

25 years as a sports turf manager... what I learned and what I wish I had known

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Jack Campbell's Granddad

Introduction

Before retirement this year I was Sports Turf Manager at a special place for the past twenty years. Neyland Stadium at the University of Tennessee is almost 100 years old and for the people in the state of Tennessee it is more of a shrine than just a football stadium. I was fortunate to have stewardship over this special place for a short period in time.

After retirement I have had the opportunity to reflect upon my career. There are many things that I wish I had done and many things that I wish had not done. I have also thought about the things that are really important and those that only interfere with meeting our goals as sports turf managers.

Years ago Mike Andresen at Iowa State and I developed a list of things we thought were the keys to being a successful sports turf manager. After retirement I still believe they are as important as ever.

Key points for sports turf managers

- 1. Follow sound sports field management practices**
 - a. There is no "Silver Bullet".
 - b. Know your fields.
 - c. Seek advice and support from others in the profession.
 - d. Maintain good records.
 - e. Practice effective communications.
 - f. Remember to frame the picture.
 - g. Maintain equipment and maintenance facilities.

- 2. Invest in Human Resources**
 - a. You are only as good as your staff and they are a reflection of you.
 - b. You must be the leader.
 - c. You cannot delegate away responsibility.
 - d. "We are frequently misjudged by our superiors, but never by our subordinates." Harvey Penick

- 3. Define yourself as you wish to be perceived**
 - a. Define yourself before others do it for you.
 - b. Be positive, get involved, have a solution, be part of the team.
 - c. Be a professional.
 - d. Belong to and be involved in professional organizations.
 - e. Be visible.

4. Fight Complacency

- a. Complacency is our greatest hidden enemy.
- b. Don't let what you can't do keep you from doing what you can.
- c. Have another person evaluate your program.
- d. Good enough is not enough..Strive for perfection.

5. Today's Event is the most important

- a. Today may be the first time someone sees your work.

Conclusion:

As sports turf managers we need to remind ourselves that we are in the "fun business." We get to go to a ball park each day where people play. What we do is important to a lot of people. We play a prominent role in creating memories that people carry for a lifetime.