

TALK TURF

Official publication of the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association

Volume 15 Issue 3 | Winter 2014

WSTMA FALL MEETING EDUCATES & CONNECTS

Written by Peter Bemis, Western Technical College



Tour of field included interesting discussion on the benefits of the grow lights and how they help with turf and counter act the lack of sunlight in the stadium.

The WSTMA held their fall meeting at Helfaer Field and Miller Park, in Milwaukee, on November 5, 2014. The day offered many interesting and educational topics to over 50 sports field managers and suppliers to the industry.

President Chris Brindley welcomed the attendees before introducing our first speaker, Mr. Bruce Schweiger, manager of the Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab at the

UW-Madison's OJ Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility. Mr. Schweiger presented "Updates and Research at OJ Noer." It was great to be reminded of all the work that is being accomplished at the facility. Additionally, it was good to be reminded of all the services that are provided to turfgrass professionals and the general public including evaluation of herbicide effectiveness, insect and disease diagnostics, assessment of different turfgrass specie and cultivar attributes, soils investigations, management in drought and/or low light conditions, and disease, weed and insect control options, among others. Lastly, he mentioned that the researchers at OJ Noer would like to hear from our members regarding issues and challenges we face, or studies they could perform to benefit sports field management and the

athletes that play on our fields. Contact Mr. Schweiger at the OJ Noer Facility, at 608-845-2535 or bschweiger@wisc.edu, with your ideas and concerns.

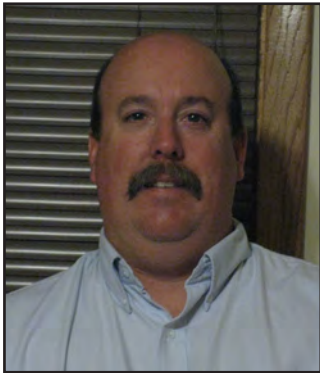
Our second presentation was co-presented by Mr. Bart Bartelme of the Green Bay Packers and Mr. Michael Boettcher of the Milwaukee Brewers. Their topic was "Preparations for Next Season." Continued on page 6

Wisconsin
SportsTurf
MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Another year is quickly ending and I hope you accomplished everything on your "to do" list. Our chapter had a check off list of what we wanted to achieve as well. I think the chapter had a good year with the newsletters we produced, the meetings we have held and the chapter is financially stable. Very proud of what we accomplished.

I will be ending my time as the president of your chapter at the end of December. I just want to say thanks for allowing me to be a part of this great chapter. I have friends all the way up from upper Michigan down to Beloit because of this group.

There are so many people to thank. The commercial vendors who have continually supported us year after year to the board members who donate their time to put all the events and newsletters into fruition, also the members who I truly enjoy networking with at every event. Last but not least I want to thank Brett Grams who took on the chapter manager duties for our organization and has done an amazing job keeping us on task. You don't know how much this chapter has influenced me in what I do.

I am very proud to have served with such a wonderful group and will always be grateful. I will always be active in the chapter and look forward to seeing you all at upcoming events. I am excited about the new board that will lead us into the future, they have some great events scheduled for the upcoming year.

Stay Warm!

Chris Brindley

WSTMA Contact Telephone Numbers

Mid-AM | Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show | www.midam.org

PLANET | Professional Landcare Network | 800.395.2522

STMA | Sports Turf Managers Association | 800.323.3875

TPI | Turf Producers International Field Day | 800.405.8873

WGCSA | Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association | 920.643.4888

WSTMA | Wisconsin Sports Turf Manager Association | 920-643-4494

WTA | Wisconsin Turfgrass Association | 608.845.6536



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CHAPTER MANAGER'S REPORT

Brett Grams

At the time of this writing the winter season has come to Wisconsin and for most parts of the country considerably earlier than normal. I hope all members were able to complete as many of the outdoor tasks on their fields before the snow and cold set in. Who knows what type of winter we will have in the next few months, but it sure has been an early and cold start to what is hopefully a little slower season for most of you.

I am very pleased to report that our Fall Meeting held at Miller Park on November 15, 2014 was very successful. It may have been the last "nice day" of fall and our attendance was over 50 attendees, not including our great line up of speakers! I must thank Mike Boettcher and his staff and fellow employees of the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club for a great day of hospitality. Those of us fortunate to attend learned a little more about our profession and more importantly networked with the many great people in our industry. I am confident that the momentum we took from our Fall Meeting will continue into next year.

The WSTMA Leaders have committed to making 2015 another positive year with continued focus on offering members quality communications using these newsletters and expanding the

offerings on our website. The planning of the details of our Annual Winter Conference has already begun. The WSTMA Board has agreed to return to the WI Timber Rattlers Stadium on Wednesday, February 11. Specific topics are yet to be determined but we will communicate these to all members upon completion. We again have plans to offer a Summer and Fall Meeting for 2015. If you have ideas or suggestions on these meetings please contact me so I can share with the board and committees.

I view the winter as my "busy season" for the association. Hopefully all of you have received your 2015 Ballot for the election of next year's leaders. All vendor members were also provided our Industry Partner offerings and all members needing to renew dues were sent renewal notices. Please review the deadlines for returning the ballot and also the dues renewals with payment. I encourage all members to renew your membership online using our website. I would be glad to assist any members or potential members to contact me for any assistance as needed.

Lastly, the holidays are a great time of the year to reflect back on the year and give thanks for all we have both personally and professionally. I am truly honored to be your Chapter

Manager and to help all members and the leaders of the WSTMA grow our association. Many thanks to our generous vendor members who are true Industry Partners in supporting our cause and helping with our efforts and education. I must also personally thank Mr. Chris Brindley who has been a long time leader of the WSTMA. He is concluding his second multi-year term as our Chapter President. He has been able to accomplish many small and large efforts over the years and I know he will remain an active member in the years to come. Please join me in congratulating him for all his years of service and thanking him for a JOB WELL DONE!



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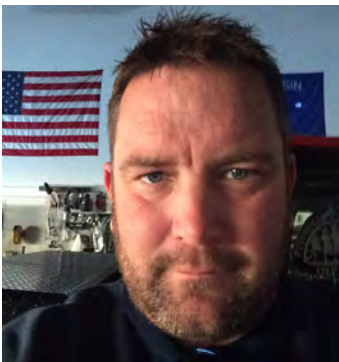
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OFF SEASON PREP = SUCCESS FOR MANAGERS

Take a glimpse into the world of four WSTMA members during the off-season in preparation for a successful season. Re-affirming the fact that there really is no “off-season” for sports turf managers!



*Keith Hepp
Park Maintenance Supervisor
Pewaukee Park & Recreation*

One of the most important factors to having a successful future season is to have a professional staff/crew of individuals who have full knowledge and understanding of the goals and objectives of the department. Off season allows you the time needed to attend seminars, training exercises, and team building. This

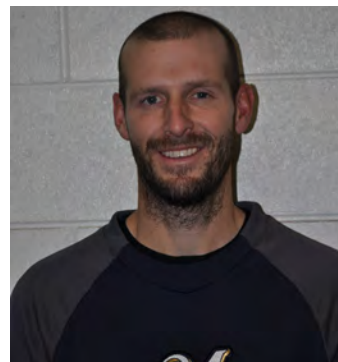
educates and prepares staff for the upcoming season. Most operations rely heavily on seasonal or part-time employees. It is important for your command staff to be the best they can be, come crunch time, and hit the ground running. You are only as good as the people under you and always remember you can't do it yourself. By failing to prepare you are simply preparing to fail.



*Tim Diermeier
District Facilities Coordinator
Seymour Community Schools*

The most important element for a successful 2015 season is preparing the fields this fall for winter, we aerate, fertilize, and over seed. Once that is complete we review all of our field reports, herbicide treatments, as well as soil samples and start to plan for the

2015 season. By early February we have created a plan for fertilizer, herbicide treatments, aeration, and over seeding for next season. We then get bids for the products and services for next season. During the month of February we also do annual service on all of our equipment, so it's ready to go in the spring. We evaluate all equipment and equipment needs, and as the budget allow, purchase new or replacement equipment. Last but certainly not least we try to attend Industry trade shows and conferences to keep up on the latest developments and new products.



*Steve Ems
Grounds Supervisor
Milwaukee Brewers
Baseball Club*

The end of one season signals the start of another. The months following the season and leading up to winter are crucial to re-establishing a quality playing surface for the start of next season. It is in these months that much of the work is done in preparation for Opening Day the following year.

The initial concentration is to recover and promote a healthy turf stand through way of cultural practices such as sodding, seeding, aerating, and fertilizing before the unpredictable Wisconsin weather takes a turn for winter. Next, attention shifts towards clay surfaces. Practices of gauging, grading and leveling, followed with an application of insulation board to serve as an insurance package, concludes our prep of clay surfaces for spring regardless the winter we

endure. The culmination of work on the field is the placement of grow covers on the entire playing surface. It is at this time focus moves from the field work to office tasks with emphasis on personnel organization, construction of the field calendar for next season; including extra field events, cultivation, fertilization and general field maintenance throughout the season. The ensuing discussions and decisions with other supervisors lay the groundwork for the upcoming year and better guarantees that things run smoothly during the playing season. See you in the spring!



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*Josh Viet & Perry Bauer
Construction Managers
Midwest Athletic Fields*

At Midwest Athletic Fields there are a large number of off season preparation procedures that make for the following season's success. A big one for us is preparation of our trucks.

We are a very mobile business and must conform to all Federal and State DOT regulations. Although the upkeep of our trucks is a year round duty, it is the off season that we do thorough inspections and corrections to make sure that we do not get shut down during the season. Every truck, big or small, must go through a DOT inspection. If the truck does not pass inspection the corrections must be made promptly. A well maintained fleet of trucks allows us to have an efficient commute to the jobsite, allows us to maintain schedule for the customer, work within their budget and have an overall successful project.



<p>Mike Krupke Turf Specialist Madison Area</p> <p>Phone 920-723-0936</p>	<p>Tim Gagnon Certified Turf Specialist Waukesha Area</p> <p>Phone 414-333-8082</p>
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Mike Boettcher provided a great tour. Here he was explaining how the infield is Laser Graded to a flat +/- of 1/16th of an inch!

Mr. Bartelme started the program with a review of the many tasks that must be accomplished with both Lambeau Field and the various Packer's practice fields. The stadium field has its rootzone stabilized with a DD Grassmaster system which incorporates plastic fibers into the playing surface. Repairing this kind of surface brings challenges that no other field managers in Wisconsin have to contend with.

Both Mr. Bartelme and Mr. Boettcher spoke about their

need for supplemental lighting on their fields. Due to the height of the stadiums and the lower angle of the sun in the fall, both fields need to provide supplemental lighting. This lighting, not unlike the supplemental

lighting in a greenhouse, stimulates the foliage and the roots to continue to grow beyond Wisconsin's natural limits.

As an added bonus we were treated to a tour of Miller Park to see the lights in action. Mr. Boettcher reviewed the challenges of managing the turfgrass field at Miller Park. This season saw the requirement to remove the pitcher's mound, and cover all the dirt areas in sod to provide a safe playing surface for a professional soccer match. Of course, after the soccer match, the mound and infield dirt had to be rebuilt and returned to major league standards.

A delicious lunch was provided after those talks. After lunch, we toured Helfaer Field, the little league park adjacent to Miller Park. That tour was nicely led by Mr. Joe Ranthum who is the Landscape Manager for the Milwaukee Brewers.



The event then continued with a panel discussion entitled, "Artificial Turf Football Fields - The Good, The Bad, and the Money." Speakers for this session included Ms. Kim Tiber, Grounds Supervisor at UW-La Crosse, Mr. Tom Johns, Director of Baseball

Continued on page 7



Morning Speakers (Left to Right) - Bruce Schweiger (UW Madison), Bart Bartelme (Green Bay Packers), and Mike Boettcher (Milwaukee Brewers)

The 50+ attendees gathered in the Helfaer Field Atrium to listen to our great line up of speakers.



Panel Speakers (Left to Right) - Tom Johnson (Rock Sports Complex), Mike Miller (UW Whitewater), and Kim Tiber (UW Lacrosse) discussed Artificial Turf.

WSTMA FALL MEETING continued from page 6

Operations at the Rocks Sports Complex in Franklin, Wisconsin, and, Mr. Mike Miller, Athletic/Grounds Crew Lead for UW-Whitewater. All three facilities have had synthetic sports fields for a number of seasons. Each panel member provided a brief history of their complex and then addressed questions from the members regarding managing synthetic sports fields. It was invaluable to gain knowledge from firsthand supervisors and to embrace some of their recommendations.

Recommendations included being actively involved in the construction of the field, making sure the contractor leaves a large supply of rubber for infilling and maintenance, and making sure the contract includes the supply of appropriate maintenance equipment and a maintenance program.

The event then moved to a tour of the playing field and the maintenance facilities at Miller Park, led by Director of Grounds, Michael Boettcher. Mr. Boettcher provided a great background of the maintenance of the field, and showed us many of the unique pieces of equipment and maintenance procedures used on the field. Many questions and answers were provided regarding the supplemental lighting system, the products and equipment used, and the standard maintenance practices.

This event was a great opportunity to expand one's knowledge of sports turf management. The opportunity to network with members, learn from fellow professionals, and learn about the resources of the OJ Noer Facility made for an excellent event. Thank you to all that contributed to its success.



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SAVE THE DATE

FEBRUARY 11, 2015

6th Annual Winter Conference



Join us for the 6th annual Wisconsin Sports Turf Management Association's Winter Conference **Wednesday, February 11, 2015 in Appleton, Wisconsin at Fox Cities Stadium, home of the Timber Rattlers.**

Once again pesticide applicators certification testing will be available that day along with educational sessions and more! Stay tuned for more details and registration information in the coming weeks.

SAY HELLO...

Each issue we'd like to highlight one of the WSTMA Board Members to connect you to the great resources, knowledge, and enthusiasm each member has to offer. This issue we're featuring President-Elect Michael Boettcher, Director of Grounds at the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club.

- **What first got you interested in turf management?**

Growing up on the farm, I was always responsible for the mowing and manicuring of the turf. I always got great enjoyment out of making the farmstead clean and presentable for all our visitors. It wasn't till my landscape internship with the Brewers in 2004 did I realize that managing professional turf could be a career. Amazingly, I find myself back here at Miller Park full-time, but not until I completed a turf internship, a bachelor's degree and a few industry experiences!



- **What is the biggest challenge in maintaining Miller Park?**

Miller Park and its retractable roof structure will always present its challenges, but none greater than the restriction of natural sunlight from the structure that supports the roof. Grass LOVES sunlight! If you restrict it, you need to find ways to compensate for that restriction. With the incorporation of grow lights and improved grass varieties that better tolerate lower sunlight levels, we always look to produce the consistent, high quality field our players deserve.

- **What do you like best about your job?**

I get to work in agriculture every day! Love working the land and always coming up with solutions to Mother Nature's unpredictability!

- **What has been the most memorable moment of your career?**

The 2011 Playoffs! Nothing can replace the energy and sheer excitement of playoff baseball!

- **What do you wish other people knew about the turf industry?**

Our industry has grown greatly from the days of just mowing the grass and scraping the "dirt". Most Turf Managers are highly educated, hardworking people who strive greatly to make the industry stronger every day! A great amount of research and development has gone into our fields and we as managers are doing everything possible to make our fields the best possible for today's and tomorrow's athletes!

- **Who has been your biggest influences/mentors?**

My Father – He taught me that the essence of success is hard work. The turf industry is built on the foundation of hardworking, dedicated individuals. Without his guidance, I would not be where I am today.

Gary Vanden Berg – Truly emulated what a turf manager is supposed to be; passionate about his work, understanding, knowledgeable and willing to share and educate those who seek a career in the Turf Industry. He took a chance on a small-town, farm kid and gave me an opportunity to pursue a career I truly love!

- **When you are not working, what do you like to do?**

Back at the home farm helping out or catching up with fellow turf managers...always enjoy getting to know those in our industry. No matter what I am doing, music will most likely be playing!

- **If you were not in the turf industry what would you want to do?**

Probably farming or anything dealing with Production Agriculture!

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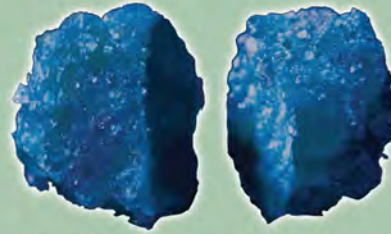
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HELP US GROW IN 2015!

We hope you value your membership with the WSTMA. Who do you know that could also benefit by joining our growing organization? Please provide this membership application to anyone you personally know in your community or area or to renew your own membership. Please contact Ch. Mgr. Brett Grams for more information and invitations for membership to anyone you think would benefit from joining us in the WSTMA!

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**WSTMA - Brett Grams
N1922 Virginia Drive
Waupaca, WI 54981**

MEMBER INFORMATION

How did you hear about WSTMA? (Please indicate name if referred.) _____

How long have you been in the turf industry? _____

Are you interested in volunteering as a board member? YES NO

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