

## NFL PLAYERS BARGAIN FOR BETTER FIELD STANDARDS

The National Football League Players' Association (NFLPA) has not dropped its demand for a moratorium on new outdoor artificial turf stadiums and better standards for those that exist in negotiations with the NFL Management Council. The two sides have yet to reach an agreement on a contract as the opening of the new season nears.

During negotiations last fall, the NFLPA introduced a "natural turf clause" designed to tackle what it sees as an increased exposure to injury caused by the artificial surfaces. Doug Allen, assistant executive director of the NFLPA, says, "Our analysis shows that more players are hurt on turf (artificial) than on grass. The legs wear out and players get burns. The injuries are more severe and it takes longer to recover from them." He went on to criticize the padding as insufficient and the maintenance as poor.

Allen says the issue is currently on the table. But John Jones, NFL Management Council public relations director, doesn't see the topic as a major stumbling block in the negotiations. He stated, "They (NFLPA) indicated in the opening bargaining sessions that it's not a priority," he says. Jones reports that management's position is that it supports further study.

## NCAA SURVEY REVEALS NO DIFFERENCE IN INJURIES

The results of a recent study by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) reveal no significant difference in player injuries between natural and artificial turf. NCAA's Injury Surveillance System collected data in 1987 on injuries in Division 1-A football games. Fifteen schools were involved in the study, with those teams having played an even number of games on each surface.

The result was that there was no significant difference between injuries on natural grass and artificial turf. In fact, in terms of raw numbers, more injuries occurred on grass.

By no means should the NCAA study be taken as the final word on the subject, says Todd A. Petr, NCAA assistant director of research. He is unsure whether the sample size was large enough. Petr says the study will be done in expanded form this season.

## WRIGLEY UPDATES IRRIGATION, ADDS LIGHTS

Ancient Wrigley Field, home of baseball's Chicago Cubs, has always been the envy of aesthetic-minded observers

everywhere—not just for its ivy-covered walls, but also, among other things, for the deep green color of its grass.

In the past, maintaining that excellence took a lot of work, says Lubie Veal, assistant director of stadium operations for the Cubs. This year, he says, his unit is employing a system that will dramatically reduce labor input without sacrificing quality.

The Cubs contracted with Century Rain Aid (Elk Grove Village, IL) to develop a new sprinkler irrigation system. Century sold the Cubs on Rain Bird's new R-70 rotor, a large head that can be buried underground and offers easy arc adjustment on site with a screwdriver.

"We took their existing manual system, valved it off and provided them a fully automatic system around all grass areas," explains Jim Flannigan a Century Rain Aid sportsturf professional.

"With the automatic system they can now water their grass with much less labor. They used to send people onto the field to plug in the heads. Now, it's fully timed and automatic, but if they want to run it manually, they can turn it on from the controller."

There is doubt, on the other hand, about when the Cubs will become baseball's last team to employ lights for home games. Veal notes that no Wrigley night games have been scheduled yet, and that, though the lights have gone up, "it's too early and no one knows for sure when they'll be used."

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