

Design for Everyday Living

ATHLETIC FIELDS I TURF A General Guide

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Americans take their sports seriously and demand that their playing fields be properly constructed and maintained to provide a safe and attractive surface on which to play. The following information is a general guide for those truly interested in sports and the safety of the players.

Player safety is of primary concern to those directly connected with a sport, whether they are coaches or parents. Considerable emphasis is placed on equipment which provides the greatest protection, but safety is not limited to the equipment alone. Serious injury may result from ill-kept or improperly constructed playing surfaces.

Coaches also spend considerable time in conditioning the players to "the right frame of mind". A well played game is often determined by the mental attitude of the players. The condition of the playing field can destroy a positive attitude which could be the difference between defeat or victory. The mood of the spectators can be set by the appearance of the field and this mood can be reflected to the players, creating an adverse atmosphere.

Each year millions of dollars are spent in establishing and maintaining turf on fields of play, but all of it could easily be wasted if the fields are not properly constructed in the beginning.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Athletic fields should be designed to meet the standards established for the sport and so constructed as to provide the safest playing condition, contribute to minimum maintenance and present a pleasing appearance.

Orientation: The orientation of the field in relation to the sun is of the utmost importance. A general rule is to orient the field so the longest axis runs north-south. Adjustments will be necessary, depending on the time of day when the field is used, the month, surrounding buildings, plantings, etc.

Drainage: Soil compaction is the biggest problem on athletic fields. It is caused mainly by trampling and heavy maintenance equipment. Soil compaction is even worse if the field is used when it is wet, whether for practice, actual play, or just by equipment. So, good drainage is a must with proper grading, soil conditioning and a drainage system. Each field will determine its own specifications.

Irrigation: Irrigation systems vary widely, from pop-up type sprinklers installed throughout the playing area; perimeter type sprinklers placed at the edge of the field; to traveling type sprinklers. Because the system used will depend on local