TALK TURF

Official publication of the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association

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Winter Conference a Success

Allen Behnke, Howard-Suamico School District



The 10th annual Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association (WSTMA) Winter Meeting was held at Neuro Science Stadium, home of the Wisconsin Timbers, in Appleton on February 15. A record number of attendees, 126 people, that included 26 industry partners participated in the day-long conference.

To start the conference, President Bart Bartelme introduced Board Members and Officers of the WSTMA. Then he got down to business and

provided Bruce Schweiger from the OJ Noer Turfgrass Research Center with a check of \$1,000.00 in support for their ongoing research on snow mold at the research center. The Board felt this a worthy cause and has committed a total of \$1500.00 to this project over a three-year period.

In addition, two scholarships of \$500.00 each, "WSTMA Roy Zehren Student Scholarships", were awarded to two well deserving students. Nick Quarberg from UW-Platteville and Isaac Zimmerman

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Sports Turf Managers association

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE —



As this newsletter reaches you, I'm hoping the weather is warming up. With opening day right around the corner, I know we all want to feel some warmth on our faces. It has been a long winter for most of us and I'm sure everyone is prepping to get their spring work under way.

I want to thank you for allowing me to be your Chapter President for another year. With the board members we have in place, I guarantee you will be pleased to get quality meetings/events which are educational, and great for networking.

A big congratulation to the WSTMA and your board for putting together another great winter conference this year. We had a record attendance of over 120 attendees! We could not do this without the help of our vendor sponsors, awesome speakers, and growing membership. I strongly encourage everyone of you to attend these meetings. We have great presentations, which contain very beneficial information. Also at this years winter conference we were able to award 2 students the Roy Zehren Memorial Scholarship! These scholarships will go towards helping students starting out in this great industry.

I also want to inform you, the WSTMA is investing into research for Poa control on athletic fields. This will be done through the WTA and OJ Noer turfgrass facility. I believe this study, which is specifically geared toward athletic fields, will help all of us in sports turf management. The WSTMA is a place for learning and networking. I hope everyone checks out our website, wstma.org where is a great resource with links to previous meetings, presentations, and the WTA. There is an abundance of information through the WTA.

Your board is continuously planning meetings and field days for ongoing learning opportunities. The WTA is hosting their annual field day at the OJ Noer turfgrass facility Tuesday, July 24th, 2018. I hope many of you can attend. This event is full of new and cutting edge research. The WSTMA will be having our annual fall meeting in October, in Green Bay, WI. More information will be out in the upcoming months about the fall field day and you don't want to miss it!

I hope all of you are refreshed from this "off season" and get out and continue to maintain the best, safest athletic fields our state has to offer!

Once again, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve for another year. I look forward to seeing or hearing from you in the near future. If you have any questions or ideas for our chapter, feel free to reach out to myself or any of your board members.

Bart Bartelme



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Why Join the WSTMA?

Peter Bemis WSTMA Chapter Manager

1st Increase the quality of your sports fields for the enhanced safety and playability of those fields for the benefits of all the athletes and users of those fields. High quality turfgrass enhances the safety aspect for all users, and we all want our children and family to be safe.

2nd Promote a higher level of professionalism. It doesn't matter if a member is with a larger organization or an independent contractor. Being a member of the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association carries a degree of respectability when presenting your ideas and plans for increasing the quality of your sports fields. Working with other professionals to achieve common goals will be rewarding for the facility and the staff.

3rd Education to increase knowledge of the profession. Here are a few topics that sports turf managers are expected to be knowledgeable about: soil testing and analysis of the test results, herbicide selection and application, fertilizer selection and application, aerification, soil amendments, baseball and softball infield blends, warning track composition, large format and zero turn lawn mowers, athletic field paint selection and application, snow mold preventatives, insect identification and treatment, topdressing equipment, current trends, new products and new equipment on the market, labor saving devises, and safety practices for both staff and athletes.

4th Networking with other professionals. Ever have a new challenge and didn't know where to turn? Networking with other professionals provides great resources from people who have "been there, done that". Practical and applied experiences gained through years of experience in the profession can not be duplicated or obtained in any other way. Networking provides accessibility to decades of practical and applied knowledge and experiences.

5th Networking with sales industry representatives. These people have extensive knowledge and experience is a phone call away. In addition to their personal knowledge and professional training they have many contacts in the profession who can provide support. Additionally, they receive yearly training on all the new

products and equipment that can be valuable to you. Another valuable point is that by knowing more sales industry representatives creates more options for bidding and purchasing to know where to go to obtain the best products and prices. Maximizing your funding is always important to all levels of management.

6th Training on current topics and practices. Learning how to complete a task at a professional level will go a long way in developing the best quality sports fields possible. Do you know the correct procedure to build a pitcher's mound? Do you know the best procedure and best products to use in creating the home plate area batter's boxes?

7th Sustainability, environment protection and enhancements. Are you familiar with the best irrigation products on the market that will allow the placement of water where it is needed, when it is needed, and in the amount it is needed, with the best water saving devices? Are you aware of how to determine the least toxic products on the market for the safety of the applicator and the athletes? These are the type of topics that are presented at our seminars and publications.

8th Publications and on-line resources. This resource is always evolving and growing. Where does one find the most relevant publications and the best online resources? You'll have access at wstma.org.

9th Grants for training and education. The WSTMA, as a chapter of the national Sports Turf Managers Association provides scholarships to both students and professionals. Have you ever wanted to attend the national conference but did not have the funding support? There are scholarships available to attend this event through the national offices and through the WSTMA.

10th Become a mentor for another member. Giving back to the next generation is one of the most rewarding aspects of professionalism. Whether through a one-on-one relationship with another professional or volunteering for the Board of Directors, giving back is always a wonderful reward.

Winter Conf Continued

from UW-Madison were each presented with \$500 toward their degree in the sports turf management field.

Two educational sessions rounded out the morning that were presented by two staff members from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the OJ Noer Research Center. First, Mr. Bruce Schweiger presented to the group "Fertilizer 101". He provide some of the latest research that is being done on fertilizers and the affect it will have on the industry in the coming years. Then, Professor Dr. Doug Soldat presented "Exploring Different Turfgrass Management Options for a Sports Field". This presentation was also very informative and included many photos of the research going on at the research center regarding this topic. It was interesting to see the progress of the research in the photos of the presentation.

Following an exceptional lunch, two experience based presentations took place. First Rex Zemke from the Wausau School District shared his experience of the "Political Dynamics in Sports Field Construction".

I think everyone in the audience could relate to some of the many examples Rex provided in his presentation that addressed cooperation is the best process in dealing with the many people in field maintenance. In our efforts, we need to keep the political dynamics in mind as we do the best job possible for our employer.

Finally, Rick Schultz from Friends of West Salem gave a brief presentation on their group's efforts to improve the baseball facilities at West Salem. It was impressive to see this from their community and demonstrates how a group of committed people can have a great impact in their community. The before and after pictures helped tell the story and we all walked away with a few ideas to take back to our communities.

Throughout the conference and at the end of day, random drawing took place for those in attendance for Milwaukee Brewer tickets, WSTMA polo shirts and \$25 Visa gift cards. All in all – It was a great day, a great venue, great educational presentations, great lunch and great practical presentations. All this and you get to connect with many vendors in one location – a real time saver!

We are all looking forward to our Fall meeting at Lambeau Field in October of 2018.





WSTMA 2018 ROY ZEHREN STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

With WSTMA President Bart Bartleme, Nick Quarberg from UW-Platteville (Top) and Isaac Zimmerman from UW-Madison (Bottom).













SAY HELLO...

We're highlighting new WSTMA Board Member Todd Putz, Watertown School District.

WHAT FIRST SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN TURF MANAGEMENT?

I've always enjoyed working outdoors, and started mowing lawns at about 12 years old. The Green Industry just seemed to be in my blood.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE AS A SPORTS TURF MANAGER?

My biggest challenge would be dealing with the increasing use of sports turf/ fields. Everybody seems to want to play every game on the best field you have....

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I enjoy working with people, especially coaches.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT OF YOUR CAREER?

Getting an unexpected letter of appreciation from my athletic director, in regards to our athletic fields.



WHAT DO YOU WISH OTHER PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT THE TURF INDUSTRY?

I wish they knew the amount of science that goes on behind the scenes, to provide high quality turf.

WHO HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST INFLUENCES/MENTORS?

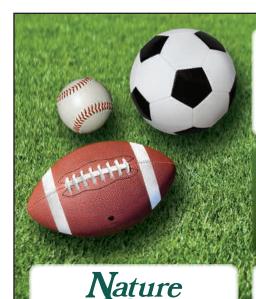
Chip Mayes, my first supervisor in the turf and horticultural industry; he had a lot of good advice and experience.

WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING, WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO?

Spend time with my family, hunting and fishing.

IF YOU WERE NOT IN THE TURF INDUSTRY, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO DO?

I'd like to be a professional hunting and fishing guide.





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Low Cost Projects, at your doorstep

Ron Novinska Oregon School District

As we all know and have experienced, budgets are tight and in some case, are being cut. We are all trying to do more with less. One area that has benefited me is with the metal and wood shop classes at the Oregon High School. Many times these classes are looking for projects to gain experience. So here are some things that have helped me with the maintenance of my athletic fields and hopefully will help you with your fields.

Here is a list of some items that the metal shop classes have made for me:

- » Nail drag
- » Refurbish a trailer—new sides and metal ramp
- » Batters box templates
- » Cart for football sideline numbers and pylons
- » Tarp cart for baseball tarps and rubber weights
- » Stakes for roping off turf areas, control traffic (like you find on golf courses).

The metal shop classes are looking for extra projects. They do nice work and have even painted some of the pieces for me.

The wood shop has also helped in many ways and are also looking for additional projects to do. The class practices building walls and when completed, the used lumber is sometimes tossed out. I will ask the teacher about using that wood to build benches, tables, etc. Recently I built shelves in a storage area to store bases, tarps, etc. Best part is the materials can cost very little and most of the time there is no cost to me at all. The Home Construction class builds a house in Oregon every year, and they have also helped me. The class will sometimes have extra materials left over, such as sod, and landscape rock. I have used these materials for projects about the track, such as landscaping under scoreboards with the decorative rock.

Here are some of the projects that the wood shop classes has done:

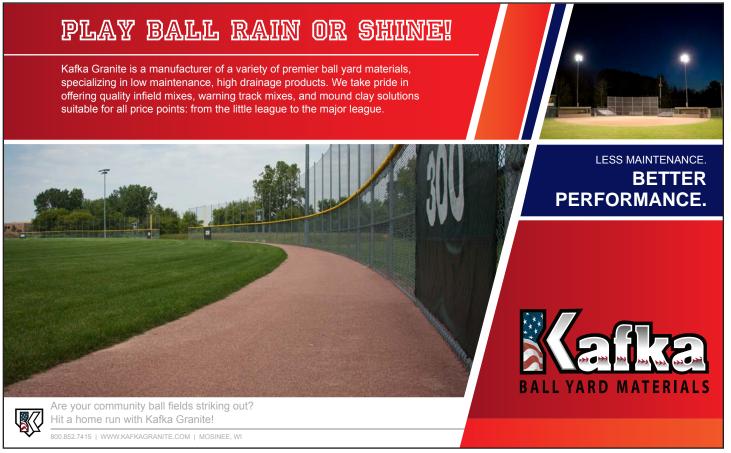
- » Cemented a base for the new bleachers at the Varsity Baseball field
- » Built an attached storage shed to the visitor dugouts, with cement floor
- » Cemented the batting cage floor
- » Built a soccer storage shed with a wood floor
- » Replace shingles on dugout roofs.
- » Built benches and tables for teams on the sideline and/or for dugouts.

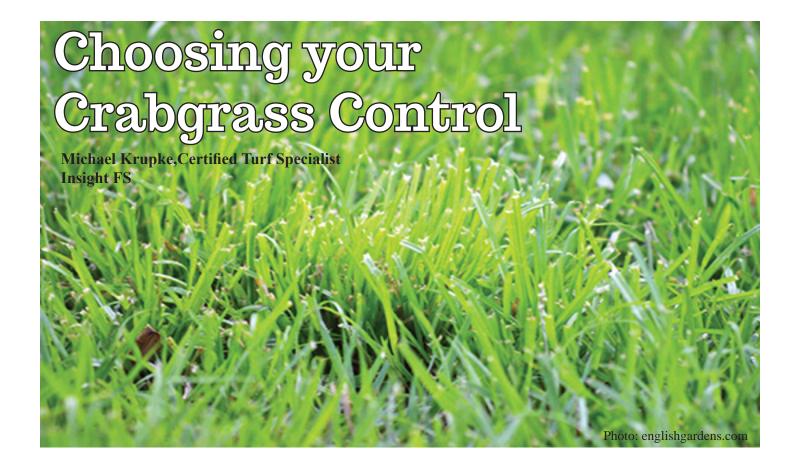
So when you have a chance, check with your high school metal and wood shop teachers to see what they and their classes can do for you. Sometimes there is no cost for materials and the students really enjoy doing these projects. I have had a positive response whenever I ask the teachers for their help, and also have a great working relationship with them. Some of the shop teachers are also coaches that I work with during the their athletic season which is a nice feather in the cap. Even some of the students are student athletes, so they take some pride in building these projects knowing they may be using them for their sport! So definitely talk with your metal and wood shop teachers so see what they can do for you.

Keep those fields looking great, people do notice even if you think they don't!









As we slowly move towards Spring, the thoughts of warm days and green grass begin to creep into our minds. Keeping that green grass lush and weed free can be a challenge, especially with so many options when it comes to herbicides. Which one and when? Here is a little information to help you make those decisions.

The first thing that should be addressed in the Spring is Crabgrass. While you won't start seeing it until Summer, early Spring is the time to fight it. This is referred to as "pre-emergent" weed control.

First of all, knowing the life cycle of Crabgrass is important. Crabgrass is in a group of plants known as summer annuals. These plants have a life of less than one year. Summer annuals germinate in the spring, grow through the summer and die with the first hard frost, leaving large amounts of seed behind. Crabgrass germination typically begins in early May when soil temperatures reach 55 degrees at a depth of 1 to 2 inches, or about two weeks after the forsythia blooms begin to drop. This is the time to apply pre-emergent crabgrass preventer. This will not kill established Crabgrass, so early application is essential.

Products like Dimension, Barricade, and Pendulum are all effective. They create a barrier in the soil when watered in, preventing seeds from germinating. This is also an important fact to remember when seeding your lawn. Crabgrass is a grass plant, not unlike your grass that you are trying to make beautiful. While it will not harm the established plants, it WILL keep your lawn seed from germinating. So if you are going to apply crabgrass preventer and turf seed, it would be advisable to seed your lawn in the early Fall when the herbicide has depleted. If you must seed or need to prevent crabgrass from choking out a new field establishment, Tenacity is a great tool. You can spray and seed at the same time, unlike the aforementioned products.

The easiest way to apply is to find a product that is impregnated on fertilizer. There are many fertilizer options for this, we recommend a low Nitrogen blend such as a 13-0-5 or a 19-0-0. Seeing is you are applying this early in the Spring, the grass is actively growing anyway and too much nitrogen will have you mowing more than you care to (most likely). Always follow label directions when applying.

Crabgrass Continued

If you find you didn't get acceptable control from your pre-emergent and some crabgrass plants start breaking through in the Summer, there are options for taking care of them post-emergently. This would be in the form of a spray. Products like Drive XLR8 or QuinStar 75DF, or Tenacity are a few of these products. Broadleaf weed herbicides such as those used to kill Dandelions and Clover are not effective in killing crabgrass.

With all this said, keeping a thick healthy lawn is still the best way to battle weeds. Fertilizer, seed, aeration and water are key ingredients to a successful field.

Think Spring!











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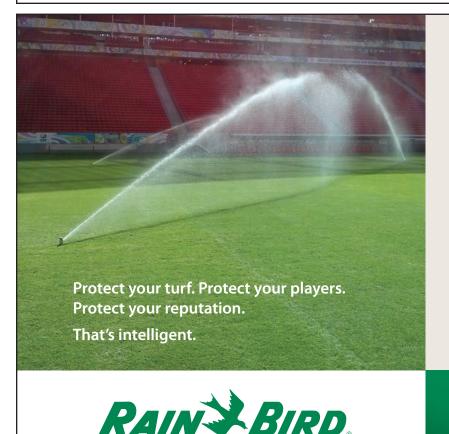
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Wisconsin Turfgrass Association

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