Between the Lines
Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization

Haffling & Crew Deliver at Moravian College

Inside:
2012 Conference Review
Topdressing
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Parks & Recr. Dept., North Smithfield, RI

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Share your expertise with your peers

Dan Douglas, head groundskeeper for the Reading Phillies and President of the Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization, asks all KAFMO members to check out page 8 of this issue for the terrific advice offered by fellow members Dave Anderson of Hempfield School District and Mark Hohenwarter of Solanco School District. This TIPS section (Training, Ideas, Professionalism, Solutions) appears in every issue and we urge you to contribute lessons learned and smart solutions to help make life easier for your friends and colleagues in the industry. Send your TIPS to Dan at Kafmo@aol.com to spread your wealth of knowledge throughout the great state of Pennsylvania.

Join KAFMO!

KAFMO is dedicated to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers in Pennsylvania through seminars, field days, publications, conferences and networking with peers. Individual membership dues are only $30 a year, and less if you have multiple members from your facility join. For more information see www.kafmo.org or call 717-921-8803.

The Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization was formed in 1994 by a small group of individuals who were concerned about the quality of the athletic fields in Pennsylvania. In 1997, KAFMO became incorporated as a chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association. Today, KAFMO is over 300 members strong and each individual is committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers in the Keystone State.

Our goals are to improve the safety, playability and appearance of all athletic fields in Pennsylvania. As an organization, we strive to accomplish our goals through seminars, field days, publications and networking with other professionals in the sports turf industry.

Any individual, institution, organization, vendor or supplier who has sincere interest in athletic field maintenance is welcome to become a member. Our members represent a wide range of professionals in the sports turf industry. From high school, collegiate and professional athletic facilities, according to Randy Haftling, General Services Manager for the college, Haftling and his crew, Buck Tarboro, Bill Boehm, Rick Churilla, Juan Cuelo, Brent Grinstein, and Ben Jacoby, are constantly improving the field to ensure that the field is highly competitive for NCAA softball play.

KAFMO 2011 Field of Distinction winner Blue and Grey Softball Field at Moravian College in Bethlehem has benefited from the college’s aggressive upgrading of its athletic facilities, according to Randy Haftling, General Services Manager for the college. Haftling and his crew, Buck Tarboro, Bill Boehm, Rick Churilla, Juan Cuelo, Brent Grinstein, and Ben Jacoby, are constantly improving the field to ensure that the field is highly competitive for NCAA softball play.

The magazine will be free to KAFMO members.
Gordon Santee of Easton was presented with the 2012 Fowler Founder’s Award to cap off a successful 16th Annual KAFMO/PRPS Athletic Field Conference in Grantville February 17. Santee, a retired 84-year-old high school chemistry teacher, has been the backbone of activity at Easton’s Jackett’s Park baseball field for many years, including playing, coaching, scorekeeping, and most importantly, maintaining the field.

Santee has been instrumental in Senior League Baseball in the Lehigh Valley and also has spearheaded efforts to raise money so that children with special needs have a chance to play baseball; his efforts have helped result in more than $300,000 being raised for that purpose over the years. Santee has been active in KAFMO since its inception.

The Fowler Founders Award is named in honor of Donald Fowler, retired Penn State extension agent, who is credited with organizing the group of individuals who formed KAFMO. The award itself is one of Don Fowler’s worn-out work boots that has been bronzed and symbolizes the hard work and determination demonstrated by recipients.

More than 300 turf managers attended the Athletic Field Conference, one of the longest-running meetings of its kind in the country. The event was co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society, and made possible through the support of conference sponsors [see list below] and more than 50 exhibitors.

Field of Distinction Winners
KAFMO also honored three fields with its Field of Distinction Awards that are awarded annually to facilities that have demonstrated a dedication to providing safe and playable conditions for their users regardless of the level of play. FOD Committee Chairman Dave Anderson of the Hempfield School District said his committee looks for fields that have been dramatically improved despite perhaps having limited budgets or small, even one-man, crews. He said the number of applications grew again this year. Winners receive a plaque, KAFMO jackets, complementary Conference registration, and local media coverage. This year's winners included:

Halifax Athletic Stadium. The Halifax Athletic Stadium is a multipurpose field, used by student-athletes in the Halifax Area School District. The Halifax field was constructed in the 1950’s and hosts more than 65 events each year. The field is the site of home contests for the school’s football team, both boys and girl’s soccer teams, as well as band practices. Halifax holds graduation and elementary field days on the field. In addition, the field is the host for the local Relay for Life, an occasional wedding and a few church activities. The Halifax stadium has been maintained for the past 4 years by groundskeeper, David Trutt. David has received numerous compliments from rival schools on the excellent playing surface of the Halifax field.

Episcopal Academy Alumni Field. Alumni Field is a relatively new field having been constructed in 2008. The field is home for the Academy's varsity boy's soccer and varsity girl's lacrosse teams. In 2011, Alumni Field was used more than 650 hours. In addition to the Episcopal Academy teams, the field also hosted the Philadelphia Union soccer camp as well as being the site for the Philly Showcase Lacrosse Games. Grounds Superintendent CJ Lauer, who has maintained the field since its construction, continues to upgrade and improve the field. One of the improvements was the installation of a drainage system, which allows for faster water drainage, resulting in the field being ready to play sooner.

Moravian College Blue and Grey Softball Field. Moravian College's Blue and Grey Softball Field has had quite a diversified history. In the 1950's the field was primarily used for local little league games and had very few amenities and little if any maintenance. Sometime later, the outfield became the primary practice field for the college’s football team. Every year following football season the outfield would need to be renovated and sodded in order to be ready for softball in March. This type of maintenance, while necessary, was becoming quite expensive and challenging for the staff to maintain year after year. Beginning in 2000, a decision was made to renovate and improve the field to meet NCAA softball standards. Since then the Moravian staff has aggressively continued to upgrade the field and its amenities. In 2005, a decision was made to make the field a softball only field and was given the name The Blue and Grey Softball Field. Randy Hafling, General Service Manager and his crew, Buck Tarboro, Bill Boehm, Rick Churilla, Juan Cueto, Brent Grinstein, and Ben Jacoby, are constantly improving the field to ensure that the field is highly competitive for NCAA softball play.

Drew Munisteri, Thomas Goyne and Ryan Murphy won an Honorable Mention Field of Distinction Award for the high school students' work on Veteran’s Field in Mountain Top.

Scholarships
KAFMO presented its Waddington/Harper Scholarships to two students who are near graduation and plan careers in turf management. The scholarships are named in honor of Dr. Donald Waddington and Dr. John Harper (deceased), two retired Penn State turfgrass professors. Scholarship Chair Mike Dickert from Manor Township said KAFMO has awarded 35 scholarships in the program’s 12 years.

This year’s recipients are Julie Adamski from Penn State, who has interned for the Pittsburgh Steelers; and Jacob Leadbetter from Penn State, who has volunteered for the Little League World Series grounds crew and will be working this summer for KAFMO President Dan Douglas at First Energy Stadium in Reading. Both received $500.

Douglas also reported that the organization had donated:
• $3,000 to the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council and Penn State for sports turf research
• $500 to the Pennsylvania Recreation & Parks Society
• $500 to national STMA’s SAFE Foundation

Education sessions
The event’s educational sessions kicked off with a panel discussion on how to handle fields that have been flooded. Led by Jim Koontz of Cumberland Valley SD, the panel included Tim Foreman and Brandon Forsberg of the Harrisburg (AA) Senators; Dr. Mike Goatley of Virginia Tech and the cur-
Foreman got a laugh from the crowd when he said he’s seen three separate “100-year floods” in his 19 years with the team!

Dr. Peter Landschoot of Penn State updated the audience on the progress of fertilizer regulation in the state. There is a bill, 1191, on the table now but there has been no vote on it and Landschoot said the future was “murky.” He said the danger in doing nothing now lies in the possibility of a more restrictive bill down the road, and/or the federal EPA cracking down on sources of nitrogen and phosphorus.

Dr. Goatley spoke on strategies for spring recovery, including making points regarding use of rollers (it’s wrong to say “never use rollers” per compaction issues); off-season lip maintenance; use of turf covers to “accelerate and manipulate” turfgrass; and being smart with your spring fertilization timing to both save money and protect the environment. He said, “If you ain’t mowing, it ain’t growing” to make his point. Dr. Goatley added, “Don’t sacrifice your fields’ safety no matter what; a safe field is not necessarily a good-looking field.”

In his presentation after lunch, Dr. Goatley discussed best management practices, including choices in cool-season turfgrasses, using compost, and the importance of drainage (“Where is your water going?”).

Mike Shelley, a graduate student at Penn State, shared his findings from research on establishing fields with tall fescue in the summer, and Tom Serensits, manager of PSU’s Center for Sports Surface Research, finished up the day sharing the latest information on what herbicides to use in specific situations and time frames.
Topdressing for sports fields: the three W’s

By Dr. John N. Rogers, III

Players, coaches and fans all appreciate athletic fields that look good and play well. Most realize the practices of mowing, irrigation, and fertilization are responsible for keeping these fields in playing condition. Maybe a few would even know core cultivation is an important practice. What about the practice of topdressing? It is likely this would be very foreign to most people. Yet, it is just as vital as the four practices listed above.

Failure to topdress will lead to an uneven, unsafe playing surface very quickly. Timing of topdressing is essential. Apply topdressing at the wrong time, and you can be the proud owner of a skating rink rather than a football field. Use of the wrong material may convert your field to either a parking lot or a quagmire (or a combination of both) for years to come. Topdressing is a science whose importance cannot be underscored and is a valuable tool to the knowledgeable professional. The logical question for implementing or strengthening your topdressing program is “Why, when, and what?”—the three W’s.

Why topdress?

We topdress turfgrass to improve both agronomic and playing conditions. The term is self-describing, in that material is applied to the turfgrass surface from above. This is currently the only way to apply material and minimize disruption to your field. There are five major reasons to topdress. Each topdressing application can address one or all of the following:

1. Smooth the playing surface. A smooth playing surface is critical and unquestionable for ball and player performance. However, this same topdressing is used to provide an uninterrupted slope for surface drainage. If this surface drainage is disrupted, then the formation of “duck ponds” is imminent.

2. Modify the thatch layer. Thatch is our friend, but too much can be our enemy. We do not see thatch on high traffic portions of our sports fields, but there can be excessive thatch accumulation on low use areas. Topdressing modifies the thatch layer, maintaining adequate soil macroporosity and providing a better growing environment for the plant by aiding the microbial community for thatch decomposition.

3. Change the soil texture. If the soil of your sports field is unsuitable and a wholesale change is not possible, a gradual change could be the answer. This is accomplished through core cultivation and harvesting to remove unwanted soil and subsequent topdressing to incorporate back favorable material. Over time, soil texture changes, and surface and soil conditions improve.

4. Provide resilient surface. Topdressing a new material can change the surface characteristics and provide a more resilient surface that retains macroporosity. This objective often plays hand-in-hand with modifying soil texture; however it can be a single objective after efforts to change soil texture through core cultivation techniques are complete.

5. Provide favorable environment for germination. Sports turf managers know one thing: they lose grass to activities on the fields they manage and they must overseed. Topdressing provides a favorable environment for germination by enhancing seed to soil contact and reducing soil water evaporation.

When to topdress

Simply stated, the best time to topdress sports fields is during periods of active growth and little, or no, play. This may be impractical, but it is the ideal to strive toward. In order for topdressing to be effective, it must be at the soil/plant interface. Following topdressing, there is a time period where the particles are migrating to this interface. The speed in which they can migrate is critical. Irrigation will help in this process, but the best aid is simply actively growing grass. Therefore, the best time to work topdressing into the profile is the spring and summer for cool-season grasses.

We can learn a little from the golf course regarding topdressing and timing. Putting greens are topdressed, but typically only during periods of active growth. The amount applied matches the growth of the grass and is done to minimize disruption to the putting surface because golf courses receive their heaviest traffic during the growing season. We can take this approach as well, but our amounts in the spring and summer can be greater if there is low play. The higher cutting heights (as compared to a putting green) will also lend themselves to greater amounts of topdressing.

Topdressings during periods of heavy traffic, i.e. during the season, should be done with caution. Fall topdressings during the season should be done early and with caution, if at all. If there is low growth, then it will be difficult for the material to migrate and the topdressing will be unstable, thus creating footing problems on the field. Another issue is the abrasiveness of the material. Topdressing material (like sand) damage leaf tissues, but during active growth times this abrasion is not an issue. However,

Tips for topdressing success

Topdressing at lighter rates is important to “level” divots during the season and protect from further turf injury. Topdressing at heavier rates is important to protect turf heading into winter to help prevent dessication.

Topdressing is not always necessary after an aeration process. With little spring activity, leaving the aeration holes open and not topdressing will provide increased rooting and cavities in the soil for which roots and water to travel. However, a light application of sand topdressing during slow spring growth may help increase the soil temperature.

Compatibility in topdressing is comparing the particle sizes of a topdressing product with the underlying soil medium and seeing if the two materials can work together. Using a topdressing material different or not closely associated with the underlying material will start to cause layering in the soil profile, which can adversely affect internal drainage in an athletic field.

If a topdressing material is to be changed, the topdressing program should stay consistent with that same material. The biggest problems in a soil profile occur when there is finer grade topdressing material overlaying a coarser soil. The finer material will seal off the draining capabilities of the underlying soil.

Composition choices could include mixes of different ratios of soils, sands, peats, and calcined clays. For example, a sand-based field rootzone that was originally a 94% sand 6% peat, you might use a 100% sand topdressing that is the same particle size as the sand in the rootzone. On a native soil based field, you might use a well-balanced soil with a little higher sand content mixed with 50% by volume of calcined clay. When you use sand topdressing on some fields, try and stay away from sands with 40% fine/very fine sands.

Example of application process

After the football season is over and your field has been aerified and cores removed, apply a little more than 3/4 of an inch of topdressing over 80,000 square feet, or about 25 ton of sand material. After the sand is spread, allow it to dry and then brush it into the aerification holes and divots. This is the best time to apply a heavy application of sand topdressing while the grass growth has slowed down, allowing the sand to effectively be moved in the aerification holes. The heavy amount also gives you that added protection going into the winter months.

During the season, periodically apply light (1/8 to 1/4 inch) amounts to topdressing between the hashes to help fill divots and protect exposed crowns and rhizomes.

Compatibility means making sure the topdressing material you apply matches up with the material you are applying it to. The materials must adhere positively to prevent a shear plane, allowing a field to point at which to break apart.

Mike Andresen, facilities and grounds director, Iowa State University

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during low growth periods the plant cannot recover as quickly and this abrasion can accelerate deterioration of the turfgrass plant.

In summary, remember timing is everything! Plan topdressings around periods of active growth and low play. This may mean topdressing in the spring and then late fall after the season. Cool-season grasses should be topdressed heavily (6-16 mm) once per year in combination with core cultivation in late spring after spring football and soccer. This will provide topdressing to smooth the surface, modify thatch, and help with surface resiliency. If there are no games until late summer, the heavy topdressing will have time to migrate and not affect play.

What to topdress?

The choice of topdressing materials is extremely important, with the range of materials available wide and varying. There are a couple of rules of soil physics to keep in mind. These center around soil macropore space. If your macropore space is the same throughout the rootzone then drainage will proceed at the rate allowed by the size of the macropores. If the pore space of the top layer is finer than the pore space of the soil below, then water will not flow until the top layer becomes very wet. This has caused many problems on fields over the years, particularly with poor choices of turfgrass sod and/or topdressing.

The key is to remember to topdress with a material that is at least equal to or coarser than the rootzone material or the material at the surface. This will ensure that the macropore space on top is greater and water will drain at the rate of the rootzone profile.

There are numerous materials from which to choose, both organic and inorganic. The potential for success with these materials can be just as great as the potential for disaster. Never use a topdressing product without a thorough understanding and testing of the particle size of the material. Sand is a good example. It is a long-time excellent choice for topdressing, as it is readily available and relatively inexpensive. However, you must perform a particle size analysis for the material, and never assume that a “named” sand will always be suitable for your needs. Numbers and names of sands can have tremendous variation, as their origin was usually for road building or construction, not sports fields.

Several products on the market today have proven themselves as very effective topdressing materials. These are heat-treated materials like calcined clay, diatomaceous earth, and porous ceramics. One key to porous ceramics is the particle size of the product. The product helps to maintain adequate macroporosity in the soil profile. Another inorganic product used is crumb rubber from used tires. Although expensive in comparison to sand, one benefit is its lack of abrasiveness on leaf tissue. This can be an advantage during periods of low growth.

Again, you must monitor product particle sizes to prevent any soil layering problems.

Topdressing is as essential to quality sports fields as any other cultural practice, and must be included as part of the management plan. Applications should revolve around periods of low play and good growing conditions. Materials should be chosen with an understanding of the particle size and its relation with the existing rootzone.

Dr. John N. Rogers, III is a professor of turfgrass management at Michigan State University.

Advice for better topdressing/spreading results

Some manufacturers of topdressing machines and spreaders give three quick pieces of advice.

1. Before topdressing, always take a soil sample to determine what your field really needs. Many sports turf managers just look at what golf courses are doing and think everything they do will also work for them. Even golf courses topdress for different reasons. An example would be: Do you have soil with heavy clay content that has poor permeability and lacks the ability to hold moisture? Then you may want to consider topdressing with compost or a compost blend in conjunction with aeration.

2. Develop a strategy or plan covering how to best improve your field. You may have to work with a local extension agent to ensure you are doing what is right. Write the strategy down and then follow it, monitoring your results and making adjustments as needed.

3. I know budgets are tight, but if you are going to buy a topdresser, buy as big a unit as your budget will allow; it will save on trips to and from the pile. The final objective of topdressing is to improve the soil in your field, so that it will support healthy turf growth and improve field playability. — John Bentley, Earth & Turf Products, LLC

1. Use a quality brush
2. Use dry materials
3. Aerate first — Paul Hollis, Redexim Charterhouse, Inc.

1. Place the sand as close to the field as possible as it takes longer to load and travel back to the pile than it does to spread each load.
2. Use a calibration program (one is available on www.dakotapeat.com) to insure you have enough sand for the entire field. I like to run it on the short side so I can have some left over at the end for use for touch up or high traffic areas that need a little more.
3. Stay on the topdressing program: it’s not a one-time fix. — Randy Dufault, Dakota Peat

1. Precisely applying the product is most important. Precision spreading will cut waste and cost, improve plant growth by applying the precise product at the correct amount, which in turn reduces environmental impact by reducing run off of product by over application
2. You get precise applications through correct gate openings, calibrations to ground speed, and spinner spread control for width.
3. If you can keep your speed constant while at the same time controlling the fertilizer flow at a pre set amount and the spinner speed at a preset width you will have accurate spread.

— Bob Brophy, Turfco Manufacturing

1. Adjust the belt speeds and metering gate before topdressing a large area. These adjustments, as well as machine ground speed, control the amount of topdressing distributed onto the turf. It is important that these settings are pre-set before topdressing to maintain consistency throughout the area to be topdressed. Pick a small area to fine-tune the settings before going out to the main area. Otherwise, different areas will be covered with different levels of topdressing as the settings are fine-tuned. As you get more familiar with your topdressing needs, it will be much easier to establish these settings.
2. Operate at a constant throttle setting. Many topdressers use the hydraulics of a traction unit to control the speed of the belt and spinners. Some operators have a tendency to speed up and slow down their ground speeds, which will also speed up and slow down the belt and spinner speeds, leading to inconsistent topdressing. Once you have established the initial settings and select a throttle and ground speed, stick with it for consistency.
3. Make straight lines. For a consistent topdressing application, it is important to maintain a straight line to minimize overlap. Curved lines lead to less efficient topdressing, heavy topdressing in overlaps, and possible wheel-tracking from making turns with a heavy load.

1. Know your turf. What is the purpose of your field? What is it composed of? How much water does it retain? Will there be higher traffic in one area than another? How often will it be used? Each field is different; the soil and water requirements are different. Knowing and understanding your turf will help you make the best decisions on how to nourish and maintain your fields.
2. Use the right material. Remember the old adage, “You are what you eat?” Your field turf is the same, the material you put on your turf is directly related to the results you will receive. If you need to amend the soil and provide nutrients you should use the best product available to provide a lush, soft, sports field. Never use a topdressing product without a thorough understanding and testing of the particle size of the material. Sand is a good example. It is a long-time, excellent choice for topdressing, as it is readily available and somewhat inexpensive. However, it is important to perform a particle size analysis for the material, and never assume that a named sand will always be suitable for your needs. Numbers and names of sands can have tremendous variation, as their original purpose was usually for road building.

— Brad Aldridge, John Deere

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— John Bentley, Earth & Turf Products, LLC
April or May Fertilization?

If you were able to fertilize your fields with a late fall feeding, there is no need to fertilize in the early spring. Late fall fertilization allows the turf plants to store carbohydrates over winter dormancy, and making the available to the plant as the temperatures warm in the spring. Adding a fertilizer application in the early spring, following a late fall feeding, will cause excessive vertical shoot growth, which could lead to extra mowing, in what is usually an already busy spring.

A fertilization between May 15 and Memorial Day, as the late fall fertilization begins to wane, will give the fields a feeding that will carry it through the summer months. Apply 0.75 to 1.0 lbs. N/1000 sq. ft. of a product that contains 50% or more slow release fertilizer. Slow release fertilizers would include sulfur- or polymer-coated urea, urea formaldehyde, or natural organic nitrogen. In addition, if you must apply crabgrass control, consider using a product with an N carrier such as 0-0-7.

— Dave Anderson, Grounds and Athletic Field Manager, Hempfield School District

Quick and Simple Mound Gauge

A pitching mound has a 1-inch to 1-foot fall for 6 feet that begins 6 inches in front of the pitching rubber. A mound gauge is the best way to determine the slope of the pitching mound. A simple and quick way to build a mound gauge is as follows.

1. Take a six-foot square tubular sign-post. These posts are pre-drilled for hanging signs.
2. Measure and mark the post at one-foot intervals up to six feet.
3. Take six 6’ x 3/8’ screw-rods and place them through the at the one foot interval marks in the square posts.
4. Place a washer and a nut on either of the screw rods.
5. Allow the screw rod at the one foot interval to extend 1 inch below the post.
6. At the 2-foot mark allow the rod to extend 2 inches below the post, at the 3 foot mark 3 inches below the post, 4 foot extend 4 inches, 5 foot extend 5 inches, and finally at the 6 foot mark allow the rod to extend 6 inches below the post. Tighten the nuts.
7. Tack weld a flat washer to the bottom of the rods to give it “feet” for stability. Cut off excess rods above the post.

— Dave Anderson

Protect your fuel supply

With the increase in gasoline and diesel fuel prices the last few years, it was getting to be a common occurrence to come in the morning only to find the locks have been cut to our fuel tanks. Taking the hoses off did not solve the problem as the thieves cut the locks to the fill cap and just siphoned the fuel out.

I came up with a tank cover made of 1/8” steel plate that covers the entire tank top that slides into place hooking under a vent cap on one end and using a ¼” x 1 ½” bar with a hole for the lock on the other end. The lock is protected by a cage so it can’t be cut.

I am happy to say this cover has completely stopped all thieves although they have tried.

— Mark Hohenwarter, Solanco School District
Meet your peers in KAFMO

Dave Hansel, Director of Operations, New Hope-Solebury SD

What are your current job responsibilities?

Hansel: I am the Director of Operations for the New Hope Solebury School District located in Bucks County and responsible for managing all aspects of the buildings and grounds maintenance, custodial services, construction and renovation, security, transportation and food service.

What is the best part of your job?

Hansel: The best part of my job is the satisfaction that I get from knowing that the staff who report to me and I play a very important part in educating students. While we do not actually do the teaching, we provide a well-maintained and safe environment for teaching to take place. Our athletic facilities are included in that statement as they are also a place for learning and maintaining safe fields not only helps the athletes but also brings a sense of pride to our communities.

What's the worst part?

Hansel: I don’t have one because I consider the worst things as challenges. Issues like reduced funding, negative community comments, changes in regulations and even the weather makes me think outside the box on how we can do more or even maintain what we have with less money, change those negative comments into positive ones, accept that regulations are generally meant to better the environment, and when it comes to the weather, you make hay when the sun shines or you sharpen the blades when it rains.

Give an example of how being a member of KAFMO has helped you professionally.

Hansel: I’ve been a member of KAFMO for about 10 years and I appreciate the professionals who take a true interest in groundskeeping and turf management. The people from Penn State and other professionals are always available to give you advice on growing turf, the vendors are there to show you the latest equipment or product or to provide you a competitive quote for the service that I need, and the members are there because we all basically share the same problems but talking to them about how they get them resolved is what it is all about. The turf management knowledge that I have gained from being a KAFMO member helps me to continually improve my program.

Mark Shrift, RLA, ASLA, Director of Landscape Architecture, Hayes Large Architects

What are your current job responsibilities?

Shrift: As a Principal and Director of Landscape Architecture, my current job responsibilities include overseeing all site development projects for Hayes Large and managing the day to day operations of the Landscape Architecture group.

I also manage project resources, coordinating the efforts of the landscape architects, civil engineers and other team members in order to meet the clients’ goals, budgets and schedules. I lead projects from design through construction. In addition to project management, I market the resources of the firm in developing new opportunities.

What is the best part of your job?

Shrift: The best part of my job is designing projects and seeing the finished project being used and enjoyed by students and athletes of all ages. I get to travel the Mid-Atlantic region and get to know and work closely with school and university administrators, athletic directors, coaches and booster groups.

What’s the worst part?

Shrift: Attending a lot of night meetings with municipal officials and school boards; days can become very long.

Give an example of how being a member of KAFMO has helped you professionally.

Shrift: I have been a member of KAFMO for more than 13 years and in that time, I have met a lot of really great people. The members of KAFMO have served as tremendous resources for me over the years. You are able to find a member that can answer any question you may have regarding design or maintenance and people are always willing to share information.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)
Topdressing...
(From page 7)

or construction, not sports fields.

3. Have the right equipment for the right job. Topdressing requires precise material application. If the equipment you have does not apply the material optimally, it’s like throwing money out the window because your efforts and expense of material and labor will be wasted. There are many topdressers on the market; do your homework to make sure you have the right equipment for your turf, application and budget. If your budget can afford it, purchase a step up so you have the ability to expand the use of the topdresser as your needs increase. A field will go through stages of growth and the applications can range from spreading a variety of materials (topsoil, fertilizer, topdressing mix, lime, crumb rubber, etc.) in a variety of conditions using a variety of attachments (brush, dual spinner, beaters) throughout the years. If you have the most versatile, well-made topper you will be saving money in the long term while having the best fields. – Tina M Merrill, Millcreek Manufacturing

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Meet Your Peers...
(From page 9)

Rich Yoder, CLT, Grounds Manager, Bloomsburg University

What are your current job responsibilities?
Yoder: I started at BU in 1997, have been involved in landscaping since 1990, and am a Landscape Nursery graduate of Penn College. My responsibilities are to oversee the grounds maintenance of 280 acres, 54 buildings and a growing campus. We have 13 full-time and up to four temporary employees at times. We have two field turf fields, one for football and one for field hockey/soccer and lacrosse. Last fall we hosted the NCAA Division II field hockey championship. We maintain 26 acres of natural turf where our baseball and softball teams play as well as practice and intramural activities. In the past we've hosted numerous softball, football and tennis playoffs. During the summer, we host many summer and youth camps.

What is the best part of your job?
Yoder: The highlight of this job is working with my staff to provide the safest, best-looking fields and campus we can. I grew up playing on ball fields and now coach youth softball. I love the smell of the field and seeing the fresh white lines on game day. It never gets old.

What's the worst part?
Yoder: The most challenging part would have to be the unpredictability of the weather; it creates the most beautiful of stadiums and at times the biggest of headaches.

Give an example of how being a member of KAFMO has helped you professionally.
Yoder: The advantage of being part of KAFMO is meeting with other groundskeepers and discussing experiences they've had as well as the technical information from the professionals and vendors at the conferences and field days.

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