

# SPORTS TURF

by Ron Hall, assistant editor

## Grounds tricks spice baseball

There's a place where a good, sneaky trick is still appreciated—the baseball diamond.

Forget about the players and the old "hidden ball" trick.



Forget about the managers and their sign-stealing stratagem. An experienced groundskeeper might be able to win more ball games for the home team than both of them put together.

Groundskeeper Jim Anglea hinted as much this winter when he moved from the Cleveland Indians to Texas.

"I put 10 points on Julio Franco's (Cleveland shortstop) batting average," says Anglea just after moving south. "Bobby Bonds (Cleveland batting coach) told me to make the ground around home plate, about 15 feet out, hard, real hard. He said, 'Make it so hard the ball

will bounce out of the Stadium.' Franco often chops the ball at the plate and got a lot of hits that way."

Roger Bossard—he babies Comiskey Park in Chicago—is one of baseball's masters of creative groundskeeping.

"The groundskeeper is the ball player's man, the 10th man," Roger says. "A lot of new guys haven't been taught that."

Bossard is convinced an experienced groundskeeper, tailoring a park to the personality of the home team (or exposing the weaknesses of competitors), can put extra wins on the board each season. The fun of it all, he says "is being able to get away with it without the other team finding out."

When the Chisox were loaded with sinker ball pitchers, Bossard turned the area in front of home plate into a "swamp." Forget about high hoppers over the mound. His brand of "moisture control" has also slowed visiting jackrabbits on their journeys from first to second bases.

"You take this sod lifter and put it down about three inches apart and lift the soil, and you soak it real good underneath," Bossard says almost gleefully. "It looks dry, but..."

Softening the power alleys in right and left centerfields gives plodding outfielders a step or two on line drives, while the skillful drawing of the batter's box closer to the mound can give home hitters a chance to jump on a junkball pitcher before his stuff dances. Or, if the box is slyly moved back, that extra peek at a 90 mph fastball.

Subtle adjustments to the height of the pitcher's mound (both in the bullpen and on the field) has bedeviled more than a few skiddish pitchers.

"There are things done in the field that if you had false teeth, you'd drop 'em," says Bossard. "There isn't a series that goes by that something isn't done to a field to help a team."

A groundskeeper's bag of tricks is only as full as his knowledge of turf and his team, his imagination... and his cunning.

## PEOPLE

### Names in the news

North Carolina State University professor and researcher **Dr. William Gilbert** and retired golf course superintendent **Ross Taylor** received Honorary Lifetime Membership awards at the recent North Carolina Turfgrass Conference. Others recognized at the conference included **Dr. Joseph DiPaola**, assistant professor of turfgrass research at NCSU and **Charles Jordan**, USS Agri Chemicals, both receiving Outstanding Service awards, and **Dr. Glenn Burton**, Tifton, GA, winner of the Presidential Award.

The 1985 officers of the North Carolina Turfgrass Council are: **Gary Stafford**, golf course superintendent, Cardinal CC, president; **Les Kuykendall**, Porter Brothers, Inc., vice president; **Bob Turney**, Catawba Valley Technical College, secretary; and **H. Eugene Maples**, Pine Needles Country Club, treasurer.

The New England nursery industry lost a leader with the recent death of **Cliff Corliss, Sr.**, a past president of the Massachusetts Nurserymen's Association. Corliss held plant patents for perennials, annuals, and shrubs, and helped popularize the idea of living Christmas trees.

Noted golfer and golf course archi-



Bill Diddel



Dieter Rappsilber

tect **Bill Diddel**, died Feb. 25 in Carmel, IN, at the age of 100. He designed and remodeled more than 300 courses. Diddel became involved with golf before the turn of the century and won his first tournament in 1904 before going on to win the Indiana state title five times. Among some of his better known courses are Bardmoor CC, Largo, FL; Woodlands, Carmel, IN; Speedway 500, IN; and Sunset Ridge, Northbrook, IL.

Mobay announces the appointment of **Dieter Rappsilber** as director of marketing for its Agricultural Chemicals Division, which includes the Specialty Products Division. Rappsilber succeeds **Heinz Wehner**, who was recently named vice president and general manager of the Ag Division. Rappsilber has been an international marketing specialist with Bayer AG, owners of Mobay, since 1958.