

UPDATE

November/December, 2008
Vol. 8, No. 6
e-mail: hq@sfmanj.org
www.sfmanj.org

Sports Field
Managers Association of New Jersey



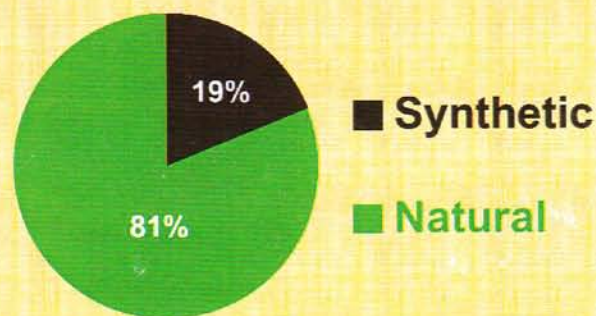
WHAT DO LACROSSE PARENTS THINK ABOUT SPORTS FIELDS?

BY: Brad Park and Dr. John Grande

Do lacrosse parents have opinions about the playing surfaces on which their sons and daughters compete? A survey developed in cooperation with the Rutgers University Snyder Research & Extension Farm, Pittstown, NJ determined lacrosse parent stakeholders' views on issues including field quality expectations, pesticide applications, increased budgeting for sports field improvement, and synthetic infill fields.

In late summer 2007, the Rutgers Snyder Research & Extension Farm established seven acres of a tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass turf for the purpose of demonstrating how farming principles can be used to

WOULD YOU PREFER TO SEE YOUR CHILD PLAY ON A SYNTHETIC OR NATURAL TURF PLAYING SURFACE?*



*Survey conducted at Rutgers Snyder Research & Extension Farm lacrosse event on July 10, 2008; 47 lacrosse parents answered this question.

At a summer 2008 lacrosse event held at the Rutgers Snyder Research & Extension Farm, parent stakeholders were asked their opinions on a range of sports field issues, including synthetic turf.

develop "utility" sports fields. In many rural and suburban areas of New Jersey where land selection is still feasible, "utility" sports fields can potentially be developed on land that is naturally suited for sports fields - and subsequently reduce the high cost of major construction activity.

These principles included first choosing a naturally crowned site with good quality agricultural soils that did not require extensive earthmoving as part of the site preparation process and had adequate internal drainage and moderate rock issues. Lime and pre-plant fertilizers were applied based on soil test results and incorporated using a disc harrow.

A land leveler was then used to create a

(continued on page 6)



Lacrosse students enjoyed seven acres of tall fescue turf at the Rutgers Snyder Research & Extension Farm in July 2008. The turfgrass was established for the purpose of demonstrating how "utility" sports fields can be constructed using farming principles.

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Currently we have 283 new & renewed members. In December 2007, SFMANJ mailed invoices for 2008 membership dues to all current members. If you did not receive an invoice, please contact us at 856-514-3179 or download the membership form available at www.sfmanj.org. Mail membership dues direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070.

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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.

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

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

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One Last LOOK!!!

The Rutgers Tuf Club Tours Yankee Stadium on May 2, 2008

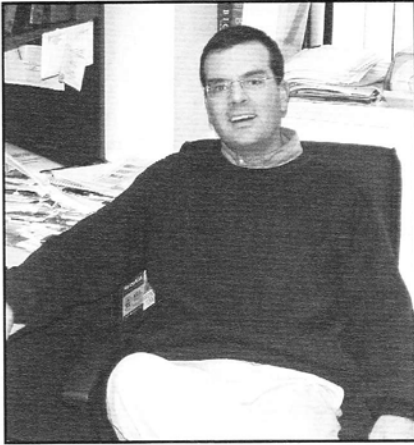
Photos by: Dr. James Murphy, Rutgers University



From the Editor:

An "Update" on SFMANJ Update

By: Brad Park



Changes to *Update* for 2009

Beginning in 2009, SFMANJ *Update* newsletter will be published four times per year. The dates for publication in 2009 will be March (Spring), June (Summer), September (Fall), and December (Winter).

For our advertisers, we have kept advertising rates in *Update* constant since 2005 despite increased mailing and administrative costs. For our SFMANJ vendor members who purchase advertising for the year (4 issues) in 2009, the total annual cost of advertising in SFMANJ *Update* will remain unchanged in 2009. In an effort to encourage advertisers who are not currently vendor members to join SFMANJ, advertising rates for non-SFMANJ vendor members will be increased.

If you are a vendor interested in advertise opportunities in SFMANJ *Update*, please contact our Executive Secretary, Debbie Savard, at 856-514-3179.

It is my goal that we continue to provide the best (in my humble opinion) newsletter among Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA)-affiliated Chapters. Practical sports field tips and research-based information from both the practitioner and academic communities will continue to be provided in *Update* as well as coverage of recent SFMANJ events and notifications of future field days and activities.

Back issues of *Update*

We have made significant gains in acquiring back issues of *Update* newsletter – including the very first issue published in July 2001. The two-page

newsletter (front-and-back) reported on the Chapter's first Field Day, hosted by Commerce Bank Park, Bridgewater and Head Groundskeeper Ray Cipperly. The issue also ran a Calendar of Events (including an STMA Conference in Las Vegas and several Floyd Perry Workshops), Monthly Field Tips, and Question & Answer section on mowing height.

I would personally like to thank **Brad Pastrick**, North Brunswick Parks; **Eugene "Spooner" Peer**, Montville Township; and **Eleanora Hermann**, SFMANJ Past-President for donating their personal copies of *Update*.

I hope to see you all at an upcoming SFMANJ event. Best of luck in 2009!

-Brad



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WHAT DO LACROSSE PARENTS THINK ABOUT SPORTS FIELDS?

(continued from page 1)

smooth surface, followed by rock picking. Final seedbed preparation was completed using a roller harrow. A Brillion Seeder was calibrated to deliver 350 lbs of seed per acre and following natural rainfall, seedling emergence was evident 13 days after seeding. Equipment, supply and labor costs were documented throughout the project.

Although in many cases necessary, sports fields are often constructed on sites that require extensive earthmoving. The result is costly engineering designs and extensive topsoil disturbance. In these cases, heavy road construction equipment is often used during construction and ultimately over compacts the soil compromising turfgrass establishment and future management.

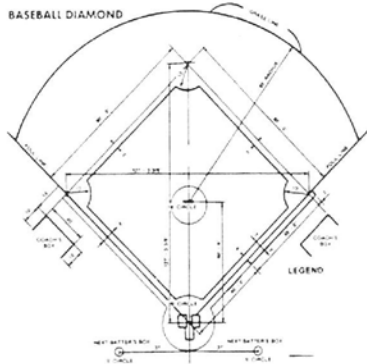
After the successful establishment of the fields, the Rutgers Snyder Research & Extension Farm hosted a lacrosse event in July 2008 to showcase the new fields to the public as well as demonstrate field development and construction using the farming principles described above. The event brought several hundred

lacrosse parents and players to Hunterdon County, NJ and players were able to use the fields for practices and scrimmages. The parents and coaches, as stakeholder groups, were presented information regarding project details.

A survey issued to the parents of players revealed their various opinions regarding sports fields – and the high bar they have set for field conditions. When parents (sixty-three responding) were asked what playing surface conditions they deemed to be minimally acceptable, 69% indicated either uniform turfgrass cover throughout the field with no bare soil or voids in the turf OR good turf cover throughout the field and thin turfgrass cover in front of goals. Only 25% thought that moderate turf cover throughout the field and bare soil in front of goal mouths and penalty kick areas was acceptable. These conditions are very common on Board of Education and Municipal fields in New Jersey. Interestingly, of the 69% of parents that found thin turf cover in front of goal mouths OR no voids in the turf minimally acceptable, 28% of those parents would not support the use of a herbicide on the sports field where

(continued on page 7)

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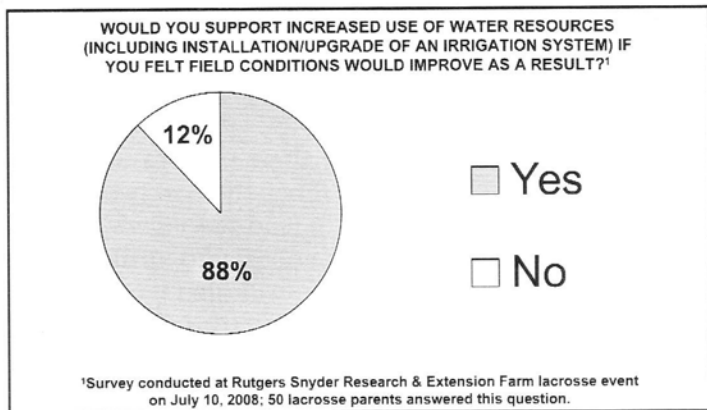
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WHAT DO LACROSSE PARENTS THINK ABOUT SPORTS FIELDS?

(continued from page 6)

their child plays – even if the application resulted in fewer bare areas resulting from dead annual weeds.



The importance of water resources to sports field performance was recognized by lacrosse parent stakeholders who answered a survey at a summer 2008 lacrosse event sponsored by the Rutgers Snyder Research & Extension Farm.

Parents did express a high level of support for increased expenditures for improvement of natural turf fields. When asked whether they would support increased budgeting for seed, equipment, and personnel if it meant field conditions could improve with fewer pesticide inputs, 75% of fifty-one parents responding answered "Yes." Similarly, 88% of parents (50 responding) supported increased use of water resources (including the installation /upgrade of an irrigation system) if field conditions would improve as a result.

In the midst of significant media attention towards human health and synthetic infill sports fields in summer 2008, parents were asked about their opinion of synthetic infill fields. Question 9 of the survey stated, "What is your general feeling regarding synthetic infill surfaces (i.e. tire rubber or tire rubber + sand-filled playing surfaces)?" Forty-five parents responded to this question and 35% answered, "Synthetics provide an all-weather, uniform playing surface compared to natural surfaces and are a worthwhile expenditure." Thirty-eight percent (38%) chose, "Although costly and human health questions remain, synthetics provide a benefit to youth athletics program." The

remaining 27% of those responding voiced concern over synthetic installations by selecting, "The human health questions and costs outweigh any potential benefits of synthetic turf fields."

When the question was posed, "Would you prefer to see your child play on a synthetic or natural turf playing surface?" 81% of the forty-seven parents answering chose natural surfaces over synthetic.

These results provide a look into the minds of parents whose children play on the surfaces overseen by sports field managers. While there still appears to be a strong preference for natural grass, the expectation for playing surface quality is high.

The authors would like to thank JoAnn Stevely and the Rutgers Snyder Research & Extension Farm staff for their hard work in administering the survey.

Brad Park is Sports Turf Res. and Ed. Coord., Rutgers Univ.; SFMANJ Board member; and Editor, SFMANJ Update; Dr. John Grande is Director, Rutgers Snyder Research & Extension Farm

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THE POLITICS OF SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT

Part I of a Series

By Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

I am a sports field manager at a high school in Wilmington, Delaware. I have been managing high school sports fields for the past 18 years. I have come to the following conclusion, that is, managing a sports field is easy, but people make it complicated. How great would it be if we could go to work every day and grow the very best sports fields without anyone bothering us? Like it or not, we need people so that we can do what we do. We serve with a variety of people from our co-workers to the people who use the fields, to the people who own the fields and pay the bills. If we consider these people as our customers, are we not customer service specialists first and field managers second?

Many of us and our crews are support staff. We work for organizations whose primary business is something other than grass and dirt. Something like education, or government. From a financial point of view our operation is viewed as overhead.

We compete with other departments within our organization for money, resources, positions, recognition, programs, and approvals. Nothing comes easy. To survive and for peace of mind, we need to get along with our customers. Our stakeholders or customers have diverse interests and agendas. Some of these agendas serve the common good; some serve someone's individual self interest. To fully understand the politics of the organization, you must become well acquainted with all of the stakeholders and their agendas. And within each organization, some stakeholder's agendas have more legitimacy than others, including yours and mine.

Let's look at our stakeholders or customers both within and external to our organization:

1. First and foremost are the athletes who use and play on our fields. That is why we are here. We try to maintain safe and playable fields for them. The players want fields that play well and do not impede their performance. Players, particularly at the youth level take the athletic facilities for granted. Usually if they do not seem to notice the field, we are doing an adequate job. At many levels, the players seem to be the easiest customers to satisfy.
2. Coaches exist to develop their players and guide the teams to victories. At times the coaches seem to be at odds with the sports field managers, considering the ways their practices and drills use or abuse their fields. Coaches will also let you know when they think there is something wrong with your field.
3. Athletic Directors are responsible for the management and quality of their athletic programs. That includes everything from hiring coaches, arranging team schedules, renting buses and letting someone know that a shower head in the locker room is leaking. Athletic Directors have a very large sphere of influence. They also hear everything from everybody. An Athletic Director on your side is an important ally.
4. There are the owners. They are the people who give you money. Or withhold it. The owner of the facility can be a Board of Education, a School Administration or a Board of Trustees, a government department or some other entity. Frequently this entity has a hierarchy of management in which you have a boss and your boss has a boss and so on. In organizations, the chain of command is important and must be respected. Breaking the chain of command in organizations probably won't get you a court martial, but it may cause you some pain in a variety of ways depending on the organization and the personalities involved. Respect the food chain.
5. There are usually support people within this hierarchy. These include administrative assistants, accounting specialists, and others who are the wheels of the organization. Be careful you don't get caught under the wheels.

(continued on page 12)

2008 Calendar of Events

STMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009

January 13-17, 2009
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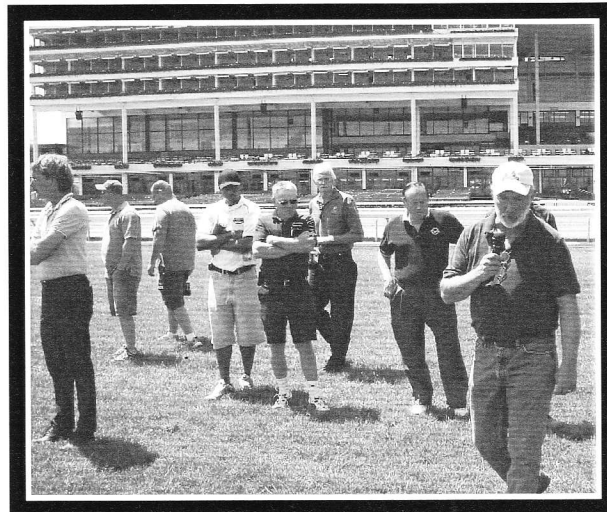
Photos By: Brad Park, Rutgers Uni



Don Savard, CSFM and CGM and SFMANJ Board Member describes irrigation auditing at the Spring Field Day at Shore Regional High School on May 7, 2008.



Cricket anyone? Dr. Jim Murphy, Rutgers University and SFMANJ Advisor investigates a make-shift cricket pitch in Weequahic Park, Newark, NJ.



Steve Fischer, Turf Track Superintendent, Monmouth Park Racetrack describes his turf management practices at the Spring Field Day in Oceanport, NJ on May 7, 2008.



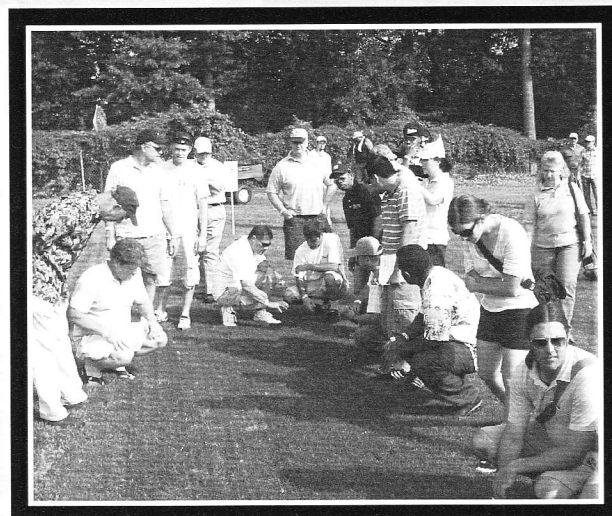
A trade show sponsored by SFMANJ offered attendees at the Rutgers Lawn, Landscape and Sports Field Day on July 30, 2008 at Adelphia an opportunity to view the latest products offered by vendors.

REVIEW 2008

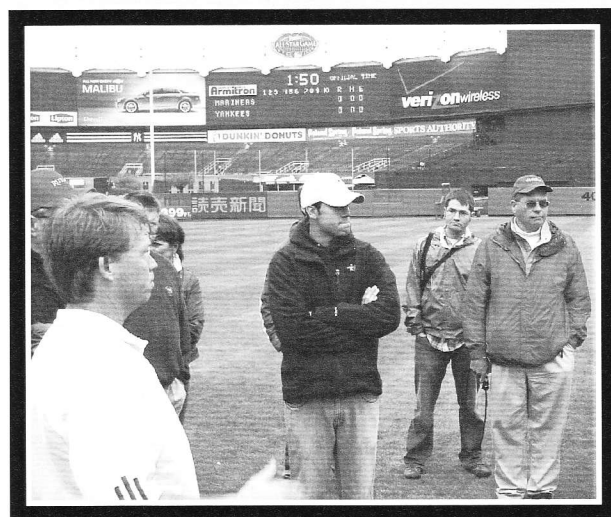
University and Editor, SFMANJ Update



Sports field managers from across the region were on-hand at Lincoln Financial Field, home of the Philadelphia Eagles, at a Regional Conference sponsored by STMA in Philadelphia, PA on June 27, 2008.



Attendees at the Rutgers Lawn, Landscape, and Sports Field Day examine core aerification holes created by a machine shown during the equipment demonstration component of the Field Day sponsored by SFMANJ.



Dan Cunningham, Head Groundskeeper, Yankee Stadium (*left*) provides Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science faculty, staff, and students a tour of The House that Ruth Built on May 2, 2008 prior to the Yankees 5-1 victory against Seattle.



Dr. Steve Hart, Rutgers University, shares research-based weed control recommendations at the Rutgers Lawn, Landscape, and Sports Field Day held at the Rutgers Adelphia Research Farm on July 30, 2008.

THE POLITICS OF SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT

Part I of a Series

(continued from page 8)

6. Parents of players- Alaska Governor Sarah Palin expressed it perfectly in her Republican vice Presidential nominee acceptance speech- "What is the difference between a hockey mom and a pit bull? ... Lipstick!" 'Nuff said. Parents can be tough critics but they can also be staunch supporters. How they are treated usually makes the difference.
7. The committees who run youth league sports- very dangerous territory. If you fall in that quick sand you might not be saved. Watch where you tread!
8. The public and the press have a perception of you or your field that can be accurate or inaccurate. Like it or not, these external customers can influence your internal customers.
9. Vendors, suppliers and contractors can help make you look good or let you wither on the vine. So can your coworkers and other sports field managers. Treat your network right.
10. Family, and close friends because we need their love and support; without them life is a lonely place.
11. And Nature, we are its stewards. We can never be successful if we work against it.

As customer service representatives, we're the "go to" guys and gals when it comes to our sports field facilities. Stakeholders at all levels come to us when they need something from us or want something done. From being the "tenth man" on the baseball team to the event coordinator for a non-sporting event, we are the hub of the wheel. It's great when our customers are happy and it's miserable when they're not. Remember that a problem is the difference between what somebody has and what they want. Our job is to solve problems; big and small. Unfortunately we face challenges such as resources, time, weather and the unexpected. Even when we do everything right or at least

the best we can, somebody can be dissatisfied, usually over the small problems. They complain. We get defensive. Things escalate. We feel like we get no respect. They feel that we are not listening to them. Frustration sets in and breeds distrust. There is less cooperation. Communication stops, our effectiveness shrinks and nobody is happy. Sound familiar?

Next issue: Both sides own the problem. Let's look at the part we own.

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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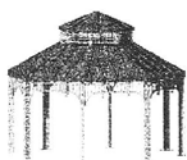
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REMOVAL OF A 10-YEAR-OLD SYNTHETIC SURFACE

By: Sean Connell

Last summer, I replaced a synthetic field at a Division III College in Allentown, PA. The field was 10 years old and school wanted to accommodate other sports, update the field and respond to fears about lead in the synthetic fibers. The construction took about 2 months to complete after scheduling of all contractors. The field consisted of a 10-year-old AstroTurf® carpet with a double elastic (e) layer (34 mm). This was not an infill system. The AstroTurf® carpet was only about 0.25-inch thick.

The first part of any construction job is to install a construction entrance/exit. The running track was covered (including the "D" zones behind the field's goal post) using a Mondo® surface. This is a paved surface that is spongy to the touch and has a red finish on top. It is a hearty surface but not when crossed with construction equipment. So the construction entrance was covered with two (2) layers of plastic visqueen, 2.0-inch rigid foam insulation, 0.75-inch plywood and topped with crusher run type gravel. This gravel has fines in it so it tightens up for protection at 12-inch thick. It seems

like overkill ... until tandem dump trucks are run across it.

From there we cut the carpet with a stand-up, cut-off saw with water. The cuts were made every 8-foot using the lines on the field. We had to make cross cuts every 40 or 50 feet for removal. Initially, we tried to save the e-layer but could not separate the backing of the carpet from the e-layer. The removal was easy. We used a grapple bucket on an 81-hp track steer and just rolled up the carpet and e-layer and then drove to 30-yr dumpsters. The field was only 77,000 square feet so it was small compared to most fields. The complete removal only took 4 days and 30 dumpsters. The school had to submit a sample prior to construction to the dumpster company to see if they would accept the material as waste - which they did and there were no problems.

The sub-grade left behind was not in bad shape but had spots that were a problem from the initial construction. A new field grading plan was devised. The

(continued on page 16)

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REMOVAL OF A 10-YEAR-OLD SYNTHETIC SURFACE

(continued from page 15)

factors that determined the new plan were the depth of the e-layer, height of carpet, existing material and the outside elevation of the curb. From that information, we did slopes to the each sideline of 0.6% and matching "D" zone grades of 50 linear feet (LF) from the field goal posts, 1% to the end zone and 0.6% to the right and left. Some additional material, which was available and original to the project, was needed to complete the sub-grade. The field was laser graded and rolled smooth with the additional material. After that was complete, we installed a 1.0-inch layer of #8 stone (which is less than 0.25-inch in size) to achieve a smooth final grade. This layer was laser graded and rolled to smooth. A certified land surveyor was then used to record all grades – this confirms all grades. The carpet company approves sub-grade before acceptance.

The fibers of the original carpet were tested for lead and it was determined that lead was present in the fibers; however, an adult would have to consume over 20 lbs of carpet to have a noticeable dose.

During the cutting and removal of the carpet, the school hired a company to do air quality testing. The sample collectors were placed around the field during

work hours and employees wore air testers on their work clothes. All results were negative with respect to any lead in the air; the lead was found in the nylon fiber of the carpet only. We had no additional issues related to the subject of lead.

When the carpet company accepted the sub-grade, they brought in the material for the new e-layer. This material is paved and is a cold emulsion. It is porous and is used for drainage and as a pad for the carpet. Using an e-layer was previously a standard component with synthetic fields; however, it is used less frequently in the current era of synthetic field construction.

The new carpet was a monofilament carpet without lead and was infilled with crumb rubber. The school was happy the carpet that they had but wanted to update and accommodate the field for soccer and field hockey. The previous field required painting for football as well other sports; so the change was welcomed from a maintenance standpoint. Additional footers were installed for field hockey to put-up nets behind the field goal posts that stretched across the entire "D" zone. The new carpet had permanent lines for all sports that originated from the factory. Sean Connell is Owner and Primary Project Manager,

*Georgia Golf Construction, Woodbine, NJ;
and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors*

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A MAN AND HIS MOWER

By: Fred Castenschiold

It was business as usual back on June 18 of this year when my general manager asked me to send out a couple of quotes to an account which, over the past 25 years, has occasionally purchased the Toro Groundsmaster 300 series. What was different this time was that they wanted a quote for the 300 series as well as the Groundsmaster 7210. As it worked out, the 7210 was a little less expensive; so, they expressed more interest in the 7210 and requested a demo. The account was Pillar of Fire in Zarephath, a Christian college in our area. The administrator indicated that the **"operator must** approve of the different type of mower which they were not accustomed to."

Having sold lever steer mowers early in my career I thought "no problem" and made arrangements for the business-as-usual demo on an early summer morning. Having arrived at the school a little early, I spoke with the mechanic and showed him the new style Groundsmaster while it was positioned on the trailer. I asked him, "Who is this operator I must convince to go with the 7210 versus the 300 series." I was thinking that the operator was some young fellow who would take to it instantly. The mechanic answered, "Here he comes." From down the driveway moving a bit slowly the operator approached. When he arrived I introduced myself and unloaded the 7210. His name is Rubin and was quick to inform me that he was 94 years old. I thought to myself, "Oh my, this should be interesting, to say the least."

I took the unit out into an open field next to his on-campus residence and reviewed the machine with Rubin and the mechanic very carefully. Rubin nodded as if ready to climb aboard. With encouragement to operate the 7210 with only one hand to get use to it at half throttle and with the mower deck turned off he was soon in slow flight. I asked him to stay in the open and make some figure-eight turns and practice going back and forth. After a few minutes he returned and shut the machine off. He stated, "Its ok, but I'm not cutting any grass!" Appearing ready to go the next step, I showed him the yellow knob to pull-out in order to start the mower as well as how to throttle-up to full power. I asked Rubin to again stay out in the open and give it some time to get use to the operation of the mower.

While Rubin gave it a try on this hot sunny morning I sat on his deck behind his little cottage with his wife of 77 years. We talked about Rubin and his long career with Pillar of Fire. Evidently he has been working for the school in one capacity or another since he was 16 years old! While listening to her I occasionally glanced past to keep an eye on Rubin. He really seemed to be getting the hang of it! After excusing myself I approached the field where he was operating the mower and signaled to stop.

I asked, "Well Rubin, what do you think? Do you have any questions?" He exclaimed, "I'll take it!" However, he noted he wasn't 100% sure he would like it and stay with it. Within a week I delivered the shiny new mower and re-trained him in an effort to make it work.

Over the summer I made several visits to see how it was working out but never seemed to find Rubin; although, I saw the mower in the garage - which showed signs of use so I didn't worry too much about it. In addition, I never received any phone calls from the administrator or mechanic indicating that there were any problems with machine or operator.

One cool fall afternoon I stopped-in to find Rubin still at it; mowing while grinding leaves with his new 7210. Before pulling over to say, "Hi", I went to see the mechanic who was standing outside of his garage and asked him how the new mower and Rubin were going. He said, "Great! We can't get him off of it!" "Awesome", I thought as I was preparing to say, "Hi" to Rubin. I went over to Rubin and he came to a controlled stop and shut down the engine. I asked him how it was going and he said, "GREAT! I love operating this machine because it is so easy to control versus the older Toros." Rubin said that he turned 95 years old recently and after mowing all day with the 7210 he wasn't tired. I asked him if it was alright to take a few pictures. He said, "Sure, why not!" Later, I found out that Rubin donated ... out of his own pocket ... \$10,000 towards the purchase of the machine for the school. Now it all made sense when the administrator said that the **"operator must** approve of the different type of mower which they were not accustomed to."

*Fred Castenschiold is Sales Representative,
Storr Tractor Co., Somerville, NJ;
and SFMANJ Vice-President*



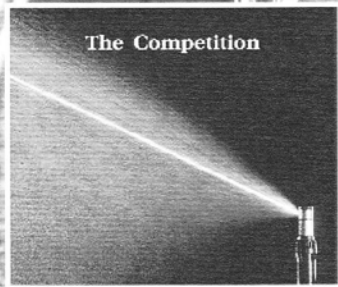
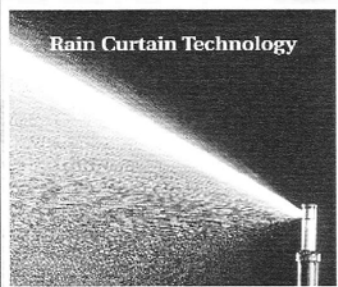
Rubin, a dedicated operator at pillar of Fire in Zarephath, NJ who is 95 years young, operates his favorite mower.

SFMANJ PHOTO QUIZ: GUESS THE BALLPARK!

The first SFMANJ member to accurately name this past MLB ballpark (pictured) and city in which it resides will be awarded an SFMANJ tee shirt. Responses can be emailed to SFMANJ Update Editor Brad Park at park@aesop.rutgers.edu



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