

# TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

*For the past 16 years Alpenrose Dairy Stadium has hosted world class events, but volunteers are needed to make that continue.*

By Mike Hebrard, Athletic Field Design

Henry Cadonau, owner of Alpenrose Dairy, originally built the Alpenrose Dairy ball field for his grandkids to play on. Shortly after that, a representative from the Little League asked if they could use the ball field to host a portion of their baseball season. Henry said "yes", and soon after, an outfield fence, the dugouts and the lights were added.

I initially installed the field on the Major Field 20 years ago, and the two minor fields the following year. Originally, The Dairy only had one quick connector behind the mound and six in the outfield. Since then, all of the fields have been upgraded to a fully automated irrigation system with Hunter heads, and each zone can be operated by a hand held remote.

There have been as many as seven different Little League area leagues play their season games at the three field complex, as well as, several season ending tournaments. After hosting the 1992 Softball Western Regional for Girls 12 and under a group from District 4 submitted a request to host the World Series. Not knowing much about softball, the tournament committee and Alpenrose Dairy wanted to keep the grass infield (softball is usually played on a skin infield). After the league play and several tournaments, the infield is pretty worn down. Twice I have stripped the sod and resodded a week before the World Series starts and the field is usually at its best near the championship game. I usually topdress the newly sodded infield

and aerate just before the first game of the tournament. With the weight of the sand and the aeration it helps to stabilize the turf. During one of the renovations three tons of Turface MVP was tilled in to amend the soil.

Since Little League relies on volunteers to help with their operations I usually don't get much help during the tournament, but have two high school baseball players hired by Alpenrose to drag and mark the fields during the summer. In fact my son, Andy, now 21, has been involved since he has been five years old and can pretty much do any of the needed tasks. I usually get help from some of my baseball coaching friends for much needed labor during resodding and renovation.



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One of my most valued helpers came from an umpire at the first World Series, who came back to volunteer by dishing out ice cream and making cotton candy. While I was having problems adjusting a reel mower that was loaned to me during the tournament, he asked me if I needed help. I asked what experience he had with reels and he told me his family owned the North Shore Golf Course in Tacoma. That person ended up being Bob Proctor and he has come down every year and stays in his fifth wheel during the week long tournament. Bob has become a great friend and has helped me with jobs in the Seattle area.

Along with mowing, watering and fertilizing the fields, the request for tournament logos has added to the aesthetics of the field. I use to paint an 20' Alpenrose Dairy logo in the middle of center field, but Little League International prohibits any logos inside the field of play for the fear that a player could lose sight of the ball. However, the big logos in front of the dugouts and team colored Alpenrose Cameo behind the batters box are okay.

About eight years ago I created another challenge and decided to paint a warning track. By scalping the grass 10' from the fence, and using a special mix of reddish paint and stain, I have created an almost perfect match to a well manicured warning track. In fact during a ESPN 2 broadcast one of the announcers referred to the painted grass as a warning track during a home run.

This Year's Softball World Series starts August 13th - 19th. The schedule can be viewed online at [www.softball-worldseries.com](http://www.softball-worldseries.com) and any STMA members are welcome to stop by or get involved with any of the tournament operations.

For more information contact Mike Hebrard at (503) 705-6845 or [hebrard@athleticfield.com](mailto:hebrard@athleticfield.com) ♦



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