

UPDATE

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey

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A Message from The President

By Matt Olivi

The off-season is over and we are ready for another year of doing what we do best. As we scratch-up our infield skins for the first time this year we have an opportunity to apply all of the new knowledge that we've acquired over the winter months from the various educational programs we've attended. Several members of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) Board of Directors attended the annual Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Conference in January. As always, STMA put together a very informative educational program. SFMANJ was well represented on the national stage this year by two of our local chapter Directors. Brad Park from Rutgers University and Past-President Don Savard from the Salesianum School were honored as guest speakers on the program. Also representing our local association were the two Student Challenge teams from Rutgers University and the County College of Morris. SFMANJ was proud to sponsor both teams. Our thanks to all of the students who took part in the challenge as they also represented us well. We look forward to working with the next generation of up and coming sports field managers.

Local educational opportunities for sports field managers will be available throughout the year. SFMANJ will be hosting its annual Spring Field Day on Thursday, April 19, 2012. This year we'll be heading north to Ginty Park located in Morris Township, New Jersey. Be sure to join us early for morning refreshments and catch-up with friends and colleagues from all over the state. After breakfast, we'll roll up our sleeves, test out some infield grooming equipment and show you a few tricks of the trade. Then, we'll move to the outfield and best management practices for maintaining healthy turfgrass will be discussed. These proper cultural practices will be demonstrated in the practical applications of topdressing and aeration. This will be the main focus of our educational program and demonstrations will feature some of the best equipment available from local distributors. After the conclusion of our demonstrations, we'll fire up the grill and have lunch. We'll continue our educational program after lunch with a risk assessment seminar featuring Dr. Neil Dougherty, Rutgers University. Brad Park, Rutgers University will conclude the day with a presentation describing how to read and interpret a pesticide label. Distribution of NJ pesticide recertification credits will immediately follow. Admission to the Field Day event will be free of charge to all pre-registered SFMANJ members. Be sure to keep an eye out as further updates, program details and registration information will be coming your way.

As sports field managers it is always in our best interest to be aware of any legislation that affects our maintenance practices. We are all aware of the Fertilizer Regulations that were passed into law last year. Since then, Rutgers University has been working hard to develop a Professional Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training Program. The online program is up and running and available for all sports field managers to stay in compliance with state law. The certification process is outlined in detail at www.profact.rutgers.edu. We encourage all Sports Field Managers to study the related material and if necessary, become a certified applicator.

The SFMANJ Board of Directors looks forward to seeing you at upcoming educational events. We will continue to make all of the informational and educational resources you need available to you as we move forward. All members are always welcome to attend monthly board of directors meetings and are encouraged to contact us with questions, comments and concerns.

Matt Olivi is Sports Field Manager, Piscataway Board of Education, Piscataway, NJ; and SFMANJ President

Student Challenge . . .



SFMANJ sponsored four Rutgers students to participate in the 2012 STMA Student Challenge in Long Beach, CA in January 2012. Pictured (l-r) Kyle Genova, Rutgers Student; Brad Park, Rutgers University; Erik Taylor, Rutgers Student; Kevin Rundstrom, Rutgers Student; Nick Delmar, Rutgers Student; Matt Olivi, SFMANJ President; Don Savard, CSFM, CGM, SFMANJ Past-President.



A team of three County College of Morris (CCM) students was sponsored by SFMANJ to participate in the Student Challenge at the 2012 Sport Turf Managers Association Conference held in Long Beach, CA in January. Pictured (l-r) Matt Olivi, SFMANJ President; David Los, CCM Student; Giancarlo Sarrullo, CCM Student; and Dan Colyer, CCM Student.

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Currently we have 169 new & renewed members. Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey mailed invoices for 2012 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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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 quarterly publication of the
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SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.

2011 *Field of the Year*

By Scott Bills, CSFM

Hammonton High School's Frank Capoferri Field

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) received three applications for 2011 Field of the Year. The entrants included Somerset County Park Commission, Torpey Athletic Complex, Softball Field, Somerville, NJ from David Kuczynski; Northern Burlington County Regional School District, Varsity Soccer Field from Don Czehut and Bernard Luongo; and Hammonton High School, Frank Capoferri Football Field by Frank LaSasso.



Hammonton High School's Frank Capoferri Field: The 2011 SFMANJ Field of the Year

After personal interviews and visits to each field, the SFMANJ Board of Directors chose Frank Capoferri Football Field, Hammonton High School as the 2011 Field of the Year. Somerset County, Torpey Softball Field and North Burlington County School District, Varsity Soccer Field were both awarded runner-up.

Dave Kuczynski from the Somerset County Park Commission was the Field of the Year winner in 2010 for the Torpey Athletic Complex Baseball Field. Dave has transformed both the softball field and baseball field into very playable surfaces that are perhaps two of the best public ball fields in New Jersey. Both fields have natural turf, with the baseball field having a grass and skin infield and the softball field being all skin. Dave credits his years working with Ray Cipperly and Dan Purner at TD Bank Ballpark, home of the Somerset Patriots with giving him the skills and confidence to become a superior sports turf manager. When asked, Dave still helps at the ballpark.

In addition to both ball fields, which are lighted, Dave is responsible for a lighted synthetic all-purpose field. From late April until late October, Dave estimates 25-30 ball games are played on his two fields, 7 days a week.

Like many experienced groundskeepers, Dave performs much of the infield grooming by hand. His pre and post-game routine, learned at TD Bank Ballpark, included making sure all displaced infield mix is swept from the grass to prevent lip build up. Dave will then make sure the pitcher's mound and home plate area are leveled with moistened clay and compacted. If no game is scheduled during the day, Dave tarps these areas, to keep the clay moist. SFMANJ congratulates Dave for his being a runner-up for the 2011 Field of the Year award.

In Columbus, NJ, the Northern Burlington County Regional High School has made great strides improving the safety and playability of their sports fields. Don Czehut, Facilities Director and Bernard Luongo, Grounds Supervisor have worked together to provide students of the school district with quality fields.

Several years ago, Don and Bernard, began following a comprehensive turf management program that included cultural practices such as aeration and over-seeding, applications of nutrients required by soil testing and the responsible use of pesticides, only when necessary. In addition, maintaining a regular mowing schedule which includes returning clippings to the soil and keeping mower blades sharp, have improved the health of the turf.

The results of their diligent efforts allowed Don and Bernard to submit an application for 2011 Field of the Year for the varsity soccer field. Speaking with both gentleman 3-4 years ago, I don't think either of them could have imagined then, that one of their fields would be up to the standards required to be a Field of the Year candidate.

The North Burlington County Regional School District should be proud of Don and Bernard, their efforts and more importantly, their results. In a time when all we hear about are budget issues, Don and

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THE NEW JERSEY FERTILIZER LAW:

UPDATE ON CERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONALS

By Dr. James Murphy

On January 5, 2011 Governor Christie signed into law New Jersey Act, P.L. 2010, c. 112 (C.58:10A-64). The Act is intended to protect all New Jersey surface and ground waters from impairment by minimizing nitrogen and phosphorus pollution that may be derived from fertilizer. It addresses the **application, sale, and use of fertilizer for turf**. Both specialty fertilizers sold at retail for turf and professional fertilizer applicators making applications to turf are affected by this law. As defined in the law, "Turf means land, including residential property and publicly owned land, that is planted in closely mowed, managed grass, except golf courses or land used in the operation of a commercial farm". Please note that, while golf course turf is exempted from the fertilizer restrictions in this law, those individuals applying fertilizer to golf courses are considered professional fertilizer applicators and are required by law to participate in the certification program. Fertilizer applications to commercial farms are not affected by this law.

A "Professional Fertilizer Applicator" is defined in the law as any individual who applies fertilizer for hire, including any employee of a government entity who applies fertilizer within the scope of employment. The law requires that a certification program for professional fertilizer applicators be established by the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) in consultation with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Please note that this certification program for professional fertilizer applicators is not part of pesticide licensing administered by the DEP. Thus, the fertilizer certification program is separate from the pesticide licensing program and you will need to participate in both programs to legally apply both fertilizer and pesticide as a professional in NJ.



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stop the insanity

By Scott Bills, CSFM

As a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM), I consult with dozens of municipalities, schools and private sports organizations each year regarding problems with their ball fields. If I only had a nickel for every time I heard, "My infield mix doesn't dry out", or "My infield mix turns to concrete in the summer", or "My infield mix is like a sand box" or "How do I keep weeds from growing in my infields." Sound familiar?

Despite all of the inventions and historic moments in the last century, curing polio, sending a man to the moon, Facebook (Yuk), we couldn't figure out what makes a quality infield mix.

In 2007, two Major League Baseball head groundskeepers had serious problems with their infield skin surfaces. After calling most of the major manufacturers of infield materials, the only answer was to completely tear out the mix and start from scratch. Unfortunately, time and expense didn't allow for that option. Convinced they could somehow salvage or 'amend' the mix they already have, they didn't stop inquiring. The symptom on both fields was 'chunking out.' In other words, the infields would not stay together without a lot of moisture. Experience working with many materials, told both groundskeepers, they needed more clay.

Persistence led them to Grant McKnight, The Natural Sand Company. For several years Grant had been trying to figure out why there wasn't an agreed upon standard for infield mixes. He concluded that because there was not a single source of ingredients that could be reproduced nationally, the industry relied on regional sources. When Grant received the phone call from two prominent groundskeepers, he felt it was time

to reach out for additional help. Grant contacted Dr. Norm Hummel of Hummel and Company. Dr. Hummel is one of the country's most respected soil scientists.

The Natural Sand Company owned a natural source of clay, plus a sand source that could be screened to meet specific standards. Before any amendment could be formulated to help these fields, he needed to know the analysis of the existing infield mixes on each field. The mixes were sent to Dr. Hummel for analysis. Dr. Hummel provided a report indicating the percentage of sand, silt and clay, a breakdown of the sand gradations, from fine to coarse, plus the ratio of silt to clay. After consulting with Dr. Hummel and discussing the test results with each groundskeeper, Grant manufactured an amendment for each field. The prescription was to blend a specific amount of amendment into the top 2-3 inches of existing infield mix. The goal was to reduce the overall amount of sand, specifically fine sand, increase the amount of clay and reduce the ratio of silt/clay to less than one.

After installing the amendment, both groundskeepers noticed a significant improvement in the performance of their infields. The fields were staying together, they were able to absorb and hold moisture longer, the playing surface was consistent throughout the infield and overall maintenance requirements were greatly reduced.

As a result of those two success stories, now 16 of 30 major league teams have either amended their existing infields or in the case of the new Miami Marlins stadium, installed the product within the complete profile.

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For information on other ways to support this fellowship, please contact

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UPDATE ON CERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL



To become certified, the law specifies that professionals must receive training in the five subject areas outlined below and pass an exam which addresses these subjects:

1. The proper use and calibration of fertilizer application equipment;
2. The hazards involved in, and the environmental impact of, applying fertilizer, including nutrient pollution to the State's waterbodies;
3. All applicable State and federal laws, rules and regulations;
4. The correct interpretation of fertilizer labeling information; and
5. The best management practices developed by the NJAES for nutrient management in turf.

An online program for **Professional Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training** is now available; type **ProFACT.rutgers.edu** in your web browser to register and begin online training. The website records and documents your progress in the online training. Once the training is complete, registered users will be qualified to take the online exam.

The exam is intended to certify that individuals possesses sufficient knowledge of the laws, rules and regulations, standards and requirements applicable to the use and application of fertilizer as required by law. The certification exam was available online at ProFACT.rutgers.edu on January 30, 2012. See the website for more background and instructions for the online training and exam as well as other program details.

The law allows two general classifications for professional fertilizer applicators: **certified** and **trained**. Individuals that make decisions on selection of fertilizer products and application rates and timings; calibrate and setup of application equipment; develop spill response protocol as well as make applications

should become a **Certified Fertilizer Applicator**. For a professional to become a **Trained Fertilizer Applicator**, the individual must also receive training on the laws, rules and regulations, standards and requirements applicable to the use and application of fertilizer by a **Trained Fertilizer Applicator**. Trained Applicators can only apply fertilizer under the direct supervision of a Certified Fertilizer Applicator. Trained fertilizer applicators will need to receive annual training and registration with the ProFACT program. The details for training Trained Fertilizer Applicators will be released shortly and made available through the ProFACT website.

The law also requires NJAES to maintain a list of all **Certified Fertilizer Applicators** and make the list available on its internet website (ProFACT.rutgers.edu). A list of Trained Fertilizer Applicators along with the Certified Fertilizer Applicator(s) that supervise them will also be maintained.

Visit **ProFACT.rutgers.edu** for more information on the certification program.

Dr. James Murphy is Extension Specialist in Turfgrass Management, Rutgers University; and Advisor, SFMANJ.



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SPORTS FIELD MANAGERS

Conference & Exhibition

By Kevin Rundstrom

The Rutgers Turf Club would like to thank Rutgers University, Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ), and Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) for making our visit to Long Beach to attend the 2012 STMA Conference and Exhibition possible. Without these organizations we would have not had the opportunity to experience the National Conference.

The Rutgers Turf Club sent a team of four students to compete in the Student Challenge. We also attended the education sessions and industry trade show. The conference was a great way for students interested in pursuing careers in sports turf to network and interact with many in the industry. Three students were first-time underclassmen attendees and will be able to compete and attend again in the future. We believe that the STMA Conference allows for wonderful student activities and networking potential.

Our first day was not limited to travel. We were able to arrive in Long Beach and have time to sign-in and attend the Student Networking Session. Over the next few days we attended many talks that were specifically designed for students. One session entailed two professional sports field managers and an international university professor. Darian Daily from the Cincinnati Bengals was one of the two sports field managers. Darian gave a presentation titled, "The 'Real' Story of Being an NFL Sports Field Manager." During his presentation he spoke of his journey that we all will soon make and how he ended-up with the Cincinnati Bengals. He also detailed many of the daily activities a sports field manager performs. His presentation described how one must continue to learn and speak to people to be well informed beyond graduating. Another professional sports field manager, Larry DiVito, Minnesota Twins gave a presentation titled, "What it Takes to be an MLB Field Maintenance Manager." Throughout his speech he described his daily activities. It was very good to see how two professional managers in different sports share similar ideas and tactics to ensure high performance fields. Ian Lacy is an international professor and he was able to give insight into looking for international experiences as part of his presentation called, "Broaden Your Horizons Through International Experiences." He began with a story of his

travels and how sports fields and academia helped him work, study, and live in countries all over the world.

One of our favorite sessions of the trip included one of our professors at Rutgers University, Brad Park. On the panel of speakers with him was Bill Deacon of the New York Mets, Dr. Gwen Stahnke, Dr. John Rogers, and Tim VanLoo. They opened the floor to question after question and each person was able to give their own opinion and knowledge of the subject. The talk was titled, "Cool Season Turfgrasses: New Varieties for Sports Turf and Management Tips from the Pros."

The trade shows allowed for students to see companies and meet people from those companies that fuel the sports turf industry. These are the people that help make our profession a reality. Talking to these companies and seeing new products is one of the most exciting aspects every year.

The main reason for us going to Long Beach was to compete for our school in the student challenge. We competed against over 30 teams and placed 16th. Scores were very close and we were pleased with how our test went. The test is made-up with multiple choice, short answer and identification that includes turfgrass, weeds, insects, diseases, and irrigation parts. The Turf Club is eager to get back to STMA in 2013 and compete again for Rutgers.

Once again we would like to thank Rutgers University, SFMANJ, STMA, and Rutgers Turf Club for enabling us to attend. It is always an honor to be able to represent our university, turf program, and all the people we are lucky enough to work beside and learn from. Thank you!

Kevin Rundstrom is Undergraduate Student, Rutgers University; and 2012 STMA Student Challenge Team Member representing Rutgers University

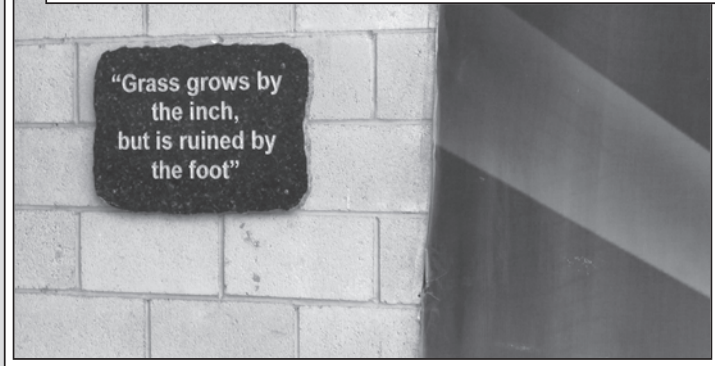
The Rutgers Student Challenge Team received a tour of the Toro Booth during the 2012 STMA Conference and Exhibition in Long Beach, CA



Photo Recap of Sports Turf Managers Association Annual Conference Turf Tour

by Brad Park, Rutgers University

Hollywood Park Racetrack,
The Home Depot Center,
and Blair Field



January 10, 2012



We have more tools than you might think

Submitted by Tech Terra Environmental

Times are changing and due to public demand and new regulations we have to become knowledgeable in other techniques to care for plants. Public pressure, government regulations and good business practices are all telling us to Go Green.

We all have issues with the NJ School IPM Program, the new fertilizer law and the continuing battle over the Safe Playing Field Act. These regulations remove many of the tools we have depended upon for years. On the other hand there are good reasons to rethink some of the methods of the past.

I talk with many people in the industry and many who are environmentally concerned. I hear a lot of misinformation on both sides, from "We can't successfully maintain turf cost effectively without access to pesticides as we currently use

them" to "All these pesticides are killing us". The vast majority of people believe that the truth is in the middle.

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.

Albert Einstein



Now is the time to get serious about promoting our profession as being environmental stewards. We should be able to wisely use some pesticides and still embrace the use of more environmentally sensitive methods. There is a growing body of science which describes the benefits of adding organic matter to the soil and the effectiveness of many of the Low Impact Pesticides. They are

being used on many playing fields throughout the country successfully.

There will be a hard fought battle in Trenton this year over the Safe Playing Fields Act. By taking a strategy of compromise, the Green Industry would present itself as having a concerned and reasonable approach towards the future of turf care. 🌱

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Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey

2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NJ School Buildings & Grounds Conference/Expo
 April 3-4, 2012
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 Atlantic City, NJ
 800.851.9382
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SFMANJ Spring Field Day
 April 19, 2012
 Morris Township, NJ
 856.514.3179
www.sfmanj.org

Rutgers Turfgrass Research Golf Classic
 May 7, 2012
 Fiddler's Elbow Country Club
 Bedminster, NJ
 973.812.6467
www.njturfgrass.org

Rutgers Turfgrass Golf & Fine Turf Field Day
 July 31, 2012
 Rutgers Hort. Farm 2
 North Brunswick, NJ
 Rutgers Lawn, Landscape, & Sports Turf Field Day
 SFMANJ-sponsored equipment demonstrations
 August 1, 2012
 Rutgers Adelphia Research Farm
 Freehold, NJ
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New Jersey Green Expo
 December 4-6, 2012
 Trump Taj Mahal
 Atlantic City, NJ
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www.njturfgrass.org

HAVE YOU CHECKED-OUT OUR WEB SITE LATELY?

- ✓ Check our Events page for upcoming events and pictures of past SFMANJ functions.
- ✓ Check our Resources page for past issues of our Newsletter Update, Minutes from past Board Meetings, links to useful information and job postings.
- ✓ Check our Contact Us page for direct links to all of the Board of Directors. Call us with any questions or comments.
- ✓ Check our Vendor page for interactive links to our advertising vendors' web sites and a complete list of all our vendors. Call them first! They are happy to answer any questions.



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2011 Field of the Year

Continued from page 4

Hammonton High School's Frank Capoferri Field

Bernard were able to improve their fields. SFMANJ congratulates Don and Bernard for being a runner-up for 2011 Field of the Year.

For the second time, Frank LaSasso, Sports Turf and Grounds Manager at Hammonton High School, Hammonton, NJ submitted an application for Field of the Year. The first time Frank sent his application for the Frank Capoferri football field, the SFMANJ Board of Directors was forced to make a tough decision. That year, Frank was chosen as runner-up and the Field of the Year award went to Lacey Twp. When I visited Frank's field the first time in late November it looked as if no one played on it. That same year I visited 4 other applicants' football fields, all in November. They asked me why we inspect them in November after they have been played on. Frank was happy to show his field off in November. It looked like it had never been played on. That year Frank estimated the field had already hosted over 20 games.

Fast forwarding 3 years, Frank's budget and manpower has been cut. Sound familiar. Despite the budget woes, the worst heat spell in recent memory, 12 inches of snow at Halloween and no letup in usage, the Frank Capoferri football field still looked perfect in November. In fact, I show pictures of the field so other school districts and they think it is synthetic.

Frank LaSasso has figured out how to manage turf, regardless of the obstacles. Aside from his mowing schedule, fertility program and cultural practices, Frank is a great communicator. He has won the respect of the administration and coaching staff. As a result, Frank is able to manage field usage and is rarely denied funding because the administration sees results.

The SFMANJ Board of Directors would like to congratulate Frank LaSasso and The Hammonton School District for being awarded the 2011 Field of the Year for the Frank Capoferri Football Field.

The SFMANJ Field of the Year program recognizes the efforts of member sports turf managers throughout New Jersey. Applications are due by the end of October 2012 and are awarded at the NJ Green Expo in Atlantic City, NJ in early December. In addition to a plaque, the winner will receive a complimentary registration to all education sessions, the two day trade show, dinner and one night's lodging at Trump Taj Mahal.

If you have any further questions regarding the program please feel free to contact the SFMANJ office at 856-514-3179.

Scott Bills is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM); Sports Field Consultant, Sports Field Solutions LLC; and Secretary and Public Relations Committee Chairman, SFMANJ Board of Directors

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Stop the Insanity

In the past, local sports field managers were fearful of installing the same type of infield mix used in professional stadiums.

Through continued research and understanding the resources available to each groundskeeper, now specific infield mix blends and amendments can be installed on college, high school and municipal ball fields. More importantly, the fields can be improved without having to completely replace the existing infield mix or spend \$500 to \$600 per ton on conditioners.

But the title of this article is "Stop the Insanity". So far, it doesn't sound so insane. I'll get there.

Although I am mostly familiar with field issues in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast region of the country, believe me, there are infield problems in all 50 states.

In our area of the country, most of the indigenous infield mixes that are produced have too much sand, too much fine sand, too much silt in relation to the amount of clay and not the right type of clay. Most of the producers of local infield mixes find a source of sand that has some percentage of silt and clay. These materials are harvested, not engineered. Since most of these companies are large sand producers for other industries like masonry, concrete, asphalt and glass, these sands with too much silt and clay become waste. Well someone much smarter than me figured out that if you screened it a little bit, have it analyzed, keep it somewhat consistent and give it a fancy name related to the game of baseball, they could add \$10 to \$20 per ton or more and sell it as infield mix.

So over the years engineers and architects have specified these materials because that's what was available. Now with a little more knowledge, we have figured out these high sand and high silt mixes cause a lot of problems on our fields.

OK – Here it is.

Because these materials have characteristics that don't allow them to manage moisture efficiently, can be easily migrated during grooming or from wind and water erosion, plus are relatively cheap, we have ruined our fields.

Here are a couple examples of the insanity.

Case Study #1 – I was asked to look at a field for a local little league in an upscale town in Bergen County. The field had such a significant lip that an infielder actually broke a small bone in his neck when he fell chasing a pop up into the outfield. I was asked to contact the township engineer and discuss my recommendations. Before calling him I checked the depth of the infield mix and found the area behind second base was 19 inches deep. I didn't need to survey the field to determine there were grade problems. While on the phone with the engineer, he advised me they were planning to build a new softball field in town. I joke and told him there was enough infield mix on this field to build 3 new fields.

Here's the insanity. While on the phone with the engineer I hear a back-up beeper. Following the sound, I realize it is a tri-axle backing into the park maintenance yard. Reluctantly, the engineer admitted it was a load of infield mix. After doing some quick math, this 11,000 square foot infield had 15 inches of infield mix it didn't need. At a conservative cost of \$40 per ton, that was about \$30,000 of wasted money, not including the labor to install over the years and now a potential lawsuit.

Case Study #2 – I was asked to survey the ball fields for a county park system. I am sure when the fields were originally designed and constructed, the grades allowed for water to drain off the fields. Well after about 10 years the county now had over 40 ball fields that were bowls or saucers. Not one field allowed for surface run off. Here's the insanity. The grass lips were so severe; one county worker admitted they need to use a trencher to cut through the lips to help get some of the water off the fields. In addition, they spend thousands of dollars on drying agents.

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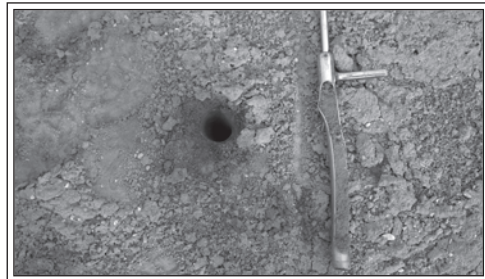
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stop the insanity

Continued from page 17

Case Study #3 – I recently visited a little league complex in Central New Jersey. My first observation was the fields had major grading issues. As in Case Study #1, I checked the depth of the infield mix. My probe is 12 inches deep, I didn't hit bottom. See included picture. After surveying the first field, I noticed all of the bottom rails of the backstop and player bench fences were buried by about 6 to 8 inches and a considerable amount of infield mix had washed into the dugouts. Here's the insanity. While walking from field to field, I noticed tire track damage from double gates in the outfield fence towards the infields. Not only were they adding infield mix they didn't need, they were damaging the turf to do it. Assuming there was at least 12 inches of infield mix on each field (actually there was more), these four infields had about 1,200 tons of excess infield mix. Again, using a conservative cost of \$40 per ton, this equates to \$48,000 of wasted money. Now let's throw in tens of thousands of dollars to fix them.



Case Study #3

I could go on and on. Here's the scary part. There are 566 municipalities and 416 high schools in New Jersey. With a fair estimate of at least four fields per town and school, that means there are about 4,000 ball fields in the state, not including counties, colleges, middle schools or private little leagues. Again using conservative estimates, let's say each field has twice the amount of infield mix it should have or an additional four inches. Using an average infield size of 8,000 square feet, that would equate to 600,000 tons of infield mix that has been added to ball fields unnecessarily. At \$40 per ton that's \$24 million dollars. No wonder the schools and towns have budget problems.

The take home message here is that we need to change our way of thinking. Albert Einstein said it best: "We can't solve problems by using the same thinking we used to create them."

More importantly, there is a practical solution to this problem. It has been tested at the highest level of play and is available to improve all little



league, recreational, high school and college fields. Plus, there are groundskeepers who have changed their thinking and are practicing better techniques to reduce unnecessary expense.

Let's stop the insanity!

Scott Bills is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM); Sports Field Consultant, Sports Field Solutions, LLC; and Secretary, SFMAN

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