



SPORTS FIELD
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Panel Discussion: Future of Sports Field Management

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JOHN DEERE

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark blue hoodie with a logo, is operating a Toro Field Pro maintenance machine on a baseball field at night. The machine is black and red, with a large roller at the back. The field is illuminated by a bright light source, possibly the moon or a stadium light, creating a soft glow. The background shows a dark green field and a fence.

The Future of Sports Field Management

Leah Withrow, Ryan Bjorn, Drew Miller



Current Trends

- Lack of Skilled Labor
- Lack of quality Pay
- Trouble with work Life Balance
- High Demands from Grounds Departments elsewhere
- Management of Personnel not fields
- Next generation does not want to work
- Where can we find them?

What can you do?

- Connecting with the younger generation is critical
 - Local Community
 - High Schools/ Colleges
 - Community Centers
 - Friends and Family
 - Display SFMA branding around your facility
 - Actively recruit on Social Media
 - Provide opportunity for those outside the industry see your work
-





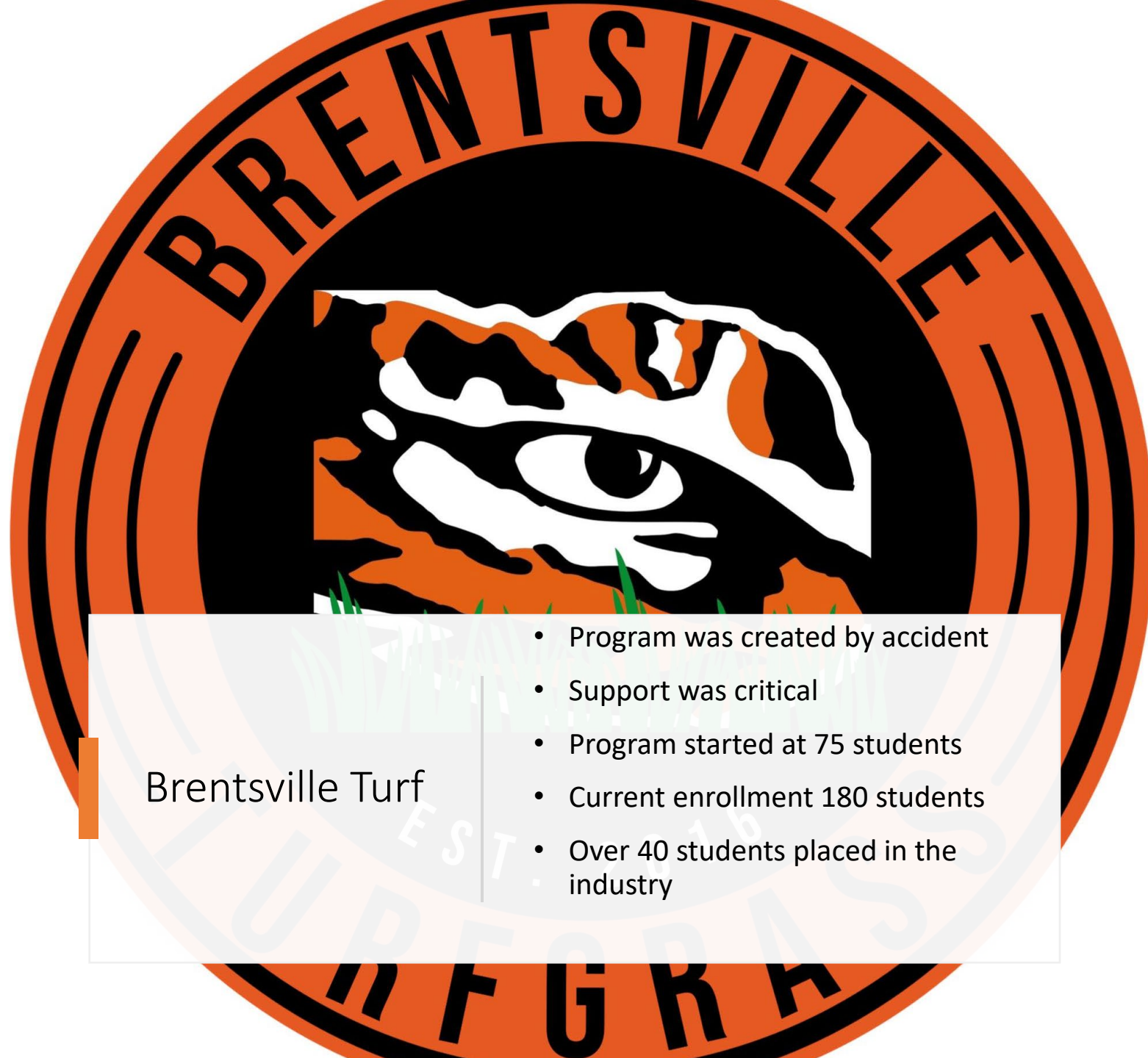
Connecting with High Schools

- Guidance Departments- Career Counselors
- Athletic Directors
- Coaches
- Biology/ Chemistry Classes
 - Virtual Field Trips



- Introduces the industry at a young age
- Provides a broader audience throughout the country from Parents, faculty, student, and community.
- Creating new opportunity for the next generation of sports field managers.
- Develop young and skilled industry professionals
- Developing support through student athletes
- Bringing awareness to the significance of Sports Field Managers

Develop High School Turf Programs



Brentsville Turf

- Program was created by accident
- Support was critical
- Program started at 75 students
- Current enrollment 180 students
- Over 40 students placed in the industry



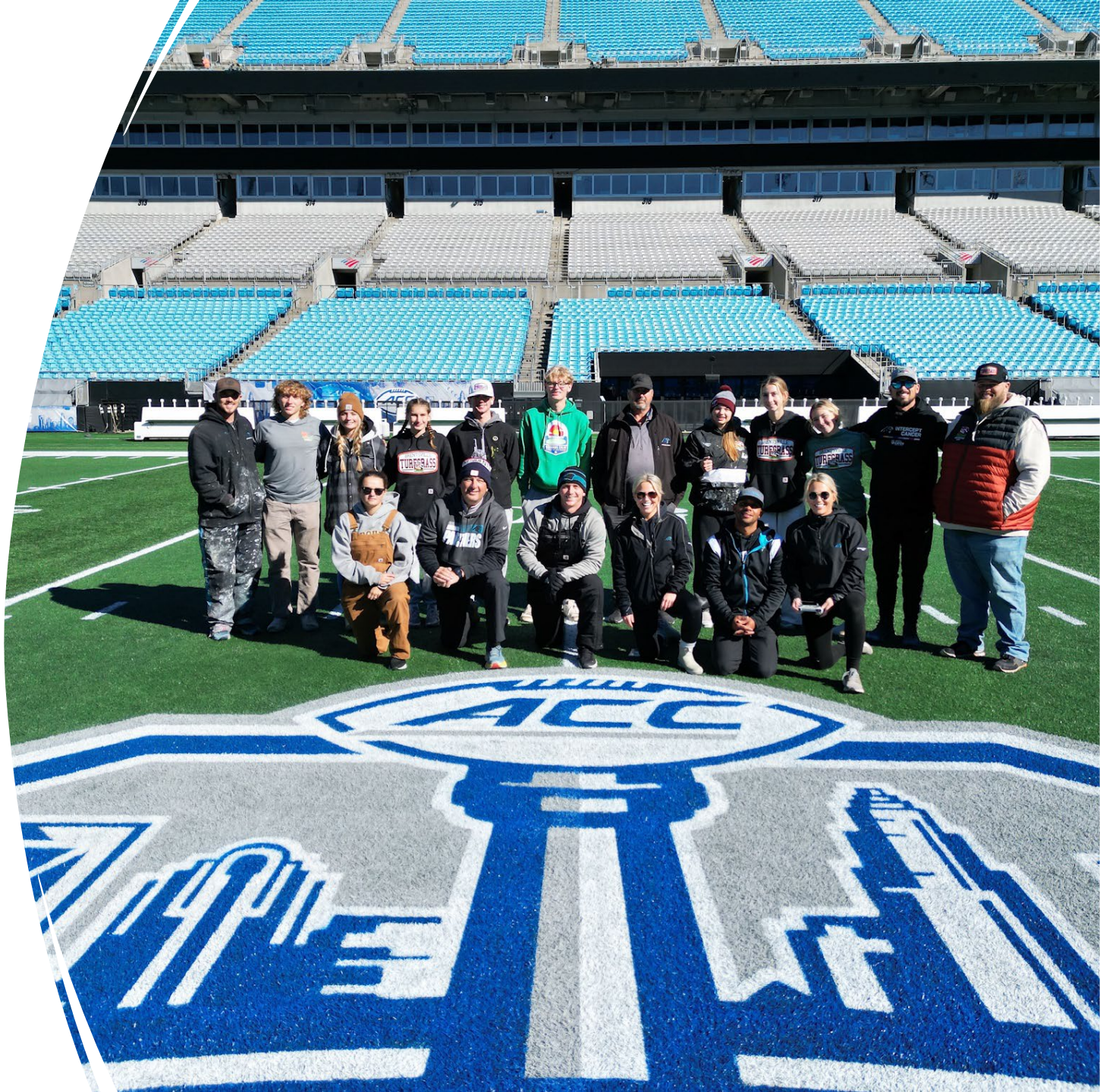


We are here to Help!

- Challenges are present
- School Board Approval
- Curriculum
- Student by in
- Community support
- Our program services the school
- Most program needs are present at the school

Impact

- Young industry professionals are developed
- Students become advocates
- Grow our industry
- All it takes is one moment
- Be the Hero a young person is looking for.
- The students are going to change the outlook of this industry forever



Zach Sedmak Story

- Brentsville Specialty Program Information Night
- Advanced Placement Courses
- Did not know this was an Industry
- Created incredible Opportunities
- Work Along Industry Professionals

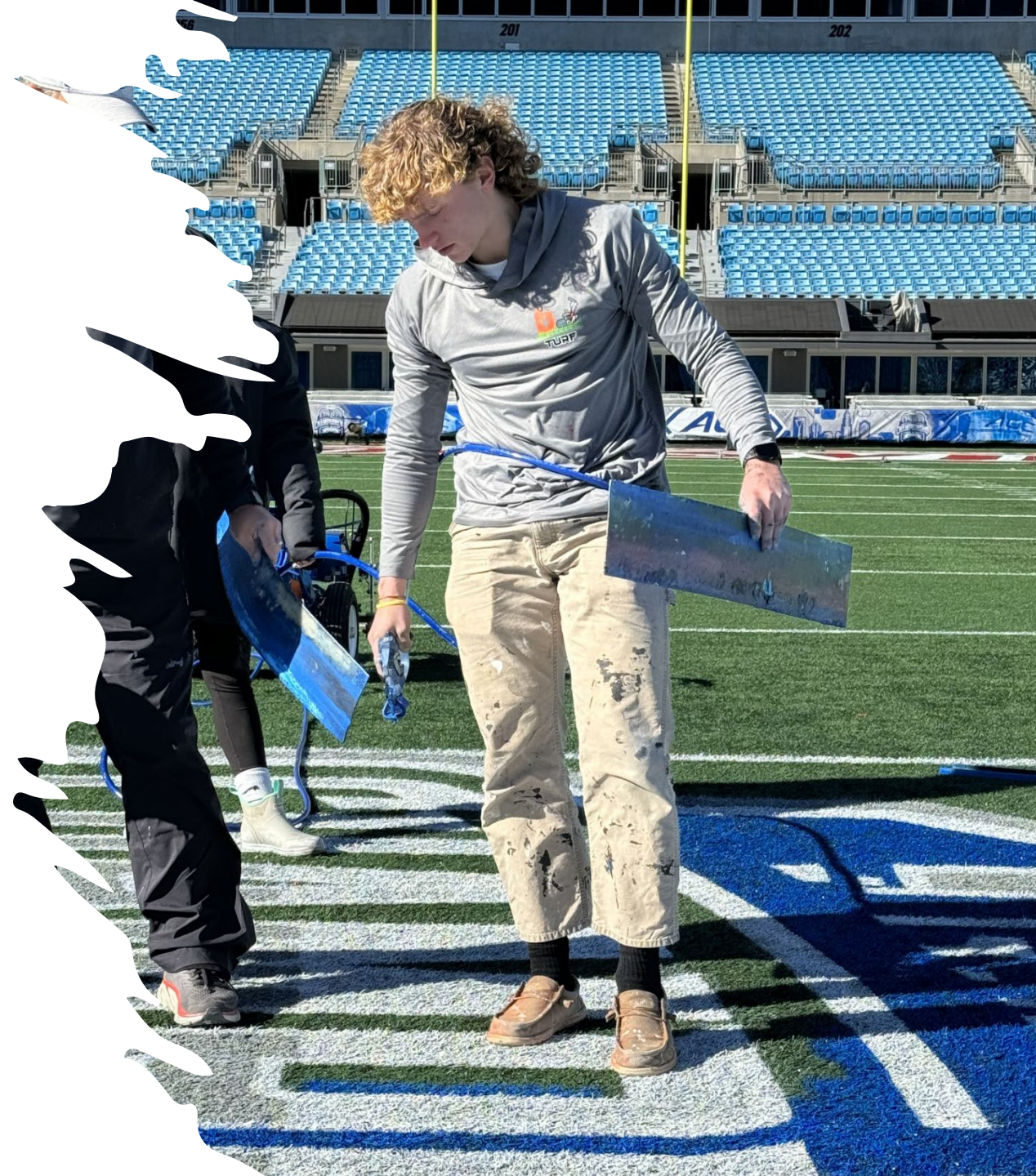


High Schooler in the Pros



Future Outlook

- Attending Virginia Tech- Double Majoring in Mechanical Engineering and Turfgrass Management
- Develop the next Generation of Turfgrass Equipment to better management practices
- NFL Groundskeeper Aspirations





Impact of Brentsville Turf

- Would have never known of the Industry
- I have gained industry skills most college students have not been afforded the opportunity
- One of the best Networks in the Industry
- Develop life skills
- Better Leadership skills

Julie Kessler Story

- Junior in High School
first year in Program
- Unsure of Future
- Loved Turf Classes
- Learned of the
Opportunity



Journey to Virginia Tech

- Field Trip Senior Year of High School
- Agriculture Technology (Associate Degree)
- Agribusiness Degree (Bachelor)
- Internship Programs





Network Development

- Opportunity in the Industry at Brentsville
- Softball Little League World Series
- ACC Championship
- Sports Field Management Association



Internships

- Pittsburgh Steelers
- Blacksburg Country Club
- St. Louis City Soccer Club



Development of the Next Generation

- Opportunity to work alongside Zach and Julie
- Become paramount in work to develop our younger staff members
- Internship programs
- Empower them to learn firsthand
- Develop them as professionals



Internships Program

- Focus on growth as professional and as person
- Develop skills
- Allow them to mess up
- Failure is the most powerful tool to learning
- Create Opportunity for Growth





Empowerment

- Give significant responsibilities
- Show them your standard
- Set your Expectations
- Implement your plan through their own
- Grow their confidence
- They should be able to run a GameDay by the end of the internship



Mentorship

- Focus on Developing the Individual
- Identify Strengths and Weaknesses
- Spend time making their weaknesses strengths
- Create the best learning environment
- Post Internship Relationship



Its your Responsibility to...

- Ensure they pursue further education
- Make sure they are learning
- Develop their skill set
- Be successful on their own
- Provide opportunities to own their work
- Push them outside their comfort zone
- Ensure their understand the standard and they are meeting it in any and all tasks
- Build their Network
- Provide extended education through online courses or SFMA Chapter Education Days



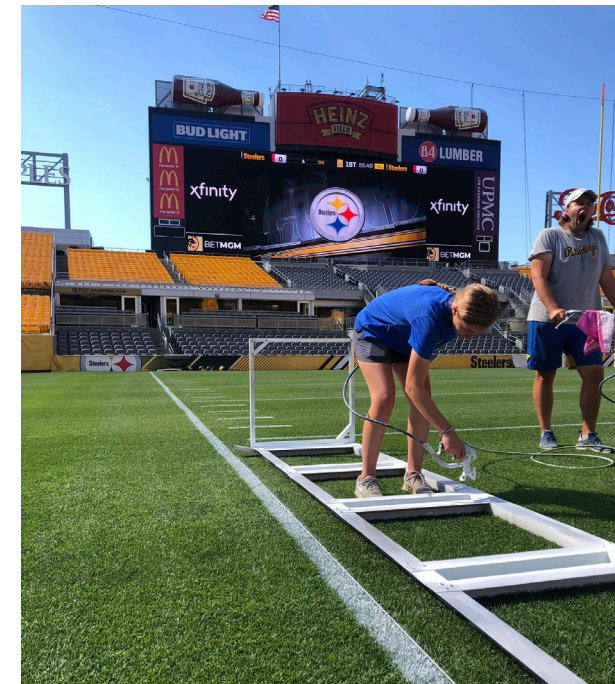
Understand

- By 2030, 30% of the workforce will be made up of Gen Z
- They are young and sometimes it is their first time on a crew
- There is a Learning Curve
- Not every child is the same
- That your Approach matters
- You do not know everything
- They are only human



Successful Internships

- Students understand what it takes to be a Sports Field Manager
- Basic Workplace Standards are now habits
- A new Industry Standard is understood for their future successes
- A Positive Relationship was developed among the crew



Social Media

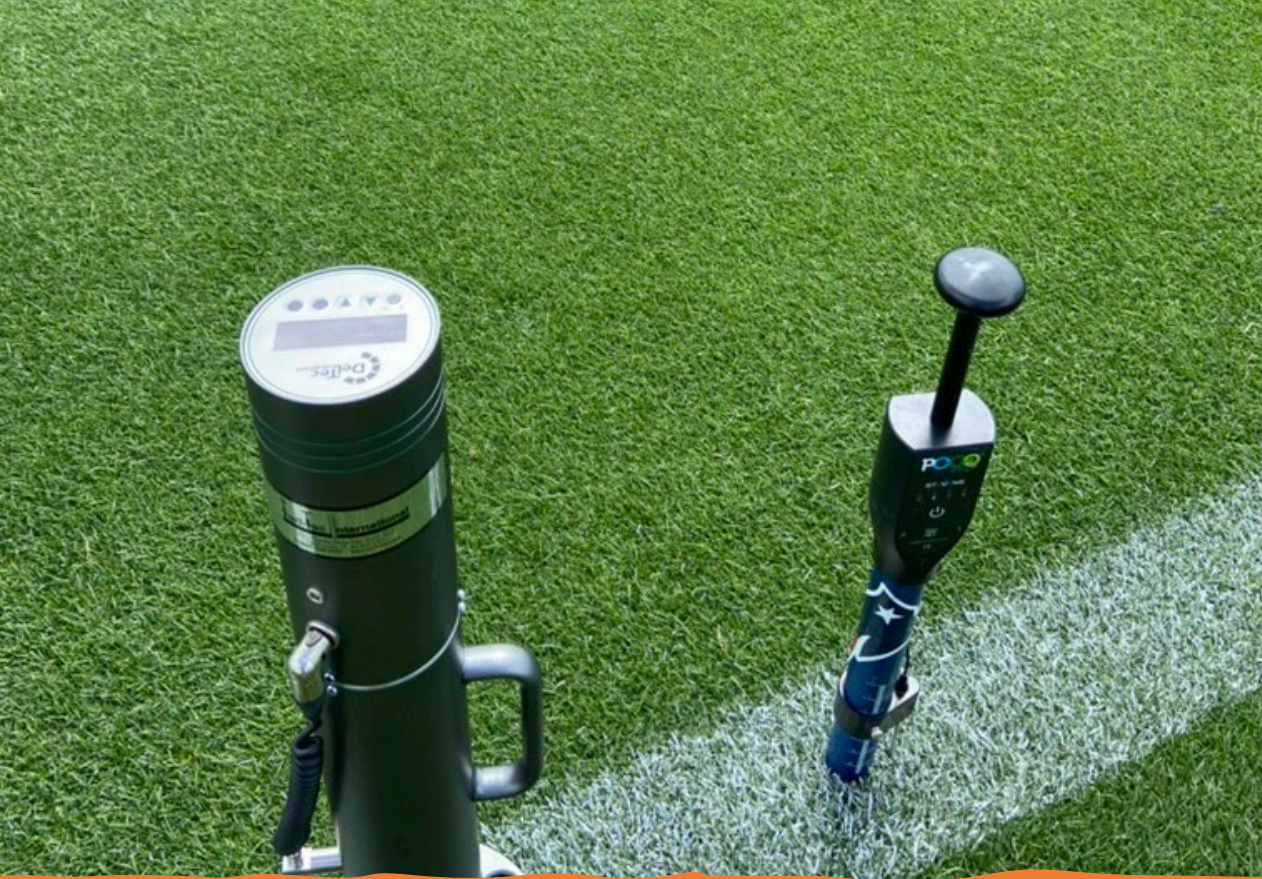
- Showcase our Profession
- Reach a completely new Audience
- All it Takes is One
- Develop a following that in turn Advocates
- Have a Strong Presence Highlighting your Work
- Highlight your Brand



Be your Own Best Advocate

- Showcase your skills
- Share the Significance of your work
- Advocate with Employers
- Emphasize player safety
- Develop positive Relationships





Educate those Around You

- Everyone knows Best
- Provide the Science-based Facts
- Provide the Solution they Need
- Highlight our Industry



Further our Industry

- Bring in the Next Generation
- Show the Hard work Behind the Field
- Develop their knowledge in your Post
- Be Personable so People Relate
- Have FUN!





Development of Current Industry Professionals

- Always push the envelope
- Set Expectations High
- Be the Example
- Trust in their Abilities

Retaining Great Professionals

- Make sure their Value is known
- Adapt to meet their needs while meeting your standard
- Understand the human being behind the field manager
- Have Empathy
- Support in all areas





Provide Opportunity

- Elevate Responsibilities
- Make sure to include them in industry events
- Build up their confidence to be able to work alone
- Build Strong Relationships

Healthy Work Environment



- Make the workplace somewhere they want to be
- Develop Expectations for the different workspaces
- Provide Incentives
- Have a Safe and Inclusive Workplace



Show you care for
their Future

- Be the boss you always wanted
- Support them to become better professionals
- Develop their leadership skills
- Create the next generation of Industry Leaders



Get Involved

- Be an advocate in your Region
- Serve on the board of your Local SFMA
- Professional Soccer/ Football Groups
- Reach out to other industry professionals
- Be a Voice for those who cannot
- Support your community

Understand the Importance of Communication

- Communication comes in many different forms
- Day-to Day Operations
- Front Office
- Stakeholders
 - Players
 - Coaches
 - Trainers





Proper Communication

- Understand your Words Carry Weight
- Critical to communicate properly for all situations
- Professionalism is critical
- Understand lack of Communication can ruin a Strong Workplace Setting
- Respect is Critical



Professionalism

- This is Ever Evolving in the Sports Field Industry
- Need for growth
- Better understand a professional standard.



Transparency

- Showcase your Experience and how you Learned
- Open Door Policy
- Share your struggles
- Support those around you
- Mental Health
- Work Life Balance

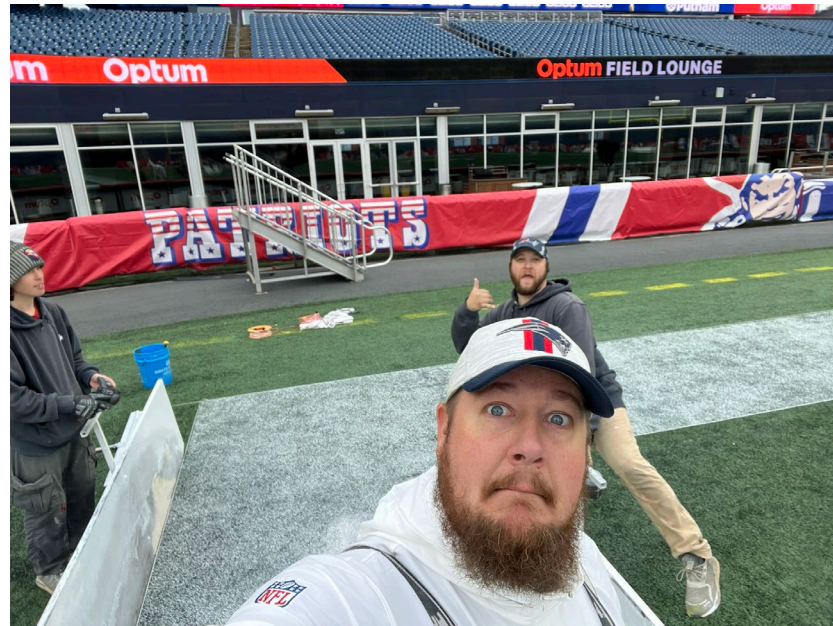
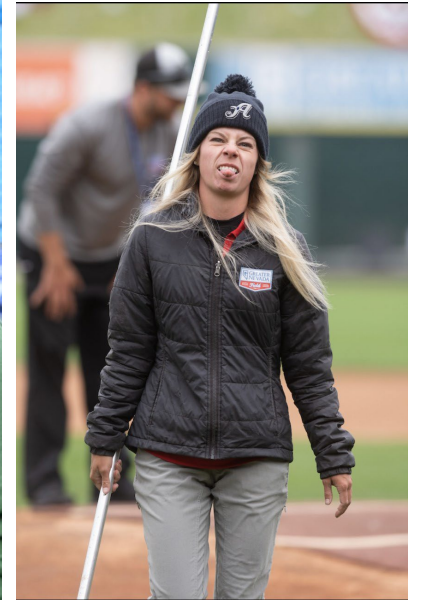
Empowerment

- Allow there to be Room for Failure
- Give decision-making responsibilities
- Set the expectations
- Create the Standard

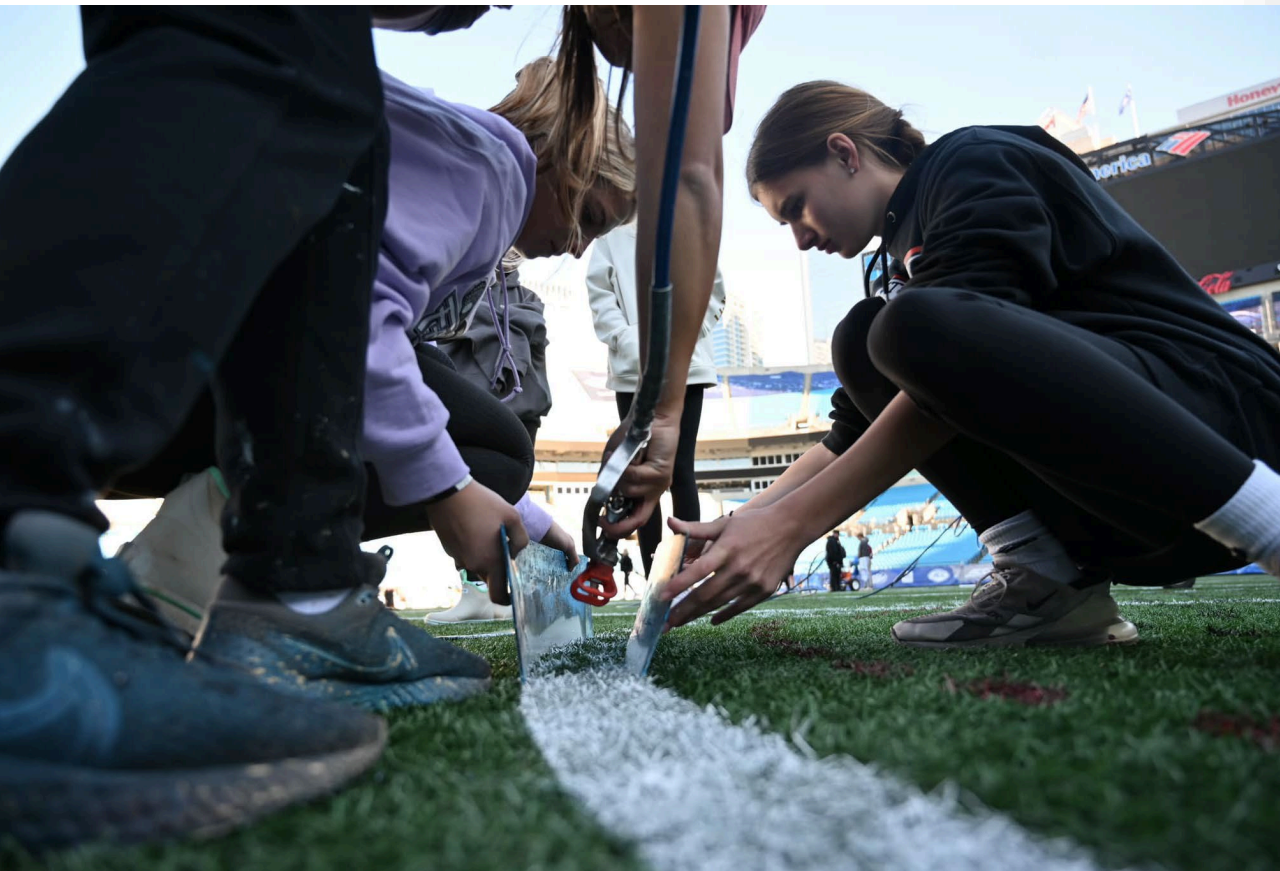


Authenticity

- Be yourself
- Be personable
- Share the Journey
- Love What You Do
- Create Memories
- Learn and Laugh



The Future of Sports Field Management



- How can you make the difference?
- What can we do for you?
- Keep fighting the good fight
- Get outside your bubble
- Create Opportunity

Questions