



School News & Notes

Schools Are Using Synthetic Turf To Add Value To Sports Facilities

(NAPSA)—There can be real benefits to using artificial turf on athletic fields.

That's the word from schools that report they're trading in their grass fields in favor of longer-lasting, durable synthetic playing surfaces, the same kind of fields used for collegiate, professional and even Olympic competitions.

Increased Facility Use

While some may consider investing in athletic facilities a luxury, proponents of artificial turf cite far-reaching dividends that go beyond Friday night football games.

Most school administrators consider increased facility use as one of their top reasons for switching to artificial turf.

Unlike natural grass fields that are highly guarded to ensure they are in good condition for games, artificial turf can withstand 3,000 hours of playing time per year without a "rest" period, according to the Synthetic Turf Council. That's more than three times that of natural grass.

Meeting Multiple Demands

As a result, natural fields that were previously used for only one or two sports can meet the intense demands of multiple sports when replaced with a synthetic surface. With football, soccer, lacrosse, rugby and even physical education classes able to use the same field, a significant number of students benefit from these top-notch facilities.

In addition, youth athletics and community events can also take advantage of the enhanced spaces. All of these functions lower the cost per use, and in some cases,



Unlike natural grass fields, artificial turf is designed to withstand thousands of hours of play year-round—and to be more resilient to Mother Nature.

create an additional revenue stream for districts.

Environmental Benefits

Artificial turf fields are designed to be more resilient to Mother Nature than their natural counterparts. Since irrigation and drainage systems store rainwater beneath the surface, rainouts and poor field conditions are rarely an issue with artificial turf, even in the wettest cities.

On the flipside, schools in areas that experience extreme drought—like much of the southern U.S.—are not left with dry, brittle fields if they switch to artificial turf. Schools in dry climates also eliminate exorbitant costs and excessive water usage involved with natural grass maintenance.

In 2010, the water conserved from every synthetic turf field in the U.S. equaled between \$6 million and \$12 million in savings. The Synthetic Turf Council says one full-size synthetic turf field saves an average of 500,000 to 1 million gallons of water each year, depending on the region.

The El Paso Independent School District in Texas expects even bigger savings, though. It estimates a savings of 8 million

gallons of water per year on each of the 10 synthetic turf fields recently installed, saving the district 80 million gallons of water a year in total.

Quality Counts

The key to realizing these benefits is to ensure artificial turf systems are made with the highest-quality materials. Turf produced using DOWLEX™ Polyethylene (PE) Resins from The Dow Chemical Company, for example, is designed to provide the right combination of softness and resilience to create quality athletic fields for all levels of competitive play.

A Worthwhile Investment

"Considering all the benefits offered in terms of expanded use, reduced maintenance and positive environmental impact, we believe school districts that invest in artificial turf will be well served over the life of the investment," said Carlos Ruiz, a turf specialist from Dow's Performance Plastics Division.

Switching to artificial turf is a big decision, but many agree it is well worth it.

Athletic directors, coaches and students will undoubtedly enjoy practicing and competing on high-quality synthetic surfaces that replicate the look and feel of natural grass.

School districts will appreciate the return on investment. And communities will take pride in having top-notch facilities available to showcase the talents of local youths.

To learn more, visit www.dow.com/artificialturfsolutions or contact Gina Borgman at gborgman@gibbs-soell.com.