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As I mentioned in the last newsletter, the NZ Turf Conference & Trade Show Governance Board met just before Christmas. The final accounts for the 2011 conference were presented and I am pleased to say that the conference came out with a surplus of \$11,000 which was a very satisfactory result given that the conference had to be moved from Christchurch following the earthquake in February 2011 (a loss would have had to be underwritten by the conference stakeholders, including STANZ). This surplus certainly helps to maintain the on-going viability of future conferences.

During the meeting it was resolved that there was a need for a high level review of the conference and a small sub-committee has been set up to report back by the end of March. The sub-committee includes a representative from Avenues who were appointed as the next conference organiser. Until the sub-committee submits its report, I can't give any update on when or where the next national turf conference will be held, but we will know by the time of the next STANZ newsletter.

Chairman's Cheers

Welcome to the first newsletter of the year and also to the new format. The Sports Field Forum name is now officially replaced with the Sports Turf Association of New Zealand (STANZ). Later this month the full executive of STANZ will be meeting in Auckland to work through the recently-published STANZ strategy. The initial focus will be on business planning, regional representation and membership. One thing is clear – we need to grow the organisation and look at ways in which we can operate on a much more nationwide basis rather than relying on the current Auckland-dominated set-up. Not an easy task.

This week has been a particularly difficult time for those from Canterbury as the country marked the first anniversary of the February earthquake. I was fortunate enough to be in Christchurch for the anniversary and it was a humbling experience standing amongst 400 construction workers for a two minute silence at the new Christchurch Temporary Stadium site in Addington (there's an article on the stadium later in this newsletter). Here's hoping for a speedy recovery for Canterbury and a much better year ahead.

Dr Richard Gibbs, STANZ Chairman

Cobham Oval



Simon Harvey inspects his pitch 2 days out from the first ever ICC International played at Cobham Oval

Cobham Oval hosted its first ever Cricket International on Waitangi day between New Zealand and Zimbabwe.

Turf managers, Simon Harvey and Ross Hart from Recreational Services produced a brilliant cricket surface that got rave reviews from players and administrators – The game produced the highest grossing score in NZ conditions by NZ in ODI history (372 runs plundered across all parts of Cobham Oval).

Ian Mckendry NZC Grounds and Facilities manager said, “After inspection of soil cores two days out from the game, we were very confident that Simon had produced a very good surface. The gravimetric moisture content targets were spot on at 29-31% and soil density readings of 1.4 were consistent through the profile to a depth of 100mm, the surface was well grass, with brown bruised grass foliage, the surface was flat and hard and most importantly consistent and true in bounce with little or no seam movement allowing for confident stroke play. In all you would say the surface was the ideal One Day International pitch”

Eden’s landlord – Mark Perham

Eden Park’s Mark Perham is one of the world’s best turf managers.

With 27 years behind him in turf management of both golf and stadium facilities, Mark has experienced all the satisfactions and frustrations that the profession has to offer.

During his near ten year stint as turf manager he has witnessed many changes in the sports landscape, including the increased expectations of turf quality, as well as the frequency of sporting events on it. Mark has glob trotted the world investigating sporting stadiums to bring together the best innovations and technologies of turf science and applying to Eden Park to create a surface that is regarded as one of the best playing surfaces in the world.

“The quality and expectations from the players has changed quite a bit, especially for rugby. The players don’t like to get muddy anymore,” Perham said with a laugh.



Mark Perham

“The increase in games means constant maintenance, but we’re lucky since we’re pretty well resourced. It can be pretty tough for those who lack the facilities and resources.”

In fact the schedule for Eden Park is absolutely frantic. The stadium will host a BLACKCAPS v South Africa One Day International on March 3rd and must then get ready for a rugby league match between the Warriors and the Manly Sea Eagle just 16 hours later.



Simon Harvey turf manager at Cobham Oval applying the finishing touches to the pitch NZ vs Zimbabwe.

As for the facilities, the ground and atmosphere created was just outstanding. Over 1,500 corporates enjoyed the hospitality, and over 4,000 punters enjoyed the occasion as plenty of sixes peppered the boundaries to keep the public on their toes...

Huge congratulations to Simon and Ross, and Gary Bell and the team at Northland Cricket for hosting what was an excellent début for the ground for International cricket.

Ian Mckendry, Vice Chairman.



Garden of Eden – Turf Manager Mark Perham and Dion Lawson of TIC Contracting on the reconstructed Eden Park No.2 ground awaiting a final level in preparation for stolonising with couchgrass.

“Unfortunately it means working all night. Hopefully the cricket should finish early,” Perham said with a grin.

“New Zealand will win quickly” he adds.

While Perham may be as busy as ever, the increase in events has seen a wide range of highlights during his time at the Park.

Not surprisingly he cites last year’s World Cup as a major highlight, but also refers to hosting two of the Chappell Hadlee matches in the 2009/2010 series and international fixtures in any sports as something that him and his team always treasure.

The next big ticket items that the Eden Park staff is preparing for are the BLACKCAPS games against Zimbabwe and South Africa. One Twenty20 against Zimbabwe and a Twenty20 and ODI against South Africa will be played at the venue during February and early March.

Perham says everything is ready to go, even though a large amount of his crews time has been spent on the renovations to No.2 Ground.

“Number one looks great. Best I’ve ever seen it at this time of year. It should be pretty good to bat on.”

“Number Two ground is (also) coming along nicely. It’s been the main focus since the world cup and should be close to finished by end of next week. That’ll be used for a lot of domestic cricket so that’s pretty exciting.”

While we can expect a good surface for the batsmen in the upcoming limited overs games, Perham doesn’t believe flat and fast is always best. He believes the ideal surface is very dependent on the format being played.

“Times are changing. In Test matches and the longer version of cricket there needs to be something more for the bowlers like we have seen in the recent India Australian series, while batsmen probably get decks to their liking during the shorter formats of the game.”

Take his word for it. Who are we to argue with 27 years of experience?

Callum Elder, NZ Cricket

Christchurch Temporary Stadium Update

The new 17,000 seat Christchurch Temporary Stadium is due to host its first Super15 rugby game on 24th March 2012 following an ambitious construction period of just over four months. Construction of the stadium is being carried out by Hawkins and RCP are the project managers.

Based at the old rugby league ground at Addington Park, the pitch construction is probably the biggest turf recycling project that has ever been carried out in the country.

The existing pitch was re-levelled and drained with a new system of lateral and slit drains, and a new irrigation system was installed. Turf and sand was then recycled from the earthquake-damaged AMI Stadium to complete the profile. At the time of writing, the turfing component has almost been completed over the pitch.

Pitch construction has been carried out by Chris Lewis and his team from Terrafirma Turf and there has been a fair amount of pressure on him to get the pitch finished and playable for the first game in March. Considering that the Motz-reinforced turf at AMI Stadium was more or less abandoned after the earthquake, he has done an impressive job bringing it back to life and making sure the turf has been in a harvestable condition.

However, it has not been a straightforward job – many areas of turf at the AMI Stadium were contaminated by silt from liquefaction and until a trial was actually carried out to see if the turf could be harvested without falling to bits, it wasn't a certainty that the process would work.

It is very fortunate that Chris hadn't needed to carry out much physical treatment through the Motz-reinforced turf at AMI Stadium since its installation four years ago, and this meant that the backing material was more or less undamaged, which in turn allowed the 60 mm thick turf to be harvested and re-laid at Addington intact.



Levelling, lateral drainage and irrigation work at the Christchurch Temporary Stadium, Addington (January 2012).



Stadium turf brought back to a standard suitable for harvesting and re-using at Addington. The mound to the right of the photo is a pocket of liquefaction.



Slit drain installation at the Christchurch Temporary Stadium, Addington.



Harvesting turf from AMI Stadium for recycling at the Christchurch Temporary Stadium, Addington.

Of course, re-laying the turf has not been that simple either. The turf did not have the nice clean edges that would be expected from a turf farm. Inevitably there were slight differences in quality between the many rolls of turf brought in for this 9,500 m² turfing project. The outcome is that there will be many hours of rolling, handwork and sand topdressing required over the next three weeks to convert the surface to a first class rugby field.

Chris has been well supported by the turf industry for this project and in particular he would like to acknowledge the help he has been given by Peter Barwell of Advanced Irrigation, Mark Shaw of PGG Wrightson Turf and CB Norwood Distributors Kubota.



Silt from liquefaction deposited in a lateral pipe drain at the AMI Stadium.



Chris Lewis of Terrafirma Turf – the AMI Stadium pitch now resembles a beach volley ball court.



Relaying the AMI Stadium turf at the Christchurch Temporary Stadium, Addington.



Turf first laid on 7/2/12 already knitting in. The lighting tower awaiting installation in the background has been recycled from Carisbrook. One of the new stands can just be seen to the left of the photo.

Dr Richard Gibbs, SSDM

STANZ Executive

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April 2012 Newsletter

I'm keen on getting some updates from around the country on how the summer has been on our turf for the April issue. It would be good to share these experiences with other members as well as any changes you had to make to deal with the inclement conditions.

If you would like to contribute, please email me at sportsturfnz@gmail.com by April 5th 2012.

Past Forum Newsletters

If you wish to read any past newsletters (including all newsletters from the past year), they are all on the Sports Turf Association's website at www.sportsfieldforum.co.nz. All contact details for the STANZ Executive and their responsibilities are also listed there.

Best Wishes

Bobbie Harvey – Editor

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