



Ohio State HCS News

HORTICULTURE & CROP SCIENCE IN VIRTUAL PERSPECTIVE - THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Science Under The Shoe Grows in Popularity



Brian Gimbel introduces students to athletic field management through the "Science Under The Shoe" FYE program.

"This is just another aspect of how large, diverse and talented a community the Ohio State University is. Without the hard work and dedication of the people who manage the field, we would not be able to enjoy and take part in the pride and joy that is Buckeye football!"

"I didn't know turfgrass was a major here! Very good program."

"I thought it was an extremely interesting session and I can't wait to tell others about it!"

The above comments are quoted directly from first-year students who participated in the "Science Under The Shoe" Ohio Stadium tour. As part of the [First Year Experience](#) (FYE) Success Series at the Ohio State University, this academic engagement and exploration program was first delivered in 2002 as a way to increase awareness and appreciation for the science of growing and maintaining the turfgrass at the Horseshoe.

study (Turfgrass Science, Landscape Horticulture and Horticulture & Crop Science department. After a stadium and field history lesson, students are invited onto the field to experience the turf close-up while tour presenters answer their questions.

The "Science Under The Shoe" FYE event introduces students to the major areas of



Sports Turf Specialist Pam Sherratt works to insure player safety on all turf fields.

As the event grows in popularity from year to year, the attendance has reached full capacity, with approximately 90 students participating in each of four tours held in October. This year, despite adverse weather conditions, the H&CS majors were introduced to a total of 340 new students in just two days.

OSU Alum **Brian Gimbel**, (BS 1994 Agronomy) Athletic Grounds Superintendent for the university, paired up with Turfgrass Extension Specialist **Pam Sherratt** to give a compelling talk that incorporated the stadium's history as well as the history and science of the turf. "It is always a challenge to keep the field in top playing condition for the Buckeyes," said Gimbel. "With the new field going in mid-season and the weather conditions this year, it has been even more challenging."

Both Gimbel and Sherratt stress that the most important thing is to keep the field in the best possible condition for maximum speed and minimal injury to the players. "Whatever it takes" is the attitude of Gimbel and his grounds crew. As testimony to that fact, the field was being dusted with sand to promote stability during the first day of the tours, and tarped by the crew on the second day as a precaution against

an early freeze warning.



During a tour Brian Gimbel invites first year students to examine the Prescription Athletic Turf system in Ohio Stadium.

Most of this year's tour attendees gave it a "extremely" or "very" interesting rating on a written evaluation, stating often that it gave them a real sense of pride and ownership to learn about the stadium first-hand.

Ohio State's FYE programs include special events and opportunities to help students find friends, adjust to college life, and balance their academic and social schedules. The FYE Success Series complements the required university survey course by addressing transitional challenges new students face. More than 300 seminars conducted by campus experts, community leaders, and well-known personalities help students transition smoothly to college life and make the most of their time at Ohio State. The nine themes emphasized are academic engagement and exploration; alcohol and other drug awareness; anxiety and mental health; current issues; diversity; financial and debt management; health and wellness; leadership; and sexual health.

Many of the students who participated are enthusiastic about studying turfgrass science.

"I will now look at the turf differently whenever I watch a sporting event."

"I would love to have a career dealing with sports and this major gives me that

opportunity."

"I enjoyed this session and it made me think about a profession in turf/landscape science."

Story by [Mary Rose Molinaro](#), photos and web publishing by [Victor van Buchem](#).

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