



Why the performance of your sport or play surfaces matters



REGARDLESS OF WHO USES A SURFACE IT SHOULD BE SAFE AND COMFORTABLE

FACTS

Protecting and Serving More than Just Athletes

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The performance of your sports surface matters and I hope this post brings some awareness as to why they matter. Often sports surfaces are part of a very large project, and I think they are often not given the consideration they deserve. I hope this helps people get beyond the *"It's just a basketball court/football field/running track/playground surface..."* attitude that is easy to fall into.

Surfaces protect 3 main groups, and they are a large part of why the performance of your sport surface matters:

Athletes/Students/Children

A sport /play surface can create a comfortable environment for your users, and may even reduce injuries. (Gmax and HIC testing of artificial turf and safety surfacing in playgrounds is based on biomechanical data and the levels are established to prevent catastrophic head injuries).

Your Organization

In extreme situations it can also provide protection against an injury liability lawsuit. If the surface supports a revenue generating sport for your organization (such as professional, college, or even high level high school) the fitness of your players can also affect the revenue you generate. A preventable injury to a key player can mean lost revenue or recruiting opportunity.

Your Community

If the facility serves a community such as a high school, YMCA or similar type facility a sports surface will affect the lives of thousands of additional users during its lifetime. A properly performing surface protects the community and a comfortable environment promotes fitness levels as well as increases the use of the surface.

Gyms and turf fields at a mid-sized high school may interact with 50,000 athletes, users and children during usable life.

Playgrounds in those same schools and communities may also touch the lives of 40,000 children during the life of the surface.

Accounting for the number of times students and athletes use the surfaces means each surface can easily have 500,000 to 1,000,000 interactions with users during it's life.

A properly performing sport, or play surface protects people every time they use it, benefiting and protecting users, families, communities and facility owners.

The Numbers Might Surprise You

Let's take a minute to see how quickly the number of users and the number of times that a surface can protect those users adds up. We'll use a gym at a high school of about 1,000 students, and the results would be very similar to the turf fields and playgrounds within that same community.

- ➔ 30-year life: A gym at a high school would be expected to last 30 years or more.
- ➔ Every student spends 1 year out of 4 using the gym for physical education: This group includes no fewer than 30,000 students.
- ➔ Consider JV and Varsity Sports: Visiting teams can easily add another 10,000 to 15,000 students during the gyms life.
- ➔ That means 40,000 to 50,000 students use this surface during its life, and we have not considered any adults that



Newly installed Playground surface At Wheaton, IL

- might use the surface recreationally, or coaches, trainers and referees.
- ➔ 500,000 interactions: Don't forget that each of these students use this surface several times a year. If we assume that each user uses it 100 times during high school, we can estimate that the surface interacts with users at least 350,000 to 500,000 times.
- ➔ What about 1,000,000 interactions? The above scenario assumed a use rate of 25 times a year which is very conservative, and it ignores non-community uses beyond traditional JV and varsity sports. Altering the assumptions just a little quickly elevates the number to 1,000,000 interactions.

Don't forget Revenue

Some surfaces may have an additional consideration beyond the sheer number of users. What could a preventable injury do to revenue generated by that sport or venue.

A professional or college sport, and even large high school sports are large revenue generators. Athletes get injured, and some injuries limit their playing time, other injuries may be for a short duration (concussion), and others may mean the loss of the season (torn ACL). The timing and consequence can both be significant:

- ➔ **Consider right before a bowl game or tournament run:** Limited play by even one key player can alter the outcome of the game and can result in lost revenue and lost recruiting power. For professional and D1 colleges the loss could be

over \$1,000,000, D2 colleges could see losses exceed \$100,000.

- ➔ **Consider a lost season:** Every now and then there is an athlete that carries a team; who's loss cannot be overcome. If that athlete is lost for a season will that make sales of season tickets slower or harder the next year?
- ➔ **Recruiting Tool?** Athletes care about their own health. We've been to several universities where their hard floor made recruiting difficult. A safe, properly performing sport surface may be a recruiting tool all to its own.

No Surface can Prevent Every Injury

Injuries will happen, and no surface can prevent every injury. However, modern surfaces are safer than ever when they perform as designed and specified.

Did You Know: Indiana boasts 10 gyms that seat 7,000 or more, 30 that seat 5,000 or more. Texas boasts no fewer than 10 schools with football stadiums that seat at least 16,000.)

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