Awards Program to Boost Sports Turf Recognition

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COLUMBUS, Ohio — To help garner more appreciation for the sports turf industry, the first Ohio State University Buckeye Sports Turf Awards have been launched — assisted, in part, by contributions from an Ohio native and prominent athlete.

Brad Friedel, a former Major League Soccer Columbus Crew player and second-most capped goalkeeper in U.S. National Team history, donated $1,000 toward the Brad Friedel Field Manager of the Year Award. The award recognizes the efforts of turf management on sports fields.

"People are sports crazy, but they really don't have a handle on what it takes to get playing fields ready, especially in situations where the sporting events are broadcast live," said Pam Sherratt, an Ohio State University Extension sports turf specialist. "This award helps bring those efforts to light. The award is also a testament to Brad's efforts in bringing an interest in sports to Ohio." Friedel currently plays for an English soccer club and is developing a soccer academy near Cleveland, Ohio.

The first recipient of the Brad Friedel Field Manager of the Year Award is Doug Gallant, head groundskeeper of the Great American Ballpark — home to the Cincinnati Reds in Cincinnati, Ohio. Gallant is an Ohio State alumnus. As an award recipient, Gallant has the opportunity to attend the national Sports Turf Management Association Conference — the premiere event for educational seminars, workshops and the latest technology in the sports turf industry. The event will be held in Orlando, Fla., in January 2006.