

SPORTS TURF

by Ron Hall, associate editor

Infield action

It's arguably the most exciting play in sports and too often one of the most painful; the simultaneous arrival of baseball and runner and the slide over baked clay at home plate.



Don Sadler, the barrel-chested maintenance supervisor for the Canadian city of Etobicoke (pronounced AY-TOE-BE-COE) near Toronto, works to take the sting out of the play. That's just one of the benefits of a properly prepared infield; firm for good footing and true hops, yet soft enough that it doesn't flay a sliding baserunner.

Catch the action any summer afternoon.

He's your boy, he's all arms, legs, and joints working at cross purposes and he's rounding third, jets working. The relay from centerfield to the shortstop to the plate is chest high. The teen-age baserunner's automatic pilot flashes down, and the runner, right knee tucked, skids in a scraping duststorm of flying gravel.

First there's just a touch of red below the rip in the knee of the baseball pants (pants that some sponsoring merchant shelled out money for and under normal circumstances couldn't be cut with a chainsaw), then the blood spreads along the outside of the calf from knee to ankle.

The composition of the infield is the key. Many of Sadler's fields, particularly the softball fields, contain six inches of worked-in hazemag.

"It's crushed round gravel, not crushed stone," says Sadler. "Crushed stone has jagged edges. You don't want that."

The material—available from most sizable aggregate companies—should be screened to $\frac{3}{16}$ th-inch-minus.

Although Harry Gill, veteran groundskeeper for Milwaukee County Stadium and the professional baseball Brewers, prefers "more pointy" chips of sand and not round beach sand which he feels stays "loose and movey," both groundskeepers agree that crushed limestone screenings or rock dust is unacceptable.

Major league groundskeepers' jobs hinge on their ability to provide major league-quality infields, but the infields of many of our community ball fields—most of them totally skin—aren't adequate. Too much clay baked by the mid-summer sun and given perfunctory smoothing and raking, they play like concrete. Rains and they don't drain; players skate.

Sadler, an avid amateur softball player, gives his infields the attention they deserve, including working the material around the bases several inches down with a rake before play.

tionwide program of development and testing from the Northrup King Research Station in Mount Joy, PA.

N. Wayne Rish has been promoted to vice president marketing-agricultural chemicals for **Elanco Products Co.**, the agricultural marketing division of Eli Lilly and Co. Rish joined the company in 1969 as a sales trainee, worked his way up, and in 1982 was named director of agricultural sales for Elanco.



N. Wayne Rish

A native of Lexington, SC, Rish holds bachelor's and master's degrees in agriculture from Clemson University.

Vermeer Manufacturing Co., Pella, IA, has appointed **Lyle Borg** vice president of sales and marketing of all Vermeer products in North America. He had been sales manager for both industrial and agricultural divisions.

Carl Boat, senior vice president of Vermeer who had handled sales and marketing, now directs international operations. Also, **Larry Hutchinson** is new education and training manager with **Al VanderLinden** filling Hutchinson's previous post as industrial service manager. **Lee Wright** steps in as Vermeer's service manager, a responsibility similar to that of VanderLinden, only in the agricultural division.

Mickey Strauss, president of American Landscape Inc. of Canoga Park, CA, has been installed as president of the **California Landscape &**



Mickey Strauss



Don Fisher

Irrigation Council. He also served as president of the California Landscape Contractors Association in 1981.

Don Fisher will be working with Southern California architects, irrigation consultants, and municipalities in his new post as specification sales manager for **Toro Irrigation** of Riverside, CA. Fisher joined the Irrigation Division in 1978 as a warehouse supervisor.