Baseball/Softball

Title: What I've Learned...19 Seasons in Professional Baseball
Format: Concurrent Session (1-1.5 hours)
Level: Advanced
Audience: Higher Edu and Pro STM

Description:
Since beginning a career in professional baseball as a Head Groundskeeper in AAA in 1995, I have seen many things on the field in four distinct regions of the country: New England, Southern California, Washington, DC, and Minnesota. This talk is a descriptive narrative of what I have learned in the past 19 seasons. I will discuss my career path to provide perspective on how the sports turf industry has evolved. We will look at new technology for the turf manager as well. Then I will offer some insight on my turfgrass experiences in four climates with different types of turf. After going through a couple minor field renovations early in my career, I was fortunate to be on hand to open two major league baseball parks in 2008 and 2010. I will discuss field design and building from the side of the turf manager. Then we will focus on infield dirt areas and professional playability. The attendee will get value out of this talk by hearing specifics on career development, field construction, and infield playability at the professional level.

Outline:
A. Our evolving profession.
   1. Career paths and changes in expectations.
   2. Technology, greater resources and improved efficiency in sports turf.
B. Thoughts on turfgrass for baseball.
   1. Warm Season turf experiences.
   2. Three seasons in the Transition Zone.
C. Field design and construction.
   1. Planning to avoid pitfalls in building.
   2. Concepts in baseball field design.
   3. Opening a new facility and field.
D. Infield dirt, mounds and plate areas.
   1. Design and product selection.
   2. Equipment and maintenance of dirt.
   3. Watering techniques.
   4. Professional infield playability.

Objectives:
Attendee will learn:
1. How the role of the turf manager in professional baseball has evolved since 1995.
2. Fundamentals of designing, building and opening a pro baseball field.
3. Expectations for field playability at the major league level.

Delivery:
Power Point. Many photos in slides
Title: 2 hour infield renovation
Format: Innovative Session (15 minutes)
Level: Beginner
Audience: Cool season STM

Description:
By using available equipment one is able to topdress, aerate and slice seed a infield grass in a timely, quick & effective process. By using light weight equipment one is able to do this process in wetter and softer conditions, getting an early start before the season begins.

Outline:
Locate sprinkler and other utilities
Mow infield lower than normal
Topdress in a circle starting around the mound gradually turning in a square pattern
In between loads of sand, aerate in the same pattern overlapping the middle of the aerator over the last roll of plugs
If additional labor force available (players) rake plugs off
Slice seed in both directions starting on each foul line
By topdressing 1st and then aerating, tines force the sand into the soil creating a rough wall to increase oxygen and water exchange
raking the plugs moves move sand into the holes, slicing acts as a planner and cuts higher turf and moving into the lower areas as well as sand into the holes
drag with a mat in both directions to work more sand into the holes and lower areas

Objectives:
1) Use what equipment you have or can borrow or rent
2) Only needing two people to perform the task in two hours
3) Confidence in doing other infields and more regularly
Use available equipment and quickly renovate a baseball infield

Delivery:
PowerPoint with slides and time lapse video of affective coordination can get the job done. Have done 12 this past month of March!

---

Title: Creating Mowing patterns on skin infields
Format: Can fit to conference needs
Level: Beginner
Audience: All

Description:
By using colored and natural infield conditioners, (topdressing) how you can create a mowing pattern effect on skinned infields. Also other logos or patterns recognizing facilities, events or people.
Outline:
Preparing infield skin for topdressing application
Selecting product and color
Selection application method and equipment
Training crew to be detailed and efficient
Exposing game spectator to the results

Objectives:
1) Exposing attendees to creating a new look for their skin infields
2) Strategies and patterns while planning to create the effect
3) Do's and Don'ts as well as well as knowing problems
To have confidence in creating patterns with raving results!

Delivery:
PowerPoint showing different patterns, techniques and strategies Used in Softball Little League World Series, Alpenrose Stadium, STMA Field of the Year 2012 Softball Schools and Parks category

Title: What are your baseball field dirt-turf transitions telling you?
Format: Concurrent Session (1-1.5 hours)
Level: Beginner
Audience: All

Description:
Consider the transition between the dirt and the turf on your baseball field. It can tell you a lot. Why? Because that transition (or edge) is responsible for more baseball field induced injuries and errors than anything else. And it causes more lost ball games than any other field problem.

The turf edges are one of the first things you notice when you see a ball field. Do you see nice, straight, flat edges, or do you see ugly lips and raggedy turf edges? Either you are in awe or you sneer at it. Athletes either look forward to playing on it or they say, “this is gonna hurt.”

A bad edge causes bad hops, sprained ankles, strained knees. And you know it causes players to shy away from fielding a ground ball anywhere near the edge.

In this presentation you will learn why:
1. these edging recovery and maintenance techniques can improve the way you maintain your baseball field dirt turf transitions, and why
2. these tips can save you time and money while helping the athletes in your sports programs reach their fullest potential.

Everyone would like a nice, clean and flat turf edge.
But what about all those horrible edges that exist on most every youth ball field even through
high school and college baseball? Some are like speed bumps and others are like miniature cliffs.
In this presentation you see how to fix them.

This presentation also covers expert advice on how to keep your turf / dirt edge trim and level.
And it is loaded with pictures so you know exactly what to do with your specific situation. No
matter how bad it is, you will learn how to fix and maintain it.

How to get a winning baseball field dirt / turf transition includes:
– The Importance of a flat dirt-turf edge and athlete performance
– Daily maintenance of the edge - how the pros do it, and so can you
– The typical edging process that you can easily do
– What exactly causes lip build up? And how do you avoid it.
– Ideas on how to mark the edges before you cut.
– Major and minor edge repair case studies: from hosing, to trenching and rolling, to installing
new sod, to mass aerating and rolling, to good and bad edging and finally an example project to
reclaim the dirt from major lip build up

This presentation is for baseball or softball field maintenance staff, and both professional sports
turf managers and community volunteers who don’t have the resources and staff that premium
quality fields have, but want a ball field they can be proud of and a ball field that is safe and
playable.

The session will include tips/hints and mistakes to avoid using seven case study examples from
youth through MLB and everything in between.

The turf/dirt transition may not sound so important, but bad edges will undermine all the work
you put into your ball field, as well as jeopardize the safety of your players. So, attend this
session to learn how to get - and keep - a winning edge.

Outline:
1. Start by looking at some good and bad edge fields. Impress attendees that neat, flat edges (or
lack of) is one of the first things you notice about a field. Some narrative about specific injuries
that occurred on poorly, or non-edged fields: sprained ankle by third baseman, slip and fall by a
pitcher, split finger by a short stop, bad hop that lost a tournament game.

2. The importance of the dirt / turf edge (this will primarily cover natural grass fields, but does
include a short bit about a dirt mound on an artificial turf field and the lip that can form there.)
Maintaining a good, clean, level grass edge not only looks better, but it also:
• Prevents bad bounces,
• Prevents injuries like sprained ankles, twisted knees, and balls in the hands or face,
• And prevents embarrassment about your field.

3. Daily and weekly maintenance of the dirt / turf edge
• Dragging techniques that work best: broom drag, mat drag, and of course stay away from the
grass on turns
• Removing dirt from the grass edge: fan rake (why plastic is better than metal), blowing, vacuuming, hosing
• Problems that can occur from over zealous use of good techniques
• Removing dirt from edges and when to activate sprinklers – get this right or it makes more work for you later
• Rolling the turf dirt edge

4. The typical edging process: measure and determine where edge should be cut, tips for using a stringer as a guide (so you don’t cut it by accident), three wheel gas powered lawn edger use – speed and depth, removing grass trimmings (from minor clippings to up to 2-3 inches), things to do in the fall that make the first spring edge high quality.

5. Edge Repair Methods. This is beyond just simple edging. These techniques are used when there is lip build up from something minor to quite significant such as what you may find on a neglected youth sports field. Examples show fixing increasingly bad edges.
• The pros and cons of using a hose to blast water at the lip.
• How you can eliminate a lip that is up to 4 inches wide but not too high by digging a trench next to the edge and running a 1.5 ton roller over it. Instant flat.
• Next if the turf is in good shape but you have a wide, rolling speed bump, See how you can mass core aerate, remove the cores, and run a 1.5 ton roller over the area to get it to sink back down.
• If the edge is flat, but the turf is just thin, raggedy, and worn out, learn how you can cut it out and replace with a strip of new sod. Understand the challenges and solutions to getting sod to match existing color and texture.
• And lastly is the major renovation of a youth sports field with 4-6 inch high lips. See how to remove and reclaim the baseball dirt for the base paths and an example of leveling massive lip build up around a mound.

6. Some ideas on how to mark edges for cutting with either a sod cutter or a lawn edger using such things as stringers, paint, chalk, steel bars – including some ‘creative’ ways to edge such as using a pressure washer to cut it.

7. Conclusion and Q&A

Objectives:
After attending this session the participant will be able to:
1. Evaluate their ballpark dirt-turf edge practices and identify options for managing your grass edges to prevent lips thereby improving safety and playability
2. Create a specific action plan for your dirt-turf transition improvements including tools, supplies, techniques, budget, schedule, and labor required
3. Layout a program for ongoing dirt-turf edge care – basic steps, frequency, and handling special situation that arise

Delivery:
Use a power point presentation to guide a lecture with case studies and audience discussion.