



Larry Hanson/Daily News Staff

Dennis Robinson of Horst Distributing, left, shows Brad Garrison of Diamond Pro how to use the KisCutter, a machine used to trim to lip of the infield on Thursday.

Slinger field gets makeover for clinic on maintenance

Seminar at softball diamond leaves field in tip-top shape

By **LARRY HANSON**
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SLINGER — The softball field at Community Park should be in tip-top shape when the weather breaks in the spring.

The field was selected by the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association for an extreme field makeover, part of a day-long clinic on field maintenance presented Thursday by Midwest Athletic Fields of Jackson.

The seminar provided information for parks and grounds personnel from neighboring communities, high schools and colleges on how to maintain fields as well as tips for making them look and play as well as they can.

Some of the demonstrations included edging grass lines, grading, compacting, batter's box installation, base anchor installation and mound and pitching rubber installation.

"They're showing some very simple maintenance techniques that professionals use," said Josh Trame of the Slinger Park and Recreation Department, who applied to have the

Field: Slinger makeover

event in Slinger. "These can help keep the cost of maintenance down."

The Community Park field can see as many as 200 games a season, with four games four nights a week, two Pony League games and weekend tournaments.

"The reason we applied was we felt our fields could be in better shape," Trame said. "We do all of the maintenance on our fields here. We figured why not have them come in and show us some of their techniques. They're the professionals and they do this day in, day out."

Josh Viet of Midwest Athletic Fields, which has been in business for three years, took an internship at the Ripken Baseball Academy in Aberdeen, Md., before moving back to the Midwest. The Iowa native said fall is the best time for sprucing up softball fields.

"It is the best time," Viet said. "A lot of time we're doing our work in the summer, after the spring season."

Viet's company handles about 45 fields for various organizations and also does

work on soccer and football fields.

"The best time to do your field work is in the fall because when you come back in the spring everything's ready to go," Trame said. "In the spring you start up with games right away. The rule of thumb is your supposed to put your fields to bed ready to go the next year. It gives the sod some time to come back ready to go in the spring."

The Slinger Parks and Recreation Department maintains seven fields in and around the village so Trame said he finds the information to be extremely useful.

"When we found out we got selected, we were excited because this field is used a ton," Trame said.

The annual extreme field makeover began in 2008 after Lake Delton flooded and Kaminski Park was destroyed in the deluge. Surrounding park districts, business owners, vendors and WSTMA members from all over the state to aid in the restoration of the park.

The event in Slinger was the third annual extreme field makeover day.