

UPI field maintenance updates – 2013

Wednesday, October 16th, 2013 - Last update of the 2013 season

What a wonderful year we were blessed with this past season and now we are blessed again with a favorable fall. The warmer temperatures and beautiful weather this October has been a joy to both people and plants. The optimum weather has allowed the turf to continue in its normal growing pattern and therefore the fields have continued to be mowed at 2 to 3 times a week.

On **October 2nd** a large team from Mountainview set out to the UPI fields to begin on the fall program for the fields. The first thing that took place was marking every single head in the field with a flag. This difficult job is necessary for the safety of the irrigation system as other work took place. A core harvester then passed over all of the fields and removed cores to relieve in compaction from the seasons foot traffic. This will relieve the roots from any struggle of getting water and nutrients. Once the fields were properly aerated, a fall application of seed was applied to all of the fields concentrating especially on some of the areas that were thin from heavy play. We are so thankful for the continued rain and beautiful warm weather as the roots will be very well established before winter.

The fall application of fertilizer was delayed until **October 9th** as Mountainview wanted to give the seed an opportunity to start to germinate before the application of fertilizer. This high potassium and phosphorus fertilizer will aid in strengthening both new and old turf roots. Stronger roots will have a better chance this winter at resisting disease and death. The healthier the roots, the healthier the turf!

Unfortunately, on **October 15th** it was discovered that beavers have returned to the fields over Thanksgiving and the dam has flooded some of the east fields. The trapper has been re-notified and the beavers will be safely moved to a better home. The fields will continue to be closely monitored throughout the fall to ensure they don't return before the winter.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone from the Ultimate Frisbee Association for another wonderful season. As always, it is a pleasure to work with such a great group of people. We look forward to working together next year.

Wednesday, October 3rd, 2013

Welcome to October! As the leaves begin to change around the Ultimate fields so does the turf. When the weather starts getting cooler and frost begins to touch the ground, the turf begins the process of "hibernation" for the winter.

Turf growth begins to slow down as there is less sunlight and warmth. This results in less mowing. At this time, the weather is still favorable that the grass needs to be cut twice a week.

There might be a slight color change when it comes to turf getting ready for the winter. There is less chlorophyll being processed by the plant which will affect its green appearance. The turf will begin to slightly yellow over time as the weather continues to get colder and colder. One of the reasons it is recommended NOT to put on a high nitrogen fertilizer in the fall is because you don't want to get the artificial surplus of growth that can occur with high N fertilizer. This surplus of growth under the snow surface will negatively affect the turf in the spring. Artificial growth under the snow surface will cause many spring diseases that can be

devastating such as Pink and Grey snowmold. Instead of high nitrogen it is recommended that a fall fertilizer contains high amounts of phosphorus and potassium instead as it encourages healthy roots. This fertilizer theory will be applied to the fields in the form of a fall application once the weather is a little colder.

It was discovered at the end of September that the fields had some furry visitors again. Mountainview called on a professional trapping company and they successfully removed 2 beavers and the dam from the property. The beavers were safely moved to a better suited location where they could build a new home.

We are closely monitored the area to make sure no other beavers return.

Wednesday, September 18, 2013

Although the Ultimate season is slowing down, the maintenance of the turf fields is beginning to become busy again.

One of the first jobs that need to be done at the threat of frost is getting the irrigation system shut down. It is not good to have the irrigation pipes to be full of water during frost as it could cause them to burst. On September 11th a crew from Mountainview arrived at the fields to officially shut down the system. This involves taking a compressor and blowing the water out of every single pipe and cutting down the electronic components.

This past season the irrigation system only ran at 2/3. Not all of the heads were used (66 heads running out of 96 total) because in certain areas of the fields it was still wet and added moisture was not needed. There was also enough significant rainfall that the deep well never had to be turned on.

It was noted that mice had gotten into the valve box in one zone and chewed the wires and will be addressed next year before the season begins.

There was also a broken valve lid that as it pushed itself into the valve box, it broke the pressure regulator. Again, parts will be ordered this winter for spring repair.

There was also a few irrigation heads that will need replacement next spring from regular wear.

It was also noted that on the "high" areas in the centre of some fields that the grass has gotten thin from regular foot traffic. In the upcoming days a team will be on site to alleviate compaction through aeration and then heavily overseed those areas (along with regular fertilizer application). This maintenance in the fall will aide in getting the fields in perfect condition for 2014!

Lastly, we have beavers again! These new visitors are making their home in one of the ditches. It was discovered on Monday, September 16th that the dam had backed up the water enough to flood some of the fields causing those areas not to be mowed. A trapper has been contacted, quoted and is now on site to safely and successfully trap the beavers and move them to a better habitat. The traps will be on the opposite side of the creek and will not be able to be accessed by the public.

Wednesday, September 4, 2013

Welcome to September! In the blink of an eye, it will be fall! It's hard for some of us to believe that the grass season is starting to wind down. You can begin to feel the colder temperatures at night. These colder temperatures begin to slow down turf growth allowing us to only mow the fields 2 times a week.

Many people don't realize that there are a lot of important cultural practices that are essential to properly "winterizing" the turf before the snow begins to fly.

After a season of hard play on the field, it is important to relieve some of that soil compaction by doing a proper aeration. The aeration allows for more water and nutrients to reach the roots.

At times, from rough play throughout the season, there may be areas where there is no turf left. For those areas, it is important to fill in sparse areas with seed. Filling those areas with seed will push back any chance of weeds invading those bare spaces.

Fall fertilization is one of the most important cultural practices that a person can do to any turf surface before it begins to snow. By putting down a low nitrogen, high potassium and phosphorus fertilizer, you promote root growth. It is key to not apply too much nitrogen this time of year to grass. Nitrogen promotes grass growth and a surge of growth in the fall will be more susceptible to winter diseases. Canadians typically have long periods of snow cover. This long period of snow cover can cause diseases like Pink or Grey Snow Mold. Grass is less likely to get this disease by putting on a low nitrogen Fall fertilizer.

Although the fields are currently in between applications at this time, the next couple of weeks will bring a lot of important winter maintenance work to the fields as they get prepared for the winter ahead.

Wednesday, August 21, 2013

The fields are currently in between applications at this time.

The fields are being mowed at 2 times a week.

Wednesday, August 7, 2013

It's within the months of July and August that all of the cultural practices that we perform on the fields get tested. It is at this time that the fertilizer, seed and compaction relief get tested. They get tested by play. The way that a field can rebound after being heavily used indicates how well it is maintained.

The fields right now are being mowed at 2-3 times a week, weather dependent. Some may notice on their own non-irrigated turf that growth has slowed down. This is the case for UPI too, except that it is still irrigated and the extra nutrient from fertilizer keeps it lush, and therefore growing.

Much less irrigation is needed this year in comparison to last year. As of the end of July, there were still fields that we showing signs of excessive moisture! Those areas are not being irrigated but they continue to be wet. The grass is also growing excessively in these areas because of the added moisture. The mowers have to carefully drive over these areas so that they can still cut the grass but not cause any damage.

Unfortunately, during a wet period, the tractor did have difficulty not making a mark and made ruts in the turf on UPI field 14. When this was brought to our attention, Mountainview immediately sent a crew out on **July 25th** to alleviate the problem.

While the crew was there on **July 25th**, they also dealt with a few trees that had fallen on field 18 due to a storm. They also noticed that boards were missing from some walking bridges because of vandalism. They quickly went out and got supplies to fit this problem before the No Borders tournament that coming weekend.

Overall, the fields are doing well as we gear up for some early fall applications. We are continually watching the fields for any signs of drought or stress as temperatures in August are typically very warm.

Wednesday, July 24th, 2013

The fields are currently in between applications at this time.

Currently the fields are being mowed twice a week. A vacuum unit from Mountainview was sent down on **July 18** to remove excessive grass clippings that had the potential to harm the growing turf. Excessive grass clippings can prevent light and water to get to the roots of the healthy turf causing it to die.

The irrigation system is working on a regular schedule at this time considering the amount of heat and precipitation. The fields are being closely monitored as to the water requirements needed for the fields. The non-irrigated turf is starting to show some signs of drought which is normal for this time of year. The irrigated turf is healthy and growing well after the **June 25** application of slow release summer fertilizer.

Overall the fields are in great condition this July in comparison to last season. We are pleased with the response the turf has to the current fertilizer application and even more pleased of no irrigation problems this year!

Finally, Mountainview would like to wish everyone a safe and successful tournament this coming weekend!

Wednesday, July 10th, 2013

It's truly amazing how weather conditions can change so much from year to year. We are still able to remember the days of drought that brought on a lot of stress not only in turf conditions. This year, we have had some of the best weather conditions for growing turf. Long hot days with lots of rain water falling from the sky.

On **June 27th** a small crew from Mountainview headed over to the fields to officially turn on the irrigation system at the fields. On the most recent walk of the fields, we noticed there were a few areas that were dry. The irrigation system was set up to only irrigate those areas that were showing signs of being dry. There are other areas that are not being irrigated as they are still wet. It would be a waste of water and could harm the turf by having too much water.

We are closely monitoring the watering schedule and turf conditions as the weather gets increasingly warmer.

The fields are being mowed at this time 2 or 3 times per week, weather dependent. The person who mows the grass makes sure to mow at certain times of the week as to reduce the amount of clippings. We do not believe in removing clippings from any turf surface unless absolutely necessary. Clippings are a natural fertilizer that adds extra nutrients to the turf and soil. It is an organic source of nutrients that is both ecologically and economically friendly.

Overall, the fields are looking completely different than they did this time last year. We are very happy with not only the great growing weather but the look of the fields at this time. The fertilizer has slowly started to release and the turf color has slightly darkened from the added nutrients.

Wednesday, June 26th, 2013

Summer has officially made its presence known with high temperatures, lots of humidity and most recently, thunder storms almost every day. This is the typical summer that we are all use to but may have forgotten after the unusual summer we had last year.

The warm temperatures just recently hit and so the grass is still growing at a quicker rate as it hasn't gone into its warm weather dormancy yet. Therefore, the grass is currently being mowed two-three times a week, weather dependant.

Knowing from the long term forecast that the weather was about to spike, a team from Mountainview went out to the fields on **June 19** to "charge" the irrigation system. Charging the fields means turning on the irrigation system without actually activating it to begin its regular schedule. Charging the system allows us to make sure that it is in fact working properly without any problems before irrigation water is actually needed. Charging the system has to be done at the perfect time. It has to occur before water is actually needed but we must also insure that there is no chance of frost. If frost were to occur after the system was charged, water in the pipes could freeze causing them to burst.

While the team was there on **June 19** they also proceeded to fill a hole that was by the irrigation well from last year. We wanted to leave that hole open until after the system was charged in case there were any further issues. The Mountainview team also did some regular maintenance which included cutting back some overlaying limbs and removing some litter.

While the manager was at the fields on June 19 he took note of the color of the fields. The lighter green appearance suggested to him that the fields were in need of another application of fertilizer. On **June 25** all of the fields were fertilized using a summer fertilizer. This slower release fertilizer will aid in summer growth in hot weather as well as improve overall color.

Overall, we were both pleased and relieved with the success of the irrigation repairs as the weather can become dry at anytime. The fields are not showing any signs of lack of moisture at this time but they will continue to be closely monitored.

Wednesday, June 12th, 2013

When comparing the 2012 and 2013 growing season, there are have been a lot of differences. A couple of the most noticeable differences are the lower temperatures and the higher amount of

rain fall. Grass surfaces all over the region will see the benefits of this rainier season. Although the weather isn't great for a tan, it is great for a strong and healthy turf.

The rain and natural wear has begun to break down the spring fertilizer that was applied in May. The nutrients are in the soil and are now being taken up by the plant. This results in a lush, dark green color and rapid growth. Mowing during this period has to take place 3+ times a week (weather dependant) in order to keep up with the rapid growth. If it is mowed less than that thick clumps of grass can form on the fields from the abundance of clippings. Normally, we don't remove grass clippings because they add extra nutrients to the soil. However, an abundance of grass clippings can cause turf death by smothering out the sun and not allowing the turf to grow. Think of it as laying a patio stone in the middle of your lawn for a week. Once lifted, the turf is sparse, yellow and mostly dead.

At the end of May a turf roller was used to give better contact between the soil and the turf. During that cultural control the tractor created a few ruts on the wet field. On **May 31**, a team from Mountainview arrived to fix the ruts before the fields got lined. This involved a sod cutter to remove old turf, a fresh application of topsoil and new rolls of turf.

Overall, we are very pleased with the look of the fields at UPI. It has been a phenomenal season thus far for growing turf. The sunny yet lower temperature days, mixed with heavy and infrequent rainfalls is the perfect recipe for heavy and strong turf surface.

Wednesday, May 29, 2013

Welcome to the 2013 season! What a winter we experienced this year! This time last year we had temperatures into the high 20's! What a difference a year can make!

We were excited to head out to the fields on **April 30th** for the spring meeting and walking of the fields. At that time the fields were surprisingly dry considering the field's history of notoriously holding onto moisture in the spring. We were pleased to see the definite outline of little seedlings that had germinated from this past fall. It is a sign of recovery from the dry summer that we experienced the year before.

On **May 1st** a member of the Mountainview team applied spring fertilizer to all of the fields. This fast release fertilizer will boost turf and root growth after being in "sleep mode" all winter. It kick starts the growing and the added nutrients give the grass a vibrant green appearance.

Of course throughout a tough winter there is always some extra debris that needs to be cleaned up around the fields. On **May 2nd** a crew of team members from Mountainview headed to the fields and spent the day cleaning up the parking lot, ditches and fence lines.

Being that the fields were dry, we were able ship down a tractor and large mowers that will stay there for the rest of the season. Being that the spring fertilizer was applied 1 week prior, the grass had begun to grow. On **May 8th** all of the fields had the first mowing of the year.

It was brought to our attention that the lid to the access box that surrounds the opening of the well was rotten and a safety hazard. It was later discovered that it was both the lid and the box that was rotten. On **May 20th and 21st** Mountainview excavated and placed the ground box with lid. Hinges were added to easier future access.

During the spring thaw/freeze cycle, turf roots can rise and lose some contact with the soil slowing down spring green up. On **May 23rd** a tractor and large turf roller went over all fields to ensure good soil/turf contact. This will allow for better root growth and an overall healthier turf.

We were all pleased with the overall condition of the fields. There was no ice/snow damage or diseases present. The percentage of weeds is still low from the application of pesticides that we applied from 2011 for Nationals. We all left very encouraged and excited for the season to come!