

TALK TURF

Official publication of the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association

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Wisconsin
SportsTurf
MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greeting Everyone!

Although it has been a bit slow and challenging, spring is upon us. Spring sports seasons are in full swing. We are excited to announce a full schedule of events with the WSTMA! The new Summer Series Program is going to be a great way to reach more turf managers statewide.

The Summer Series Program is scheduled on three different dates at three different locations. Our first one will be June 22 at Darlington High School- hosted by Lee Black. Please continue to check the website for an update on the remaining two Summer Series events.

We are in the middle of planning our fall event at the University of WI Sports Facilities. We will send out information with more details pertaining to this event later.

We look forward to working with Doug Soldat from the University of WI on this year's field study pertaining to wetting agents.

Don't forget- if you are a student of the turf industry, please apply for the WSTMA scholarship!

If you are interested, we are always looking for more Field of Excellence applicants. All athletic fields with natural turf qualify. We are excited to run the second year of The Fields of Excellence Program!

Good luck with your spring sports schedules, and hopefully the weather will start to turn a corner!

Sincerely,

Josh Viet

WSTMA President

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: FOR YOU, BY YOU

We want to give you some opportunities to share your talents with us and the rest of the WSTMA Membership. As a reminder, we are offering 3 such opportunities. One is to show off your field management prowess and the other two are to share your stories and successes.

First, the "Field of Excellence" Award program is returning this year. This gives you the opportunity to show off your field managing expertise and win prizes and recognition from your peers and those you serve. You may submit multiple fields such as a baseball field AND a football field.

Winners will have their field recognized in WSTMA publications and social media. Also, press releases will be sent to your local newspapers and TV stations. Information on criteria and application information are available in the newsletter, and on our website.

Next, we have an opportunity to share stories and articles YOU write. First, we would like you to submit articles for the newsletter written by YOU pertaining to Sports Turf Management. It may be a process you did on your field or one you are familiar with, that would be informational to the rest of sports turf management world.

Once they are submitted to the Board, they will be judged, and the winner will be published in the newsletter and links will be available on the website. Winning article authors will also win their choice of our new WSTMA apparel.

Finally, we want to have some fun with the newsletter. I am sure we all have a story about something humorous, goofy, odd, weird, good, and bad done in relation to managing sports turf. Whether this involves yourself, an employee, a field user, or the general public, I know we all have them. Seriously, the hardest I have ever laughed was when I was a golf course superintendent, and I was sitting one night with a group of other Superintendents telling stories (for hours) about things that had happened on the golf course. That evening I swore I wanted to write a book with humorous stories collected from my peers (I have not) in relation to our jobs.

So, we would love to include any offbeat stories related to managing sports fields or things that have happened during events you have in our newsletter every month. We can make it anonymous if need be as we know some of these stories may include someone screwing up or screwing around. We are confident you have shared these stories, please share them with us!

Please submit materials by email to mkrupke.wstma@gmail.com or send by mail to WSTMA Michael Krupke N4222 Pandow Dr., Brodhead, WI 53520.

Looking forward to hearing from you! Michael Krupke, Chapter Manager

INCORPORATING PLANT GROWTH REGULATORS INTO YOUR TURF

As we all know, our work loads are increasing but the amount of time in a day isn't.

So I started looking for ways to be more efficient with my time and improve the turf at the same time. After researching and gathering information on Plant Growth Regulators (PGR's) for a few years, I decided to incorporate their use into my turf management program in 2019. I applied my first application to our Football field around mid-May and continued throughout the summer. My final application for the year was on July 30th, about 3 weeks before the first home football game. I wanted the "rebound" effect to happen a week or so before the first event. I applied the PGR about every 4-5 weeks. I started to use GGD days last year and it is a valuable tool. During this PGR period, I averaged about 8 less mowing's than normal, mowing once a week vs. the normal 2-3 times a week. I did notice the turf was thicker, denser and an increase in rooting. The field held up really well for the remainder of the fall sporting season.

I first started using PGR in my paint in 2018. I only painted the 3' football sideline and the numbers with the PGR in my paint (see pictures). I used the recommended label rate of 1oz of PGR per gallon of paint, but I believe this was too high of a rate as the turf in heavy traffic areas really declined by the end of the football season. After looking at my notes and talking with other Turf Managers, I determined the reason for the turf decline was due to overlapping when painting the numbers and wide sideline. I you all know, when painting numbers or logo's, you actually apply 2 coats because you overlap to get a good coat of paint down. So I was actually over applying the PGR, now I use half rate when painting those areas. Even in late November, you could still see the effects of the PGR on the turf even though the paint was gone. I had back to back home games a week apart, and I didn't need to paint the numbers or sidelines for the second game, just a few touch up areas. Using a PGR in your paint, does extend the life of the paint, and you're not mowing off the paint.

In 2020, I now use PGR on all my baseball and softball fields all year long, as those fields tend to not get as much traffic and it's a different kind of traffic



compared to football or soccer. I have noticed a quicker green up on the BB/SB fields the following spring. I don't use a PGR during the football and soccer season's, only in the off season. If looking at using a PGR, make sure you look at the research and determine if it's right for you. I do see a great benefit and certainly has improved my turf.

Keep up the great work on your fields, people do notice!

Ron Novinska



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UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
SUMMER FIELD DAY SERIES I	WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22	DARLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
SUMMER FIELD DAY SERIES II	TBD	PLYMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL
SUMMER FIELD DAY SERIES III	TBD	MERRILL
FALL EDUCATION CONFERENCE	TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4	MADISON (INCLUDES TOUR OF CAMP RANDALL STADIUM & UW ATHLETIC FIELDS)



The Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association would like to congratulate Lee Black and his Staff at Darlington School District for having his Football Field chosen as “Field of the Year” in our Fields of Excellence competition. Here is his Submittal and pictures.

The Darlington high school football field, later renamed Wadzy Martens Field in 1982, was built in 1969 at its present location. The football facility has undergone some changes over the years, but the field has kept its location since the beginning.

Wadzy Martens Field hosts on average 10 varsity/jv football games, 4 junior high football games, and a variety of physical education classes every year. The field hosted 3 home football playoff games this year as well. The field is also used during our high school and grade school track season, and summer workouts and conditioning.

The football field had field lights installed in 2015 for the first time in its history. The bleachers were recently repaired and seat roughly 1,030 on the home side, and 613 on the visitor side. The district bought a new Micro Rain water wheel to use for irrigation, replacing the Kifco water wheel which was 15 years old and no longer working. The field has a 2” city water line piped next to the field that we use to hook up the sprinkler. The unit is run overnight to allow the city water tower to refill before the morning demand hits. The sprinkler does not have an electronic timing system, so we start it around 7pm and it is all the way wound up by 5-6 am the next morning.

The football field has shown some wear and tear over the years. The hardest parts to maintain are between the hashes, the 40 yard line kickoff marks, and the extra point areas. Overall our root depth has prevented major holes, but longer seasons, including multiple home playoff games into November have taken their toll. The drain tile that was installed originally, has held up well over the years.

One issue with our football field is trying to keep the field maintained while still hosting events and avoiding scheduling conflicts. The football season takes up a large portion of the work schedule. There are multiple games at home each week with all 3 levels playing at home at various times, sometimes all 3 the same week! That presents a lot of challenges by trying to maintain a safe environment, but also making sure the field is painted, and looks great for the public. Darlington has a rich tradition in football, and the demands of the teams, public, and administrators continues to rise. The use of the field by outside groups, or physical education classes can also present a challenge by finding ideal times to spray, fertilize, overseed, aerate, and mow. Being a small district and community, the field can be a focal point for several groups, and a place to take pride in our district. Darlington’s football field is unique in that it sits up on a hill, has excellent seating, and allows for large crowds to enjoy games. There is a hillside next to the concession stand, which has been a popular place for local fans to enjoy games for decades.

The maintenance program that I use has been constantly improving and changing to accommodate all the challenges being a single staff ground crew can bring. I have a consistent aerating/coring process that is done twice per year. We use an aerator/seeding machine in the spring once the ground warms up to open up the surface and overseed the field. We then follow up with fertilizing and I try to time that up with a solid rainfall in the spring. In the fall, after the football season is over, I pull 6” cores using a coring machine. I break up the cores after they dry with a metal drag from our baseball field, then mow up the rest, blowing everything towards the center of the field. I find this process has been successful for me, in allowing good root growth. I have found top dressing with Turface has helped maintain moisture in the field. I also use Turface when we have heavy rainfalls and the field is soggy. I have found it helps the surface from being sloppy. Another practice I follow and believe in, is to allow the field to stress a bit in the summertime. I have found



HOOLO DISTRICT HE YEAR

by doing this, the roots dig deeper, and make the grass stronger. I will try to keep an inch of water per week on the field later in the summer as the season approaches. The drought this past summer brought more challenges for me. Without an in field irrigation system, the water wheel had a hard time keeping up with the elements, and I found myself watering more than usual. I have the local InsightFS spray our field twice a year. Once in the spring, and once in the fall.

During the summer, I mow the field at 2.5" and make sure to vary my patterns each time. I try to prevent ruts, and I feel it presents a better cut for the playing surface. We use a Kubota 61" zero turn for mowing. Another trick I use is as the season approaches, around the middle of July, I will drop the deck down ¼" every 2 weeks until I reach the playing surface height of 1.5". I found that using this method allows the grass to adjust, and the watering to keep up without stressing the turf. It allows the surface to maintain its natural green color and a healthy appearance. If the grass begins to stress too much, I will stay at that mowing height and water the ground. I try to switch up my mowing patterns each year, and keep mowing the pattern I choose until the season is over. I like to mow and paint the field the day before an event, in case there is an equipment malfunction, and it allows me to focus more time on the game day tasks I have. On gameday, I will wait for the dew or frost to be gone, then mow any spots that need it. I then sweep any extra clippings up, and proceed to roll the field into the pattern with our 48" lawn roller. I have found this gives the field an amazing appearance, and levels off any rough spots. I use a Kubota UTV as the main piece of equipment for hauling supplies, field markers, pylons, etc. I have a Graco 3500 paint sprayer, and I use Hallman Lindsay 50/50 white field marking paint on all of my fields. I have a goal of eventually putting a logo at midfield, but I am currently trying to figure out how to make a template, and how I would fit that into my schedule. This year, I began painting a 3' wide white boundary line around the field to give it more character.

Darlington School District is part of the SWEEP group and shares turf equipment with around 20 other schools in SW Wisconsin. There is a membership fee, which allows the use of the equipment, which is stored at Iowa-Grant Schools. We have to schedule a time, and pick it up for use. SWEEP provides an aerator/seeder, plugger, topdresser, slit seeder, and a few other pieces of equipment. It is a beneficial way for smaller districts to avoid having to pay full price for equipment.

As mentioned before, staffing is a major problem in our grounds department. As the field conditions improve, demand for top notch grounds and playing surfaces increases. I am the Head of Maintenance, and have 4 full time custodians in the district, 2 are PM, and 2 are day. They all have busy schedules, but I have found that at times, I need to pull one of them from their duties to help finish prepping a field. Weather issues, such as rain or snow, can make field prep incredibly difficult. During the fall, the football field requires a lot of attention, but we also have an excellent cross country course that needs to be mowed and painted. This all on top of normal mowing and grounds maintenance, makes this process very difficult. In the summer, I do hire a few college kids to help with weed whipping, and minor grounds work, but the school year is when the most work happens.

Winter Conference Recap

The WSTMA Winter Education Conference was held February 17th & 18th at the Kalahari in Wisconsin Dells and was a great success.

The WSTMA has added a Networking Event prior to each Conference we have held this past year and plan to continue to offer the event in the future. On Thursday evening we had a wonderful turnout of both Commercial Partners and members and the evening was a great “get to know you” in a relaxed atmosphere with free liquid refreshments and the great buffet provided by the chefs at the Kalahari.

On to the show on Friday... Approximately 75 attendees gathered to hear a highly informative array of presentations on subjects important to Sports turf managers and the Sports Turf industry.

Dr. Doug Soldat, Professor of Soil Sciences at the University of Wisconsin started the day off with “Developing an NR151 Report for your Facility”.

This topic is highly pertinent to Sports turf managers and their facilities as it is required by the State. Regulations concerning turf management are becoming more prevalent in other parts of the US, and Wisconsin potentially doing the same. As the WSTMA is focused on educating sports turf managers to managing their facilities in a socially responsible manner, this information was on target for many in attendance and Dr. Soldat, as always, gave us a highly informative presentation. Many thanks!

Next up, Dr. Adam Thoms of Iowa State University gave his presentation, “Lowering Inputs, while Maintaining a Safe and Playable Surface.” He covered a wealth of material pertaining to his research at ISU on Humics, sports turf traffic, and Natural vs. Artificial playing surfaces. There were many key turf management points covered and he gave us a wealth of information for turf managers to take home to their facilities.

We gave our Commercial Partners the opportunity to tell us about themselves and promote their Companies. Each Company was given 2-3 minutes to stand up and “toot their horns”. We cannot say “Thank you” enough for their support of Sports Turf Managers in Wisconsin and their support of the WSTMA. We hope we make them feel



appreciated!!

WSTMA Josh Viet presented Lee Black from Darlington with the award for Field of the Year. Congratulations to Lee & his Staff!! Please take the time to read the article in this publication.

We switched from education to entertainment after lunch. Wayne Larrivee, the voice of the Green Bay Packers, who many of us have spent Sunday afternoons listening to, gave a highly entertaining look behind the scenes at the Packer Organization and sportscasting. I am sure many wanted to hear his “inside scoop” on the Aaron Rodgers saga, he did not disappoint, but as we know, only Aaron knew for sure. Wayne was a great speaker and stayed around for Meet & Greet and photo opportunities. What a great addition to our Conference.

We wound down the day with an overview of the new “Best Management Practices” initiative produced by the National Sports Field Managers Association. It ties in well with the day’s presentations and the WSTMA’s commitment to responsible turf management.

We were thrilled with the Conference as were many of those in attendance. Thanks to all who attended, and we look forward to seeing you all at the Summer Field Day Series this Summer and our Fall Conference that will include a Tour of Camp Randall Stadium and the UW Athletic facilities.

Michael Krupke
Chapter Manager



Introducing the New UW-Madison Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program

The WSTMA is excited to support this new Turf Education Program developed by Dr. Koch and Dr. Soldat, Professors at the University of Wisconsin. We will be offering an Annual \$3500.00 Scholarship to this program for those looking to begin or advance their career in the Turfgrass Management Industry. We will release more details regarding this Scholarship Application soon. In the meantime, if you have someone you know that would benefit from this program, please share this information with them.

By: Paul Koch, PhD and Doug Soldat, PhD

The UW-Madison Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program (TAP) is a 2-step program that consists of a 12-week, in-person educational bootcamp and a field-based apprenticeship at a golf course, athletic complex, or other turf facility. The program provides participants with the hands-on, real-world experience needed to succeed in the turfgrass industry. Successful completion of both the bootcamp and the apprenticeship is required to earn the Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program Certificate.

Step 1: Educational Bootcamp

The educational bootcamp is a 12-week, in-person program run by UW-Madison professors Doug Soldat and Paul Koch that offers an applied turfgrass education in a compressed period without compromising the quality of the course content. The majority of classes will take place on the UW-Madison campus, though regular ‘shop talk’ visits will be made to local turfgrass facilities to gain hands-on education on a range of topics from practicing turfgrass professionals.

The bootcamp will take place over two 6-week terms during the late fall and winter that allows for working students to complete seasonal tasks in the field prior to starting class in the fall, and to complete classes in the winter prior to the start of the following growing season. The fall term starts the first week of November and ends in mid-December, and the winter term starts the second full week of January and ends in mid-February. Each week will have class on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10 AM until 3 PM CST with a 1-hour break for lunch. This compressed schedule allows those that don’t want to commute daily to book housing for only 2 nights per week. Regular attendance and completion of quizzes, projects, and exams will be expected of each student. There will be no class during the week of Thanksgiving in the fall term and during the GCSAA Conference in the winter term.

Tuition for the 2022-2023 bootcamp will be \$3500 for the entire 12-week program. This cost is the same for in-state and out-of-state students. Payment of tuition will be due by the end of the second week of classes in the fall term, and full refunds will be offered to any student that withdraws by the end of the second week of class. Contact Dr. Paul Koch or Dr. Doug Soldat for questions about program costs and payments.

The 2022-2023 UW-Madison Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program is as follows:

Term	Class	Time (CST)	Primary Instructor	Start Date	End Date
Fall	Introduction to Turfgrass Management	10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Paul Koch	November 1st, 2022	December 15th, 2022
Fall	Introduction to Turfgrass Soils	1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Doug Soldat	November 1st, 2022	December 15th, 2022
Fall	Turfgrass Irrigation and Drainage	2:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Doug Soldat	November 1st, 2022	December 15th, 2022
Spring	Nutrient Management	10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Doug Soldat	January 10th, 2023	February 16th, 2023
Spring	Integrated Pest Management	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Paul Koch	January 10th, 2023	February 16th, 2023

Housing is not provided by UW-Madison during the bootcamp, but we will work to provide a number of affordable hotel options in the Madison area and coordinate hotel stays among the students so that most or all students who wish to stay in Madison can stay in the same hotel. We anticipate that hotel costs for two nights per week during the 12-week program will be less than \$2000, and those costs will decrease considerably for those students interested in a roommate.

There will be significant scholarship money available to support student tuition and housing costs from a variety of turfgrass associations, including the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association, Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association, Wisconsin Sod Producers Association, among other sources. More information on scholarships and how to apply for them will be provided in the first week of class during the fall term, and all scholarships will be awarded at the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium in Kohler, WI in January. Please contact Dr. Paul Koch or Dr. Doug Soldat for more information on TAP scholarships.

Step 2: Field-based Apprenticeship

Students in the TAP will also be required to complete a field-based apprenticeship at a golf course, athletic complex, or other turf management facility of their choosing. A list of tasks to complete during the apprenticeship will be developed in cooperation with associations in the turfgrass industry and will be ready in time for the 2023 field season. The student's field supervisor (superintendent, grounds manager, etc.) will sign off on each assigned task once they have deemed the apprentice proficient at the task. Students who complete the assigned tasks will be ready to assume a position as an assistant superintendent in the golf course industry or an equivalent position in the sports turf, lawn care, or sod industry. More details will be available on the apprenticeship in the fall and winter of 2022-2023.

How to enroll in the TAP

To enroll in the UW – Madison TAP please email Dr. Paul Koch or Dr. Doug Soldat and indicate that you would like to enroll in the program. You will be added to the class list and receive regular email updates as the fall term approaches, including information on how to pay tuition for the program and guidance on housing and parking. Deadline for enrollment in the fall term is October 15th.

WSTMA SUMMER FIELD DAY SERIES

"FIELD MANAGERS HELPING FIELD MANAGERS"



The Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers will be presenting a Summer Field Day Series at three locations across the State this summer.

Prior to each Series Session, a Survey will be sent to Sports Turf Managers in that area asking what they would like to see information presented on. From that Survey information, an Agenda will be planned, addressing the most requested information.

Those include:

- Mound/Batter's Box Renovation
- Aeration Techniques
- Seeding/Overseeding
- Nutrient Management/Pest Control
- BB/SB Infield Management
- Water Management/Irrigation

Each is going to be a relaxed and hands on half day event. A lot of question and answer, not just presentations. Much

of what we all learn is from our peers, so we want to provide a place for that type of exchange.

Our goal is to provide education to those who may not be able to make it to our Annual Conferences and Field Day. We will still be holding our Fall & Winter Conferences, but we thought we'd take the Field Day experience on the road and make it a little more localized. This way we can provide sports field education to more field managers.

The three host sites will be Darlington High School, Plymouth High School, and Merrill with host site to be determined there. All are welcome, no matter the site or where you live. There will be the usual morning refreshments and Lunch provided. We will have more details as they develop. We hope you can join your peers for a morning of education and networking!

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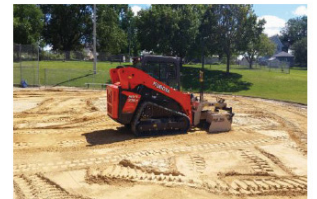
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MEET A BOARD MEMBER

We're highlighting new WSTMA Board Member Todd Putz,

What first sparked your interest in Turf Management?

I first became interested in turf management when I was working for a large lawn and landscape maintenance company. I was a horticulturist, but gradually learned the lawn care side as well. I was baptized by fire after taking a Park and Rec. position!

What is your biggest challenge in maintaining the athletic fields at your facility?

I believe the biggest challenge is having enough time to devote to field maintenance. As public employees, we tend to wear a lot of hats, and grounds care often has to take a back seat.

What do you like best about your job?

I really enjoyed working with people. The fellow employees, coaches athletic directors and student athletes were a joy to work with. I always made the time to have some fun every day, and I tried to make at least one person laugh each day.

What has been the most memorable moment of your career?

I always took pride in helping to prepare our grounds for large events. Probably most memorable was a visit from First Lady Michelle Obama.

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

I wish they knew about the incredible amount of science and technology that is involved in turf management. Unfortunately we don't have the time to teach folks how important it is.

Who has been your biggest influences/mentors?

My first supervisor, Chip Mayes taught me about hard work and how to be efficient in the field. My dad is also an incredibly hard worker and I always admired him for that.



When you're not working, what do you like to do?

I enjoy volunteering at church, spending time with my family and hunting and fishing when I get the chance.

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

I would probably be working in the National Park Service in Montana or Wyoming.



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