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An invitation from your board members

KAFMO is proud of our tradition of pursuing excellence on the fields and in the classrooms of Pennsylvania, as well as our reputation nationally as one of STMA’s most venerable chapters. Our members hold prestigious titles and have enormous influence over the safety and playability of fields and facilities across the Keystone State, as well as serving as local experts in many areas.

As part of our effort to excel, the 14 turf managers, educators, and commercial members who make up the Board of Directors of KAFMO/STMA want to hear from you. We are committed to improving Between the Lines and are asking for your take on what you want to see in future issues. Now’s the time — email KAFMO@aol.com with your ideas for articles, specific topics, regular departments you might like to see, whatever is on your mind.

We are also interested in having chapter members write articles for this magazine, on topics ranging from technical to personal, so if you have something you would like to share with your peers, let us know at KAFMO@aol.com.

KAFMO was founded 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 has 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.

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.

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

The magazine will be free to KAFMO members.
Dirty Dozen, Plus Two, Tournament Tips

By Bill Marbet, Brad Essary, Glenn Lucas, and Waldo Terrell, CSFM

Tournament prep starts days and weeks before the first pitch of your tournament. As we all know, most tournaments are 20 minutes of work and 2 to 3 hours of waiting for the work to start again. We have tried to put together some tips for use during your tournaments to make them go smoother and to make your job easier. These are just some of the tips that we have thought about and hopefully, they can be some that you can use during your tournaments this year.

Time your fertilizer schedule to build up to the tournament and beyond. Turf needs to be durable as well as green. The Tournament Schedule should be incorporated in your year long program/plan that you follow. You will be building toward the tournament to make it look the best and be healthy to withstand the increased amount of traffic that your fields will have over the course of the tournament. Also, the schedule should allow for adequate time for your field to recover and your plan should have enough maintenance practices in place after the tournament to help your field recover.

Out of Gas? Equipment in good repair? Has the oil been changed, tires properly inflated, reels sharpened/backlapped, grease fittings lubricated, fluid levels checked, daily fill all machines with fuel. There is nothing worse than running out of gas on the infield groomer while trying to drag an infield before the games.

Under Cover? Arrange ahead of time where the crew will be located during the “downtimes.” A tent, pavilion or some other place that is covered where the crew can relax and be during the games is essential. Taking care of the crew should be a top priority! If you are the head groundskeeper, taking care of your crew is important due to the fact that they are a reflection of you and your work during the year. If they feel well and properly hydrated, fed and not sunburned, then they will put forth their best effort during the tournament. Also, during the long days, a relaxing chair/chaise lounge is a great place to rest during the downtimes.

Readiness; prepare for worst case, hope for the best case. Be prepared for weather. A meeting a few weeks in advance of the tournament to devise an action plan as to whose call is it to tarp or not. Once the game starts, if you have a tarp, it usually rests on the shoulders of the umpires along with the groundskeeper. You need to have a reliable weather forecaster on your team to call for updates. Also, let him know that he is just as important as the person tamping the mound, and he can feel a part of the tournament. He can even alert you to changing weather patterns/forecasts.

Not Hungry? If you have a chance to eat, eat. Hunger can cause short tempers, especially in tense situations which will happen during long hot days of tournaments. Eat foods that are not very heavy on your stomach. Pizza is easy, but not always best. If food is not easily accessible at your venue, plan ahead and pack a cooler with sandwich meat, cheese, bread and condiments for the crew.

Always Look Professional. Shirts tucked in, a crew that looks uniform looks professional when on the field. The crew is just as important as the teams taking the field for play. Look like a team, act as a team. In order for you to be taken seriously as a groundskeeper and as a crew, you need to present yourself in a professional manner.

Manage Your Crew. Have a plan for each crew member pre and post game. Delegate duties, making sure you have qualified people (full timers in position to get the job done in a timely manner. Use volunteers, which are very important keys to success, alongside full time people so they can be better equipped to help with future tournaments.

Everybody’s Job is Safety. Everybody’s ultimate job is making the field safe and playable. This is not just limited to the field; make sure the shop area and equipment are safe for the crew to use and be around. Be sure to remove all items from the field that are not needed for play. The last thing you want to do is leave nails or hand tools (chalker, rake, tamp, shovel, spool of twine, etc) on the field for a player to find later. Do not leave anything behind and the last person leaving the field should be responsible for checking the playing area to make sure that all items are removed.

Never leave home without a change of clothes. The bag that you pack should include socks, shoes, shorts, shirts, toiletries, towel, pullover for night time and rain gear. Two pair of shoes is important, one for morning prepping time of the field and one pair for the pre game and post game work. Dew will make your shoes just as wet as rain.

Take time to drink plenty of water or sports drink. Dehydration can lead to serious health problems that can put you in the hospital if not careful. Be sure to avoid the drinks with lots of caffeine and carbonated water during the tournament, or any other drink that might dehydrate you. Staying hydrated with water or sports drinks can make you more effective when working on the fields and make your time spent at the tournament more enjoyable and rewarding.

Bill Marbet is President of Southern Athletic Fields; Brad Essary, Waldo Terrell, CSFM, and Glenn Lucas are all in sales and/or marketing with the company. Southern Athletic Fields, Columbia, TN, has served as the grounds crew provider for the SEC Baseball tournament (1999-present), TSSAA Spring Fling Championships, Tennessee Junior College Baseball/Softball Tournaments, Atlantic Sun Championship, and Sunbelt Conference among many others. Photos used by permission of Southeastern Conference.
Togetherness. As a Charles Bloom, SEC Baseball tournament director once said, “The grounds crew is the glue that holds Tournaments together.” The entire crew needs to understand that one part of the crew is just as important as the other. If you are repacking bullpen areas, dragging the field or chalk, they are all important duties that need to be completed to the best. We all want to give the team that plays in the championship game the same field as the first teams to play in the tournament.

Inventory All Materials and Hand Tools. Some items you need to have on hand as you prepare for the tournament: field conditioners, drying agents, mound clay, marking chalk, and enough tools to accommodate your crew, e.g., rakes, tamps, drag mats, etc. The list of tools needed vary depending on the size of your tournament crew and the facility being maintained. A backpack blower is often overlooked as a tool used for fields. It can be used at night or early mornings for cleaning dugouts, blowing out your lips from the day of play. It is a time saving tool. Try not to use the backpack blower during the day as it disrupts other fields or coaches trying to prep his team for the game.

Pre and Post game entrance exit, where does the crew enter the field? Do we have easy access to the tarp? Who is responsible for opening the gate for field access? Is the way we enter the field also going to be used for emergency vehicles? If so, don’t block the gate with equipment. Who is responsible for closing the gates and securing it before game?

Sunscreen for Use. Waterproof/sweat proof sunscreen SPF 30 or greater is ideal. Bullfrog works great too for prevention of sunburn. We also recommend using a straw hat, with a wide brim on it to prevent any unnecessary sunburn on the forehead. Some aloe might be nice to have in the refrigerator just in case someone does get a little sun burned.

We encourage hosting tournaments to be able to spotlight your facility not only locally, but regionally and nationally also. It is a great opportunity for people to view all the hard work that goes into making tournaments a success.

Wanted: Pictures

Send us pictures of the good, bad and even ugly of your fields, you and/or your crew working or anything else related to the sports turf industry. The pictures will be part of a GrasStains Production piece presented at the 2011 KAFMO Conference and may also be in the national production at the STMA Conference. Email pictures to KAFMO@aol.com.

“Everybody’s ultimate job is making the field safe and playable. This isn’t limited to the field; make sure the shop area and equipment are safe for the crew to use and be around.”
AFMO’s 14th Annual Athletic Field Conference was held in association with the Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Society, the Sports Turf Managers Association and Penn State February 19 at the Holiday Inn in Grantville, PA. Fifty exhibitors and 22 sponsors promoted their products and services to the 260 attendees. Seminar topics included seed considerations, sustainability, practitioner’s experiences and low budget turf care. Dr. Pete Landschoot, Penn State; Shawn Mahonski, Towson University; Kevin Meredith, National Soccer Hall of Fame; and Dr. Frank Rossi, Cornell University were presenters.

David Fowler receives Founders Award

One of the day’s highlights was David Fowler, retired Penn State County Extension Director, being presented the Fowler Founders Award by the award’s namesake, his twin brother Don. Don’s commitment to the sports turf industry and his support of the goals and standards on which KAFMO is based are legendary. The award itself is one of Don Fowler’s worn-out work boots that has been bronzed, and signifies the hard work and determination demonstrated by the Fowler Founders Award recipients.

Dave and his wife Betsy are long-time residents of Knox, PA, and he has been very active in many of the athletic field renovations that have taken place in western Pennsylvania and has worked on the grounds crew at the Little League World Series for the past 15 years. Dave volunteered at PNC Park on the grounds crew during the MLB All-Star Game. In addition, he has built a number of minor league stadiums around the country working for Alpine Services of Gaithersburg, MD. He has also worked at two spring training facilities in Arizona.

When accepting the award Dave gave many thanks to a number of people including his brother Don and nephew Jeff Fowler of Penn State Cooperative Extension. “Both of these guys have given me the opportunity to learn the ball field business,” he added, “I also want to thank my wife and Grove Teates from Alpine Services.”

Field of Distinction winners

2009 KAFMO Field of Distinction Award winners included Centre Region Parks & Recreation Soccer Fields; Exeter Township Little League; and Wyomissing Area School District’s football field.

The Centre Parks soccer fields in State College were constructed in 2003. A crew of four led by grounds superintendent Ted Weaver maintains the field. Assisting Ted are staff members Jeff Weist, Clifford Waltz and Charlie Myer. The Centre complex plays host to an incredible 960 practices and games throughout the year. While primarily a soccer venue, the Centre Parks fields are also used for lacrosse. Over the past 2 years the Centre Parks fields have been the home for the Keystone Games lacrosse competition. During this tournament the fields can hold as many as 40 games over a 2-day period. Even with such heavy use the staff of Centre Parks and Recreation continues to maintain the fields at a high standard.

The Exeter Township Little League complex was constructed out of what were originally farm fields in 2002. The complex is used exclusively for baseball and softball and consists of a senior field, two T-ball fields, and a multi-use field. The fields see use daily from the beginning of April to the end of October. A crew of two led by grounds foreman Noel Davidheiser and his assistant Russell Hart maintain the complex.

The Wyomissing football field, originally built in the 1930’s, was renovated in 1998. The field hosts approximately 65 events a year. While football is the main activity on the field, it is also used for girls’ soccer as well as boys and girls lacrosse. A crew of two led by grounds foreman, Jon Yorgey, and his assistant Dave Steinmetz maintain the field. The 2009 seasons proved extremely challenging for the Jon and Dave, as they had to work through turf diseases problems in the spring and a very wet fall season. Through it all the Wyomissing crew maintained the field at an exceptionally high standard.

Field of Distinction honors are awarded annually by KAFMO to facilities that have demonstrated a dedication to provide safe and playable conditions for their users regardless of the level of play. Entrants must supply information on the type of facility, the uses of the facility that impact the playing conditions, the maintenance program, budget and staff. Photos of the field are provided to document the playability and appearance of the playing surface. The KAFMO Board of Directors judges entrants.

Scholarship winners

Waddington/Harper Scholarship recipients were Brandon Cable, George Peters and Charles Roman from Penn State. Donations for education and research were presented to the Resource Branch of the Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Society ($500) and the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council ($3,000) for sports turf research at Penn State University. Also, $1,500 was donated to support the four Penn State teams that competed in the STMA Student Challenge in Orlando in January, two of which returned as champions of that national event.
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Upcoming Events...

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**August 11-12, 2010**  
**Penn State Turfgrass Field Days**  
At the Valentine Turfgrass Research Center on campus. The Field Days are a biannual event sponsored by the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council to highlight the research being conducted at Penn State. New this year will be a sports turf track with demonstrations on herbicide applications, seeding rates, fertility, pre-germinated seed, synthetic turf, NTEP trials and much more. The second day of the event will feature tours of Penn State’s athletic facilities, including Beaver Stadium, baseball, softball, and soccer. More details will be provided at www.KAFMO.org when they become available.

**October 11, 2010**  
**KAFMO Cup Golf Tournament**  
Dauphin Highlands Golf Course, Harrisburg.

**February 18, 2011**  
**15th Annual KAFMO Athletic Field Conference**

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Turf manager attests to sun’s dangers

By George Marshall

Some of you may have heard of Stetson University in DeLand, FL; we have won the STMA College Softball Field of the Year for the past 2 years. I am the Field Maintenance Tech/Turf manager for the field and have been for 10 years. Before working at the complex, I was the grounds coordinator for the entire 180-acre campus. Over the past 41 years of work, including 25 years with the fire department, I have owned both a foliage nursery and a lawn care business. I grew up in Florida, played sports and spent many hours outdoors.

Just as we don personal protection equipment such as masks, protective suits, rubber gloves, and breathing protection before we apply herbicides and other pesticides and safety glasses, ear plugs and gloves before operating some of our equipment, those of us who work outside must also protect ourselves from the sun.

Experts recommend that with 2-3 inch brims or larger; those with UV protection are even a more effective option. Dermatologists and the American Cancer Society suggest that ball caps do not offer enough protection since the tops of the ears, nose, and neck are highly susceptible to the sun.

There are many types of clothing on the market today including both pants and shirts that offer some type of ultraviolet B rays (UVB) protection rating from 15 to 50 (UPF) ultraviolet protection factor. The higher the number is, the greater the protection. Darker colors offer more protection than lighter colors. Many larger department stores offer this line of clothing, as well as some of the large sporting goods stores and retailers of outdoor clothing. Protective gear of this type can be expensive, but it wears well, and certainly helps to protect us.

Sunglasses count, too

Sunglasses are a very important part of our attire since we spend most of our time outdoors in daylight hours. Look for sunglasses that give both UVA and UVB protection from 99-100%. Sunglasses should have a listing of UV400 (400nm is the wavelength of UVA radiation.) All sunglasses block UVB radiation. Excessive exposure to the sun’s rays unprotected can cause cataracts later in life. If you are blue-eyed like I am, your eyes will be even more light sensitive. Regardless of whether or not the sun is often visible where you live UV rays are still there. UV rays at their peak are found in high altitudes, snow-covered landscapes, or bodies of water.

I know that some of you are reading this wondering, what is the most important piece of clothing I wear to work? While all the items mentioned above are very important, the thing I put on that is most important to me is...
Sun’s dangers...

(From page 9)
not clothing but SUNSCREEN. The UV rays given off from the sun can be beneficial by giving us vitamin D which helps strengthen bone, and teeth, and aids in the prevention of Ricketts and colon cancer.

Unfortunately, the rays are invisible and we can easily absorb too many, too fast. Sunscreen with a minimum rating of SPF 15 is recommended by the American Cancer Society. Sunscreen can fight the early signs of skin cancer, and yes ladies, help prevent wrinkles from too much sun exposure. Your are 12 times more likely to develop solar keratoses (SKs) skin damage when not using sunscreen. The peak hours of the sun which are from 10am-2pm are 10 times more damaging than any other time of the day.

A rule of thumb is that if your shadow is longer than you, UV exposure is low, or if your shadow is shorter than you, UV exposure is high. I know that in our line of work we can not change the hours we’re exposed to the peak time of UV rays, but we can change the protection we use.

I remember as a young person camping on the beach with the Boy Scouts. We had a beautiful full moon that night, with the most beautiful blue sky you have ever seen the next day. We fished and swam all day and had a great time. I also remember the terrible sunburn I had, the trouble standing up because of the pain in my legs, not being able to wear clothes, and the pain while my mother rubbed me down with lotion for days. That was not only sunburn I’ve had, or the problems sun exposure has given me since.

The dermatologists and cancer societies report that most of our sun damage occurs before our 18th birthday. It just happens to show up later in life and the older we get, the more problems we have. However this is not true in all cases, as melanoma cases are on the rise in young people.

I tell you this from experience; I have used topical creams to burn off sun damage on my arms. I have had basal cell cancer cut off my face, and had cancer frozen from my arms, shoulder, and legs. I have had squamous cell cancer removed from my nose by Moh’s surgery and the skin grafted from my ear to my nose. (I can hear my food now, ha, ha). Trust me, you do not want your ear to your nose. I also remember the terrible sunburn I had, the trouble standing up because of the pain in my legs, not being able to wear clothes, and the pain while my mother rubbed me down with lotion for days. That was not only sunburn I’ve had, or the problems sun exposure has given me since.

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There are three types of skin cancer, all that I have mentioned. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) statistics from 2003 show that 54,000 people had melanoma cancer, and 8,345 people died from it that year. The largest population was Caucasian, but Hispanics, blacks, and Asians were also affected. They also say 1 in 5 people will develop skin cancer sometime during their life. Some newer statistics say 9,000 died from melanoma in 2009. As supervisors, employers, directors and foreman we should use sunscreen and preach to our employees about the importance of using it. Sunscreen comes in many forms such as lotions, creams, wipes, and sprays. Maybe sunscreen should be provided by management much as ear plugs, eye protection, and gloves are. At Stetson we use a wall mounted 2 liter refillable dispenser that I could tell you more about. Do yourself a favor, slap on the lotion and cover up with proper clothing. It may be expensive at first, but so is a plastic surgeon.
In early December of 2008, I had my first experience in adding compost to one of my five soccer fields at the Solanco High School sports complex. With advice from Steve LeGros of Turf & Dirt, Inc., I had the field core aerated in four directions and rented a compost spreader from ABC Groff in New Holland, PA. It took 2 hours round trip to pick up the compost spreader and about 5 hours to apply the compost to the field. The next day the compost spreader was returned, another 2-hour round trip.

Knowing the time involved, I needed to acquire a compost spreader for use in the school district but the price of a new one probably wouldn’t make it past the budget process. After searching for an abandoned manure spreader, I located a David Bradley by Sears & Roebuck, circa 1950, at a farm equipment salvage yard. All the wood was rotted but the mechanisms were free and working fine. For the better part of January 2009, the old spreader was taken apart down to the metal frame, wire brushed and repainted. The wood was replaced with pressure treated lumber and new tires were installed. An adjustable rear gate was installed to control the amount being applied. The only other modification was to add flat plates to the rear beater assembly to be able to pick up the finer texture of compost and spread the material.

The compost spreader had its maiden voyage in October 2009. I must admit it met all my expectations. The best part is the cost – under $1,000, materials and labor included. It was a winning situation. For minimal cost, I have a new tool to help improve the district athletic fields.

So the next time you need a piece of equipment, go GREEN and recycle.

Mark Hohenwarter is with the Solanco School District, Quarryville, PA.

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