

The *Sideline* Report

Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association

August 2015

2014 ISTMA Golden Cleat Award



Table of Content

3	A Letter from the President -Tim VanLoo, CSFM
4	Southwest Director Update -Lee Van Meeteren
6	ISTMA Chapter Challenge Results - Tim VanLoo, CSFM
7	Fall Workshop Information
8	Overcoming Wet and Hot Conditions - Brent Smith
9	ITI/Iowa GCSA Benefit Tournament
10	ISU Expanding Sports Turf Research -Dan Strey
12	2014 Golden Cleat Award -Jason Koester
14	Transition Zone -Seth Triplett

Advertisers

Bush Turf	2
CoverMaster	3
Pace Supply	4
Turface Athletics	5
MTI Distributing	5
Commercial Turf Services	8
Floratine Central Turf Products	13
River City Turf & Ornamental	13
D & K Products	15

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A Letter from the President

Tim VanLoo, CSFM, Iowa State Athletics



Well, it's August, which means the growing season 2015 is well past half way. It also means that for many of us, students will be back soon. For some reason, students returning to school affect us all. For me, it means the teams will be back in full swing and we will be more than busy. For some, it means summer baseball crowds and tournaments are starting to slow and you can see the end of all the running around. No matter where you are or what you have left on your schedules; let me encourage you by saying, keep doing your best because you are helping create lasting memories for many athletes, parents, and sport fans.

As I write this, the summer has been relatively cool and wet. I hope the cool part is still true in a few weeks when you are actually reading this. This is my 6th season here in Iowa, and the weather continues to spark my interest. It is a powerful force that continues to be unpredictable and unforgiving no matter the technology we try to develop. It is a reminder to us all, that we are

only as good as our resources and what Mother Nature gives us!

I want to remind all of you to try and attend our September 16th workshop at Tuma Sports Complex in Cedar Rapids. We have a great line-up scheduled and should be a great fall workshop. Also, set your calendars for December 2nd winter workshop at Jack Trice Stadium. We are trying something a little new this year and are hoping the timing works well for most to attend a workshop after the playing season is complete.

My final thoughts, sometimes being a sports turf manager seems like a thankless job. Other times it seems like there is nothing we would rather be doing. No matter how you feel about your job on any particular day, you still have the opportunity to make someone else's day better by your actions. Make every day better for someone else, and the rewards will be far greater than you ever imagined.

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Southwest Director Update

Lee Van Meeteren, City of Sioux Center

Looking at the calendar this morning, I noticed that it is already a couple days into July! In only 5 or 6 more weeks I am looking at my part time help starting to leave to go back to their schools, and the grind of the fall months with little to no help is right around the corner.

With this in the back of my mind this week it is making me reflect on whether I have correctly trained and supported my staff the way I should've. Do they have a new appreciation for the turf industry, and hopefully do they want to continue their careers in this field? Most of the time I am so caught up in making sure all schedules are met and fields and parks grounds are in perfect shape I forget to take time to train on something that isn't just physical labor stuff and educate on spray rates, what weeds and funguses are present on our grounds, and why certain practices are done at the necessary times.

The part I love about my job is the teaching and how excited they get about doing something new or different, because that just keeps my fire going through the really long hot days. Also, I have always felt that the more my staff knows, the easier my job gets. If they understand why I get frustrated, they learn more. It just makes sense that the safer everyone works and the better they treat equipment and the more pride they take in what they are doing, the better job they do. They perform better when there is ownership on their part.

Mostly, I wanted to take this moment and thank my staff for everything they do for me and the City of Sioux Center. We have a great community with very high standards and almost every day my staff steps up to those challenges and exceeds my expectations. I am also here to remind all you turf grass and park managers to take a second and look at your staff and let them all know (good worker or bad) how much you appreciate their effort and their time to accomplish all the goals we have set over the winter months.

I have been very blessed to have very little turnover even though it seems to be getting harder and harder to find kids that will work this hard. I have found that the

harder I push on making them understand and giving them the correct responsibility, the more they have thrived and even begun to enjoy coming to work and encouraging others to come work. I love that they have pushed themselves harder and just saying thanks every day as the day ends goes a long way because there are days that it doesn't seem like anything gets done or I don't see them all day until I see them leaving the shop.

So, take a few minutes to teach something new, let someone try a new piece of equipment, and most important, no matter who the worker is, always say thanks.

Lee Van Meeteren



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ISTMA VS. Minnesota STMA

Chapter Challenge



Well, absolute dominance this year at chapter challenge, by Iowa in case you hadn't heard. The event was held July 17 and 18 in the Ames area. Golf was held at Honeycreek in Boone, bocce ball was done at Cyclone Sports Complex, and softball was played at City of Ames softball complex.

Golf at Honeycreek was HOT. The temps were in the 90's with little to no breeze. Maybe that's why Iowa took 4 out of 5 matches. Minnesota folks aren't built for heat like that or maybe I am trying to give them an excuse for allowing a thumping like the one we gave them on the golf course. Overall, Honeycreek was in great shape and the competition was great fun.

Bocce ball was held at Iowa States Cyclone Sports Complex softball field. The infield and outfield made for mixed conditions and a whole lot of fun. It came down to the last ball thrown from Josh Lenz to rip the victory out of Minnesota's hand. Much running around and trash talk soon followed with Minnesota boys heading to their cars and licking their wounds from what Iowa had gave them throughout the first day of competition.

Softball was played on Saturday morning and it was still really hot, however Minnesota boys couldn't possibly use that excuse two days in a row. The game started out with trading a few runs back and forth through the first couple of innings until Iowa had a 6 run inning and opened it up midway through the game. Minnesota never got closer than 4 runs after that. Final score was 11-7.

The chapter challenge again proved to be one of my personal highlights of summer again. A great time was held by all and I would encourage any of you who are interested to plan on going to Minnesota next year.



Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association
Fall Workshop – September 16, 2015
Tuma Soccer Complex – Cedar Rapids, IA
 Host: Chad Peterson



8:00	Registration
8:30	Welcome & Overview of Days Activities – <i>Chad Peterson, Tuma Soccer Complex</i>
8:45	Paint: Why We Use What We Use/How to Specify Quality/Paint Types/Logos – <i>3 stations, 15 minutes each</i>
9:30	Break
9:45	Irrigation Audit – <i>Lynda Wightman, Hunter Industries, Tim Van Loo, Iowa State University, Troy McQuillen, Kirkwood CC, Neric Smith, Indian Hills CC</i> Pressure Testing Heads – <i>Steve Lindner, Hunter Industries</i> Setting Up for an Audit – <i>3 stations total 1/2 hour each</i>
11:15	Lunch – Visit with Vendors
12:15	Sprayer & Spreader Calibration/Top Dressers – <i>Brent Smith, Floratine & Austin Allen, D & K Products</i> – <i>3 stations total 1/2 hour each</i>
1:45	Break
2:00	Aerators/Seeders – <i>3 stations total 1/2 hour each</i>
3:30	Fraze Mowing – <i>2 stations, different types, total 1/2 hour each</i>
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Registration Form

ISTMA Fall Workshop, Tuma Complex – September 16, 2015

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 Company: _____
 Address: _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
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Pre-registration Deadline by September 11, 2015

- Members \$40
- Non - Members \$50
- Students \$20

STUDENTS MUST PRE-REGISTER

On-Site Registration

- Members \$50
- Non - Members \$60

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Overcoming Hot and Wet Conditions - The Science

Brent Smith, Floratine Central Turf Products

Spring and summer conditions in the Midwest have tended to be extremely wet and overcast for many parts of the state, which can lead to a number of issues with plant growth, strength and development.

When soil conditions are continually wet and anaerobic, there is a lack of oxygen/carbon dioxide exchange occurring in the soil which can lead to a number of issues: poor root development, limited beneficial microbial activity (or increased detrimental microbial activity - disease), excessive leaching of available nutrients (particularly Potassium and micro-nutrients), among other issues that can arise on surface like black algae, black layer and or moss development.

Along with continued wet conditions comes excessive days of overcast skies, coupled with the lack of duration and intensity of the sun - photosynthetic activity will be severely compromised, and in turn root development will be limited.

The overall effect on the turf may be significant given the above conditions, particularly coming into extreme heat and continued moisture. Steps can be taken to mitigate the effects on the strength and durability of the turf during these conditions. Enhancing the movement of water through the profile with penetrating-type wetting agents will increase gas exchange and aerobic microbial activity. Oxygenation technology is also available to provide non-disruptive aeration, aid turf respiration, and increase soil nutrient conversions, although cultural practices are the best option to increase gas exchange.

Maximizing photosynthetic activity in the plant during the wet and overcast conditions (along with moving water and oxygenating the soil) will help plant continue to 'push roots' during summer stress, or at least maintain what you currently have. Maximum photosynthetic activity can be encouraged by maintaining great color through proper Nitrogen and Micro-Nutrient availability, and supplementing balanced blends of Amino-Acids, Carbohydrates and Proteins. The turf is expending a lot of energy at the expense of rooting during heats stress, so directly providing amino

acids and carbohydrates through foliar supplements can offset continued root loss. Increased color will provide the energy transfer for maximum utilization of the sun's energy and carbohydrate production (the end result of photosynthesis).

Potassium (K) supplementation is also critical during excessively wet conditions as it is one of the easiest nutrients leached from the soil profile. Potassium is required for a number of plant functions, one of the main being Stomata control - and therefore water movement in the plant (for cooling of the turf and movement of nutrients). Cell division also requires Potassium, and foliar supplements will help to keep the cells from "ballooning" and becoming weak or succulent, as Nitrogen release is abundant with high soil temperatures.

Calcium (Ca) is required for Cell Wall Thickness and proper forms can aid in the reduction of respiration stress, therefore keeping the photosynthetic activity above the critical tipping point of root loss... among the added benefits of wear tolerance with a hard cell structure.

Balanced foliar packages that supply Potassium, Micros, Amino Acids, Carbohydrates and Calcium will certainly help to mitigate hot wet conditions the remainder of the season!!

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34th Annual ITI/Iowa GCSA Benefit Tournament Echo Valley CC August 24, 2015

Echo Valley Country Club, along with the Iowa Turfgrass Institute and the Iowa Golf Course Superintendent Association, invite you to be their guest at the **34th Annual ITI/Iowa GCSA Benefit Golf Tournament** on August 24, 2015. All proceeds from this golf tournament will benefit scholarships and research in the turfgrass management field.

Golf Format

The Golf Tournament is a **4-person, best-shot format**. The tournament is limited to the first 30 teams returning their entry forms and contributions. **Payment must be received in full at the time of registration to hold your place in the tournament.**

The tournament prizes will be given to the overall champions, with the rest of the prizes determined by blind draw. Everyone has an equal chance to win! In addition, there will be a pin event with prizes on several holes and the sponsors will provide a drawing item.

Box lunch will be served at Noon with a shotgun start. Prizes will be awarded at the reception following the tournament – snacks provided.

Team Donation

Any golf course, company or individual may sponsor a team of four individuals. The team sponsorship donation of **\$500.00** includes golf, prizes, cart rental, lunch and the evening reception. Optional mulligans are available for \$5 per player and can be paid in advance or onsite. Please indicate to the right of your name if you would like a mulligan.

Announcements: No t-shirts, jeans, or cutoffs are allowed; however, sport shorts are permissible. No metal spikes will be allowed. Range will open at 11:00am.

Team Name

Mulligan

Team Captain

Address

City

State

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ISU Expanding Sports Turf Research

Dan Strey, Iowa State University

At the beginning of June, we began construction of a new three acre site that will be used for future sports turf research. The area will be divided into three different plots. The first being a native soil field. Topsoil from the existing site was stripped and stockpiled prior to reshaping. Once the clay sub-grade was moved and leveled, ten to twelve inches of topsoil was then placed on top. The second plot will evaluate sand topdressing over existing native soil fields. The construction process will be similar to that of the native soil field. Once the area is seeded, topdressing will begin to take place. Lastly, the third plot will have a four inch sand cap. The subgrade will contain a minimum of four inches below the sand cap. The three plots were designed to represent the major types of fields being used and constructed in the state of Iowa as well as the Midwest.

The rough grade is nearing completion. We spent the last two weeks moving over 6,000 cubic yards of soil. We expect to begin the irrigation work within the next week or two. The system includes 72 heads, 24 electric valves, 8 isolation valves, 12 quick couplers, 3 miles of wire and 1.25 miles of pipe. Once complete, we will move on to the drainage system.

Last week the Iowa State News Service published a press release regarding the construction project. They included a video from the site. The link to the release is <http://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2015/06/10/sportsturf>

The Ames Tribune also ran a story on this last week, here is the link <http://amestrib.com/news/new-isu-sports-turf-research-park-underway>.

Planning for the project started last fall where we identified the location, plans were constructed, and sought out donations to help fund the project. We had an overwhelming response from the turf, irrigation, and construction industries. By early spring, the project was 100% funded.

[Here is a list of our sponsors and donors.](#)

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Thank you to everyone who has helped make this project happen!

Zac Olinger and I have been making a GoPro video of the process. We downloaded the first video July 10th.

Approximately one half of the irrigation system has currently been installed. Final grading will take place in August and seeding will take place by early September.



Watch the Go Pro video of the process at <http://iaturf.blogspot.com/2015/07/gopro-video-of-new-sports-turf.html>





ISTMA GOLDEN CLEAT AWARD

By: Jason Koester, Grinnell College

At the Iowa Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show last January, the ISTMA surprised Mike Burt with the ISTMA Golden Cleat Award. Mike received this award for the work he has done with the ISTMA and the sports turf industry in Iowa. Mike is currently employed at Grinnell College in Grinnell. I sat down with Mike to interview him about what drew him to the turfgrass industry and started a lifelong career.

How did you become interested in sports field/turfgrass management?

I grew up on a 9 hole golf course in Ankeny spending most all summer days playing golf, swimming, fishing, and hunting golf balls. I would ride my bike to the course after breakfast and return home before supper. As a young teen, my best friend's dad became greenskeeper at the course and we would help out on the course moving tee markers and picking up garbage. We also helped out topdressing greens and whatever they wanted us to do eventually cutting cups and mowing. I always loved golf courses in the early mornings. I earned BS and MS degrees in Horticulture-turfgrass at ISU and worked at golf courses part time through that period. After grad school I accepted an offer to work in Facilities Management at Grinnell College and have been here since.

What does my current job consist of?

I supervise 12 employees and am responsible for the maintenance of Grinnell College's campus grounds, landscape, and sports fields. I am also responsible for campus set ups and take downs; campus deliveries including mail services; recycling, trash, and food compost removal from campus; grounds equipment acquisition and maintenance; college carpool including fleet acquisition and maintenance; campus signage, campus hazardous waste management; project management including all campus paving and some light construction projects; and other duties as assigned!

How has the business changed over the years?

The turf maintenance equipment and growing products are so good now. We manage much better turfgrass cultivars- much more suited to low mowing and intensive maintenance. Native soil management was the norm when I first entered the business. Then came sand based golf greens and sand topdressing, then sand based athletic fields and sand topdressing. Artificial carpet like turf has evolved into the artificial grass surfaces of today.

Advice for someone starting out in sports field management?

Find a mentor. Network with peers. Join and be active in an association like ISTMA. Get an education

Transition Zone

Seth Triplett, Waukee Community Schools

In July of 2014 I made the transition from the world of golf course maintenance to that of sports turf. I had anticipated there would be several similarities and differences between the two disciplines. However, as I set out on my new endeavor as the Head Groundskeeper for the Waukee Community School District, I was hopeful that the skills I had gained in my nine years on golf courses and 13 years of lawn care would be an asset.

Similarities

There are several similarities that have carried over from golf course maintenance. First, it is still maintaining finely manicured turf that endures intense traffic stress. While on golf courses it is the teeing areas, cart drive-offs from fairways, and the walk-on areas on greens that must be maintained, my new work in sports turf involves working with the wear and tear from various student athletic teams and organizations; player warm-up areas, baseball and softball outfielders' positions, yard lines for the marching band, and the wide-spread usage of the football and soccer fields.

They both require special fertility programs that curtail to certain issues facing a specific green or field. The biggest fertility need is promoting traffic tolerance, so I have utilized Gypsum and higher K fertilizers, overseeding, and starter fertilizers to help the worn areas rebound.

I have used starter fertilizers wall-to-wall on both the baseball and softball fields to help the overseeding germinate and establish faster. This is also intended to help improve root development in already established areas.

In addition, there are two important similarities between these disciplines: a great level of detail and communication. The detail portion is my favorite part of maintaining our baseball and softball complex; be it keeping fence lines clean, painting picnic tables, or keeping the edging of the infield and warning track in tack, I love it all. There is always more detail work that can be done, and it is encouraging to know that things can always be made better.

Communication is an area in which everyone can always improve upon. Between keeping my superiors informed as to what is going on and coordinating with

coaches and the activities director regarding schedules and the needs and wants of our different sports, strong and consistent communication is necessary.

Constant communication has allowed me to reduce traffic stress better than any chemical or mechanical practice would. Both baseball and softball coaches have helped by utilizing other turf areas for practices and drills, such as playing catch and batting practice, so that they can limit the game field usage.

Differences

The biggest differences are how the turf areas are used, who is using them, and the mentality they have while using them. On golf courses, everyone shows up, plays their round, and expects the course to be in top condition and aesthetically pleasing.

In the world of sports turf, there are seemingly endless different types of drills and warm-ups that are done on the fields by the highly competitive student-athletes. The field's aesthetics, however, are on a different scale. While golfers or members show up expecting things to be gorgeous, parents and other spectators of high school sports are there to watch the game rather than marvel at the field itself; it is an added bonus if you can start catching their eye with the field's condition. A major goal of mine has been to make our fields noticeable to the spectator while keeping them at high quality of playability for the student-athletes.

There are obviously many more differences between the two disciplines, but these have been the ones that have stood out to me in my first year.

All of these similarities and differences have been complimented by the skills I attained while working in the golf course industry and in home lawn care. The most important skill being adaptability - being able to completely switch things up should anything get cancelled, rescheduled, or a practice runs late and interferes with the maintenance schedule I had planned. Simply being flexible and adaptable to the needs of the various coaching staffs, the athletic director, and of my superiors has been greatly helpful in keeping everyone satisfied.

New Challenges

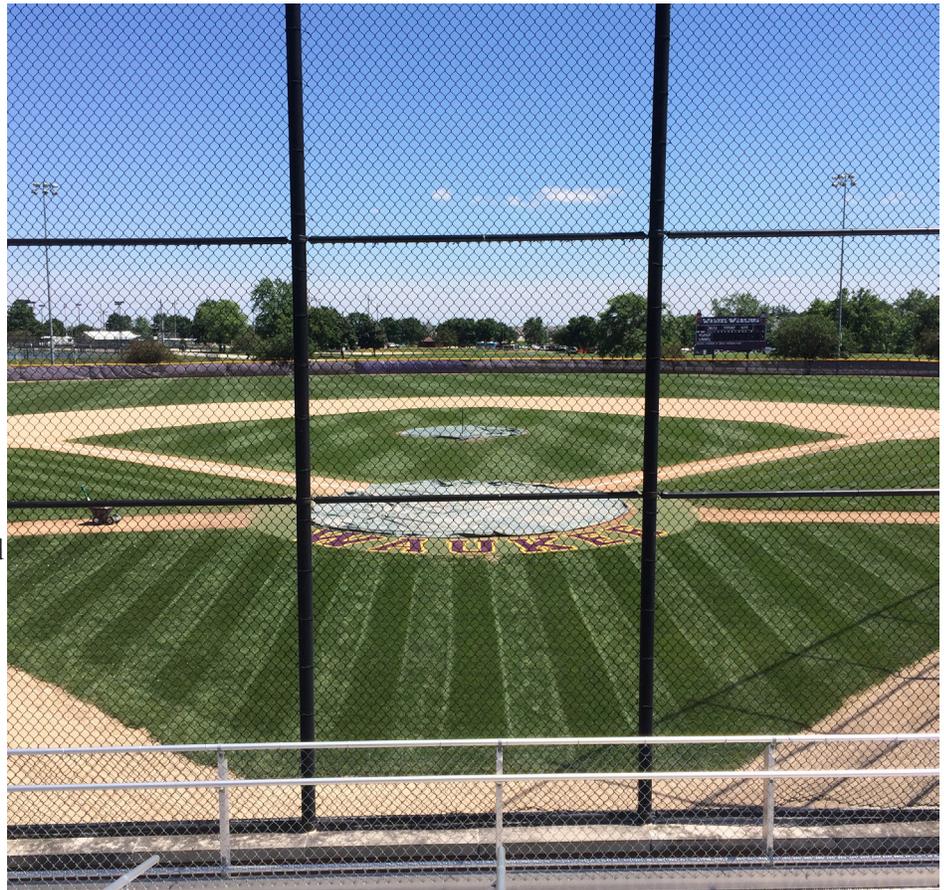
The biggest challenge that I have found is having four

to five grades of baseball, softball, football, girls/boys soccer, and marching band spread over four natural grass football/soccer practice fields, an artificial turf football stadium field, a baseball, and a softball field. Add P.E. use on top of all that, and it often feels like all the fields are being used on a daily basis. I'm sure this is a common feeling among sports turf managers. The most important role as sports turf managers, in my opinion, is to provide suitable playing surfaces for all sports to give student athletes, especially at the high school level, a safe and proper field to play on.

Having an artificial turf stadium field for football and soccer has been both good and bad. The negative side has been everyone wanting to use it for anything - from practices to games, junior football games to band competitions – that one field is in constant use. It is good, however, because it makes all of those things possible and allows the school to generate revenue from some of those events.

I understand there is deep debate between artificial turf and natural grass; I myself prefer natural grass. Being mostly a one-man operation, however, I have benefited from having an artificial turf field because it is less labor intensive and allows me to focus on our other fields and the stadium grounds themselves.

In conclusion, I am incredibly happy to have become the head groundskeeper for the Waukee Community School District and to have made the transition to sports turf, as well as being a part of Iowa's Sports Turf Manager's Association. I look forward to, hopefully, meeting and learning from as many of the STMA members as I can in the future. While I recognize that there is always room for improvement, I feel like it has been a smooth transition.



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