

Growing Sod in a Parking Lot

(from necessity
not by design)

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The Location:

- Haymarket Park, Lincoln, NE



The Situation:

- New sod installed October 2008



The Situation:

- Last Week of June, 2009
- Due for replacement of sod



The Situation:

- Worn areas: Total 800 ft²
 - Pitcher's mound
 - Home plate
 - 2nd Base
 - Short Stop
- Scheduled sod replacement Saturday June 27th
- 3-Day Window after UNL baseball and start of Saltdogs' season

The Situation:

- Unexpected high school tournament
 - Friend of administrator
- Existing sod now becoming extremely worn (safety issues)
- Eliminated 3-day window of opportunity
- Saltdog games every day until July 13th

The Situation:

- Sod is already scheduled for delivery from the producer in Colorado
(Graff's, Expensive)
- Three week wait for installation
- No nursery areas for sod
- What to do with the arriving sod?

Castle Pines



The Solution:
Build a temporary nursery on plastic



Nursery Location 1

Placed on concrete parking stall

- Plastic Sheeting
- Sod





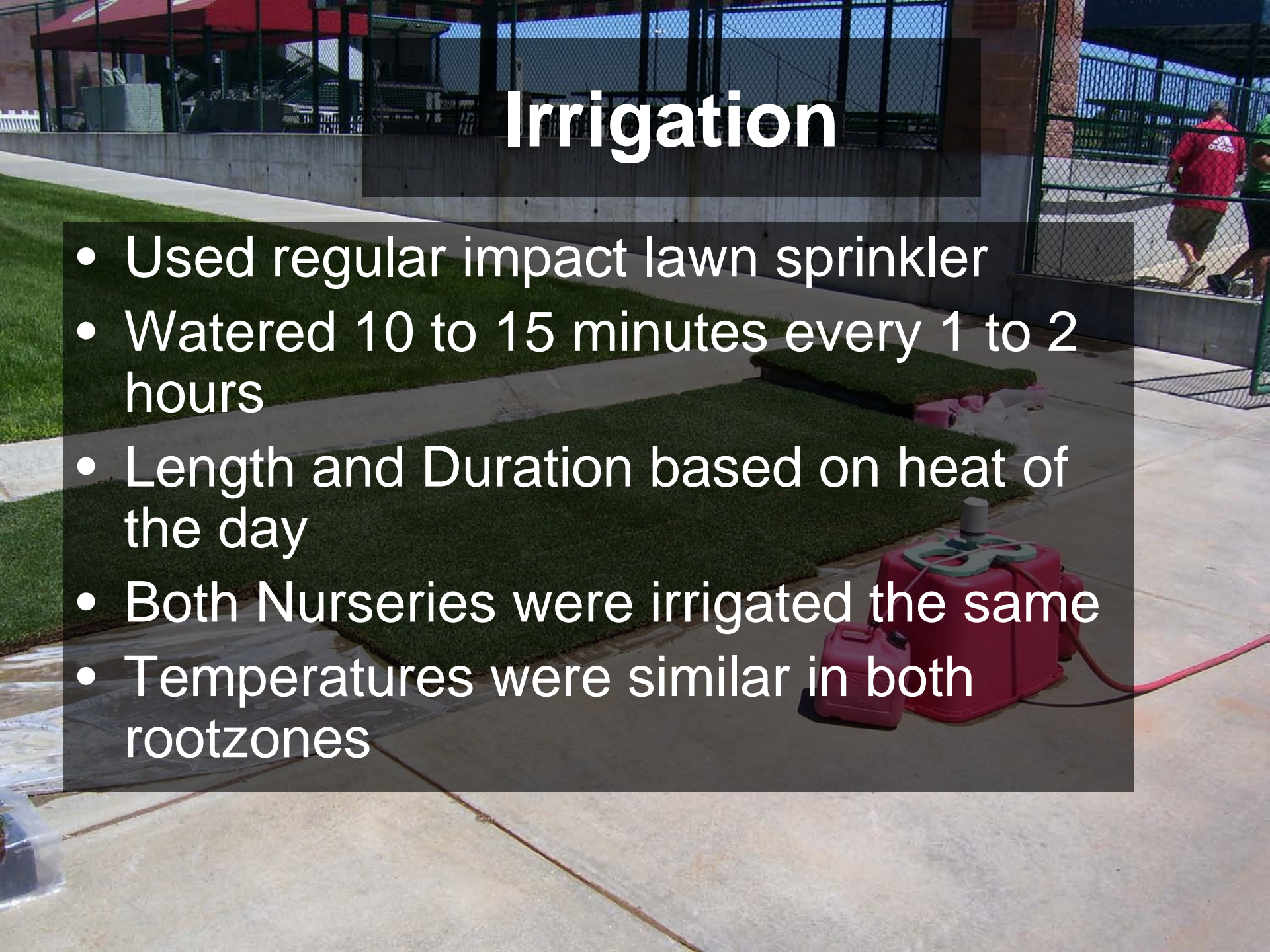
Nursery Location 2

- Old mulch storage area
- Plastic sheeting
- ¼ to ½ inch sand
- Sod



Irrigation

- Used regular impact lawn sprinkler
- Watered 10 to 15 minutes every 1 to 2 hours
- Length and Duration based on heat of the day
- Both Nurseries were irrigated the same
- Temperatures were similar in both rootzones



Irrigation

- Nursery 2 with sand responded better to irrigation
 - Remained firmer after irrigation
- Nursery 1 without sand felt 'soggier' when walked on or mowed



Mowing



- Mowed every other day, time permitting
- Mowing height was 1 inch
- Walk-behind reel mower









Question

How did they
mow the grass
on the pallets?

Solution #1


- Scissors

Solution # 2

- Weed Whip



Fertilization

- 
- Applied same products, rates and frequency as main ball field
 - Example:
0.10lb N of 12-0-0-12Fe / week applied at 1.5 gal water per 1000 ft²
 - Would include granular fertilizers if required at that time

Roots after 1 Week



Day 3



Day 10



Day 3



Day 10



Day 3



Day 10



September 10, 2009





Results

- Sod installed and matched very well with existing field
- Additional sand in rootzone did not create sod thickness problems (short period)
- Weed-whipped sod **DID** show additional stress and **DID NOT** match as well
- Left-over sod showed additional stress as summer continued (minimum management) but was usable



Recommendations

- Definitely use $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch sand in the rootzone
- Take extra time and effort to ensure seams are tight and even
- Make sure sub-base is even
- Find a way to automate the irrigation system
- Manage sod the same as the game field as much as possible

Growing Sod From Scratch

- Level area
- 6 mil plastic
- 0.75 inch of growing medium
 - Sand and or compost (especially fall) or pine bark, Ecomats, etc. Rootzones can be customized



- Light, even irrigation
- Consider hydro-mulch cap for stabilization?

Pros

- Doesn't require lots of rootzone material
- Rootzone media can be made to match whatever rootzone the sod is being produced for
- Roots are not required to recover from shearing
- Roots intertwine and can create a strong sod, even with tall fescue
- Quick turn around; 10 weeks or less

Cons

- Shipping costs for rootzone media
- Irrigation practices need to be much more precise for grow in and management
- Thunderstorms and uneven irrigation can wash rootzone away before established
- Harvesting may require specialized equipment
- Limited shelf-life

Notes

- George Toma uses this source of sod for his projects
 - Rose Bowl, BCS
 - Pro Bowl, Superbowl
- Ben Oak Sod Farm – Foley
 - 42" wide by 40 feet long (comes shrink-wrapped)
 - Heavy, each roll weighs one ton
 - Old rolls, 7' by 40' weighed two tons
 - Use special Dingo to pull seams together
- University of Oklahoma used it after U2 concert

Questions or Comments?