

OUTLOOK

By Bruce F. Shank, Editor

The organizational needs of athletic field managers are growing and existing Green Industry associations should consider whether or not they can be of service.

The influence of an athletic field manager currently depends more on the success of and the support for the teams that play on the fields than on the agronomic needs of the turf. Like other Green Industries, the athletic field manager has to educate his superiors to the needs of natural turf and to the waning popularity of artificial turf.

To think that trustees could be sold on the concept of expensive artificial turf, but hesitate to allocate funds for the proper care of natural turf is ironic. There is a definite need to educate financial managers of athletic fields about the advances in turf management.

There is a choice. We can leave the task of educating the financial officer to the product salesman, or we can assist athletic field managers in

establishing specifications for quality athletic field construction and maintenance. No doubt specifications do exist in the files of some landscape architects, but they come from numerous sources and may have outdated concepts in design. One organization needs to compile such specifications for the various climatic zones of the country, officially approve them, and release them to all landscape architects and stadium managers. Extension turf specialists from across the U.S. should assist in constructing specifications with the input of athletic field managers for practicality. What is best may not be practical, but minimum standards must be clearly defined.

Whether this task requires the creation of another Green Industry association is debatable. It depends upon the willingness of existing associations to help out.

For the most part, the athletic field manager is an employee, not the

owner of a business. His needs are different from business owners. Dues must be reasonable and the organization must be national in scope. Suppliers to athletic field managers usually have booths at the major shows and may resist participating in another show until proof of organizational viability and market support exists.

I am not recommending the formation of a new group nor do I mean to discourage it. The horizontal identity of the Green Industry is most important. Segmentation should only take place when clearly needed.

So, we encourage present associations to evaluate their position regarding athletic managers and write their views to this magazine for publication. We also encourage those involved in athletic field management; whether they be managers, suppliers, or extension personnel; to send their view to Weeds Trees & Turf for publication.

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