KAFMO MEMBERS VOLUNTEER AT THE LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES

Photo by Dan Douglas.
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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, to parks and recreation departments, municipalities, educators, youth leagues, contractors, and commercial vendors, our membership base is made up of a broad range of individuals who pool their knowledge together for the good of our craft.

Annual Events include:
- Summer - Field Day(s)
- October - KAFMO Cup Open golf tournament – proceeds benefit the Awards Fund
- January - Eastern Pennsylvania Turf Conference
- January - Northeastern Pennsylvania Turf Conference
- February - Annual KAFMO conference featuring seminars, exhibits and the annual awards program
- February/March - Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference
- March - Northwestern Pennsylvania Turf Conference

Educational Grants and Research
KAFMO has donated over $47,000 for educational grants and sports turf research since 2001. KAFMO provides scholarships for sports turf education and sponsors collegiate teams in the Sports Turf Managers Association’s Collegiate Challenge at their annual national conference. Research beneficiaries include: Sports Turf Managers Association’s Foundation for Safer Athletic Field Environments (SAFE); Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council’s fund for sports turf research at Penn State University and the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Research Fund, Inc.

Our brochure can be downloaded at: www.kafmo.org/membership.htm

The magazine will be free to KAFMO members.
2009 KAFMO CUP REMINDER

The 2009 KAFMO CUP golf tournament will be held at Iron Valley Golf Club in Lebanon Pa. on Monday, October 12, 2009. This event is the main fundraiser for the Widdington / Harper Awards Fund. It will be a great day of golf, food and beverages for the players and volunteers who attend. The day will start with a 10:00 am registration, 11:00 am shotgun start, Dinner, & Awards. Price for this year’s event is $75.00 per player, which will include cart, greens fees, range balls, beverages & food. Sign up as a foursome, if you do not have a foursome we will put you in one. Any questions please feel free to contact a committee member or visit www.KAFMO.org. Hope to see you there!

Sincerely, Tournament Chairman
Bobby Piccolo

2010 The application can be downloaded from www.KAFMO.org.

KAFMO SUMMER FIELD DAY

KAFMO’s summer field day was held at Hempfield High School in Landisville on July 20, 2009. Over 100 people attended. The facility was top-notch, thanks to the efforts of Dave Anderson and his crew.

Attendees participated in four different workshops covering overseeding programs, artificial turf maintenance, weed management, and baseball infield maintenance. Twenty sponsor companies brought equipment to demonstrate or products to display. Overall, it was a great day to network and learn about athletic field products and issues.

KAFMO CUP GOLF COMMITTEE
Bobby Piccolo, Tony Leonard, Steve LeGros, and Kevin Bevenour

Plan Now to Apply for a KAFMO Field of Distinction Award

2010

The application can be downloaded from www.KAFMO.org.
A few thoughts as we start the fall sports season...

Dr. Andrew McNitt, Penn State University

Have all of your mowing equipments serviced and ready to go. It’s been a busy summer for mowing with all the rain. Try to mow your high profile fields at least twice and maybe three times per week.

Get ready to fertilize with nitrogen! Even though we’ve had an abundance of rain, you should have been holding off on your nitrogen through the hot months of July and August. In September it’s time to start fertilizing again. A pound to 1.5 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. per application is not too much in your higher wear areas. In low wear areas you may be able to cut this rate in half. Be calibrated and know how much your spreader or sprayer is putting out.

SEEDING

Be prepared to seed. I have traditionally suggested overseeding with 100% perennial rye after every home football game. Down the middle of the field I’d suggest 2-3 lbs of seed per thousand sq. ft. per home game and less in other areas. Use one of the top 100 perennial ryegrass varieties found at ntep.org.

I spent some time at Dr. Dave Minner’s research facility this June and Dr. Minner believes you should make life easier on yourself and apply all the seed in one application in September. He suggests 20 lbs. per thousand square feet, in your high wear areas, in one application sometime after labor day. This technique has shown the best results in his research plots and since I’ve never tried it I can’t argue with him. Let me know if you try this approach!

Again, don’t bother overseeding anything other than perennial ryegrass when fields are being used – the other species will not establish and you are wasting your money.

Spend time now preparing for your late fall cultivation and topdressing. Right after the last home event on the field be prepared to renovate. Some years the soil is dry just after Thanksgiving and sometimes it’s not. If it is, this is an excellent time to aerate and topdress. I suggest you use 0.75 in diameter tines and try to aerate until you have holes on 2” x 2” centers. Some piston type or vertical aeration tools can only get down to 2” x 3” centers and that’s ok. The point is big hollow tines and lots of holes. If you have a more traditional disk aerator, pictured is an idea of how to get more holes with fewer passes. Install a second set of tines so you make double the aeration holes with each pass.

TOPDRESSING

Topdress using a high-quality compost. One quarter inch is the amount to use (that’s about 50 cubic yards per football field). Err on the side of less compost vs. more but a quarter inch is what you should shoot for. I like to put the compost down before aeration. It seems to mix better when you drag the field.

If you have a lot of uneven or bumpy turf, hollow-tine aeration, topdressing with a high-quality compost, and dragging the field will help but you might try using a compost/topsoil mix. I suggest you start with a 50/50 blend mixed by volume. You can do it yourself with a front end loader on an asphalt or concrete pad. Use one scoop of each and just keep lifting and dropping it.

You can experiment with how much to apply but with the topsoil in there, but I wouldn’t go heavier than a quarter inch to start.

You can seed at this time and if you’ve had a hard killing frost you can also put down your winterizer fertilizer mentioned above.

GROWTH REGULATOR IN PAINT

One last thing. I know many people have experimented with using Primo GRowth regulAtOr in PAint in their paint to reduce the amount of repainting you need to do. Many of you tried it on your game fields and found that you will repaint before a game.

(Continued on page 6.)

Penn State and FieldTurf Team Up For Research

Penn State and FieldTurf have partnered to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of different sport surfaces in terms of player performance, player safety, maintenance and environmental considerations.

All types of sports surfaces will be included in the research. Dr. Andy McNitt, who will be managing the new Center for Sports Surface Research at Penn State, says that although 80% of the research effort will be directed at synthetic and natural turf systems, surfaces commonly used for basketball, track and, as the program develops, other surfaces will be scrutinized as well.

“We hope to break ground relatively quickly,” said McNitt. “We hope to have the first group of plots installed yet this fall.” Much of the research at Penn State will take place at the Joseph Valentine Research Center located within sight of 107,000-seat Beaver Stadium. “All of this research will be going on in walking distance of the campus, which will be great,” he added.

The Penn State effort – 18-months in the making and fueled by financial support from FieldTurf and the University – will involve researchers and experts from more than a half dozen disciplines – kinesiologists (focusing on human movement and physical activity), sports surface experts, toxicologists, soil scientists, athletic trainers and field maintenance professionals, to name a few.

The Center for Sports Surface Research has a five-year agreement with FieldTurf and the University, but McNitt said he will be working to secure additional funding to continue and expand the program because he sees a great need within the industry for quantifiable, reproducible data about the performance of various sports surfaces.

“We want to take performance and safety to another level. I think this is a start,” McNitt added.

Portions provided by ATHLETIC TURF.
A few thoughts...
(From page 5)

Anyway just to make the lines sharp, so it didn’t save you any time on the game fields. I agree, but try it on your practice fields or any other line painting that you have to do. Below is a picture I took at the Iowa State Field Days. The middle line (yes there is a middle line) is just paint with no Primo added. The line on the right is paint with ½ oz. of Primo per gallon and on the left is paint with 1 oz of Primo per gallon. I think this picture was taken three weeks after application, I can’t remember off hand but the benefit is obvious. Also, if you are interested in following the synthetic turf research I’ve been conducting visit ssrc.psu.edu for updates. You can also subscribe to my blog at http://www.personal.psu.edu/asm4/blogs/pennstateturf.

I hope everyone has a productive fall season!!!

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Fall Weed Control
on Athletic Fields

By Nancy Bosold, PSU Cooperative Extension

Fall is a great time for controlling many troublesome weeds in turf. Unfortunately, fall is also a time when field use, mowing schedules, weather, and overseeding plans restrict the time available for herbicide application on athletic fields. If you want to make the most of your weed control budget this fall, here are some items to consider.

Choosing herbicides that can be used on fields that are regularly overseeded during the fall can be tricky. Broadleaf herbicides that contain 2,4-D, MCPP, dicamba, triclopyr, clopyralid, fluroxypyr, or sulfentrazone require a waiting period before seed can safely be applied. The waiting period from application to seeding may be 3 weeks or more. There are also restrictions about how soon after seeding these herbicides can be applied, to protect the young seedlings from damage. In most cases the labels require waiting until newly seeded turf has matured enough to be mowed two or three times. Using these products alone or in combination may be best as a spot treatment on fields that are overseeded regularly during the fall.

The herbicide quinclorac (found in the product Drive) can be used to clean up clover, large crabgrass, foxtails, barnyardgrass, black medic, speedwells, and some other weeds before or at the time of overseeding. Be sure to read the label for details about the weeds controlled, the sensitivity of overseeded grass to Drive, and surfactant required. You can apply Drive up to seven days before seeding Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass or tall fescue. If either perennial ryegrass or tall fescue is being seeded, the Drive can be applied right at seeding. If you wait until after overseeding, you can’t apply Drive until after perennial ryegrass or Kentucky bluegrass seedlings have been emerged for four weeks, but you can use it one week after tall fescue emerges. So, if your target weeds are controlled by Drive, it may be the best choice to use where overseeding is routine.

For control of crabgrass, goosegrass, and foxtails, consider a selective grass herbicide like fenoxaprop-p-ethyl (found in Acclaim Extra). It only controls grasses, but it will control goosegrass where Drive will not. Do not use on Kentucky bluegrass seedlings until they have been emerged for at least one month or on tall fescue or perennial ryegrass seedlings younger than four weeks old. Tall fescue and perennial ryegrass can be seeded immediately after application, but Kentucky bluegrass can’t be seeded for 21 days following application.

If yellow nutsedge is a problem, it should be treated in early fall when the weather is still warm. Halosulfuron-methyl (found in the product Sedgehammer) is labeled for athletic fields. It must be used on well established turf, and seeding with annual or perennial ryegrass can be done two weeks after application. Sulfentrazone (Dismiss) is also labeled for nutsedge control on athletic fields, but the seeding restrictions are longer.

During the fall you may be faced by warm or cool weather. Most herbicide labels warn against applications when temperatures exceed 90 degrees. If you have to wait until October or November for weed control, it’s possible to get good control of perennial broadleaf weeds in cooler weather. Ester formulations generally are a better choice than amines during cold weather, and apply only if weed foliage is present.

The labels on most of these postemergence herbicides say not to mow two to three days before or after application. That’s so there is ample weed foliage to pick up the herbicide and time to allow movement within the plant.

Fall can be an ideal time for weed control. If you’re trying to schedule herbicides on your athletic field remember to target your problem weeds and then thoroughly read the product labels for specific directions.

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“Choosing herbicides that can be used on fields that are regularly overseeded during the fall can be tricky.”
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Late Fall Fertilization of Athletic Fields

Department of Crop and Soil Sciences – Cooperative Extension
Prepared by Peter Landschoot, professor of turfgrass science

Contents
- Why fertilize in late fall?
- When to apply
- Fertilizer sources and rates
- Summary

Fall is the time of year when cool-season turfgrasses recover from summer stress related conditions; such as drought, heat, and disease. For athletic fields, fall is also the time that turf takes a beating from football and other school sports activities. This year, many athletic field managers will be making late fall fertilizer applications with the hopes of improving turf vigor and recovery from injury next spring. This publication examines how late fall fertilizer applications influence turf performance, when to make your applications, as well as the types of fertilizers and rates which provide the best turf response.

Why fertilize in late fall?
Late fall fertilization has been promoted as a means of prolonging turf color of cool season grasses into early winter without increasing the chance of winter injury and disease. Winter color is more noticeable in regions where winters are warmer (Mid-Atlantic and transition-zone states) and during mild winters. Late fall fertilization will also enhance spring green-up without the excessive growth that often accompanies early spring fertilization. This green-up often will last into mid spring, so an early spring fertilizer application is not needed. A fertilizer application in mid to late spring is usually required to sustain turf color and growth into the summer months.

A small but potentially important increase in the plant’s carbohydrate reserves occurs when fertilizer is applied in late fall instead of early spring. Turfgrasses accumulate carbohydrates in stems and rhizomes during fall. These carbohydrates help turf resist winter injury and aid in disease and environmental stress resistance the following spring and summer. Because carbohydrates are tapped for energy by roots and shoots during periods of rapid growth, forcing excess growth with early spring fertilizer applications can deplete carbohydrates quickly, leaving turf vulnerable to spring and summer stresses. Late fall fertilizer applications do not force as much leaf growth in spring as equal amount of early spring fertilizer, thus carbohydrates are not exhausted as quickly. The result is a slight advantage to the turf in the form of better stress tolerance and disease resistance.

Another reported benefit of late fall fertilization is an increase in rooting, though precisely when and how this increase occurs is a source of some debate. Maximum root growth of cool season turfgrasses occurs in spring and fall. Some root growth will occur in winter if temperatures are above freezing, whereas little if any growth occurs in summer. Fertilizer applications are made in spring and late summer in attempts to promote root growth. One problem in using this approach is that much of the fertilizer is used by the shoots, sometimes preferentially over roots. One reported advantage of late fall fertilization is that roots are still growing at a time when shoot growth has ceased, thus allowing the roots to make full use of the fertilizer. However, during this period root growth is very slow, and if the soil is frozen, they do not grow at all. Consequently, the benefit of increased root growth in response to fall fertilization is questionable.

One study in Virginia showed that moderate rates of soluble nitrogen (1 lb nitrogen/1000 sq ft) in late fall increased rooting of turfgrass without a noticeable increase in shoot growth. In contrast, a study in Ohio showed no increase in root growth during late fall or winter following late fall fertilizer applications. However, when compared to early spring applications of nitrogen, late fall fertilization allowed more rooting in spring. Presumably, this benefit was due to early spring green-up from late fall applications, which alleviated the need for early spring fertilization. When fertilizer was not applied in late fall, but instead, in early spring, excessive shoot growth occurred, depleting carbohydrate reserves that would have otherwise gone into root production later in spring. The take-home message from the Ohio study is that while the net effect of late fall fertilization on rooting is slight, application in late fall may be more beneficial with respect to rooting than an early spring application.

Late fall fertilization is occasionally blamed for increased winter injury, snow mold, and annual bluegrass encroachment. A few studies have been designed to examine the influence of late fall fertilization on winter injury. But to my knowledge, none have conclusively demonstrated detrimental effects. Heavy fertilization in mid-fall, when grass shoots are actively growing, can enhance snow mold diseases (presumably due to reduced pre-winter hardening and increased succulence of plant tissue). Increased plant succulence should not occur with late fall fertilization. In fact, some research has shown that late fall fertilization may actually reduce winter diseases.

While some studies have shown increased annual bluegrass populations in fall, there is no good evidence to show that this increase is related to late fall fertilization.

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Dennis DeSanctis, Sr.
New Jersey / New York
Cell: 610-608-3181
ddesanctis@aer-core.com

Ryan Davidheiser
Pennsylvania / Delaware / Maryland
Cell: 610-310-3925
rdavidheiser@aer-core.com

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When to apply
Most experts agree that late fall fertilization should take place when foliar growth stops (or slows to the point that turf no longer needs to be mowed), grass is still green, and before the soil freezes. In Pennsylvania, this period usually occurs around Thanksgiving. Application timing may vary from year to year depending on weather conditions.

Fertilizer sources and rates
Most late fall fertilization programs include moderate amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Rates of 1 to 1.5 lb of mostly soluble nitrogen/1000 sq ft are suggested over higher rates (assuming a late summer application was made) to avoid excessive growth in spring and nitrogen leaching or runoff. One study at the University of Illinois showed that when nitrogen was applied at moderate rates in late fall (1 lb of nitrogen/1000 sq ft) both urea and sulfur-coated urea provided a better early spring color response than Milorganite. However, when Milorganite or sulfur-coated urea was applied in late fall at a higher rate of nitrogen (2 lb of nitrogen/1000 sq ft), spring green-up was similar to that obtained from applying urea at a lower rate (1 lb of nitrogen/1000 sq ft in late fall).

Slow or controlled-release nitrogen sources may be a better choice than soluble sources on sandy soils because of reduced potential for leaching. Nitrogen fertilizer should never be applied to frozen soil due to the increased chance of nutrient runoff.

Although application timing is not as critical with phosphorus and potassium as it is with nitrogen, these elements can benefit turf when applied in late fall. Phosphorus is important for root growth and maturation of turfgrasses and application rates should be determined according to soil test recommendations. If your soil test report indicates a need for phosphorus, late fall fertilization should take place when shoot growth ceases, the grass is still green, and before the soil freezes. Benefits of fertilizing in late fall include better winter color, enhanced spring green-up, and possibly increased rooting.

Typically, moderate amounts of soluble nitrogen provide good turf color without excessive shoot growth in early spring. However, slow-release nitrogen sources can also provide a good color response in early spring when used at higher rates. To avoid potential leaching and runoff problems, use slow-release nitrogen sources on sandy soils. Do not apply fertilizer to frozen soils.

Summary
Late fall fertilization should take place when shoot growth ceases, the grass is still green, and before the soil freezes. Benefits of fertilizing in late fall include better winter color, enhanced spring green-up, and possibly increased rooting.

KAFMO Member Profile

Lloyd & Joe Umberger

1. How many years have you been a KAFMO member?
   Joe and I have been KAFMO members since the organization was formed in 1994, I remember Jim Welshans talking to us one day and told us we should join and we have been members ever since.

2. You have a landscaping business, how much sports turf work do you do?
   About 25% of our work is sports turf related.

3. What type of sports turf work?
   We do a lot of renovations and maintenance work and also do new field construction and irrigation installation.

4. Has being a KAFMO member helped you with sports turf related work and, if so, how?
   Yes, being in contact with other members and talking to them about their approach and strategies to different situations, and how to be more creative with heavily used sports fields. The KAFMO conference and field days keep us up to date with new technology and what’s going on in the sports turf industry.

5. What would you consider to be the most helpful benefit of being a KAFMO Member?
   We think that networking with other KAFMO members is a great resource.

6. Is there anything as a KAFMO Member you would like to see from the organization that would be of benefit to you and other members?
   Joe and I have received a lot of good information from KAFMO over the years and plan on being members many more.

7. What do you see that can help with sports turf management
   Do lots of research before trying to a project, talk with other field managers, and see what works. Too often we see failed drainage systems, improper topdressing used, and a lack of education on the basics of Turf grass maintenance, these all could have been avoided just by picking up the phone.

8. What suggestions would you make, that would make the biggest impact on a field?
   Improper mowing, not mowing enough, not mowing with shape blades, not changing mowing patterns.
   If you can add one more mowing to your fields a week, they would be a lot better i.e. if you once then mow twice, if its twice then mow three.

9. What can be done to help make our organization stronger?
   Our membership needs to continue to stay involved with Penn state research, reaching out, continue to attended the clinics, and get involved. Find a committee that fits your personality and help keep KAFMO strong.
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