf managers should view the non-technical aspects of their work as a critical aspect of their jobs.

Here are 10 ideas to help you gain recognition and bring respect to you personally, professionally and ultimately to the entire profession.

1. Do a great job. No amount of publicity, communication or civic goodwill will overcome poor job performance.
2. Be visible and talk daily with other managers. Make a point of talking with other departments' staff. Your interest and sincerity will make them want to be a supporter and promoter of you.
3. Control your reactions and watch your non-verbal communication. The champions in business are able to shrug off distressing situations and regroup emotionally – that's one reason they are successful. They also keep in check their non-verbal body language and facial expressions.
4. Promote your education and training. Put your diploma, STMA membership certificate and plaques in visible areas. Talk about concepts and ideas you learned at the STMA conference and at other educational events when you are in meetings with peers and with your employer.
5. Take responsibility for your own mistakes and for those of your subordinates. Blaming others, even if justifiable, makes you look small-minded and weak. Earn a reputation as a "fixer" of errors, someone who can snap back from setbacks and learn from mistakes.
6. Always answer criticism in a professional and courteous manner. Explain why there is a problem and what you plan to do about it. Never let it be assumed that you do not care. Take immediate action on complaints.
7. Adopt a "no surprises" philosophy. If there is a problem with the field, communicate the issue immediately and honestly to those who need to know, along with how you are addressing the problem. Proactive communication, even when it is bad news, contributes to your stature as a professional.
8. Hire a top flight team and support continuing education for them. Your image is affected by the image of your staff. Make them aware of their important role in promoting professionalism in the field of sports turf management. This includes their attitudes, care of equipment and courtesy to all with whom they come in contact with while on the job.
9. Be responsive and on-time. Return telephone calls and answer requests promptly, no matter how trivial they seem. Be on time for meetings. A reputation for always being late can influence people's opinion of your performance.
10. Pay attention to the details. It's the little things that can make or break you. For example, what does your work space say about you? A cluttered and dirty desk may make others think you don't care or that you lack organization in all areas of your work.

*Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA),
Lawrence, KS*

PLANNING NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET- *Do You Know Your Costs?*

By Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

(continued from page 15)

Create a calendar showing when the activities will occur. This is helpful for scheduling resources and time around scheduled events. This will help you create a realistic picture of what tasks your organization can do in-house, outsource or eliminate. Be sure to include any overhead expenses that your operation is charged, such as rent, utilities, or other line items.

Check your figures carefully and submit your budget. Present your proposal neatly, in an easy to read and understandable format such as a spread sheet. It is likely that your budget will be challenged by a budget committee. Above all, remain flexible.

The people we work for often are unaware of the true costs of maintaining a safe and playable sports field, so remember to be tactful, diplomatic and professional.

Don Savard is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) and Certified Grounds Manager (CGM); Director, Athletic Facilities and Grounds, Salesianum School; and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors.

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South Jersey Sports Field Snapshots

Brad Park, Rutgers University and Editor, SFMANJ Update



The grounds staff at Cumberland Regional High School uses paints to highlight the end zones of their varsity football field (Cumberland County, NJ).



Pine trees create a visually appealing backdrop at the Salem High School varsity baseball field, not to mention a natural "batter's eye" (Salem County, NJ).

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