Between the Lines

Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization

14TH ANNUAL KAFMO CONFERENCE

Friday, February 19, 2010
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8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. – Registration and meet with exhibitors
9:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. – “Seed Considerations for Sports Turf in PA” Vicki Wallace, Turf Consultant, Valley Green, Inc.
10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. – “Division I Athletics in the Transition Zone” Shawn Mahonski, Sports Turf Technician, Towson University
10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. – Break and visit with Exhibitors
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – “Sustainable Sports Surfaces; Economic and Environmental” Dr. Frank Rossi, Associate Professor, Cornell University
12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. – Lunch and visit with Exhibitors
1:15 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. – Awards Program and Raffle
1:45 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. – “A Sports Turf Conundrum: Low Budget-High Traffic” Dr. Frank Rossi, Associate Professor, Cornell University
2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. – “Doing More with Less” Kevin Meredith, Turf Manager, National Soccer Hall of Fame

Visit www.KAFMO.org for a registration brochure

Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization
1451 Peter’s Mountain Road
Dauphin, PA 17018-9504
www.KAFMO.org
E-mail: KAFMO@aol.com

Contact: Linda Kulp, Executive Secretary
Phone: 717-921-8803 / Fax: 717-921-0135
Contact: Dan Douglas, President
Phone: 610-375-8469 x 212 / Fax: 610-373-5868

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.

Contact:
Phone: 717-921-8803 / Fax: 717-921-0135
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MEMBERSHIP

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

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

The 2009 KAFMO CUP golf tournament was held at Iron Valley Golf Club in Lebanon Pa. on Monday October 12th 2009. This year’s event raised over $1,000 for the Waddington / Harper Awards Fund and provided a great day of golf, food and beverages for the 80 players and volunteers who attended. The day started with a 10:00 registration and an 11:00 shotgun start, Dinner, Awards and the raffle followed, lots of prizes, challenge contests and a great fall day helped to make this year’s event enjoyable and challenging for all who participated. Congratulations to the 2009 KAFMO CUP Champions Pete Ramsey, Mark Del Santro, John Colo and Chris Cookerly. I would like to thank all of our sponsors, players and volunteers who helped make the 2009 KAFMO CUP a success and I hope to see everyone again next year Oct.11, 2010.

Sincerely, Tournament Chairman
Bobby Piccolo

7 Habits of Highly DEFECTIVE Sports Turf Managers

Most of us have a good handle on what it takes to make our fields safer and more playable. We have gone to enough conferences and field days to learn techniques; we read articles or talk to people that help us to manage our fields. Most of us admit that we still learn new information every time we go to a seminar or field day, but, most also admit that the biggest problem that we have is with our coworkers, our team, our staff, our whatever we call those that we see more often than we see our families. Making our team function as one unit and having buy-in from all of the parties involved, requires skills just like making our fields safe for play. I have seen countless work crews that don’t have enough time in their day, enough help to get it all done, enough volunteers, enough money, enough equipment, enough of this or that. I have identified 7 habits that I have seen in sports turf managers that never have enough.

Time Management:

Personal time management skills are essential skills for effective people. People who use time management techniques routinely are the highest achievers in all walks of life, from business to sports to public service. If you use time well, you will be able to function exceptionally well, even under intense pressure.

“Concentrate on results, not on being busy”

Many people spend their days in a frenzy of activity but achieve very little because they’re not concentrating their effort on the things that matter the most.

The 80:20 Rule

• Typically 80% of unfocussed effort generates only 20% of results.
• The remaining 80% of results are achieved with only 20% of the effort.
• As you master these skills, you’ll find that you take control of your workload, and say goodbye to the often intense stress of work overload.

Having a losing attitude:

The second habit of defective sports turf managers is one that I often refer to as the Eeyore syndrome. You know the character from Winnie-the-Pooh, the big purple donkey looking character. “Thanks for noticing” is one of his favorite lines. He always just kind of slumps along through life and does what he has to do to get noticed. Many of us just look at the tasks that we have to accomplish and think there is no way we can do it all. Do you look forward to a new challenge? Is your glass half full, or half empty? I read a book about Steve Prefontaine, one of the greatest distance runners in American history and he was quoted as saying “How does a kid from Coos Bay, with one leg longer than the other win races? All my life people have been telling me, ‘You’re too small Steve’, ‘You’re not fast enough Steve’, ‘Give up your foolish dream Steve’. But they forgot something, “I HAVE TO WIN.” It wasn’t his
desire to win it was his need to win that made him great.

Tiger Woods the number one golfer in the world said “I don’t go into any tournament thinking that it would be great to lose. I think it would be asinine to think that way.” Tiger, inspite of his world rank, continues with golf lessons from a golf coach! Golf lessons and golf coaches are for people that play like me, not the number one ranked player in the world. I mean, think about it; how good does he need to be? Yet how many of us have that attitude about preparing our fields for the big game, or the weekend tournament. No, I mean really have the attitude that it takes to have people say “WOW” when they arrive at the field. How about lessons even when we are the best?

**Quit Growing:**

What happens to our fields when they quit growing? They get beat down, they don’t look their best, they perform much poorer than a field that is growing. Well, sports turf managers are more like our grass than we would like to admit. When we stop growing the same thing happens to us; we perform worse than when we are actively growing. Not just growing around the middle or taller, but growing in our career. There are entire sections in bookstores dedicated to personal growth. There are movies, audio books, podcasts, newsletters, magazines all related to growing a team, a career and even a sports field. I once heard (while listening to an audio CD of a book, when travelling) “that having the ability to read and not using it is worse than being illiterate”. Think about that one for a minute. When is the last time you picked up a book, or magazine, or listened to a CD, or a podcast that stretched your mind? One that really made you squirm in your seat. Set a goal to read x number of books, or listen to, something that will make you grow in the next 12 months.

**No Game Plan:**

Speaking of setting goals, that is the fourth habit of highly defective sports turf managers…not having a game plan. Imagine what would happen to the teams that use our fields if they didn’t have a game plan. Do you think the New York Giants had a game plan when they went up against the undefeated New England Patriots in the Super Bowl? Or did they just get dressed in their uniform and mosey out on to the field and start playing?

I had a boss in my early years with Penn State that would sit and look at my goals for the year and if she read one that wasn’t up to par, she would look me in the eye and say “so what, who cares”. I used to get so mad at her, because I had put a lot of time into my annual goals. She always followed with guidance and recommendations on making them better, finally one year I found some things that helped me write my goals so I didn’t have to hear her tell me how poor they were.

So I’m giving the steps so your supervisor doesn’t have to use that line on your goals. When setting goals think about the following: What do you want to accomplish? When do you want to do it? Write down your goals. Share them with others. Make them real and obtainable. Make them quantifiable. An acronym that will help make your goals are done well is S.M.A.R.T. Make your goals Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Having a game plan will ensure that you and your team, are moving in the same direction.

**Unwilling to Change**

Habit five of the defective sports turf manager is one that is hard for everyone to overcome; you not only need to prepare for change, you need to spend some energy convincing/equipping those around you. “The front-end of an individual’s resistance to change is how they perceive the change. The back-end is how well they are equipped to deal with the change they expect. An individual’s degree of resistance to change is determined by whether they perceive the change as good or bad, and how severe they expect the impact of the change to be on them.” These words are from the book “The Biggest Mistakes in Managing Change”, by Carol Kingsey Goman, Ph.D. Carol goes on and lists the 6 Mistakes in managing change as: “1) Not understanding the importance of people. 2) Not appreciating that people throughout the organization have different reactions to change. 3) Treating transformation as an event, rather than a mental, physical and emotional process. 4) Being less than candid. 5) Not appropriately “setting the stage” for change. 6) Believing that change-communication was what employees heard or read from headquarters.” These six mistakes need to be avoided and managed as change takes place in our ever changing workplace.

**Failed in Relationships with others:**

You cannot just pay attention to grass and dirt and expect to be successful. It is also about the people around you. People today are inundated with information and messages to process. They only select a small fraction of the information to pay attention to and respond. Make certain that the information and messages that you deliver to your team are in the processed, not forgotten.

Communications is a give and a take. There is a sender and a receiver. Each of these have descriptive works that are used to designate problems. Now, as you read these descriptive words you are going to have a person’s faces pop into your head. That is what is going to help you recognize the descriptive words used to explain the problem sender and receiver. The problem sender is too vague, a detailer, a rambler, a dictator, indifferent, overbearing, has a poor sense-of-timing, or a different contexts. See I told you that you would have a face attached to each of the problem senders. Now the problem receiver is unreasonable, a know-it-all, an arguer, is overtalkative, appears preoccupied, interrupts, or is confused.

Make sure that in your communication with your team you are clear, concise, and understood by all. Make certain that you don’t just ask for more money from your budget committee, but communicate the why you need it. Don’t just tell your crew what to do, but communicate who, what, when, why and where. Don’t just assume that your field users know your desires for pre and post game field maintenance, communicate your desire for the fields, what it will do and how it will affect your abilities to provide a high quality playing surface. Don’t assume that your supervisor knows what you need and do, communicate with them about challenges and desires. Don’t fail at relationships with those around you.

**Failure to Train:**

The seventh and final habit of defective sports turf managers is our failure to train. We are quick to be critical of our field users, our volunteers, and coworkers. We complain about all the work WE have to do but never trust anyone else to do anything for us. I have seen volunteers ready, willing and able, but not used because they get yelled at for not doing it correctly. I have been on crews that stand around and watch others work because they have not been given clear expectations of their involvement. I have seen crew members fired for not performing, yet no one has taken the time to teach them what they need to know, or have been given substandard training. Make sure that you have provided the training needed to accomplish your team goals.

All of these items require you to think and plan. You will have to care enough to spend the energy to make it happen. The payoff is this: When you wake up in the morning, you will look forward to going to work.
Top Ten Steps to Networking

A nyone can talk with their established contacts, peers and friends. How do you expand your network to attain the most value, especially if you consider yourself to be more reserved and introverted? In a recent survey by career services firm DBM, 61% of respondents cited networking as the source of their new jobs. This percentage was 10 times greater than the percentage who found jobs through Internet job sites and print advertisements. Good networking skills can be learned and are far easier than you might think.

STMA members tell us that networking is one of the top reasons to join STMA and the upcoming conference and exhibition has more than 15 hours dedicated for member-to-member networking. Here are 10 easy to implement techniques to help you build relationships in your network.

1. Fight the temptation to just ‘hang out’ with the people you already know. The more diverse people you build relationships with, the more opportunities will arise, both for your own benefit and for theirs. Say your hellos, chat for a few quick minutes and then make plans to get together at some other time (maybe even later that night) to REALLY catch up. The message is, “Yes, I really want to spend more time with you, but not right now – I want to network a bit, first.”

2. Set a networking goal. For example, tell yourself that you want to meet 10 new people during the STMA conference. Keep track of that goal, and each day remind yourself about the number of new people you must meet.

3. Know that a great way to network is to simply introduce yourself to anyone who is standing alone.

4. Engage them by being curious about them - ask something about who they are, who they work for, who they know, etc., or start with a statement: “I’m interested in hearing about how you …”. Get engaged by asking questions you don’t already know the answers to.

5. Ask for a business card so that you can remember their names, have business cards and you run into someone you already met but can’t remember their name, simply say “Hello again. Remind me of your name.” Then remind them of your name.

6. Give the people you talk with your undivided attention.

7. Treat everyone as equals. There is no real value in title or prestige alone. Value is in the information and support people can give, and that often comes from surprising sources. A network is not a bureaucracy or a hierarchy. It is a level and fair playing field. Give just to give. Don’t give with the sole purpose of getting something back.

8. When the conversation lulls, move on. “Excuse me, there’s someone I want to meet (that person standing alone over there),” is a perfectly acceptable thing to say. Smile and then walk away.

9. Be a network catalyst. Introduce two people you know to each other. This is the ultimate in flattery when someone takes the time out of their day to make the effort to make introductions.

10. Say ‘thank you’ for those who have shared their time and advice.

Sources: Donna Messer, ConnectUs Communications; Diane Darling; Barry Zuebel, GottaGettaCoach

Benefits of Certification

Re cognition of the importance of fostering and improving professionalism within the sports turf industry, the Sports Turf Managers Association developed the Certified Sports Field Manager certification program.

The purpose of the program is to:

• Increase professionalism is the sports turf industry;
• Promote better and safer sports turf areas;
• Establish credentials that signify a specific level of expertise;
• Increase career opportunities and promote the sports turf manager and the profession;
• Provide recognition for attaining a level of expertise and performance as professionals in the industry;
• Stimulate and motivate improved performance and increased professionalism; and
• Increase opportunities for education and training.

Certification validates to your employer, to your peers and to the industry at-large that you have gone above and beyond the requirements of job performance and have demonstrated a superior level of competence. With this recognition can come increased compensation.

During employment searches, those with the CSFM designation have a competitive edge over those who are not certified.

Fifty-eight STMA members have achieved certified status. They have demonstrated their personal level of professionalism and their ability to apply those professional standards in their own sports field management program.

In order to qualify to test for certification status, the individual must have a minimum of 40 points earned through a combination of education and experience. The CSFM exam covers agronomics, administration, pest management, and sports specific issues. Once certification is achieved, continuing education and industry service is required.

Just as great sports accomplishments raise the bar for all competitors, excellence in field care raises the level of expectations for all sports turf managers. The results are better fields and safer fields at all levels of sports competition. If you are not already a Certified Sports Field Manager, consider taking the steps to become certified. Contact STMA Headquarters, ph. 800-323-3875, to receive the information you need to start the process.

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Athletic Field Management in the Spring

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Your Resource for Safer Football Fields

Your turf survived the long, hard winter and now it is time to get your field ready for play again. Hopefully, you prepared your field for the winter during the fall and you are heading into the spring with a strong, healthy turf stand. Even if your field is not in the condition you want it to be in at the beginning of spring, there are things you can do to get it ready for the first game. After all, you know that as soon as the weather breaks, your field will be a busy place. Here are some tips to get your field looking great before that first game.

Have a Plan
• Be prepared. Take time during the winter to plan out your maintenance schedule so as soon as the weather warms up, you will be ready to go.
• Take a soil sample and send it to your local testing facility (most universities can test your soil). You will get a report back with fertilizer recommendations that you can use to set up your fertilizer program. You will also find out if you need to correct your soil pH.
• Be sure to have all equipment, seed, and fertilizers on hand before they are needed.
• Get ready to battle Mother Nature. Spring rains can create water-logged fields. Make sure all of your baseball tarps are in good condition and explain the consequences of playing on a saturated field to the coaches, administrators, parents, and players.

What to do When Spring has Sprung
• Survey your fields. Identify potential problem areas, like high wear areas; be sure to give extra attention to these so they can recover quickly.
• Consider rotating or sliding your fields to spread out the wear. Sometimes sliding a field over just 10 yards can make a big difference.
• If you used growth covers over the winter, remove them after 4 or 5 consecutive days of warm temperatures, but don’t put them away. Be prepared to put the covers back on if you get an early spring cold snap.
• Seed or sod high wear areas and areas that did not survive the winter.
• Fill in low areas with sand or soil to prevent puddles from forming and seed or sod them. If you fix the problems now, you won’t be battling them all year long.
• Prepare your irrigation system. Once you charge the system, check for broken heads and leaky pipes that need to be repaired.

Cool Season Grasses
The following are recommendations for managing Kentucky bluegrass and/or perennial ryegrass sports fields in the spring.

Mowing
Mowing properly can make a big difference in the look and performance of your field. It is important to keep up with your mowing schedule, especially in the spring when the turf is growing quickly.
• Begin mowing as soon as the turf begins to grow.
• Be sure to use sharp blades so you get a clean cut.
• Do not remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade per mowing.
• Mow frequently. You will improve the density of your turf with more frequent mowings and you will not leave unsightly clumps of grass behind. You may need to mow three times per week during the spring flush of growth.
• Delay mowing on waterlogged fields to prevent ruts.

Fertilization
When temperatures are consistently in the 50’s, cool season grasses begin to grow and require fertilizer for healthy growth and development. Springtime fertilization can help your field recover from fall damage as well as prepare the turf for the upcoming season.
• Follow the recommendations in your soil test report to provide your turf with the required amounts of nutrients. By applying only the amounts the plants need, you are not only being environmentally responsible, but you are also saving money.
• Apply 1.5 to 2 lbs. of nitrogen per 1000 ft2 during spring. It is best to split the amount into two applications – one in early spring and one in late spring.
Cultivation Practices
Spring is an important time to perform cultivation practices that relieve soil compaction, increase water infiltration, remove thatch, and increase soil oxygen flow.

- Aggressively aerify your field with hollow tines. Removing plugs of soil with hollow tines is the most effective way to reduce surface compaction. The soil should not be too wet (the sides of the holes will glaze over) or too dry (the tines will not penetrate the soil).
- Consider using a deep-tine aerator, which has long tines that penetrate deeper into the soil. This relieves compaction by shattering the soil. The soil should be dry so it shatters easily.
- Using a spiker, slicer, or hydroject will help improve soil conditions but should only be used in the spring when surface disruption must be kept to a minimum. These are not acceptable substitutes for hollow tine aerification and/or deep-tine aerification.
- Applying 1/4 inch of quality compost prior to aerification will improve your soil. After the compost has been applied and aerified, drag the field to help incorporate compost into the soil. Do not use compost on sand-based fields.
- If compost is not used, following aerification, topdress the field with a layer of sand, seed with Kentucky bluegrass and/or perennial ryegrass, and fertilize according to soil test recommendations.
- If your soil requires lime to correct your pH (based on your soil test), apply the recommended amount after cultivation and drag the field to allow the lime to work into the soil.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 10.
Weed Control

Not only is your turf waking up and growing when the warm temperatures hit, so are the weeds. In addition to preparing for the usual crabgrass and goosegrass outbreaks, knotweed can be a problem on highly compacted fields.

• You must decide if it is more important to seed your field in the spring or prevent weeds from germinating – you can’t do both. If you apply a preemergent herbicide, your grass seed will not grow!
• Seeding early in the spring will repair your field from wear and then you can apply postemergent herbicides to kill any weeds later in the spring or summer.
• If knotweed is a major problem early in the spring, you can apply a broadleaf herbicide after it germinates and then seed after waiting the required period of time (see herbicide label for seeding instructions). 

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# Turfgrass Management Calendar

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Can perform management practice or control at this time. **Green** Optimum time to perform management practice or control procedures.

Technical information provided by Dr. Andrew McNitt, Penn State University
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