

# Turf Report

## 2007 Tostitos Fiesta Bowl and BCS Championship

**Turf Supplier and Installation Contractor**  
West Coast Turf  
Palm Desert, California  
Scottsdale, Arizona



## West Coast Turf Proves Again It's a Big Game Player



College football fans will forever remember the now-famous "statue of liberty" play that gave Boise State a two-point conversion and upset victory over highly favored Oklahoma in the 2007 Tostitos Fiesta Bowl held on January 1 at the University of Phoenix Stadium. Then, just one week later in the same stadium, Ohio State thrilled fans with an opening touchdown run during the BCS National Championship game.

Those memories might not exist if the turf at the University of Phoenix Stadium had not held up. Luckily, bowl officials for the two games understood the importance of having a premium quality surface on the playing field. They needed two perfect fields for two very esteemed football games, being played just one week apart at a heavily used stadium—and for that they turned to West Coast Turf.

Fiesta Bowl officials already had a long and trusted relationship with West Coast Turf. After all, they had supplied and installed turf for previous Insight Bowls and Fiesta Bowls in Arizona. They had also supplied the Rose Bowl, Chase Field, and seven Super Bowls, just to name a few. West Coast Turf had the pedigree to prove they could be counted on for big games.

For the Fiesta Bowl, stadium representatives, the Arizona Cardinals, Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority, BCS Bowl delegates and West Coast Turf officials carefully inspected the field two-and-a-half weeks prior to the Fiesta Bowl. They decided that the area between the hash marks was worn, damaged and not in acceptable condition for the high-profile game. West Coast Turf specialists got to work quickly to take out the existing turf in the middle of the field and planned to replace it with quality sod grown at one of their California turf farms.

Two challenges quickly became apparent, however, when deciding which type of turf to install. The University of Phoenix Stadium had a retractable roof that limited the amount of sunlight in the stadium. Plus, due to the time of year, only about four percent of the field would receive sunlight during the day.

That's where Grant Trenbeath, head groundskeeper for Major League Baseball's Arizona Diamondbacks, stepped in. Trenbeath has had extensive experience working with turf indoors at Chase Field—home of the D-backs. He consulted with the Cardinals crew and mixed his skill with their know-how to make sure the field was in top playable condition for the Fiesta Bowl.



**Grant Trenbeath,**  
Head Groundskeeper,  
Arizona Diamondbacks,  
Turf Consultant to the Fiesta Bowl  
and BCS Championship

## TifSport at a Glance

### Uses

Used on fairways, roughs, sports fields, and commercial and residential lawns

### Color

Dark emerald green

### Texture

Fine

### Performance

TifSport has good lateral growth and excellent traffic tolerance. TifSport's impressive root system can also be counted on for superior sod strength.

### Disease Resistance

Excellent

### Mowing Height

1/4" to 1"

### Cold Tolerance

Moderate

### Heat Tolerance

Excellent

### Drought Tolerance

Excellent

### Shade Tolerance

Not shade tolerant

### USDA Zones

7-11

## Tifway 419 at a Glance

### Uses

Great for use on sports fields

### Color

Dark green

### Texture

Medium-fine

### Performance

One of the most durable grasses on the market, 419 recovers quickly from injury and is highly resistant to disease. Its fine texture and soft blade provides a soft cushion for players.

### Disease Resistance

Superior

### Mowing Height

1/4" to 1"

### Cold Tolerance

Moderate

### Heat Tolerance

Excellent

### Drought Tolerance

Superior

### Shade Tolerance

Not shade tolerant

### USDA Zones

7-11

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Life is short. Sod it!  
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"Knowing we weren't going to have a lot of sunlight, we needed quality turf that would bounce back even with heavy traffic," Trenbeath said. "Having a company like West Coast Turf as the supplier was essential because they had dealt with situations like this before. They have several farm locations so we had different varieties and soil types to choose from. I knew they could supply the type of turf necessary for a high-profile college bowl game."

Officials decided to install West Coast Turf's sand-based TifSport bermudagrass overseeded with Chaparral ryegrass. On December 21, 2006, workers laid a total of 30,000 square feet of one-and-a-half inch turf. But there were a few more challenges to overcome. The new sod was put to the test because the Fiesta Bowl held their annual band competition just two days prior to the football game. That meant hundreds of feet twisting, turning and trampling the field. The turf withstood the band contest and, with the help of Trenbeath and the crew prepping the field, held up perfectly for the exciting Oklahoma/Boise State game.

With the Fiesta Bowl completed, all focus was quickly turned to preparing for the BCS National Championship on January 8, 2007. Because of the very short timeframe, officials had previously decided to overlay the entire field—without removing any of the Fiesta Bowl field—at the University of Phoenix Stadium for the BCS game. West Coast Turf, along with Trenbeath and his crew, had just one week to lay down the new turf, get the turf into top playing condition, and have it freshly painted with all the field lines and logos necessary for a championship game.

"We wanted to have a native soil-based material so we decided to harvest the turf from our farm in Scottsdale," said Joe Traficano, sales manager for West Coast Turf. "It was essential that we got an even and consistent cut for all 95,000 square feet of turf for the overlay. We went with the Tifway 419 bermudagrass, overseeded with ryegrass and cut one-inch thick so it would be heavy enough to stay firmly in place."

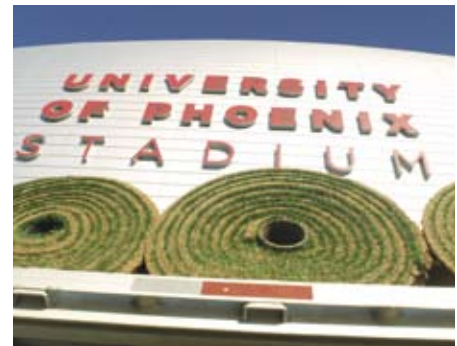
The morning of January 2, literally just hours after the over-time Fiesta Bowl was complete, West Coast Turf's crews got to work. The 42-inch wide big roll sod was brought onto the field by 7:00 a.m. and over 60 West Coast Turf crew members worked for 11 hours to put the new turf in place. Trenbeath and Traficano stuck around applying "finishing touches" to the sod until 5:30 a.m. the next morning.

"It proved to be very important that West Coast Turf had supplied a turf that had a consistent cut, was not damaged in transportation and had a perfect moisture level," said Trenbeath. "We basically gave ourselves one day to get the turf down, and West Coast Turf went above and beyond to supply enough equipment and people to get the job done in such a tight window. I'd say it was like an orchestra coming together for a symphony."

For the next six days, Trenbeath and the grounds crew maintained the turf so it would hit its peak condition on game day. That meant keeping moisture and humidity at just the right levels, rolling and sweeping the grass, mowing at the right time and length, and hand watering the field with garden hoses the last few days so the holes for the irrigation heads could be patched.

2007 was the first time a stadium hosted a major bowl game and, just one week later, the BCS National Championship game, with perfect field conditions to boot. Having a great relationship with a dependable and trustworthy turf supplier was essential, according to Trenbeath.

"When you're creating the right conditions for a high-profile game like this with such a short time frame, you have to get things done right the first time. It's a one shot deal," Trenbeath said. "You have to have confidence in the turf supplier—like I do with West Coast Turf—that they will have the workmanship, consistency and quality in their product, as well as the commitment to get the job done right the very first time."



**Crews install new sod for the BCS Championship game directly over the Fiesta Bowl field.**