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Sugar Land, how 'sweet' it is!

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Smallwood's recruiting smarts

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Old fashioned selling still works

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McClure: industry image improved

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Multi-use equipment makes sense

Sports turf managers: 'Do the field no harm.'

Like a medical doctor, the sports turf "doctor" doesn't want to damage or kill a the patient while trying to cure a simple ailment.

Or, as Tim Anderson puts it: "Do the field no harm."

Anderson spoke at a recent conference conducted by the Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO). He is a district sales manager for Beachley-Hardy Seed Company. Because of his job he's on the road and looking at lots of sports fields.

Talk about real-life examples of "dumb and dumber" sports field screwups, Anderson has seen and photographed a few. At the conference he whisked through a tray of slides he took in the course of his travels in several of our eastern states.

Some were so outlandish that they raised chuckles from the 100 or so turf pros and field managers attending his presentation in the auditorium of Allegheny College,

Meadville, Pa.

So, you've got to wonder about the school official that couldn't understand why his new sports field failed even after it was sodded. . . over an asphalt parking lot.

Or the people responsible for laying sod over actively growing turfgrass in several other locations Andersen has visited. Or, in one instance, laying fresh sod over a cinder track.

How about the field manager who drives a huge bucket loader onto a wet field to more easily topdress areas that he says are— you've guessed it—suffering from wear and compaction.

These problems aren't typical of those that most of you, as sports turf managers encounter. Anderson says most sports turfgrass problems are almost always caused by:

- ▶ Overuse, the number one cause of wear and compaction. Some sports field are literally pounded to death.
- ▶ Mowing the turfgrass too short. Most high school and park fields should be mowed at 2½ to 3 inches, certainly no lower than 1½ inches.
- ▶ Poor surface drainage.
- ▶ Incorrect fertilizing and liming.
- ▶ Playing on a field when you shouldn't, like when it's drought or heat stressed, or too wet, or before it's had a chance to recuperate.
- ▶ Poor water management.

If your sports field is struggling, start with these possible causes first. Investigate. Poke around the field a little bit. Get down on your knees. Look.

If you're still stumped, look for something almost too obvious. How about that patch of dead turf that looks like a fungal disease, but isn't? Uhm, isn't the base of that nearby trash receptacle exactly the same shape and size of that dead patch? **LM**

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