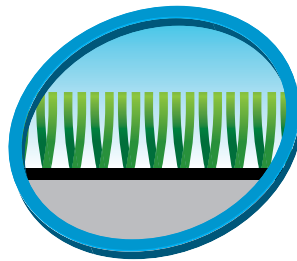
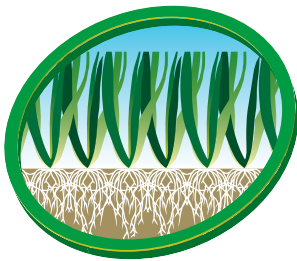


2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

# A Guide to Synthetic and Natural Turfgrass for Sports Fields

**Selection, Construction  
and Maintenance Considerations**



**SportsTurf**  
MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

Experts on the Field, Partners in Progress

There were many in the industry who provided information for the Guide. Special recognition goes to the 2005 STMA Synthetic / Natural Turfgrass Task Force for their dedication to this 10-month project and for their collaborative work on this Guide, and to the 2008 Synthetic/Natural Turfgrass Task Group for their review and updates.

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*The content of this bulletin is intended for informational purposes  
and is not intended as a substitute for specific professional consultation.*

# A Guide to Synthetic and Natural Turfgrass for Sports Fields

## Selection, Construction and Maintenance Considerations

### Introduction

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), the authority on sports field management issues, has prepared this Guide to provide basic information about the selection and maintenance of synthetic turf and natural turfgrass fields. This guide is directed to:

- Athletic directors
- School boards
- Municipalities
- Community sports organizations
- Coaches
- Parents
- Athletes
- General public

Because each field is different, this Guide offers general information with additional sources to access for your specific situation.

The Guide is divided into topics that are important for you to consider for the safety of the players and the long-term viability of a newly constructed or renovated field. The cost ranges are generalized for field construction projects throughout the continental U.S. However regional variances may be reflected in these estimates. This information is not relevant to indoor facilities or to baseball/softball fields. All references to synthetic turf are to the newer rubber infill technology, which has had more widespread use since 1997. All references to natural turfgrass are for native soil fields, unless otherwise specified. This Guide also includes a glossary of terms.

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# Constructing the Field

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The most commonly asked question about sports fields relates to the cost to construct them.

## *So, what are the average construction costs for synthetic turf and natural turfgrass fields?*

The cost to construct either field type will vary dramatically depending upon its:

- Field size
- Geographic location
- Labor costs
- Construction schedule
- Amount of site work required
- Irrigation system (as needed for each field type)
- Estimated number of games and variety of activities

There also may be state and local regulations governing construction, such as requiring an environmental impact study prior to construction.

## **Items that are Typical to any Athletic Field Construction**

Following is a list of items that should be considered when developing a scope of work for athletic field construction.

- Architectural & Engineering
- Light Towers
- Environmental Impact
- Consulting
- Excavations/Site Prep
- Permits
- Bonds and Insurance
- Engineering & As-builts
- Surveys
- Earthwork/Grading
- Proper Sourcing and Quality Control Testing of Rootzone and Drainage Materials
- Erosion & Sediment Control
  - (a) Silt Fence
  - (b) Inlet Sediment Trap
  - (c) Construction Entrance
  - (d) Permanent Grassing
  - (e) Monitoring
- Storm Drainage System
  - (a) Perimeter Drain
  - (b) Tie into Catch Basin
  - (c) Outfall installations
  - (d) Base Trench Drain
- Bleachers
- Sidewalks
- Fencing

To help you calculate average construction costs for synthetic and natural turfgrass fields, the actual playing surface of U.S. football fields are typically 360' x 160' or 57,600 sq. ft. Normally, a field will extend at least another 15' around the playing field boundary.



Example of a synthetic field pad showing its thickness. Photo: Darian Daily

## Synthetic turf

Additional factors may affect the cost of constructing a synthetic turf field. These include:

- Accessibility for heavy equipment
- Type of underground drainage system
- Drainage profile
- Cost of freight
- Design and engineering
- Edge material
- Type of attachment along edges
- Turf density or denier as they vary from product to product
- Type of backing
- Sewed or glued lines and seams
- Type of pad and its thickness (optional-if necessary)
- Type and quantity of infill
- Intricacy of logos and end-zone lettering, borders and other inlaid markings



Construction profile for a synthetic field. Photo: Darian Daily



Seam construction on a synthetic field. Photo: Darian Daily

Following is a typical cost range and what is included in that range to build a single synthetic field.

### **Synthetic Infill- \$6.50-\$11.00 per sq. ft.**

Includes:

- Rough Grades
- Curbing and Tack Strip
- Carpet & Rubber Fill
- Lines and Logos
- Geo Textile
- Labor
- Base Design and Installation
- Stone & Freight for Base
- Drain Collector
- Lateral Drains
- Sod & Topsoil Backfill of Curb
- Laser Grading & Compaction
- Equipment & Trenching



Installation of a special logo on a synthetic field. Photo: Darian Daily

- Demolition and Excavation
- Quality Control Testing
- Adequate Water Source for Cleaning and Field Maintenance
- Material Distribution Labor
- Cleanup

Optional items that may be reflected in cost range:

- Water Meters
- Irrigation System
- Maintenance Equipment
- Underlying Shock Absorbing Pad
- Backflow Prevention
- Goal Posts



## Natural turfgrass

In addition to the factors that are relevant to the construction of all field types, there are some specific items that may affect the cost of native soil fields.

These include:

- Drainage
- Top soil costs
- Type of turfgrass cultivar, propagation and its accessibility
- Sod vs. Seed
- Cost of freight
- Sod thickness
- Seed mixture and seeding rate
- Accessibility for heavy equipment
- Design and engineering
- Sod accessibility and soil interface issues, if sodding a field

Following is a typical cost range and what is included in that range to build a natural grass field constructed of native soil(s).



Example of bad conduit installation along edge of a natural turfgrass field and reconstruction to fix it. Photo: Tony L. Strickland, CSFM



Poor field drainage on a soccer field improperly constructed. Photo: Tony L. Strickland, CSFM



Example of laying sod on a football field. Photo: Ross Kurcab, CSFM

**Natural with Native Soils -  
\$2.25-\$5.25 per sq. ft.**

Includes:

- Rough Grades
- Tilling/Fertilization/Lime
- 2" - 4" Topsoil
- Sod & Installation
- Field Lay-out & Stripping
- Topdressing
- Laser Grading & Compaction
- Equipment & Trenching
- Material Distribution Labor
- Cleanup

Optional items that may be reflect in cost range:

- Water meters
- Irrigation System - optional in some regions and necessary in others
- Turfgrass establishment
- Maintenance Equipment
- Backflow Prevention
- Goal Posts

**Natural with On-site Native Soil -  
\$0.90 - \$1.50 per sq. ft.**

(no added top soil or sod)

Includes:

- Rough Grades
- Laser Grading
- Seed or Sprigging
- Clean Up
- Final Tillage, Fertilization, Lime Addition

Optional items that may be reflected in cost range:

- Turfgrass Establishment
- Irrigation System - optional in some regions and necessary in others.

Although this guide specifically focuses on native soil fields, it may be helpful for comparison purposes to have cost ranges for constructing two types of sand-modified fields. These ranges also

assume that the excavated subgrade is already provided.

**Natural with Sand and Drainage -  
\$7.00-\$10.00 per sq. ft.**

This includes everything noted in constructing a natural with native soils field, excluding the topsoil; with the addition of an 8" - 12" sand rootzone, 4" - 6" perforated piping trenched below a 3" - 4" gravel layer. These fields are typically built for colleges or professional sports where play must occur during almost any weather condition.

**Natural with Sand Cap -  
\$4.00 - \$6.50 per sq. ft.**

This includes everything noted in constructing a natural with native soils field, but replaces the topsoil with a 4"-6" sand layer.

Because many factors can contribute to the field's construction cost, it is recommended that your sports turf manager researches recent field construction that has like characteristics and a similar environment. For further information, contact the STMA at ph. 800-323-3875 for referral to relevant local and regional resources. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the ASTM, [www.ASTM.org](http://www.ASTM.org), which has released a standard on sand-based field construction (F2396-04); the Synthetic Turf Council, [www.syntheticurfCouncil.org/](http://www.syntheticurfCouncil.org/), the American Sports Builders Association, [www.sportsbuilders.org](http://www.sportsbuilders.org) and the Turfgrass Producers International (TPI) at [www.turfgrassod.org/](http://www.turfgrassod.org/).

# Protecting the Asset: Your Field

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*What are the typical maintenance activities for proper management of synthetic and natural turfgrass fields?*

As with any major asset, synthetic and natural turfgrass sports fields need well-planned and funded management programs to protect the owner's investment. This includes hiring a dedicated and knowledgeable sports turf manager to develop and implement the program. Management of both surfaces also requires a budget that reflects the amount of activities that may be on the fields. The budget must have the flexibility to expand as the demand for field time increases.

Maintenance and cultural practices will vary based upon these factors:

- amount of use and level of play
- multi-sport use
- weather and climate
- soil and terrain
- water availability and irrigation system
- budget including personnel availability
- owner's goals
- type and quality of field construction
- field security (protection against vandalism, non-regulated play, etc.)

A sports turf manager can develop a cost effective program specific to each field's requirements. For further field management information, contact the STMA at ph. 800-323-3875, for referral to relevant local and regional resources.



## Synthetic turf

All synthetic turf manufacturers have recommended maintenance practices. These include sweeping, dragging, loosening and redistributing of infill and cleaning. Cleaning may involve watering and the use of special solvents and cleansers. Depending upon use and weather conditions, a sand-rubber mix may need to be added annually to help restore the field's resiliency. The sports turf manager will also need special knowledge in troubleshooting and minor repairs, such as seam repair and snow removal. The installer can provide this information per the manufacturer's guidelines.



Irrigating synthetic turf. Photo: Darian Daily

On a multi-use field, develop a plan that follows the manufacturer's recommendations for changing markings. Options may include using different paint colors for different sports; painting over existing lines with green paint; or removing the lines and repainting.

### Typical Maintenance Costs

The typical cost range to maintain a synthetic field will vary. However, an average field can require approximately \$6,000 per year in material costs (not including equipment) and require 375 labor hours per year to maintain.\* It is much more expensive to maintain synthetic fields that are highly visible or when used for multiple sports. The cost can even be higher if field markings must be painted and cleaned often, or if frequent repairs are necessary.

\*Cost provided by James Cornelius, Westchester Area School District, Westchester, PA



Rubber mix used for resiliency on synthetic fields. Photo: Darian Daily



Dragging the field to prepare for game day. Photo: Darian Daily

### Natural turfgrass

Fields for schools and recreational use are usually constructed of native soils. Water moves through most native soils slower than synthetic turf and sand modified fields, and a 1.5% crown is suggested for most fields.

All natural turfgrass fields are living, breathing organisms that require mowing, watering, fertilizing, time off from play, and depending upon disease and pests, the application of plant protectants. To help ease compaction from heavy play, fields may be aerified multiple times a year. High sand fields require more attention to detail in the areas of watering and fertilization. They also require additional maintenance through sand top-dressing. Debris is usually removed by mowing, and flushing the field with water.



Example of a sports field being aerified. Photo: Ross Kurcab, CSFM



Example of topdressing a football field. Photo: Ross Kurcab, CSFM

## Typical Maintenance Costs

Many factors affect maintenance costs. Following are some specific examples to help you plan. However, for relevant costs in your area, contact the STMA at ph. 800-323-3875.

**EXAMPLE:** A Denver-area native soil field with Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass that hosts approximately 110 soccer events annually will spend between \$5,500 and \$8,000 annually on material costs (not including equipment) and will require 415 labor hours per year for general maintenance.\*

**EXAMPLE:** In New York state, a high school native soil field with perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass that hosts approximately 15 fall football games and 30 Lacrosse games in the spring will spend approximately \$4,000 annually on material costs (not including equipment) and will require approximately 250 labor hours per year for general maintenance.\*\*

**EXAMPLE:** A Denver-area sand-modified field constructed of 90% sand and 10% peat, with four varieties of Kentucky bluegrass that hosts 35 football games and 10 other events, will spend between \$9,000-\$11,000 annually on material costs (not including equipment) and will require 750 labor hours per year for general maintenance.\*

\* Dave Rulli, Manager of Stadium Operations, Jeffco Stadium, Lakewood, Colo.

\*\* John Gaffney, Central/Henrietta Central Schools, Henrietta, New York

# Managing Special Events

*Is there anything special required to host non-sports events for synthetic turf and natural turfgrass, and how will the special event affect the warranty?*

These events could include:

- concerts
- graduations
- fireworks
- overflow parking

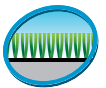
Care must be taken to protect each type of field surface. Typically, a sports turf manager will place a protective covering over the turf and will develop a plan to safeguard the turf during the event. Types of materials that should be considered to protect the field surfaces for staging and roadways are:

- ¾ inch plywood (may require multiple layers)
- Pre-manufactured road mat; and
- Geo-textile blanket.

Other materials are available for flooring protection under the staging and for the seating areas. These products should be investigated to find the one that best suits the event situation. The use of these additional materials to host such events should be taken into consideration and incorporated into the overall cost to produce the event.



Set up for a concert showing field protective coverings. Photo: Ross Kurcab, CSFM



## Synthetic turf

Concerns from these events are:

- burns from fireworks, cigars and cigarettes
- surface contamination (debris)
- security
- weight of materials (staging) if not properly designed and planned for may result in damage to the grade.

Flooring that is more specialized for seating may be necessary for certain events (graduation and concerts). Warranties should be reviewed prior to holding an event.



## Natural turfgrass

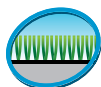
Preventive fungicide applications may be necessary based on the climate conditions and the duration of the event. Surface contamination (debris), weight of materials (staging) are concerns that should be addressed during planning. Sod and grade may be adversely affected by the weight, length, and type of event, which could result in major grade repair and/or sod replacement. When planning for the event, the field's normal schedule must be able to accommodate the additional time necessary following the event to repair the turf. If the length of the event has caused irreparable damage to the turfgrass, time and resources must be allocated to replace it. Warranties still in effect should be reviewed prior to an event.

## Developing an Equipment List

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Your sports turf manager will develop a capital budget, replacement schedule, and a utilization schedule to optimize the use of all equipment and accessories. School and park districts often share equipment across departments. Care should be taken to utilize all equipment per the manufacturer's instructions.

*What is a typical equipment list for each type of turf?*



## Synthetic turf

- Grooming equipment: typically some type of broom, brush or tine that is dragged over the field to stand the synthetic fibers up and to distribute the crumb rubber.
- Utility cart for grooming/cleaning equipment, pushing snow or operating sprayer.
- Spraying equipment: for the application of weed control, cleaning agents, wetting agents to lessen the static charge to aid in drainage.
- Sweepers/Blowers: to remove trash and other materials from the playing surface.
- Vacuum: to remove small items, such as sunflower shells and peanut shells.
- Top dressing equipment: to periodically re-dress areas that have lost crumb rubber.

**Optional:**

- Pressure washers or other flushing equipment: to remove unwanted fluids or contaminants.
- Spiking equipment: for de-compaction and/or to help with redistribution of crumb rubber.
- Irrigation system (some manufacturers require irrigation to maintain warranty.)
- Painters for adding additional lines and mechanical scrubbers for cleaning painted lines on the synthetic turf.
- Special rubber blade snow plow

**Natural turfgrass**

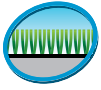
- Mower: rotary or reel depending on species, quality requirements, etc.
- Irrigation system (optional in some climates, required in others)
- Aerator: core or plug type, typically pulled behind a tractor or utility vehicle.
- Seed/Fertilizer spreader
- Weed and pest control application equipment
- Line Painter: available in walk-behind or riding configurations
- Tractor or utility vehicle to pull equipment

**Optional:**

- Blower and / or sweeper: for debris / litter management
- Deep tine aerator
- De-thatching equipment: typically pulled behind a tractor
- Groove or Slit Seeder
- Top Dresser

# Addressing Heat on Fields

*What are the temperature differences between synthetic turf and natural turfgrass fields?*



## Synthetic turf

High field temperatures may be experienced by athletes using synthetic fields on sunny days. One study published in the *Journal of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation*,\* has shown surface temperatures as much as 95 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit higher on synthetic turf than natural turfgrass when exposed to sunlight.

High humidity coupled with high heat can cause a high heat index indicating limited time exposures for athletes and can contribute to serious heat-related health problems. Watering the field prior to a game on a sunny day may temporarily lower the surface temperature. During clear, sunny conditions, it is suggested that sports turf managers, coaches, trainers, and health care professionals monitor the heat index and make appropriate adjustments to practice and game schedules. In these situations, it is strongly suggested that you purchase an infrared thermometer so that the surface temperatures can be monitored continuously. For more information, go to <http://cropsoil.psu.edu/mcnitt/>.



## Natural turfgrass

Natural grass has been shown to be a temperature reducer. According to a United States Golf Association study, natural grass keeps areas cooler on a hot day. The temperature of natural grass rarely rises above 85 degrees Fahrenheit, regardless of air temperature.



Photo: Tony L. Strickland, CSFM

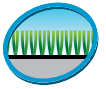
\* Buskirk, E.R., E.R. McLaughlin and J.L. Loomis. 1971. Microclimate over artificial turf. *J. Health, Phys. Ed., Rec.* 42(9):29-30.

# Protecting the Health and Safety of Athletes

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The most important element of a sports turf manager's job is to provide the safest fields for athletes, regardless of the level of play.

*Are there environmental and health concerns for play on synthetic turf and natural grass?*



**Synthetic turf**



**Natural turfgrass**

There has been significant media attention focused on athletic fields, particularly on synthetic fields. Research continues to be conducted on the safety and playability of sports fields. These studies provide owners and administrators with scientific data that will help them to determine the most appropriate playing surface for their unique situation. Make certain that the data is from a reliable entity. Be aware that there could be biased information from organizations aligned with synthetic turf and from those that support natural grass.

It is the responsibility of the sports turf manager to properly manage the playing surfaces of all types of athletic fields for the safety of the athletes. For up-to-date and impartial information on health and safety issues, check the STMA web site, [www.STMA.org](http://www.STMA.org). The Center for Disease Control (CDC) may also be helpful : [www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/) and click on Environmental Health or use the search bar on the site.

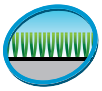
# Assessing Warranties

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## *What is the purpose of a warranty?*

Warranties provide the sports turf manager with assurances from the provider that the product is what was specified in the contract and that it will perform as expected. A warranty should not be confused with the expectation for the life of the product.

## *What are some key points of the warranty?*



## Synthetic turf

- Measurable benchmarks (impact testing, GMAX)
- Pile fiber integrity and loss
- Shock-absorbency
- Drainage
- Seam and inlay integrity
- Events that would void warranty

Warranties may have exclusions. Examples may include:

- Use of improper cleaning methods or products
- Acts of God and other conditions beyond reasonable control
- Normal wear
- Failure to properly maintain, protect, or repair
- Burns, cuts, accidents
- Failure of subbase
- Use of incorrect grade of infill
- Failure to maintain infill at correct level
- Use of improper footwear or equipment

The Synthetic Turf Council is working to develop minimum standards for warranties. For more information regarding this topic go to [www.syntheticurfCouncil.org/](http://www.syntheticurfCouncil.org/).



## Natural turfgrass

Natural grass usually has limited warranty coverage for newly constructed and renovated fields only, typically from installation until acceptance by the owner. Drainage and irrigation are usually covered for the first 12 months. The following may be defined in the warranty:

- Installation Benchmarks (survey/ grading marks)
- Soil testing (particle testing-sand specific)
- Seed/sod testing (verify product) and certified as weed free
- Events that would void warranty
- A recommended maintenance schedule

### *How should warranties be compared?*

A warranty is a promise to perform from the contractor. It is best to investigate the financial strength of the product manufacturer and check existing customer references to determine how different companies honor warranty obligations. Failure to follow prescribed maintenance practices can void a warranty.

Insured warranties help ease fears that the warranty is protected in case a company goes out of business. Most bonds will protect the field in case of bankruptcy by the contractor. Insured warranties are not all the same. Make sure that you read the warranty, ask questions about the warranty and get answers in writing, and consult with a non-biased party to determine if they are worth the extra monies that they cost.

## Other Considerations

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As you evaluate your specific needs for a new sports field, you may want to consider the following:

- Hiring an independent consultant to represent your facilities' interest. Only select qualified consultants who have prior experience with the type of natural and/or synthetic sports surface you intend to install. You may want to seek a certified sports field manager, a sports turf manager, or an agronomist who has prior experience with the construction of natural and synthetic sports fields.
- The qualifications of the contracting firm, and in particular the experience of the project manager assigned to your project. The number of fields the project manager has installed is particularly important. Other information to obtain could include the company's project references, years in business, insurance coverage, litigation history, warranty, etc.
- Owners need to review core insurance policies to confirm if coverage is in place for synthetic or natural grass fields for Acts of God, vandalism or other unwarranted mishaps. Add-ons to the owner's insurance policy or purchasing an additional policy may be needed.
- Budgeting for the cost to replace a synthetic field. Plan on an approximate range of \$6.50 to \$7.80 per sq. ft. for the disposal and resurfacing of a synthetic field.

As you move through the qualification process, you may want to ask these questions of a contractor:

- Explain the most common things that can go wrong with a project and how you might prevent those things?
- How can we save money on the construction of this field?
- How do you see the field performing in light of the usage we have described?

# Glossary

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**aerified** – the mechanical process of re-introducing air and pore spaces on a natural grass field to relieve compaction and allow quicker movement of water, nutrients and gases through the root-zone for better root development. A turf surface is considered aerified when a mechanical aerifier is used to make holes a few inches deep and on two-to-six inch centers.

**choker layer** – a layer of coarse sand or fine gravel that separates the finer textured surface rooting media from the coarse drainage gravel when using the sand construction method.

**compaction** – the reduction of air space between the soil/root-zone particles of a natural grass field, or of the in-fill material of a synthetic field. A turf surface is considered compacted when heavy vehicular or foot traffic compresses the top two or three inches of soil on a grass field and reduces the movement of the in-fill material on synthetic fields. Compaction makes fields very firm.

**crown** – the highest elevation of an athletic field used to facilitate excess water run-off. Native soil fields are commonly constructed with a center elevation (crown) up to 18" inches higher than the sidelines. Sand-based and synthetic fields utilize a very minimal crown and sometimes are completely flat.

**crumb rubber** – coarse sand-sized to small gravel-sized rubber pellets used as an infill material in an artificial turf or topdressed on a natural grass playing field.

**Cultivar** – a variety or subdivision of a plant species that, because of similar morphology and performance characteristics, can be distinguished from other plants within the species.

**cultural practices** – mowing, fertilizing, irrigating, aerification and preventive pest control practices used to produce a quality natural turfgrass surface.

**density** – the number of tillers, leaves or fibers in a unit area. A dense turf is usually very resilient.

**denier** – a unit of weight that expresses the density of a synthetic fiber. The lower the denier, the finer the fiber.

**drainage modification** – the utilization of coarse sand, gravel and/or perforated piping used to speed the removal of gravitational water after it permeates through the sports turf surface.

**drainage profile** – a vertical section of the root-zone sub-surface soil and any drainage enhancements, such as coarse sand, gravel and drainage pipe systems that will allow mapping and facilitating the downward movement of water into, through, and out of the soil.

**dragging** – pulling or pushing a mat or tine rake over a surface to smooth out undulations, re-incorporate finer particles, or stand-up turf fibers or tillers.

**epidemiological issues** – health issues that can affect many individuals, i.e. heat exhaustion, or the presence of heavy metals, carcinogens, and infectious fungi.

**face weight** – the unit of measure to determine the amount of yarn per square yard.

**field hardness** – the ability of a surface to absorb energy. Shock absorbing properties are measured in Gmax.

**field markings** – indications/markings on a field, such as inbound lines, numbers, and goal areas that are regulated by the governing bodies for the particular level of play and sport.

**Geo-textile** – manufactured fiber materials made into a variety of fabric constructions and used in civil engineering and construction applications

**Gmax** – a unitless measure used to express the impact attenuation (hardness) of a surface. It is the maximum ratio of the magnitude of missile acceleration during impacts to the acceleration of gravity, expressed in the same units.

**Grade** – the desired slope or elevations of an athletic field achieved by using earthmoving equipment. A proper grade will remove excess water.

**Grooming** – the dragging of a mat, broom, turf comb or spring-toothed rake on the surface to stand up the turfgrass, synthetic fibers or infield material after traffic has occurred.

**Heat Index (HI)** – the temperature the body feels when heat and humidity are combined. Exposure to direct sunlight can increase the HI by up to 15°F.

**impact testing** – a measurement of the hardness of a playing surface. A weight is dropped from a given height through a guide tube. An accelerometer is mounted inside the weight and measures the maximum deceleration upon impact with the surface. The surface hardness is expressed as Gmax. The higher the Gmax, the harder the surface.

**monofilament** – yarn fiber made in one single strand. Yarn is extruded out of a shower head-type extruder versus a film tape for slit-film yarn fibers.

**native soil** – unamended soil that is commonly found in a specified area.

**pad** – shock absorbing layer sometimes installed below carpet backing for additional field cushioning.

**pile fiber loss** – the reduction of the diameter, denier, total fiber and/or density of the carpet fibers due to abrasive actions, such as field traffic, grooming or other action that may affect the fibers over a period of time.

**plant protectant** – an application of a pesticide before the outbreak of disease or infestation, usually on grass that has a history of such outbreaks or infestations.

**resiliency** – the ability of a surface to recover from, or adjust easily to, change from objects that strike the surface.

**road mat** – a protective cover used to prevent turf damage in high traffic areas, such as Enkamat® and Bravomat.

**root-zone** – layer of soil in which the roots of the grass plants are found. Also a growing medium.

**rubber infill** – granulated car tires or sneakers used as an infill material on synthetic surfaces.

**sand-based fields** – a field that has a rootzone/ growing medium that consists of sand as the primary growth material.

**sand-modified fields** – a native soil field that is modified with sand. This is intended to improve the rootzone, which increases the water and nutrient retention and increases field stability.

**sand/rubber mix** – a percentage of sand and rubber particles that are combined to create an “infill material,” which is used on the new generation of synthetic surfaces. This mix fills in the areas between the fibers to provide structural support of the fibers, padding for the players, and ballast to weigh it down.

**seam/inlay integrity** – the strength, trueness and durability of the area between two edges of synthetic material, which can be hand-sewn or adhered with adhesives. Numbers, logos, and line markings are typically done this way. This is a critical area that needs to be addressed during construction

**shock-absorbency** – the ability of an object to reduce or dissipate energy from the sudden impact of another object.

**site work** – earthwork that is necessary before field construction can take place, i.e. the removal of buildings, trees, rocks, soil; installing utilities, improving or installing drainage.

**soil profile** – a vertical section of soil showing natural or incorporated layers of different colors, textures or materials.

**spiking** – vertically puncturing the soil to promote turf density and lightly aerify the thatch layer on natural grass, or loosening the crumb rubber on synthetic surfaces.

**static charge:** producing stationary charges of electricity.

**subgrade** – the soil base upon which a field is constructed and into which drainage lines are added.

**sun exposure** – the amount of Ultra Violet exposure that materials will undergo based on the amount of sun exposure. The most particular concern is the loss of useful tensile properties in products made from polypropylene materials.

**synthetic fibers** – manufactured fibers resulting from chemical synthesis.

**synthetic turf** – textile product designed to simulate the appearance and playability of natural grass utilizing a synthetic fiber grass blade constructed into fabric form.

**synthetic turf backing** – intermediate material used in the manufacturing process of a synthetic turf system to provide a stable medium to insert the synthetic fiber grass blades. The backing also provides dimensional stability for the synthetic turf system.

**sweeping** – maintenance process used on synthetic turf systems to remove loose debris from the surface and groom the synthetic fiber grass blades.

**thatch** – an intermingled layer of living and dead grass stems, roots, and other organic matter found between the soil surface and the grass blades.

**topdress** – process utilized on synthetic and natural turf systems in which a material, such as sand or granulate rubber, is applied mechanically to the turf to create a consistent, level playing surface.

**underground drainage** – system installed beneath a natural or synthetic turf system to permit the uniform and speedy exit of moisture from the playing surface. It may consist of natural materials, (sand/soil), and/or engineered products (pipes, drainage mats or synthetic stone substitutes).

**wetting agent** – a chemical additive that improves the spreading, dispersing and/or wetting properties of water.

**For more information  
go to [www.STMA.org](http://www.STMA.org)**





# SportsTurf

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