

Artificial Turf versus Natural Grass Workshop - City Council City of Dover, NH

SNHU

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- Do you happen to have any details you would be willing to share including costs, scope of maintenance, and products that you use in your field maintenance?

- From our synthetic field, we manage a lot of areas internally- we have a tractor with a turf plow (different than a truck plow) that plows our 2 artificial turf fields, but we also have a gator HPX and a greens groomer that maintains the field throughout the year for keeping the field level and not compacted-
- We spend around \$7000 a year with an external company to do a deep maintenance to the field- cleaning up all fibers, glueing rips, and softening the field so we do not have hard spots that cause injuries. They give us a pre and post maintenance summary that gives us infill depths and different information that allows us to know when we are getting close to end of life for the turf.
- For our grass fields- we outsource mowing, fertilizing, and irrigation replacement currently- we are looking to move it internally, but SNHU wants to keep the external contract- this costs us around \$25-30k a year, and does not include the seed or topdressing sand, we buy, as well as the infield dirt, topdressing product, drying agent, spray paint, etc- which is close to another \$15-20k for our baseball and softball field- we also spend a lot of hours grooming these fields, and have a lot of equipment to maintain the grass from aerovator, slice seeder, thatchers etc- this equipment we have compiled over the years, but some is very expensive.

- Does the university perform the maintenance on any of the fields or is there a contractor that performs regular maintenance?

- answered above

- Do you have information on the annual budget that you have for field maintenance? How is that budget determined?

- answered above

- Would you consider the natural grass fields you have on campus to be high performance grass?

- Our baseball and softball grass fields are very competitive and are some of the best in the region. Our problem is that our teams finish up their seasons so early, that it is hard to get them looking good when weather (this year specifically) is so cold and rainy for so long. We also have a very competitive fall season where our teams can have practices, individuals, and scrimmages

throughout the months of September through early December- so our fields get a lot of use, when the weather is not ideal.

- Do you put any restrictions on use of your fields or put in any scheduled rest periods when fields lie dormant from athletic activity?

- We have no restrictions on the grass fields, as they are for only varsity sports- if they were synthetic fields, we would be open to hosting more events, club teams, etc- we just cannot afford for the fields to get worn down and be a risk to the health of our athletes or other groups. This is why we have the 2 synthetic fields, so that our teams can use our synthetic fields year round- our baseball and softball teams practice indoors for the use of the cages, but will practice on Larkin Field for a majority of the spring due to the baseball and softball field not being cleared for use- we have to wait for our fields to thaw from the frost in the ground, and then firm up to allow our fields to be safe to use- if they are still frozen and the teams use them, they will kill the grass and we would not be able to fix the problems in a timely manner.

- Have you had any playability issues with any of the fields?

- Our baseball and softball fields are old, but maintained in a good condition- however, they were built on a slight slope, so they are never really as flat as we can get them- this is a major capital project that we need to get done- due to those issues, we have a water issue that we are getting fixed this summer for softball- due to the water that comes across the field, the tarp we have does nothing as the water just floods under the tarp from the outfield-
- This year we have had a lot of rain delays, but also issues with having to pull tarp and dry a field that was played until we had a rain delay- so the moisture was caught under the tarp- this takes an hour or so to dry a baseball field, and get ready for a game to get restarted- and after a rain delay- that is not the best case for getting games in a tight season. We also have to deal with delays due to frost, whether early in the spring, or late fall. If a synthetic field is installed properly, they just need general maintenance and grooming, which is a lot less time consuming than that of a grass field.

- Have you gone through a resurfacing of any of the turf fields yet? If so, was the surface recycled or repurposed in any particular way?

- We had Larkin Field resurfaced back in 2012- we used some of the turf to use in other areas- from bullpens at baseball, to washout areas throughout operations space that we have- however, due to how old our old turf was, the fibers were very worn down and hard to use in areas that would be played at other facilities.
- We also took all of the infill that we could extract and used back in the new turf, this was a huge cost saving and saved a lot of infill from going back to a landfill

- Were there any concerns raised from students, athletes or the community about PFAS when deciding to install the artificial grass?

- There was no concerns from our athletes about artificial turf- knowing we cannot manage all of our sports teams playing at the same facility for so many practices and games, grass would not be an option- at the NCAA Division II level, our spring and fall teams are all competing- some in the NCAA Championship season, some in the off season- but with the amount of hours per week

our teams practice, the length of their seasons- we could not sustain a natural grass field in NH for all the teams, and all their practices/games.

Do you have any data supporting the safety of one surface over another in regards to youth sports and injuries?

- We have not seen any increases on our field from other fields in risks of injuries – there are many studies provided leaning towards grass fields being a safer option, but with how our seasons run in New Hampshire, and not having football, we do not see any differences in the surfaces.