



The 13<sup>th</sup> International Turfgrass  
Research Conference



## 13<sup>th</sup> ITRC Technical Tour Information Sheet

### Monmouth Park Race Track



In the mid- to late- 1800's improvement in transportation infrastructure made the New Jersey coastline (known locally as the "Jersey shore") a popular summer vacation destination for wealthy New Yorkers. In fact, the Jersey shore town of Long Branch was the favored seaside resort of seven U.S. Presidents, including Ulysses Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Chester A. Arthur, Benjamin Harrison, William McKinley, and Woodrow Wilson, with Ulysses Grant declaring in 1869 that Long Branch, NJ was the nations "summer Capitol". Many of the wealthy visitors of Long Branch and the surrounding resort towns campaigned to bring horse racing to the New

Jersey coast. Monmouth Park Racetrack was opened in 1870 in Eatontown, NJ, three miles inland from the resort town of Long Branch. Monmouth Park Racetrack was a tremendous success and draw at its' original location until the New Jersey legislature enacted legislation prohibiting gambling in 1894 which lead to the parks closure that year.

The new racetrack facility (<http://www.monmouthpark.com/>) reopened in 1946 in the nearby town of Oceanport. Decades of success followed, including the creation of the renowned Haskell invitational in 1981. After many years of accumulated wear and tear on the racetrack, the decision was made to rebuild the turf course in the early 2000's. Monmouth Park management, the State of New Jersey, Rutgers University Turfgrass Management Extension Specialist Dr. James Murphy, Ian Chivers of Native Seeds Pty. Ltd. (Au), and the engineering firm Mazer Consulting teamed up to rebuild the existing racetracks in late 2005/early 2006 in preparation for the 2007 Breeders' Cup World Championships (including the \$5 million Breeders' Cup Classic – the richest horse race in North America, drawing the top international thoroughbreds each year).

Rebuilding of the racetracks included surface drainage improvements, enhancing cantors, lifting of the track with K5 drainage material in a layered profile design, and re-grassing with a tall fescue/Kentucky bluegrass mix. The turf track has been a tremendous success since its completion in 2007. Dr. Murphy and Monmouth Park officials will discuss the challenges and successes of rebuilding the track facilities in preparation for the 2007 Breeders' Cup and beyond.