

Turf Report

Rose Bowl Pasadena, California

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

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Field Manager
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Bull's-Eye Bermuda Puts Rose Bowl Game on Target

Something unusual happened at Pasadena's Rose Bowl stadium on Nov. 20, 1999. With little more than a month before New Year's Day and the biggest game in college football, a motocross event was held there—completely destroying the stadium's turf. It seemed it would take nothing short of a miracle to have a new field installed and playable in so little time. Enter West Coast Turf and their unique new sod, Bull's-Eye Bermuda. In just three days, West Coast served up big rolls of this durable yet beautiful blue-green hybrid bermuda. And on the day of the big game, Bull's-Eye performed ... miraculously.

West Coast Turf Tackles Short Deadline

Stadium dirt events like motocross are spectacular shows requiring several days to stage. To produce the hairpin turns and rough terrain, thousands of cubic yards of soil are brought in, making history of a stadium's turf. That's why such events at Pasadena's Rose Bowl stadium are generally scheduled after the granddaddy of bowl games.

But in 1999, the stadium's management considered an exception. A large promoter wanted to hold motocross events at the Rose Bowl—beginning in late November. A lucrative contract to be sure, but just one month later the nation's spotlight would be on Pasadena. Could a new playing field be ready for such a mega media event?

For answers, the stadium's management turned to West Coast Turf, their contracted grower and installer. "I told them we needed good-looking turf that would hold up," said Richard Gonzales, the stadium's field manager. "They guaranteed we would have it and recommended Bull's-Eye Bermuda."



AP/Wide World Photos

Pasadena's Rose Bowl needed a new field installed for college football's biggest game. West Coast Turf delivered with Bull's-Eye Bermuda. Bull's-Eye's dark green color and compact growth habit provided a beautiful look and a resilient surface for excellent footing.

Bull's-Eye Bermuda at a Glance

Scientific Name

Cynodon dactylon MSB-30

Trade Name

Bull's-Eye Bermuda

Uses

Sports fields, home lawns, golf fairways and roughs, parks

Color

Dark blue-green

Mowing Height

1/2" — 1-1/2"

Growth Habit

Compact, dense

Seedheads

Few to none

Leaves

Medium width, slightly coarse

Nitrogen Fertilizer Requirement

Low

Shade Tolerance

Improved

Cushion

Excellent

Resistance to Scalping

Excellent

Durability

Excellent

Disease Resistance

Very good to excellent

Planting Season

All (in most areas)

West Coast Turf

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West Coast Turf

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AP/Wide World Photos

Installed only four weeks earlier, Bull's-Eye Bermuda withstood the punishment of the Rose Bowl.

During a visit to West Coast's farm in Palm Desert, CA, the management team saw a variety of hybrid bermudagrasses, but Bull's-Eye was the standout. "It was mature in the field and seemed to have resiliency and a superior footing," said Steve Wightman, a turf consultant for the Rose Bowl. "And the color really stood out compared to the other bermudas. After hearing about its excellent playability from others, we decided Bull's-Eye would fit our situation."

About 100,000 square feet of Bull's-Eye sod was specified and an installation date set, just one month before the 86th Rose Bowl Game.

Bull's-Eye Provides Winning Edge

At 2 a.m. on Nov. 30, West Coast's crews were on the job. It was time to harvest Bull's Eye, fresh for the stadium's 6 a.m. delivery. Using special machinery, the harvesters cut the sod into strips 3-1/2 feet wide by 30 feet long, which were then wound into rolls. Called big-roll sod, turf this size covers an area about 13 times larger than regular sod rolls and is the key to a lightening-quick installation. Another key harvesting technique was the "thick-cut." A two-inch deep cut was made into the sod, allowing this thick soil base to remain attached. This would provide the ultimate in anchorage until the sod's roots knit to the subsoil, making for instant playability—the next day if necessary.

Over the next three days, a fleet of 40 refrigerated trucks each carried 2,500 square feet of the fresh, viable sod to the Rose Bowl. The field had already been cleared and graded. With specialized equipment, the crew rolled out the sod, butting the ends to fit snug and tightening the seams.

"The installation went like I assumed it would—with no problems," said Gonzales. "It arrived on time and just as we ordered, and the crews were finished by Dec. 1. These people are top of the line. As for the sod, it looked beautiful."

During the exciting weeks that ensued, it looked like the turf would be one less thing to worry about, especially since Bull's-Eye had arrived already overseeded, groomed and fertilized. But mother nature had a different idea. Rain fell the night before the game, totalling three-quarters of an inch. How would Bull's-Eye hold up now?

The next day, it was another great performance for Ron Dayne, University of Wisconsin and Bull's-Eye. "Even with the rain, Bull's-Eye performed perfectly," said Gonzales. "The players said they had great footing and were able to run and make their cuts with ease. Bull's-Eye has an excellent dark green color and dense top growth that gives it a nice cushion. We received lots of compliments from the Tournament of Roses Committee and the game officials."

From motocross to football in only three days. It was a feat that could only be accomplished by a full-serve company: West Coast Turf.