

"The Groundsman: the profession of the future of sports fields"

During the 44th edition of EIMA International, ample space was dedicated to the theme of training. Precisely in this area Giovanni Taverna, director of the Grassmed Association, presented the start of a formative project that could finally lead to the introduction in Italy of the figure of the professional specialized in the care of sports green.

For years engaged, together with **Francesco Dotto**, President of Grassmed, in the enhancement of training specifically dedicated to technicians who deal with sports turf, he has managed to identify the resources that could give life to an effective synergy. Having as a model the figure of the Groundsman, as it has been consolidated in other European countries and especially in the United Kingdom, he has sought contacts with associations and professionals able to share his vision and to collaborate in the realization of a path that allows to bring to Italy that sensitivity for the care of sports fields that is still missing.

Aware of the fact that the project must be able to develop harmoniously, it has identified the elements that should form its backbone: a correct legal approach, the contribution of experts and specialists in the field, qualified technicians, as well as professionals in the field of vocational training.

During the presentation he then gave the floor to the lawyer **Giuseppe Calò**, president of the Lega Imprese Sportive, who hoped for the importance of increasing sensitivity in Italy towards a legal framework of sports activities, a fundamental step to give dignity to the professional figures who in various capacities are engaged in it, such as the Groundsman, profession of the future for us, but already well established in other realities.

Professor **Mauro Sarno**, professor at the University of Palermo, focused on the importance of entrusting the care of sports greenery to technicians and scholars capable of considering the ecosystems that are created in the playing and training fields, which is why it is necessary to adapt treatments and crops according to the peculiar variables of each situation.

Deepening this theme, President Dotto has spread in the presentation of some cases related to the many facets related to sowing, cultivation, irrigation, nature and land yield, all aspects that the Groundsman must consider and of which he can become aware by combining both practical experience and professional training.

Giovanni then gave the floor to **Chiara Raimondo**, Referente of the Training sector of the agency formativa Setter srl of Alpignano, in the province of Turin, who illustrated how the training course designed by Grassmed can start by passing through the regional recognition, mandatory for professional training in Italy. This recognition would fall within the area of other figures dedicated to the care of the green, including that of the Green Maintainer, for the exercise of which it is now mandatory to possess a regional qualification. The training course would also allow to focus on the culture of prevention of risks related to work activities and the consequences of incorrect preparation of sports green.

The presentation was concluded by Dr. **Gianni Casini**, agronomist and Head Groundsman in Nice, who illustrated in detail the tasks and responsibilities of a professional in charge of sports green, who, in addition to possessing knowledge and skills in the agro-criminal field, must know how to deal with sports managers, coaches, players, doctors and masseurs, must be able to coordinate the other Groundsman, as well as manage the complexity of the interventions and the numerous work equipment.

The presentation ended with the hope that the project, presented in the truly appropriate framework of the EIMA, can finally take off and achieve the desired success, after years of conception, study and experimentation.

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