

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

Winnacunnet High School

John Gamache Sr. and Aaron Abood

Head Facilities Manager, Athletic Director, Winnacunnet High School, Hampton, NH

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Natural Grass Fields:

Winnacunnet has all natural turf. We have 2 full time grounds keepers to maintain all the fields as well as the surrounding campus. Our fields are basically used from March until December.

We have 2 different types of mowers to maintain the fields. A Scag and a Walker. The Scag is a basic fast mower to get as much mowed in a short window of time. The Walker is the finished product mower to get the fields in playable conditions with the height of the grass as well as providing sculptured designs in the turf to add to the presentation.

We use Tom Irwin products and the annual cost hovers around \$90,000. We do outsource for the applications due to needing a license to apply some of the products. Most are Earthworks and are organic. We aerate our fields twice per year. One time by our grounds crew and the second is outsourced due to time constraints.

As Aaron mentioned, there is a lot of wear and tear on the fields in the specific locations he mentioned. There is no real downtime since the fields are also used by our community with youth programs and every athletic camp you can imagine.

There has been discussion about adding artificial turf to our football field since it is used for multiple sports. I believe this will come to light in a couple years as a warrant article for the 4 towns who attend Winnacunnet to decide.

Aaron Abood, Athletic Director, Winnacunnet High School, Hampton, NH

I will say, it's a tough upkeep when grass fields are being used almost all spring, summer, and fall. Goal mouths, midfields, and PK areas all get pretty beat up. My recommendation is to go with a turf field so that you can use all the time and not worry about daily maintenance and holes. Grass fields require significant upkeep. I do most of the work on my baseball field and that alone takes hours of time.

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Nashua North and South High School

Lisa Gingras

Athletic Director, Nashua School District, Nashua NH

- Could you could provide any insight on your artificial surface in Nashua at Stellos Stadium including the recent events that led to the turf being re-done. Also looking for the life-span of your surface and whether or not you recycled or re-used the surface that you just replaced. What are costs and operational procedures associated with maintaining the artificial turf surface? Were there any concerns about PFAS or other areas that you encountered when putting the fields in?

We went with Shaw/R.A.D. Sports and game on turf. They did a FANTASTIC job. Everything is stitched in so there is no painting required.

The surface is warrantied for 10 years. The rubber was "re-claimed". When they tore up the old surface, the sucked out all the rubber and re-used it as part of the infill with the new product. They removed all of the old turf and will recycle it. We have a new groomer coming that was about \$14K. the product is PFAS free.

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Dover Recreation Youth Sports Teams

Various Coaches

Dover Recreation, Dover NH

- Have you gone or used any fields or facilities outside of Dover including turf fields for training, practices or games etc.? If so, where have you gone and what is the going rate to use those facilities?

Are any of you using the HUB in Somersworth or other indoor facilities in the area?

If you are in a travel league, what types of fields are you playing your games on Grass/Turf? And what are the conditions of the grass fields?

Kevin Sprague, Dover Baseball

Dover Baseball used the Hub for clinics (4-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12 and 13-16 year olds) weekly from December until just recently. We also had multiple teams participate in leagues run at the HUB from December to just recently (7-8, 9-10 and 11-12 year olds). At the present time we have all-star teams using the Hub for practices due to field availability limitations. In the past we have used other turf facilities in Sanford, York, Epping and Portsmouth. We have paid the Hub just shy of \$30,000 since they opened in December.

James Davis, Garrison City Football Club

We have used the Hub in Somersworth on occasion when we can get access to a 9v9 field for \$100 per hour. Their normal going rate is \$275/hr, so we can only do this at off hours or when they have unused inventory still available at the last minute.

In general, we are often short of the field space we need, but we cannot afford to rent field space from others. I know Tucker Field is available at UNH for \$150/hr, but priority is given to UNH and then Oyster River teams.

In terms of where travel teams play, it's a mixture of turf and grass. Our fields are among the worst when they cannot be rolled since the ball bounces all over the place and there are divots or exposed irrigation heads that kids can roll their ankles in. If we are getting a lot of rain and the fields are mowed twice a week, they can be similar to neighboring grass fields. As a frame of reference, we had 2 referees so far this season express concern for player safety based on the conditions on our fields - and this is at the START of the season, before we account for normal wear and tear.

Nick Couturier, Dover Football League

DFL is currently using Commissioner's field over by the county courthouse. We are over on that field with Cochecho Lacrosse. Grass field and we pay to maintain the field and structures. We have had some leasing of the fields in the past and we charge 150/hr for our game field.

We have used the NH HUB for a skills and drills 6-week session and it went great. It was 275/hr per field when we were in there.

David Devoy, Cochecho Lacrosse and Dover Football League

Cochecho attempted to utilize the HUB for winter preseason clinics, but it became too expensive for the turf we would get, so we decided not to do it. We have used St. Thomas many times in the past for early season games, at \$125/hour. Additionally, we use UNH turf fields (Memorial Field in front of the Whitt) for practices from Mar-Apr. I believe that it is \$170/hour with lights. For games that are away, I would say it's an equal mix of turf and grass fields. Majority of the playing is on Turf fields during the early season and then grass for the rest once cities/towns release their grass fields.

Dover Football League used St. Thomas for all home games at the 2-4th and 5-6th grade levels last year. \$125/hour. 7-8th graders used Dunaway for all games. Practices were at the County Fields. They also utilized the Dome this winter. We paid \$550/2 HR session, for 6 weeks. For away games, same equal mix of grass and turf.