UPDATE
Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey
Vol. 10, No. 3
P.O. Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070 • www.sfmanj.org • e-mail: mail@sfmanj.org

# CONVINCING YOUR EMPLOYER *to send you to* EXPO 2010

*By Brad Park*

*(Editor's note: This article was adapted from materials provided by Sports Turf Managers Association)*

It's time to begin planning your trip to Expo 2010. The New Jersey Green Expo Turf & Landscape Conference will be held at the Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City, NJ on December 7-9, 2010. How can you convince your employer to send you?

Continuing education and industry connections are crucial to your success and the success of your sports fields. Here are some suggestions to help your employer understand how your attendance at Expo 2010 can add value to the overall operation of your facility.

## Educate yourself on the Conference and Exhibition

Provide an overview of the size and scope of Expo 2010. It may be helpful to give your employer a copy of the brochure. This edition of SFMANJ Update provides the Sports Field Managers Program for Expo 2010.

Pinpoint specific sessions you plan to attend, and tie their relevance to your sports facility. As part of the Sports Field Managers Program, presentations on turfgrass establishment, organic fertility programs, and working with fewer resources are part of the 2010 program.

Highlight the trade show and cite suppliers and equipment manufacturers you plan to meet.

*Discuss the networking opportunities you will have with peers who share challenges similar to the ones you have.*

Note that NJ DEP pesticide recertification credits will be available.

*Explain how innovations in products, new research, and cutting edge management techniques continually change, and why it is important to stay abreast of those changes.*

*Continued on page 7*


*Lacey Township was the host of the 2010 SFMANJ Summer Field Day on June 22, 2010.*

*A busy trade show sponsored by SFMANJ has become an annual staple at the Rutgers Lawn, Landscape, and Sports Turf Research Field Day held at the Rutgers Adelphia Farm.*

*Along with SFMANJ-sponsored equipment demonstrations, education stops included turfgrass variety trials at the 2010 Rutgers Lawn, Landscape, and Sports Turf Research Field Day on July 28, 2010.*

# *Welcome!*
# New and Renewed SFMANJ Members

Currently we have 231 new & renewed members. In December 2009, SFMANJ mailed invoices for 2010 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 a www.sfmanj.org. Mail membership dues direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070.

| | |
|---|---|
| Frank Botti | Monroe Township |
| Albert Brown | City of Wildwood |
| Virgil Caputo | Monroe Township |
| Tom DeFino | Fisher and Son Co., Inc. |
| Steve Hesser | Lawn and Golf Supply, Inc. |
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| Brad Pastrick | North Brunswick Township |
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| Ed Santalone | Atlantic Irrigation Specialties, Inc. |
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| James "JB" Stronsky | Till Paint Co. |
| Tom Torpy | Monroe Township |
| Scott Van Demark | Mahwah Board of Education |
| Lisa Van Houton | Hy-Tech Mushroom Compost |
| Michael Zellner | DryJect, Inc. |

**Has your entry been submitted for the**

# SFMANJ Field of the Year Contest 2010

**Among other things, the winner will also receive a stay at the Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City and free registration to the education courses and trade show at Expo 2010.**

**See page 14 for details**

# 2010 SFMANJ BOARD OF DIRECTIORS



**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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**National Organization**
Sports Turf Managers Association
www.stma.org
Email: stmainfo@stma.org
Phone: 800-323-3875

# INSIDE THIS ISSUE




*This newsletter is the official quarterly publication of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey.*

*For information regarding this newsletter, contact:*
*SFMANJ at (856) 514-3179 or Brad Park at (732) 932-9711, x127*
*Editor: Brad Park, Rutgers University, Email: park@aesop.rutgers.edu*
*Layout and Design: Debra Savard, Email: mail@sfmanj.org*

# 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*

*President's Message:*

# *Looking Forward to* FALL!

*By Don Savard, CSFM, CGM*

After this past summer's heat, I'm sure that many of us are looking forward to a more comfortable autumn. My sports fields at the school where I work made it through the summer in fair shape (but not as good as last year). Every summer it is survival of the fittest, and the turfgrass varieties that endure the heat and disease pressures are thriving now. That which has died out has made room for the newest improved turfgrass varieties that I will be overseeding with.

Fall is a great time to make adjustments for the next year. Not only is it a great time to rebuild turf, for many of us who operate within a July first to end of June budget year, it is the time to make the budget for the next fiscal year. For those who are fortunate to participate in your budgeting process, this is an opportunity to have a voice in the direction that your program is going to take.

SFMANJ is planning a Seminar on Wheels this fall for our members. We will visit the Baker Athletics Complex, the primary athletics facility for Columbia's University's outdoor sports programs. A guided tour led by Columbia's sports field manager and SFMANJ member Kevin Malone, CSFM will feature the variety of different synthetic sports field systems used for collegiate sports including football, soccer, baseball, softball, field hockey, lacrosse, track & field and tennis. You will see and hear firsthand how an all synthetic sports complex is professionally managed on a daily basis. Motorcoach transportation and lunch will be included. Other interesting stops are also planned. Stay tuned for more information about this.

And while you are planning, we hope that you will be able to join us December 7-9 2010 in Atlantic City, NJ for the 35th Annual EXPO at the Taj Mahal. Be sure to read the article in this issue "Convincing your Employer to Send You to Expo 2010"

Don Savard

*Don Savard is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) and Certified Grounds Manager (CGM); Director, Athletic Facilities and Grounds, Salesianum School; and President, SFMANJ.*

## New Jersey Green Expo
### Turf & Landscape Conference

*Trump Taj Mahal Casino-Resort, Atlantic City, NJ*
*December 7-9, 2010*

### 2010 Sports Field Managers Program

### Tuesday, December 7, 2010

1:00 pm **Weed control strategies for school grounds**
*Steve Hart, Rutgers University*

1:30 pm **White grub control strategies for school grounds**
*Rich Buckley, Rutgers University*

2:00 pm **Integrated Pest Management strategies for school grounds**
*Mary Owen, University of Massachusetts*

3:00 pm **Evironmental turfcraft for school grounds**
*Kevin Trotta, North Rockland, NY Board of Education*

4:00 pm **Trade Show**

### Wednesday December 8, 2010

7:30 am **Early bird sports field managers**
*Networking roundtable*

8:30 am **SFMANJ Annual Business Meeting**

9:15 am **The year in review: 2010**
*Brad Park, Rutgers University*

9:45 am **Turfgrass establishment procedures for athletic fields**
*Dr. James Murphy, Rutgers University*

10:30 am **Building an organic fertility program**
*Mary Owen, University of Massachusetts*

11:30 am **Trade Show**

2:30 pm **Managing natural and synthetic fields in Long Branch, NJ**
*Frank Ravaschiere, City of Long Branch*

3:15 pm **Panel: Working with fewer resources & managing expectations**
**Moderator: Don Savard, CSFM, CGM**
*Ray Cipperly, Athletic Director, Middlesex County Vo-Tech*
*Frank LoSasso, Varsity Baseball Coach, Hammonton High School*
*Brian DeLucia, Piscataway Business Administrator*
*Scott Bills, CSFM, Former Division I Baseball Player, Northern Nurseries*

5:00 pm **Conclusion**

# Question & Answer with Rutgers University

*By Dr. Jim Murphy and Brad Park*

**Q:** Currently our soccer fields are all perennial ryegrass, I believe the variety that we are using is suboptimal and the beating it takes every year concerns me. I've done some research and I'm of the belief that we should migrate from ryegrass to tall fescue. More specifically, from the NTEP tests, Falcon V, Shenandoah III and Shenandoah Elite all look like excellent varieties for sports fields since they do very well on the wear tests and have an excellent appearance.

My concern is the existing ryegrass. I understand it's very competitive so I'm worried about over seeding with tall fescue just to have the ryegrass choke it out in a year. Would it be necessary to apply Roundup to the perennial ryegrass before planting tall fescue?

If you feel it's impractical to switch to tall fescue do you have any current test data on ryegrass and/or Kentucky bluegrass NTEP wear tests? I believe that even if we stick with the ryegrass but just switch to a better variety conditions will improve.

If you do think switching to a tall fescue is a good idea would you recommend any specific varieties of Kentucky bluegrass to mix with it? I heard at the field day this week that seeding with a fescue/rye mix is a bad idea since the 10% rye will overtake the 90% fescue in a couple of years.

Basically, any seed recommendations you may have would be appreciated.

**A:** You've asked some very pertinent questions. You could attempt to slit seed or use an Aera-Vator to begin introducing tall fescue to the existing soccer fields once or twice a year. There is no guarantee of immediate success; however, overtime you may see some tall fescue become established. Perennial ryegrass is still the best choice for routine overseeding of high traffic areas like goal creases. I would not use a Kentucky bluegrass/perennial ryegrass mixture for the purpose of overseeding high traffic locations. Use a blend of 100% perennial ryegrass. There are varieties with improved wear tolerance, turf quality, and gray leaf spot resistance available (see discussion below).

In an ideal situation, to completely transition from perennial ryegrass to tall fescue, applying Roundup makes sense. However, field closure, access to irrigation, and renovation timing all enter into the equation. If you can't close the field, don't have access to irrigation, or can't seed between August 15 and September 30, I would not apply Roundup.

The tall fescue varieties you mentioned are all good varieties. Selecting a variety based on turf quality, brown patch susceptibility, and wear/traffic tolerance will provide you with a good choice for a sports field.

Regarding mixtures, if your goal is to have a tall fescue field, I would not mix perennial ryegrass with the tall fescue. If your goal is to have a Kentucky bluegrass field, I would not mix perennial ryegrass with the Kentucky bluegrass.

The question of tall fescue/Kentucky bluegrass mixtures is a good one and Dr. Jim Murphy and I are discussing performing some research in this area. Based on what I'm observing in our Hort Farm II tall fescue study, I am not convinced Kentucky bluegrass needs to be added to tall fescue - assuming tall fescue varieties are established with superior turf quality, brown patch resistance, and wear/traffic tolerance. It has been observed that tall fescue/Kentucky bluegrass mixtures gradually transition to predominantly Kentucky bluegrass, so there is a strong argument to limit the initial seeding to 100% tall fescue, assuming your long term goal is to have a tall fescue field.

Attached are three pdf documents detailing the research results from Hort Farm II in 2009 for Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and tall fescue. We applied wear to our perennial ryegrass test in September 2009 and the results are in the document. For the purposes of overseeding, I suggest selecting perennial ryegrass varieties based on turfgrass quality, gray leaf spot resistance (usually delineated by 'GLR' or 'GLSR'), and wear/traffic tolerance. – BP

Editor's note: The Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and tall fescue research results referenced above are available by contacting Brad Park (park@aesop.rutgers.edu).

**Q:** I read the fact sheet that Rutgers put out regarding infield mixes. [See: Skin Surface Selection and Management for Baseball and Softball Fields http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS1096]. I am building a new baseball and softball field for the college facility that I manage in New England - where rain is always a factor in the spring. Drainage and playability in wet weather is a major concern. I know that clay is used as a binder and that too much sand produces an infield mix that breaks down too easily. If you use an angular sand instead of a round sand can you increase the sand percentage without breakdown being an issue? One of the local sand mines has a material which is made from crushed rocks; it is like a coarse sand and packs very well. I have used it previously for cart paths on golf course. I am wondering

*Continued on page 15*

# *Convincing your employer to send you to* EXPO 2010

*Continued from page 1*

Reinforce how the success of your sports fields ultimately depends upon the continued professional development of you and your staff.

### Know the Cost

Make a case for efficient and effective use of your facility's training dollars. By attending Expo 2010, you will be exposed to the most relevant education and technology in one place, making it the most effective use of training dollars.

Research travel times and hotel costs. While Atlantic City is feasible day trip from almost anywhere in New Jersey, the New Jersey Turfgrass Association does its part to negotiate reasonable room rates at the Trump Taj Mahal to make staying a night reasonable. Expo 2010 will feature online registration at www.njturfgrass.org

### Have an Action Plan

Develop a plan for how operations will continue in your absence. Make sure you are accessible by phone (please turn off or set on vibrate during sessions!!!!) to address any concerns that might arise in your absence.

Consider preparing and presenting a report on the information you learned and how you plan to put it into practice at your facility.

Demonstrate how you will share the technical information learned with your staff for their continuing educational development.

***See you in Atlantic City in December!***

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

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# A Contractor's Perspective on AERIFICATION

*By Sean Connell*

Aerification is a critical piece of the turf management puzzle. It is the one mechanical practice that is the staple in most turf programs. It alleviates compaction, removes thatch, and delivers air, nutrients and water to the roots very efficiently. Of course with anything in the turf business, the term 'aerification' can encompass a wide spectrum. It can mean using shoes with spikes on the bottom or a deep tine aerifier that could cost $40,000. The choices are endless and options are maybe even greater. There are two basic forms of aerification: solid tines and coring tines

Solid tines are used mostly for deep tine applications with tine sizes ranging from 6.0 to 14.0-inches long and can be over 1.0-inch diameter. Deep tine aerification penetrates the thatch, topsoil and potentially subsoil all in one motion. This is very effective and is considered one of the most economical forms of aerification because it does so much and penetrates so deep in one pass. The surface damage is minimal as well. There is usually only a tab of thatch and a hole visible from the operation of the machine. Considering how many options there are in equipment, I recommend using weight of the attachment as a determining factor for choosing equipment. Heavy usually means well built. Regular wear of an aerifier is incredibly harsh. Effective life spans of equipment that perform aerification are usually short even when scheduled maintenance is performed. Make equipment decisions wisely.

Core aerification removes a core of thatch and soil ejecting the plug every time it strikes the ground. The main reason to use coring tines is to remove and reduce thatch build up from the organic layer. The cores sizes can range from 0.25 to 1.25-inch. The larger the tines, the more economical. Larger tines remove the most thatch and alleviate the most compaction. After aerifying, the cores can be unsightly and affect play of the particular sport. So planning the clean-up in advance is always a consideration. Core aerification followed by plug removal is also excellent way to make room for topdressing material. Sand and/or organic materials are very popular choices (together or separately) that can be topdressed to fill-in coring holes. This is excellent way to modify soil by adding organics for a better cation exchange capacity or sand for better drainage. Either way, if your goal is to amend the soil, a physical soil test on your native soil and the material you intend to use will help you in deciding on

*Continued on page 18*

## *Did you know . . .*

*The turfgrass disease 'triangle' pictorially illustrates that a turfgrass will only succumb to a fungal disease if*

1. *the turf is susceptible to the fungal pathogen;*
2. *a virulent fungal pathogen is present; and*
3. *environmental conditions are suitable for infection to occur.*

# PHOTO RECAP.....


Jacobsen mower brought by Wilfred MacDonald


Smithco Sweeper brought by Wilfred MacDonald


BLEC Combinator brought by STEC Equipment

Aerifier brought by TurfTime Equipment

WaterWick brought by The Viersma Companies

Mike Viersma, The Viersma Companies

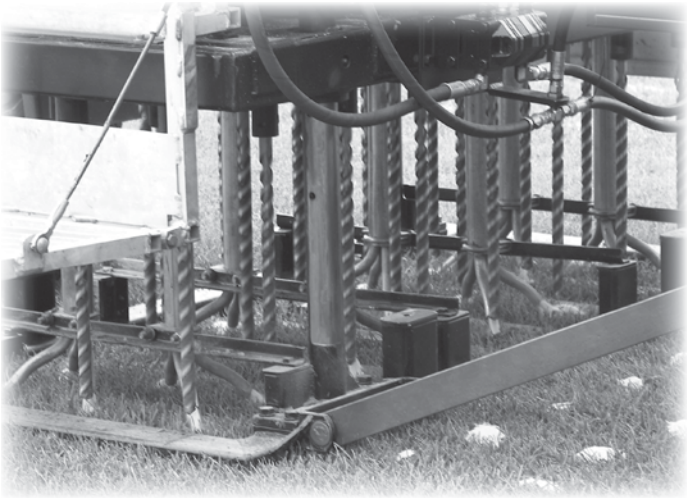
# 2010 OF THE Rutgers Lawn, Landscape, and Sports Turf Field Day,

## July 28, 2010, Rutgers Adelphia Research Farm, Freehold, NJ

*by Brad Park, Rutgers University*

**Toro Groundsmaster, Storr Tractor**

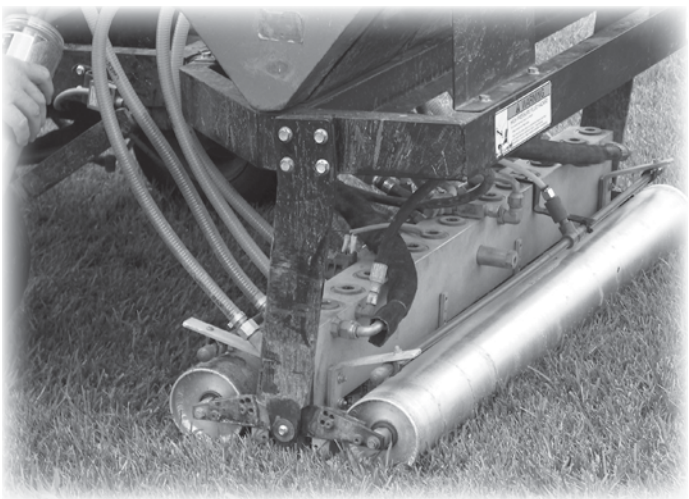
**BLEC Slice & Fill, Aer-Core**



**Drill & Fill, Aer-Core**

**Line Painting Demo, Till Paint**


**Aerification, Clarkton Sports Turf Services**



**DryJect Machine, DryJect**

# BUDGET BASICS

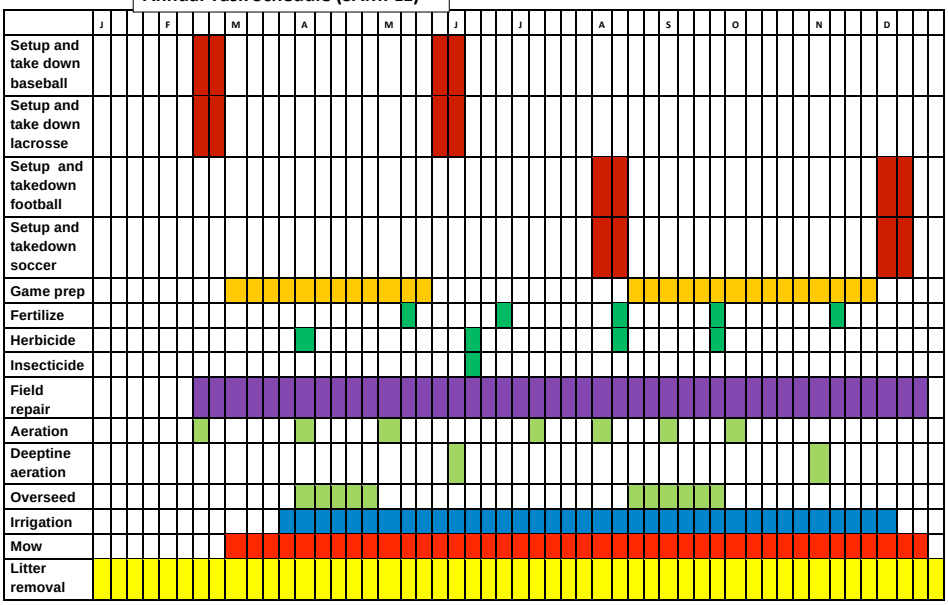
Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

*A budget is nothing more than a plan described in financial terms. Every year schools, park departments and other organizations that operate Facility Management Departments create operating budgets for their next fiscal year. Budget conscious sports field and grounds managers who know their costs can provide invaluable information for creating an operating budget.*

*For simplicity, there are three kinds of budgets you might plan for:*

- *Capital Budgets are used for planning the purchase of big ticket items such as a new field or new equipment such as trucks or tractors and are usually separate from an Operating Budget. You may not necessarily have one every year.*
- *Program Budgets are detailed budgets for special projects (such as field renovation).*
- *Operating Budgets are used for planning the everyday routine tasks like mowing, line painting, and turf management and may include the above mentioned Program Budget could be expressed as a line item of the Operating Budget.*

**Annual Task Schedule (SAMPLE)**




*We are now in the first quarter of this fiscal year 2010-2011. It is now time to think about your budget for next fiscal year 2011-2012. A good place to begin is to look back at the last fiscal year 2009-2010. Did you have enough resources to do what you wanted? Did you plan adequately for this current fiscal year?*

*There are a couple of ways to begin when creating a budget. A traditional way is to take last year's budget and inflate it by a percentage, adjust each line item until it balances and be done. This is called an Incremental Budget. Another way is to list all of your projected activities and find the costs and justify the request for funding. This is called a Zero Budget. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages.*

*Many budget administrators use the Incremental Budget approach because it is simple and easy to understand. The budget remains stable from year to year and change is gradual. Managers can continue to operate their departments as they have before. But if there were problems, such as waste, or underfunding, they will likely remain.*

*The Zero Base Budget method is a reverse of the Incremental Budget method. Rather than building from the previous year's budget, every projected activity and expense is listed from scratch, and every line item must be justified. This approach requires more time and effort but if done correctly results in a right sized and more accurate budget. Zero-Based Budgeting is useful for grounds and facilities departments to show to the Administration or Management what the costs really are, especially where the output is difficult to identify and all expenditures are looked at as overhead.*

*Regardless of which budget method you use, there is certain necessary information you must gather to build a budget that works:*

- *An evaluation of the current maintenance program to make appropriate changes if any.*
- *Area measurements to help you determine how much product to buy as well as predict the time needed to complete tasks.*
- *The amount of use, type of use, time of year the use occurs, and under what conditions to plan your work schedule.*
- *Complete chemical and physical soil testing results for accurate plant nutrition and soil management.*
- *Identification of the grass types for fertilizer requirements, seed and sod selection and cultural task management.*
- *Identification of weed, insect and disease pressures for control product selection and timing.*
- *Set thresholds for when to treat problems or initiate repairs.*
- *Clear understanding of the owner and users expectations?*

*Next, conduct an inventory of your resources. This includes the people who will do the work, as well as the equipment, materials, and time 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. All of this information will be used to create a program that satisfies both needs and wants.*

*To graphically illustrate your program, create a calendar showing when the activities will occur. This visual aid is helpful for scheduling resources and time around scheduled events. It will help you paint a realistic picture of what tasks your organization can do in-house, or whether you should outsource or eliminate.*

*Be sure to include any overhead expenses that your operation is charged, such as rent, utilities, or other line items. A spread sheet program on your computer will help you organize your data. Remember that you will have to present this to the financial people, so keep it simple but complete; and above all, neat and easy to read. Check your figures carefully and submit your budget.*

*Don Savard is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) and Certified Grounds Manager (CGM); Director, Athletic Facilities and Grounds, Salesianum School; and President, SFMANJ.*

# 2010 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**NJ State League of Municipalities Conference**
November 16-19, 2010
Atlantic City Convention Center
609.695.3481
www.njslom.org

**New Jersey Green Expo**
December 7-9, 2010
NJ Turfgrass Assoc.
Trunp Taj Mahal, Atlantic City, NJ
973.812.6467
www.njturfgrass.org

**STMA Annual Conference**
January 11-15, 2011
Sports Turf Mgrs. Assoc.
Austin, TX
1-800-323-3875
www.stma.org



# SFMANJ Field of the Year Contest 2010

**ELIGIBILITY:**
- Must be a current member of SFMANJ
- Only school and parks/recreation fields are eligible
- Must be a natural grass field/fields

**AWARD WILL BE BASED ON:**
- Playability and appearance of the playing surfaces
- Description of your maintenance program and what you did to improve your field
- Description of your yearly budget for this field
- (Sports groups may be used in your photos)


*Lacey Township Soccer Field - SFMANJ's Field of the Year 2009*

**AWARDS:**
The winner will be honored with a plaque at the New Jersey Turfgrass and Landscape Conference & Expo in December, 2010 and will be featured in an article in SFMANJ's "*Update*" newsletter.

*The winner will also receive a stay at the Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City and free registration to education courses and trade show at Expo 2010.*

**SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY:**
- All entries are to be submitted by mail or e-mail and must be received by September 30, 2010.
- Entries are limited to 10 color photos. Please include the name, location and owner of the facility, along with your name, position, and contact number.

*Mail Entries to:*
**SFMANJ 2010 F.O.Y. Contest**
**P.O. Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070**

*OR E-mail to:* **mail@sfmanj.org**
*Call for more info:* **856-514-3179**

website: sfmanj.org / e-mail: mail@sfmanj.org

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

*Continued from page 6*

if using this material as the sand portion of an infield mix and increasing the sand percentage is something that might help to improve the wet weather performance of the infield mix.

Also, I am wondering if using magnesium chloride during warmer weather would help to keep the mix from becoming too dry during a game. Salts were used in the old days on Har-Tru tennis courts before irrigation became common to keep the surface from drying out. Couldn't the same technique be applied to ball fields?

**A:** Above all, the most critical factor related to skin surfaces for wet climates is field design. Field design must entail provisions for adequate surface drainage (i.e. the skin is graded 0.5 to 1.5% away from the infield). Similarly, no water should be directed onto the infield skin - which occasionally happens when fields are designed as part of multi-purpose fields.

The ASTM Guide (F 2107-07) for Construction and Maintenance of Skinned Areas on Baseball and Softball Fields makes no mention of sand angularity. This is likely because the sources of most commercial mixes, deemed to be of acceptable quality, are mined 'pits' and what is in the pit and what has worked as a mix in the past (which likely has an appropriate quantity of angular sand) and generally conforms to the ASTM spec is what is sold. In theory, selecting a mix with a high content of angular sand as opposed to a round sand would likely provide a firmer surface, particularly when the surface is wet, assuming there isn't a critical amount of silt and clay in the mix to negate the impact of the sand. Regardless, installing a mix with a specified content of angular sand is most likely going to require custom blending - or long distance shipping if a local quarry does not have a mix to meet your specs.

For your purposes, I suggest identifying a supplier with an infield mix in the range of 80 to 85% sand; remainder silt and clay. I would be hesitant to select a mix that is too coarse (i.e. minimize particles greater than 2.00 mm). Another important factor is selecting a quartz sand - if the sand contains more than 5% calcium carbonate equivalent, the sand has the potential for particle cementation. I would not use the cart path material (or blend it with an existing commercial mix) unless I have seen it on a site where it is currently being used.

Do not overlook the practice of identifying nearby facilities with what have been characterized by sports field managers, coaches, and athletes as 'well performing skins'. Determine the physical properties of the mix, the mix supplier, and discuss the

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management strategies with the sports field manager. Also, while I fully recognize the labor intensive nature of infield tarping, this is an effective means to keep water off the infield if rainfall is imminent.

As for the magnesium chloride, I would not view it as a substitute for the ability to supply water to the skin. Coarser, sandier mixes will tend to lose stability when dry; water is critical to provide good footing during dry periods. Also, field design should include an irrigation provision to water the mix (including a quick coupler behind the mound). – BP

**Q:** The hot, dry weather has caused the turf in front of our municipal building to turn straw brown. Is it dead? Is it dormant? What actions should we take to improve turf conditions?

**A:** This has been (still is) a very difficult year for many turfs. The next few days or so are forecast to return to 90 °F highs with lows in the mid 70s °F, so stressful weather returns!

As a result, some areas of turf have gone dormant but it is increasingly evident that some areas have suffered severe damage, which will need some form of repair and rejuvenation. If your location has received some rain in recent weeks, the dormant areas should now be showing signs of re-growth. If re-growth is absent or sparse, then repair is probably necessary. I have observed that many severely damaged turf areas occur where the topsoil is very shallow (< 4 inches deep) and the subsoil is severely compacted. Such soil conditions were unable to provide enough water to the turf over sufficiently long enough period of time for the turf to develop physiological dormancy. As result, the grass plants died instead of going dormant. There are also cases where insects and/or diseases also contributed to death.

In any case, plans for repair and rejuvenation efforts need to take place as soon as possible since the prime seeding and sodding period is only a couple weeks away.

From a broad viewpoint, there are two general approaches to consider: 1) Overseed the turf or 2) Renovate the turf. Approach #1 makes more sense if you simply want to re-establish some turf cover with minimal effort and do not have underlying problems needing correction. Approach #2 is more effort but has more reward in terms of better appearance and ultimately a more durable and persistent turf.

Regardless of the approach you choose, you should have the soil tested (if you haven't already) to make sure pH, nutrients, and organic matter content aren't part of the problem in growing the turf. If you need a lab for this, the URL for the Rutgers Soil Testing Lab is: www.njaes.rutgers.edu/soiltestinglab .

Either approach will require some form of aeration/cultivation/tillage to tear up the dead organic debris that was the turf before it died. Tillage will help incorporate any recommended amendments and expose bare ground (soil) that needs to be in contact with seed or sod for repair to be successful.

With approach #1, the objective should be to core-aerate and stir as much soil as possible into the surface organic debris of the former turf. First, apply any recommended amendments, then core-aerate a lot to create holes about 2 inches apart. It is useful to chop up the aeration-cores with a verti-cutter or de-thatcher. Next, spread the seed thoroughly over the area being repaired. Use enough seed that you can actually see the seed fall into the core-aeration holes. Make sure that you use enough seed; most repair failures occur because not enough seed was applied during overseeding. A minimum of 4 pounds per 1000 square feet is recommended; tall fescue overseeding should probably apply 8 to 10 pounds per 1000 square feet. Rake the seed thoroughly into the soil after overseeding.

As for the selection of species, there are a number of choices for turfgrasses in our climate. Seed blends of perennial ryegrass typically work best for overseeding. Although perennial ryegrass establishes easily from seed, you will need to use more advanced varieties to result in more stress tolerant turf. Overseeding mixtures containing some Kentucky bluegrass and/or tall fescue can also be used but the immediate effects will most likely be from the perennial ryegrass in the mixture. Use seed mixture with low percentages (or none) of perennial ryegrass if your goal is to have these other species ultimately dominate in the turf. Most people think Kentucky bluegrass is the most attractive grass; however, this species is best to re-establish from sod (too slow from seed). Tall fescue is considered more stress tolerant but it is not quite as attractive as Kentucky bluegrass. Tall fescue can be established from seed or sod but it is not as easy to establish from seed as is perennial ryegrass. We do not recommend the varieties of tall fescue named 'Kentucky 31' or 'Fawn' for turf. These varieties are more useful as for pasture/forage and do not form a dense attractive turf. Turf managers and home owners will ultimately be frustrated with 'Kentucky 31' or 'Fawn' because of the more frequent mowing requirement. Moreover, many people will be tempted to apply a lot more fertilizer to these varieties to improve density and color of the turf. Fine fescues are another choice especially if you are ultimately interested in lower maintenance turfs. Unfortunately, high quality varieties of fine fescue seed is hard to find and sod is even more difficult to find.

Regardless of the species of grass you choice, you probably need to go to a professional wholesale/retail supplier/landscaper for high quality seed. Typically, big box stores provide seed that low priced and low to moderate quality although you can find some better quality seed if you look for it. Also, you can purchase some moderate to high quality varieties of seed at www.seedsuperstore.com

For approach #2 - if you believe the topsoil is very shallow (< 4 inches) and the subsoil is compacted, this would be a good time

to try and correct/improve that problem. First, apply any soil amendments recommended by the lab (fertilizer and/or compost are likely recommendations) and then till those into the soil as deep as feasible. Some landscape contractors have the tillage tools needed for this type of tillage - a heavy duty reverse rototiller is most commonly used. The soil will need a moderate water content (but not wet) for the tillage to go deep into the soil, so some pre-wetting with irrigation may be useful if natural rains aren't enough to moisten and soften the ground.

After amending and tilling, the loosened soil will need to be firmed with light rolling before seeding or sodding. Don't roll if the soil becomes soaked with rain, allow it to dry before. In fact, rain may do a lot of the re-firming for you. Apply a starter fertilizer to the re-firmed soil and rake-in lightly before seeding or sodding. Note that you should use 1/2 rates of fertilizer if you amended the soil with high quality compost or the soil has an inherently high organic matter content.

If you seed, rake lightly again after seeding to work the seed into the soil. If you sod, lightly roll the sod after it is placed to put the sod in good contact with the soil. Applying some type of mulch barrier after seeding is helpful in conserving water and improving seedling emergence and turf development.

Apply water immediately after seeding or sodding and don't let the seed, seedlings, or sod dry out. Light watering one to three times everyday are better at first. Change the frequency of watering to every 2 or 3 days after roots are 2 or more inches deep. Hopefully, irrigation won't be needed any later than mid October.

Plan to reapply 1/4 or 1/2 rates of fertilizer every 2 to 4 weeks to encourage a steady spread and thickening of the grass. Repeat fertilization until the turf development achieves 90 to 100% soil cover. Rapid cover of the soil is important to prevent soil erosion and minimize the invasion of weeds. Fertilization can be cut back dramatically once ground cover approaches 100% and the grass plants have healthy green appearance. Fertilization should not produce an extremely lush, dark green color or force too much growth. Cut back on fertilization rate and/or extend the fertilization frequency if leaf growth is so rapid that the turf requires mowing more than once per week.

As for timing, now is the best time to get started. If you can get the site prep done, you can seed or sod as early as 15 August. Ideally, you don't want to plant much later than 15 September in northern New Jersey and 30 September in southern New Jersey.

Two Rutgers Fact Sheets that provide additional information on this topic include Renovating Your Lawn[http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS108] and Seeding Your Lawn [http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS584]. – JM

*Dr. Jim Murphy (JM) is Extension Specialist in Turfgrass Management, Rutgers University and SFMANJ Advisor.*
*Brad Park (BP) is Sport Turf Res. & Ed. Coor., Rutgers University; Editor, SFMANJ Update; and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors.*

A Contractor's Perspective on

# AERIFICATION

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materials needs. For example, concrete sand is called concrete sand for a reason: it compacts very tightly.

Aerification can be stressful to turf so some preliminary work is in order. Providing up to an inch of irrigation helps the aerification equipment penetrate the soil. Watering after aerification is just as important since the turf can dry-out very quickly following aerification. Daily inspection of turf and monitoring of wilt is critical the first week. Fertilizing before or after aerifying is a great idea as well since the turf is under stress nutrients will help the turf to heal and grow. Soil samples are always recommended for the most accurate and responsible results. Aerification increased the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide; the turf will grow deeper into the soil building stronger roots which, in turn, will provide better playing conditions. After core aerification, some sports turf mangers break-up cores by dragging and mowing the thatch debris. This is great idea except in hot conditions. Excessive heat can intensify the bruising of the turf that is left behind to heal. This bruising can extend the time it takes the turf to heal. Spring and fall aerification seem to be the best time to aerify cool season grasses because of the vigorous growth. Summer is the best time to perform aerification on warm season grasses.

Deciding whether to purchase or lease aerification equipment or contract aerification services can be difficult considering the numerous options. Tough conditions such as rock, shallow topsoil and unknown debris below the turf areas are good reasons to use a contractor. Contractors usually have the latest equipment and operation of that equipment on your property can serve as a 'demo' to help you decide about purchasing. Regardless of the choice you make, the turf will be healthier and stronger as a result of this mechanical practice.

*Sean Connell is Owner and Primary Project Manager, Georgia Golf Construction and member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors.*



## *Did you know . . .*

*Details and forms that will assist you in complying with the New Jersey School IPM Law can be found at: www.pestmanagement.rutgers.edu*

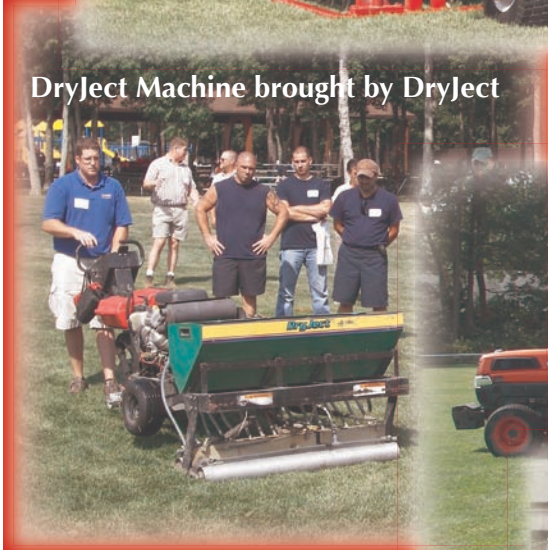
# PHOTO RECAP

## OF THE 2010 SFMANJ SUMMER FIELD DAY JUNE 22, 2010, LACEY TOWNSHIP, NJ

*by Brad Park, Rutgers University*

Drill & Fill, Aer-Core

Toro mower/blower combo, Turf Equipment & Supply and Storr Tractor



DryJect Machine brought by DryJect

TurfTime Topdresser brought by The Viersma Companies

Smithco Infield Groomer, Wilfred Macdonald

Paint demonstration by Till Paint

Deep vertical slicing unit, Garden Gates Ent., Inc.

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey

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Pennsville, NJ 08070

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