

LANDSCAPE PROFILE

MASTER from page 44

has been aerated, bare and thin areas should be overseeded with Scott's Sports Turf Seed. A seeding rate of 2 to 3 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. is recommended. Apply Scott's ProTurf High Density Starter Fertilizer to the entire field to stimulate early spring growth.

Spring: Apply ProTurf High Density Starter Fertilizer to improve root development and density.

Early summer: Apply Scott's Fertilizer Plus Dicot Weed Control to eliminate dandelions and 23 other broadleaf weeds while providing a full feeding of fertilizer.

Early fall: A couple of weeks prior to the opening of the season, apply Scott's ProTurf High Density Super Fairway Fertilizer, for thick dense turf with crowd-pleasing color.

Other practices

"Compaction is potentially our worst enemy," says Wilcox, a past president of the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council. "If you're on a limited budget, the best thing to use your money for is aeration. At least two times a year—the more the better. I've never seen a field ruined by over-aerating."

Wilcox recommends using open-
spoon tines because, he says, they

penetrate into the soil up to five inches. Other kinds of tines only penetrate two to three inches, he believes.

Some turf managers put too much emphasis on applying seed, according to Wilcox. "Seed is important if you have large bare

ANY BARE SPOTS IN ATHLETIC FIELDS LARGER THAN THIS (4-5 INCHES IN DIAMETER) SHOULD NOT BE SEEDED, ACCORDING TO TURF CONSULTANT HARRY O. WILCOX.

spots," he notes. "But it just doesn't pay to seed areas smaller than four or five inches across. If you aerify and fertilizer those spots, they'll heal by themselves."

Warren High School personnel applied 50 pounds of seed to the area inside the running track, which includes the practice field, this year.

Wilcox also believes that lime should be applied according to the type of grass in use. Bluegrass

definitely needs periodic liming while turf-type tall fescue may not.

According to district maintenance supervisor Arden Walter, the fields are mowed at 3 inches during the summer and 2½ inches when football practice begins. "We don't believe in mowing too low," he says. "And the way we fertilize, we find that we've got to mow at least once a week."

Keeping the three fields playable—and safe—takes two people 30 hours per week, according to Walter.

Constant cooperation

One of the most critical requirements of good field management is cooperation from the coaching staff.

Wilcox says that coaches should try and spread out practices. He says that Northampton (Pa.) High School uses the areas beyond the end zones of its practice field so three groups of players can each use a field 60 yards long.

Shea, when he was at the controls of the Dragon football team, didn't waste opportunities to cooperate with others like Arden Walter and Norge Luvison, director of buildings and grounds. "Men like Toby Shea are doing a wonderful job," says Wilcox. "I've never seen a coach who cared so much about his players." **LM**

THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN

During the fall, the townspeople of Findlay, Ohio direct most of their attention at Donnell Stadium. So when the field tried to hide under mud, it was noticed.

By Jeff Sobul, assistant editor

The field was only two years old. But it had aged well beyond its years. Eleven Findlay High School and Findlay College football games each year, numerous soccer games and other events, coupled with wet weather and poor drainage, had taken their toll. By the end of the second football season, in November, 1985, the Donnell Stadium field was unplayable.

In fact, an NAIA Division II playoff game between Findlay

College and St. Ambrose, Iowa, had to be played at nearby Bowling Green State University.

Something obviously had to be done.

And something was done. In addition to building a separate field for soccer to distribute field use, the Donnell field was replaced again, this time with a Prescription Athletic Turf (PAT) System perfected and patented by Purdue University professor Bill Daniel, Ph.D.

Artificial turf was considered. "It was either put in a PAT system or a similar system or go to artificial turf, which I won't do," says Jack Volkmer, business manager for Findlay Schools. "It's a horrible thing to make people compete on an artificial surface."

A little help

Now, boasts Volkmer, "Donnell is probably one of the nicest high school facilities around." The installation cost slightly less than

LANDSCAPE PROFILE

\$250,000, no small change for anyone, including a small town.

All stadium maintenance is funded by the Donnell Foundation, Volkmer says. "The money doesn't come from tax money. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been able to afford to do this." The Donnell Foundation is a fund set up by the Donnell family, former owners and operators of Marathon Oil, a primary employer in the small, industrial western Ohio town.

This major undertaking began in December of 1985. Daniel, Laurel Meade and David Heiss, who are marketers of the system, all came out to survey the field after Volkmer contacted them. (They were also in attendance for the first game on the new field.)

Excavation began in December and continued through the winter, with problems other than some occasional bad weather hampering construction. "We had some real terrain problems," Volkmer notes.

"That's built on solid rock. That's a

continued on page 54



At the end of the season, after 11 games, two played in downpours, there were no visible signs of heavy wear down the middle of the field.

In one off-season, the Donnell Stadium field went from a mud hole to a near perfect playing surface when the season opened in September, 1986, after the PAT System was installed.



LANDSCAPE PROFILE

GAME from page 50

quarry out there," he says of the ground the field is built on.

The headaches didn't stop there. "The field when it was originally built in 1927 had an 18 inch drop-off, which nobody really knew," he explains. "When you look at the track you can see we had to move the field because it needed to be perfectly flat. One end is down and the other end is up."

Laying it down

The PAT system is constructed with a flat subgrade and plastic barrier under a system of perforated pipes. The pipes set below a special mixture of sand, peat and nutrients. Pumps connected to the pipe system can

draw off excess surface water in minutes.

When weather cleared in the spring of 1986, the PAT people began installing the system. "We have our graduation out there (on the field)," Volkmer recalls. "By graduation, they had just put in all the sand.

"If you can imagine everybody sitting in the stadium; I mean everybody looked at me like 'what did they do to the football field?' If they could have had my ass, they would have had it. Everybody goes to the games. We've got 5,000 to 8,000 for every football game. It's like the only game in town."

Volkmer adds the pumps are only used in heavy downpours on

or near game days. This occurred twice during the 1986 season. "The first game we had just a huge rainstorm. Huge. We had to hold up the game until 8:30."

"You couldn't see from one end of the field to the other," adds field maintenance manager Chuck Andrus. His job has been relatively easy. The PAT system worked so well, the field looked as good last November, after 11 football games, as it did before the season started.

"The footing was never bad (during the first game)," Volkmer notes. "That's the key thing: the footing and the safety of the ball players."

And that's no small change either. **LM**

RESOURCEFUL RENOVATION

Even when budgets are low, school systems can renovate athletic fields. Here's how a Philadelphia area school system tackled the job.

by Heide Aungst, managing editor

Bare spots speckle the field. Stressed turf clumps fight to hang onto life. Twelve gym classes, a soccer league and a junior high football team trample and tear up what's left. A kid cries after a fall on the rock-hard surface. The field cries for renovation. The field manager cries for more money. The school board cries for the lack of money.

Everybody loses.

Money may be hard to come by for some school systems, but excuses are abundant. Field managers jump at the "we-can'ts" before fully exploring the "how-tos."

Every industry has tricks of the trade and corners to cut. It's possible in athletic field management, too. Just ask the Springfield, Pa. County School District. They've used almost every trick in the book, and some they dreamed up themselves, to renovate dwindling fields on a dwindling budget.

"About 35 percent of the ground on one field was bare," says Bruce Thomas, maintenance supervisor for the Philadelphia area school district. "The school was complaining about the bare ground



Bruce Thomas, Andy McNitt and Bob Scanzaroli look at the deep root system of the turf on the newly renovated E.T. Richardson field.

and the field was lower."

Personnel

Thomas took the first step by hiring Bob Scanzaroli as grounds manager in mid-August. The school system couldn't afford to create such a position, but when the grounds

manager left for another job, Thomas made sure the replacement had the necessary turf knowledge. Scanzaroli is an '84 graduate of Penn State University.

Together Thomas and Scanzaroli consulted with the Philadelphia County extension agent, Andy