



**Count on it.**

## 10 Great Reasons to Love Your Sports Turf Manager

Boyd Montgomery, CSFM, Sports Fields and Grounds District Sales Manager

**1 - They routinely poke holes in the fields throughout the year, even when they are playing great** - Without regular aerification, athletic fields develop layers of thatch beneath the surface as well as compaction from existing play. Aerification reduces the spongy build up of organic matter which can hinder the movement of air, water and nutrients to the plant roots. Safety, being as paramount as it is in athletics, is greatly improved by relieving the compaction issues.

**2 - They won't let you play on frozen fields, even after the sun comes out** – An ice cube remains an ice cube for quite a while even after you put it out in the sun. The same is true for frozen fields. They can take a while to thaw out. Footprints on frozen athletic fields kill the turf you tread on. Athletes and spectators who ignore this fact might play today but they will pay tomorrow.

**3 - They have a license to apply pesticides** – Chances are that your sports turf manager is the only person you know who is trained and licensed in the art of chemical application. The average homeowner can, and often does, bombard his backyard with any old chemical cocktail under no supervision whatsoever. There are a lot more homes in your neighborhood than athletic fields. Be thankful someone is operating with the best techniques according to the best science available. Besides that, your sports turf manager will be practicing IPM or best management practices – which means observing and monitoring pest activity and using cultural practices to control them if at all possible instead of making chemical applications.

**4 - They are on call 24 hours a day** – Long before most of us crawl out of bed and long after most of us have wrapped up our final task for the day, our sports turf manager is hard at work. When they do go home, they know that any phone call may be the one summoning them back to the fields because of lightning that has blown an irrigation pump out of the ground, field lights that aren't working, or vandals that have broken into the facility. Dealing with the unforeseen is par for a sports turf manager.

**5 - They work as hard as anyone to make their budget money work to improve the facility** – Sports turf managers are constantly under pressure to do more with less. The economy is tough but your sports turf manager is out looking for innovative ways to spend less and do more. Support your sports turf managers and let them know you appreciate the work they are doing.

**6 - They are still going to school, even after all these years** – Advances in science and technology as well as legislative changes, mean that sports turf managers are constantly updating their education. They attend seminars, study on line, travel to conferences, and network amongst colleagues just like most professionals. Bet you thought it was just a matter of turning on sprinklers and waiting for grass to grow.

**7 - They just know stuff that most of us don't** – Today's sports turf managers command expertise in a range of disciplines. At any given time, they may be working as a scientist, environmentalist, horticulturalist, personnel manager, instructor, meteorologist or accountant, just to name a few. They can ride a mower, write a budget, drag a field, find employees, negotiate contracts, read a weather map, identify turf diseases, calibrate a chemical sprayer, deliver presentations, and so much more. Isn't it great to know they are working so hard for the good of your facility.

**8 - They maintain a consistent cut of turf** – Sports turf managers are under constant pressure to mow grasses shorter than the turf can tolerate. When mowing occurs lower than the natural threshold of the turf plant, it stresses the plant and makes it considerably weaker for any other stress that is placed on it. So that means when play or vehicle traffic or band practice or concerts, or any of the other multiple activities that stress the field do occur, they are placed on a field already under stress. This means your sports turf managers have an increasingly tougher job to provide quality sports fields.

**9 - They can be artists** – The turf is a canvas for sports turf managers and, even without field paint, they can make a field stand out. They work daily on mowing patterns to make their fields distinctive and aesthetically appealing. When field painting is done, they strive to provide perfect lines for fields of play.

**10 - They care about your safety** – Sports turf managers care about not only the environment but player safety as well. Providing safe, playable fields is the goal of every sports turf manager. Understanding the BIG picture impacts on a field quality and helps sports turf managers better assess and provide feedback on fields. Working with your sports turf manager as a team member provides valuable knowledge that improves your facility.

**Sports Turf Managers – Experts on the field, Partners in the game.**