

Synthetic Turf as a Sound Investment

Since the fall of 2004, the field at Spiegelberg Stadium has literally come alive with daily practice or events/games, compared to the previous maximum of 25 games and even fewer practices allowed on the previous natural grass. Just the fact of 100% community funding in six months is testament to the community support for a durable surface that promotes more youth activity, safety, competitiveness, and school and community pride.

Instructional Investment

A national alarm has sounded, and the Oregon legislature has responded with a call to increase physical education and exercise for our youth. During fall term 2008, there were 618 students enrolled in South PE that had access to the field for games and exercise. Previously, rare days may have used the field for PE if the sod was healthy and competitive events were months away. Now, the turf is cleaned and fluffed annually with no concern to athletic seasons or events. The initial cost as instructional square footage and usage makes turf a good investment (below).

Turf @ \$650k x 80,000 sq. ft. = \$8.12 sq. ft.	Grass @ \$400k x 80,000 sq. ft. = \$5.00 sq. ft.
Turf 1800 events over 12 years = \$361. per	Grass 300 events over 12 years = \$1,333. per
Turf instructional sq. ft. = \$8.12 sq. ft.	High School Gymnasium sq. ft. = \$200+ sq. ft.

Community Use

In the last 4.5 years, students and the community has participated in over 600 events, 1,500 practices, with more than 95,000 kids practicing or performing on the new turf at Spiegelberg (these numbers do not include South PE or Band). The community use also includes service organizations use of the facility, like American Cancer Society and the Heart Association that promote community health. Even with the five US Cellular Park fields under construction, fall and spring seasons will keep all fields busy with school and club sports on a daily basis.

Revenue Source

With a four year history, the Spiegelberg turf has shown the potential of sustainment through rental usage fees that helps with the replacement cycle. With additional savings in water and maintenance of natural sod, the replacement can be planned and cost effective. The current opportunity for rental income exceeds the available time, and the competitive rental fee will continue to draw Rogue Valley Soccer, Pop Warner, and adult league teams that use Spiegelberg.

Competitive Balance and Safety

An obvious argument for artificial turf is the competitive balance with other 6A schools and in the South West Conference (SWC). North Medford High School is the only SWC School without artificial turf on campus, the new standard for varsity competition in football and soccer. Of the 46 - 6A Schools in Oregon, 33 have artificial turf for practice and/or competition. Affording the opportunity to hold regular practices on turf is important to developing and maintaining our competitive opportunity. Athletic injury studies are still pending, but generally the consistency and soft nature of the new turf appears to mitigate serious head injuries.

Ecological Considerations

Ironically, artificial turf is a “green” alternative to natural grass. America’s lawn and fields are subject to maintenance routines that outweigh any positive natural benefits the grass may offer. The use of fertilizers/pesticides and maintenance uses resources and pollutes the air and runoff water. If the water savings in dollars isn’t significant enough on a normal year, with the predictable drought, saving field water would be a huge benefit to this city and community.

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