

Safe athletic fields

To the editors:

We are grateful to your magazine and staff for the fine set of articles dealing with the safety of athletic fields in your September issue. Those of us who have been working for their improvement truly appreciate your interest.

Now, if we could only get the articles to those in the schools who need them. I'll get them to Texas schools if you can tell me how I can get permission?

William E. Knoop, Ph. D.
Texas A&M University
Dallas, Texas

(We are in the process of having the articles reprinted. Watch future issues of WT&T for instructions on obtaining the reprints.—Ed.)

To the editors:

I am the school-community relations director for the Wayne County Public Schools. The article ("Sidelined," September) is an extremely important informational tool to our administrative staff and athletic coaches on the conditions of athletic fields, with their relationship to injuries.

Your magazine has been extremely valuable in giving us a better knowledge of athletic turf. The articles in your publication stress all areas of landscaped design, athletic fields and golf course management. Please keep up the good work in providing the latest research in these areas.

Terry Pilkington
Wayne County Public Schools
Goldsboro, N.C.

To the editors:

The articles on treacherous turf were very informative and somewhat depressing. As a field manager, I find it very difficult to put in the time and effort it takes to improve the athletic fields.

Right now, we have three practice fields and a football field. The practice fields are in the baseball outfield and one is at a far corner of the school property on somewhat bumpy ground.

Schools today just do not provide enough dollars or manpower to get these jobs done at the time they

should be done. Borrowing equipment takes extra time and limits your ability to do what you would like to do. I sometimes get the impression that the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds is the goat between those who constantly call for more maintenance and those who say we've spent enough.

Needless to say that if superintendents were given more discretionary powers and communications were more open, we could do a lot more. However, I live in a realistic state: probably not a lot will be done until someone gets hurt badly or these suits that are wrecking the country subside.

P.S. Two men to mow four schools and related fields (over 100 acres), repair and maintain 13 vehicles and several mowers, deliver supplies, and maintain three playground areas, 13 ballfields, paint five fields once a week in the fall, track in the spring and plow snow and refurbish equipment in the winter is *no fun job*. There just is not enough time to even properly consider field maintenance. Planning programs without a real possibility of implementing them is almost *hopeless*.

Howard Parker
Newfane Central Schools
Newfane, N.Y.

To the editors:

I have always enjoyed reading your publication and appreciate receiving it monthly. You should be commended for the series on sports turf injuries. I was unaware of such things as a sports turf manager, appreciate the enlightenment. The articles were well-written and get the point across.

I plan to implement an improved program here with safety to player as a more important parameter.

Thank you.

Robert F. Michaels
Ricks College
Rexburg, Idaho

To the editors:

My hat's off to you. Fred Grau and a lot of other people have been working very hard to generate the type of exposure given in your September issue. People are starting to wake up to the dangers of artificial and poorly maintained athletic turf, and they will soon

start demanding an improvement.

I thought the series was well done and aimed at the right audience, the professional turf managers. We have the expertise and the resources to do more. I believe with articles such as these, we will.

Jon Scott
Grand Traverse Resort
Acme, Mich.

(Golf course superintendent Jon Scott has hosted benefit tournaments for the last two years. Monies raised by five such state tournaments go to the Musser International Turfgrass Foundation, the parent organization of the National Sports Turf Council.—Ed.)

To the editors:

The impact of your September issue has only begun to penetrate. What a service you have rendered!

We volunteers wondered how we would reach the people who care and who want to help. Wonder no longer: the media has opened the doors.

It was thrilling to get a letter from a concerned parent. These are the people we want to reach!

We started with an appeal to the National PTA. Dr. Eliot Roberts' article in "PTA Today" elicited no response. Undismayed, we pushed on. Now, with your help, all we have to do is "sandbag the dikes to keep ahead of the flood."

Thank you for the great boost you've given to safer sports turf.

Fred V. Grau
National Sports Turf Council
College Park, Md.

(Dr. Grau and Dr. Roberts report renewed interest among field managers, judging by the inquiries they've been receiving. Dr. Jack Harper at Penn State University reported an average of six inquiries per day shortly after the September issue mailed. One nursery owner and parent who happens to be on his city's Board of Education, wrote Dr. Grau: "I have been concerned about the condition of our playing fields and practice fields. I have been reading the September issue of WEEDS TREES & TURF concerning safer athletic fields. I have convinced our athletic booster club and school board that it is time to do something about our athletic fields." Thank you readers.—Ed.)

Preventative medicine

To the editor:

I think the time has come for us in the landscaping industry to take action regarding the use of pesticides. I believe that the continued application of chemicals to the environment will cause even greater health problems than we are presently experiencing.

Stop and think how many chemicals enter the environment. The Earth is not a sponge that will continually absorb all our wastes. We will not be able to throw it away like a used oil or air filter.

Although there may not be conclusive evidence that chemical A causes cancer B, I am convinced that many cancers are linked to the environment. I am not going to wait for conclusive evidence that this is so. I want everyone's and my children and grandchildren to inherit a clean and safe environment.

The question is, then, what should we do as an industry? Before the finger turns to point and include us as polluters, we should have enough foresight to increase our efforts at using cultural, non-polluting alternatives: hand-weeding, insecticidal soaps, integrated pest man-

agement and so on.

This will mean the cost of doing business will rise and we'll have to charge more for our services. However, this is worth doing in terms of protecting the environment, and will be less expensive than chemical contamination suits. Preventative medicine is less expensive than major surgery.

We can, as landscapers, be caretakers and stewards of the land and set a leadership example. Or we can continue to do business as usual and suffer the consequences.

Robert Mulder

Amsterdam Landscaping
Raleigh, N.C.

On fertigation

To the editors:

In the June issue, I was and am interested in the article "Two Birds with One Stone," about fertilizing a golf course through the irrigation system.

Back in 1968, I was very much interested in developing a system to fertilize our golf course through the irrigation system. After two years of experimenting, I developed a method

that was very successful. It took about only half the water, and I am sure we had fewer disease problems.

We used this method until the course was sold and I left—I did not care to work for the new owners. After this, the idea was discontinued due to the fact that I did not care to leave my method intact after how I was treated by the new owners.

I thought I'd pass this on for what it might be worth.

Harvey C. Dreibelbis

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