

Victory at Victory Field
Ken Quandt, Regional Manager

Victory Field in Indianapolis, Indiana is the home of the AAA Indianapolis Indians baseball team. It is a magnificent venue for baseball and it is recognized as one of the finest minor league baseball facilities in the country. The playing field is constructed on a base of sand that is 10 inches thick and it is covered with a blend of improved bluegrasses that were sodded in the fall of 2003.

Head Groundskeeper, Jamie Mehringer, does a tremendous job in keeping it immaculate. Victory Field is located in a climatic zone that is conducive to many types of turf diseases. "The field has experienced some type of turf disease every year from 1999 to 2005, despite being sprayed regularly with some of the best plant protectants known to mankind," says Jamie. "In 2005, the big problem was Summer Patch. The best synthetic fertility practices and regular applications of fungicides were only marginally effective. There was still some turf loss and the surviving turf was not tolerant enough to stand up to the traffic from prolonged home stands."

That fall, Jamie decided to change his turf program. After doing a considerable amount of research, he decided upon a program that uses Nature Safe 10-2-8 and 12-2-6 as his base fertilizers. "My goal was to produce a strong healthy turf that was able to stand up to the traffic patterns. I also wanted a healthy soil microbe system that was better able to suppress diseases that regularly plague the field," said Jamie. Nature Safe 12-2-6, supplemented with ammonium sulfate, was applied in late fall and early spring. Nature Safe 10-2-8 was applied monthly at one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. for the rest of the year. Jamie followed this program for the entire 2006 season. Due to the high profile nature of the facility he kept up his regular applications of fungicides.

For the first time since 1999, Jamie went through an entire season with no disease outbreaks of any kind despite suffering through one of the most severe summers in recent memory. The wear tolerance was much better than in the past and the color was better than ever before. At the same time, shoot growth was limited. Mowing the field every other day resulted in limited clipping yield and no flushes of growth.

"One of the things I like about using Nature Safe in my program is that I never have to worry about accidental fertilizer burns at any time, even in the hottest weather.

Jamie is continuing with a Nature Safe program in 2007. He knows that a healthy soil microbe system is the key to success. "Nature Safe is my fertilizer of choice because it provides a turf that is healthy, dense and grows evenly in all weather conditions. Its reliable performance meets and exceeds my high demands."