

Thursday October 02, 2014

Welcome to October!

The weather has threatened to drop below 0 a few times in the last few weeks. With the fear of water freezing in the irrigation pipes, a team from Mountainview went to blow out the irrigation lines on **September 24**. With the water no longer in the pipes, there is no longer any fear of the pipes bursting. The colder weather makes the need for irrigation obsolete. Therefore the electricity at the pump house was also turned off. All of these can be easily turned on again if a Fall heat wave were to hit.

The supply well was never turned on this year (2 years in a row) as there was a sufficient amount of water.

The mowing at the fields has slowed down to once a week as the turf growth is beginning to slow down from the lower night time temperatures. The weather is not yet too cold that it has started the turf to go into hibernation yet.

Thursday September 11, 2014

Although it is September, the season is not over yet. There should soon be some relief from the heat and the colors around us will begin to change. With it, the maintenance on the fields will amp up as most of the invasive work happens during the Fall. There are many reasons for this. One being the turf does not have the added stress from heat.

On September 2, a crew from Mountainview arrived at the fields to begin some repair work on fields 1 and 10. They removed the material from damaged areas, added a layer of fresh soil and leveled everything out.

The crew then returned on September 4 to install sod to the designated areas. An application of pre-plant fertilizer was applied prior to the sod to encourage the roots to grow. A large turf roller was also used over the sod to aid in rooting of the new turf to the soil.

On September 8 an operator returned to the fields with a tractor with turf tires and a seeder. He then proceeded to apply a Kentucky Bluegrass seed mixture to the designated area on field 10. The first of the seeds should germinate in 7 days with full germination after 21 days. As it was with the sodding, an application of pre-plant fertilizer was applied

to this area before the seed. This fertilizer is specifically designed to encourage root growth which makes for faster germination and a stronger seedling.

The fields are still being mowed 2-3 times a week depending on the weather. As the temperatures begin to fall, the fields will only be mowed 1-2 times a week. There will be less turf growth with the colder weather.

Thursday August 28, 2014

It is amazing to think that we are fast approaching September and the Fall season. The fields are currently in between applications and cultural practices. When tournament play finishes, the focus will then be on repairing the turf from foot traffic and play by using fertilizer, seed and compaction relief through aeration.

The mowing is still taking place 2-3 times a week but they will soon begin to slow down as the weather gets colder and the days get shorter.

Thursday August 14, 2014

Although it feels like Fall some days, we still have lots of time left before the end of the season! The new rain gauge system is working well with this recent rainfall. When an adequate amount of precipitation has fallen, the system will shut off and no water will be wasted. There is no more gamble as to whether or not the forecast will be correct!

On July 30, an experienced operator did a summer application of fertilizer to all of the fields. The slow release fertilizer will continue to release nutrients to the plant until the fall.

The fields are currently being mowed 2-3 days a week.

Thursday July 31st, 2014

The fields are currently in between applications at this time.

Currently the fields are being mowed twice a week.

Thursday, July 10, 2014

Happy July!

The summer of 2014 has had a lot of precipitation thus far. One of the reasons why the fields of UPI are able to thrive is because of its well maintained irrigation system. During hot and dry periods of time, the fields are able to condition to grow and not show signs of drought. Then there are times when it is with uncertainty that the irrigation should be on at all. The irrigation can be turned off if rain is in the forecast but if for some reason the storm passes over without a drop; the fields risk damage from lack of moisture. In temperatures of at times over 30 degrees, it takes little to no time for stressed turf to get irreparable damage. On the other hand, if an unexpected rainfall does occur and the system is not able to be shut off in time, there is the environmental impact of wasting water or overwatering the grass. That is why last week a specialized rain sensor was installed into the existing system. The sensors were wired into the control boxes which will automatically shut off the system if ½ inch of rainfall is detected. They can be adjusted to different levels as needed. There are huge benefits both environmentally but financially as well as there is be future hydro savings from no more wasted power to irrigation after rainfall.

With the fertilizer, proper precipitation and other cultural practices, the grass is growing optimally and needing to be mowed 3 times a week.

Thursday, June 26, 2014

When they forecasted a wet summer this year, they weren't kidding! Just when the hot and dry weather seems to affect the grass, the clouds roll in and we get a torrential downpour.

On June 11 a crew from Mountainview headed over to UPI to do the rolling and overseeding. There were hopes of doing this work before June 11th but unfortunately it wasn't possible because of the amount of moisture that was still on the fields. Even with special turf tires on, there was still too much risk of damage that could be done to the fields if it was driven on with heavy equipment before then. It was decided that fields 1 and 10 were going offline from June 9-26 in order to give the fields time to repair. These fields were double overseeded in order to give the best chance of them filling in with new turf and making it a perfect surface again. Fields 4 & 5 were also double overseeded but were not put offline as the damage didn't seem as severe as the other fields. The operator then continued to overseed areas that appeared thin.

The rain from June 13 was substantial but unfortunately there is no way to remotely turn off the irrigation. It was brought to our attention that there was sufficient amount of rain at

the fields that day so Mountainviews external manager went and shut off the irrigation as to not over water the fields.

Since the rain on June 13 the weather turned very warm and we didn't receive anymore precipitation. A couple areas were beginning to show signs of needing moisture so on June 18 two water stations were turned on.

There were a few minor irrigation issues that were discovered in the Spring. On field number 7 it was originally thought that there was a broken irrigation head. Upon closer inspection it turned out to be a problem irrigation line. On field 6 there was a broken scrubber valve which allows the water to get from the line to the irrigation head. Both of these repairs were done on June 24.

The summer season is now here and with these minor repairs the fields will be up to optimum playing and growing conditions.

Thursday, June 12, 2014

Everything looks so lush and green as we approach the summer season. The long winter is far back in our memory banks and we are looking ahead to a wonderful warm season.

One of the first and most important things that can be done to turf grass in the spring is feeding it with nutrients through fertilizer. It is always our recommendation that in the spring the fertilizer that is applied is a fast release. A fast release fertilizer gives nutrients to the soil and grass quickly which gives the turf surface a boost after a long winter of no growth. On May 30, Mountainview went and applied spring fast release fertilizer to all of the fields.

A team from Mountainview went down to the fields in order to do a little bit of clean up around the fields on June 9. This included trimming weeds, mowing the grass in the ditches and around the outer perimeter of the fields and marking every valve box with bright yellow paint.

One of the main reasons why the UPI turf fields perform so well is because they have access to proper irrigation. Having water is so important in the dry summer months. It allows the turf to continue to grow and thrive instead of going into drought induced dormancy. On June 10 Mountainviews external manager fired up the irrigation system and checked for any problems. There were a couple minor electrical problems that he

fixed and he also noted 4 irrigation heads that were broken from regular wear that will be repaired next week with heads that we already have in stock.

There are plans to overseed the fields in the immediate future to help fill in some areas that are thin. Otherwise, the fields are being mowed 2 times a week and performing normally for this time of year.

Thursday, May 29, 2014 - First update of 2014

The 2014 season is here, finally. Although a late start to the spring after a long winter, things are green and the weather is finally favorable.

It was a wet meeting on April 23 to walk the fields and assess the after winter condition of the fields. Overall, the park wintered well. There were 3-4 areas (mostly centre field) that we will be addressing with extra overseeding, over and above the regular program. Once it dries up properly, we hope to return to more normal playing and maintenance conditions.

The mowers were conditioned and brought to the field on May 15th. The fields were mostly dry enough to begin mowing the fields on May 17th and 18th. The fields were still wet in some areas which meant the tractor had to be careful to mow without causing any damage to the fields. In fact, some areas were still so wet that the tractor did not mow those areas as it would have caused damage. Unfortunately, that means that when the fields were dry enough to mow these wet spots, the grass had grown so long that it caused clumps of clippings.

While leaving grass clippings on the fields adds extra nutrients, large clumps can create a barrier between the grass and sun. Ultimately, that means that a large clump of grass clippings can hinder the growth and cause that grass under the clumps to die. That is why Mountainview sent down a large tractor run vacuum to remove these clippings on May 26th.

There was some damage that was done to a few wet parts of the fields when a Hydro truck drove in those areas. Thankfully, the tires did not damage the turf itself but caused undulations in the ground. This is a safety hazard to the game and needs to be rolled with a larger tractor roller to fix the problem. Unfortunately, those areas that need to be rolled are still too wet and we fear doing more damage. Therefore, we are holding off on rolling these spots until there are drying conditions.

Overall, we are very pleased with the fields at this time. It was long winter with a lot of snow. Thankfully, the fields are without damage or disease this spring and we anticipate a great season ahead!