



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Sports Turf Managers Association, Minor League Baseball Announce 2017 'Sports Turf Managers of the Year' Sponsored by STMA and John Deere

Four Groundskeepers Honored at Baseball Winter Meetings in Orlando, Fla. December 11

(LAWRENCE, Kan.) – [Sports Turf Managers Association](#) (STMA) and [Minor League Baseball](#) (MiLB) award the 2017 'Sports Turf Managers of the Year' sponsored by STMA and John Deere.

This year, three of four honorees are first time winners; demonstrating that excellent groundskeepers are continually proving and developing as top-notch practitioners nationwide. Award recipients will receive this top honor at the Major League Baseball Winter Meetings Banquet on Monday, Dec. 11, at Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort in Orlando, Florida.

Award winners include:

- Triple-A – Matt Parrott, Charlotte Knights (Charlotte, N.C.)
- Double-A – Ray Sayre, Pensacola Blue Wahoos (Pensacola, Fla.)
- Single-A – Mike Williams, Charleston RiverDogs (Charleston, S.C.)
- Short Season or Rookie – Ryan Olszewski, Mahoning Valley Scrappers (Niles, Ohio)

"Our minor league members continually demonstrate uniqueness and skill while maintaining safe and playable surfaces," says Kim Heck, CAE, CEO of STMA. "The high-quality submissions illustrate the individual merits for winners and we're proud to honor their truly fantastic results."

Out of the four winners, Matt Parrott is the only two-time winner of this award. In 2011, he earned the 'Double-A Sports Turf Manager of the Year' award as a member of the Bowie Baysox. Parrott's accolades include 'Eastern League Diamond Pro Sports Field Manager of the Year' (2011, 2014 and 2015).

Ray Sayre was recognized as '2017 Southern League Groundskeeper of the Year' for the fifth straight season (2013 – 2017). Hired by the Philadelphia Phillies as Head Groundskeeper at their Carpenter Complex in Clearwater, Fla. at the beginning of October, Sayre previously supported the Pensacola Blue Wahoos as Head Groundskeeper for seven years.

Mike Williams, a professional groundskeeper since 1993, has worked for the Charleston RiverDogs since 2006. Accolades include '1994 Eastern League Groundskeeper of the Year,' '1994-95 Beam Clay Professional Field of the Year' and 'South Atlantic League Sports Turf Manager of the Year' (2009, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2017). The RiverDogs' playing surface, Riley Park, has been named 'South Atlantic League Best Playing Field of the Year' each year Williams was honored as 'Sports Turf Manager of the Year.'

Ryan Olszewski completed his third season with the Mahoning Valley Scrappers as Head Groundskeeper & Assistant Director of Stadium Operations. He and his staff worked more than 155 total on-field events and demonstrated expert planning, preparation and work ethic. Olszewski joined the team from the Akron Aeros/Rubberducks.

Since 2000, STMA and MiLB have honored members who manage fields in Triple-A, Double-A, Single-A and Short Season or Rookie divisions. Winners are selected via a 13-member awards committee, compiled by STMA. Each nominee is independently scored on cultural practices, game day routine, resource utilization, staff management and the groundskeeper's involvement and support of the sports turf industry.

Download high-resolution facility and personnel images [here](#).

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About STMA

STMA is the not-for-profit, professional association for men and women who manage sports fields worldwide. Since 1981, the association and its 34 local chapters have been providing education, information and sharing practical knowledge in the art and science of sports field management. Its more than 2,600 members oversee sports fields and facilities at schools, colleges and universities, parks and recreational facilities, and professional sports stadiums.

About Minor League Baseball

Minor League Baseball, headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida, is the governing body for all professional baseball teams in the United States, Canada and the Dominican Republic that are affiliated with Major League Baseball® clubs through their farm systems. Fans are coming out in unprecedented numbers to this one-of-a-kind experience that can only be found at Minor League Baseball ballparks. In 2017, Minor League Baseball attracted 41.8 million fans to its ballparks to see the future stars of the sport hone their skills. From the electricity in the stands to the excitement on the field, Minor League Baseball has provided affordable family-friendly entertainment to people of all ages since its founding in 1901. For more information, visit www.MiLB.com.

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