Long-Term Injury Study Among College Athletes Concludes Fewer Injuries on FieldTurf Vs. Natural Grass

Data builds on similar study of high school football - both concluding that FieldTurf is safer than natural grass in many cases.

Montreal, Canada (Vocus) January 15, 2010 -- FieldTurf, the world leader in artificial turf, praised the published research today which concludes that college football games played on FieldTurf synthetic turf playing surfaces resulted in statistically fewer and less severe injuries than those played on natural grass.

The research was led by Michael C. Meyers, PhD, FACSM, presently a professor within the Department of Health and Human Development at Montana State University. The official study is entitled: “Incidence, Mechanisms, and Severity of Game-Related College Football Injuries on FieldTurf Versus Natural Grass: A Three-Year Prospective Study”.

The peer-reviewed study is published in the American Journal of Sports Medicine

"Over the past decades, numerous studies attributed a greater risk and incidence of articular and concussive trauma to playing on an artificial surface when compared to natural grass," said Meyers. "To that end, though balanced by a view that the synthetic turf product had seen technology advancements in the years thereafter, we hypothesized that FieldTurf would deliver a similar safety profile as natural grass relative to injury incidence, mechanism and severity. Although similarities did exist between FieldTurf and natural grass over a three-year period of competitive play, the findings showed significant differences in injury incidence, severity of injury, injury time loss, injury situation, grade of injury, injuries under various field conditions, and temperature between playing surfaces – with FieldTurf markedly the safer playing surface.”

The study evaluated play under natural game conditions and across 24 NCAA Division 1-A FBS universities. A total of 465 games were tracked – 230 games on FieldTurf, and 235 games on natural grass. A "reportable injury" was defined as any game-related football trauma that resulted in an athlete missing all or part of a game, time away from competition, any injury reported or treated by an ATC or physician and all cranial/cervical trauma reported. "Injury time loss" was categorized as minor if time lost was 0-6 days; substantial at 7-21 days resulting in the athlete unable to return to play at the same high competitive level; and severe if the trauma required 22 or more days of time loss.

“Injury incidence and severity is a topic of much discussion right now, not only within the halls of the NFL and relative to head trauma, but at colleges/universities and high schools across the country,” said FieldTurf President Eric Daliere. “We are pleased that this first-of-its-kind college football research is consistent with similar earlier findings at the high school level. These long-term studies will serve to set the record straight about athlete safety and FieldTurf.”

Findings suggested FieldTurf fields were safer than natural grass fields to the following degrees:

In regards to incidence of injury
7% Fewer total injuries
3% Fewer minor injuries
19% Fewer substantial injuries
22% Fewer severe injuries

In regards to head, knee, and shoulder trauma
12% Fewer concussions
42% Lower anterior cruciate ligament trauma
16 % Lower ACL and associated tissue trauma
10% Fewer AC separations
64% Fewer rotator cuff tears
46% Lower incidence of shoulder lesions (SLAP, Hill-Sachs, Bankart)

In regards to injury category
8% Less injury from player-to-player collisions
10% Less injury from shoe surface interaction during contact
8% Less injury from shoe surface interaction during non-contact

In regards to primary type of injury
8% Fewer ligament sprains
32% Fewer ligament tears
8% Fewer muscle strains and spasms
74% Fewer muscle tears
8% Less tendon strains

In regards to grade of injury
24% Lower incidence of second degree trauma
24% Lower incidence of third degree trauma

In regards to type of tissue injured
6% Lower incidence of joint trauma
6% Lower incidence of muscle trauma
6% Lower incidence of neural trauma

In regards to environmental conditions
10% Less injury during inclement weather (rain, snow, sleet)
42% Less injury during no precipitation, wet field conditions
24% Lower incidence of injury during games played under hot weather conditions

More than 60 top NCAA universities currently play their home games on FieldTurf including Nebraska, Ohio State, Michigan, Texas, West Virginia, Washington, Oregon, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas State, Boston College, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Texas Tech, Rutgers, Syracuse, Cincinnati and Louisville. Twenty-one of the NFL's 32 teams presently utilize FieldTurf in their stadiums and/or practice facilities. In addition, MLB's Tampa Bay Rays and Toronto Blue Jays have FieldTurf at their respective stadiums.

The NFL Players Association released their bi-annual ranking of NFL stadium fields during a January 2009 press conference in Tampa prior to the Super Bowl. Once again, the results tabbed FieldTurf as the runaway leader among all artificial turf brands. In data gathered from polling/voting of over 1500 NFL players, 40% of
the league’s Top Ten surfaces were FieldTurf fields. In addition, four of the top five and eight of the top ten artificial turf fields in the league are FieldTurf, according to that NFLPA data.

About FieldTurf:
FieldTurf offers industry-leading engineering and manufacturing resources and leads the synthetic turf industry with regard to setting higher environmental standards. FieldTurf is the global market leader in terms of synthetic sports fields with more than 3,000 fields installed. Additionally, FieldTurf has attained more than 15,000 satisfied customers in high quality pet, residential, commercial and municipal landscaping solutions, playground surfacing and has a complete range of golf and tennis products. FieldTurf synthetic turf customers enjoy the benefits of significantly reduced water consumption, the elimination of fertilizer and pesticides, superior durability and drainage and a product that looks and feels real. The positive environmental impact of FieldTurf provides the added benefit of LEED building contributions.

FieldTurf is part of Tarkett Sports, a Division of the Tarkett Group. Tarkett Sports is the largest entity in the sports and landscape surfacing industries. Included within the Tarkett Sports portfolio is an impressive range of performance sports flooring products. This product range includes: synthetic and hardwood basketball; volleyball and gymnasium flooring; squash and racquetball courts; floor protection and covering systems; weight room flooring; and high performance indoor and outdoor running tracks, featuring Beynon and Atlas track surfaces. All Tarkett Sports surfaces are developed, produced and installed with a concentration on sustainability and a commitment to protecting the environment, providing additional LEED contribution opportunities for customers. The company calls this focus on sustainability and the environment ‘Environmental Intelligence’ and all company personnel strive to exemplify this philosophy in all aspects of the business. For more information, please visit: FieldTurf Artificial Grass & Synthetic Turf Products

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