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## ATHLETIC TURF

### STMA is ballooning

The Sports Turf Managers Association, which started out with just 64 members in 1984, is fast approaching the 1,000 mark in membership.

"Our renewal rate is 70 percent already this year and we're signing up about 10 new members a month," says executive director **Mark Hodnick**.

Hodnick, supervisor of landscape services at California Polytechnic University in Pomona, was named executive director to succeed **Dr. Kent Kurtz** earlier this year. The new arrangement is working out nicely.

"But the board of directors will soon have to consider having a full-time executive director," Hodnick notes. "We're just getting too big."

For more information on joining the STMA, write 400 North Mountain Ave., Upland, CA 91786 or phone (714) 981-9199.

### Repairing Soldier Field

Soldier Field, home of the Chicago Bears, was supposedly ready for National Football League play on June 15, 1988. But the following month during a nationally-broadcast Bears-Miami Dolphins exhibition game, the grass began to tear, a result of poor rooting.

**Ira Berke**, director of landscape for the Chicago Park District, and **Jim Duggan**, landscape construction supervisor for the Chicago Park district, played key parts in the repairs. The decision was made to go with a thick sod in the center of the field between the hash marks. A total of 2,400 yards of 4½-inch thick sod was installed in four days and treated with heavy topdressing and aeration.

Berke and Duggan encountered two problems: soil interface and drought. "We had sod grown on black earth installed on top of sand. We had 42 days to work with, and 35 of those days were over 90°F. The roots and grass want to go dormant in those high temperatures."

Berke and Duggan dealt with those two problems through heavy topdressing, aeration and irrigation.

Berke liked the PAT (Prescription Athletic Turf) system's drainage advantage, but admits that no field is perfect. "When you're sold on the PAT system, you're sold on the idea that it's going to solve all of your problems, which it won't. Any field that gets a heavy amount of play is going to tear. The amount it tears depends on what kind of climate you're in."

### 1990 conference

The Sports Turf Managers Association's annual conference and show will be Jan. 19-21 in Houston, Texas. Theme is "Sports Turf: Heart of America in the 1990s;" keynoter is **Dr. Jim Watson** of the Toro Company.

For more information, contact the STMA at 400 Mountain Ave., Suite 301, Upland, CA 91786; phone (714) 981-9199.