

BALSAM BUYS SPORTEC FROM TECSYN INTERNATIONAL

Balsam Corporation continued its expansion into the North American sports and recreational surfacing market last month with the purchase of Sportec International from Tecsyn International, Inc. The sale consolidates ownership of Balsam, AstroTurf, Omniturf and All-Pro artificial turf surfaces.

Balsam AG, a West German-based manufacturer of athletic surfaces, purchased Astro-Turf Industries in 1988 from Monsanto and formed Balsam Corporation, headquartered in St. Louis, MO.

Last year, Tecsyn acquired Texas-based All-Pro to add to its Sportec Division. Sportec manufactures Omniturf, Omnigreen, and Omnicourt sand-filled synthetic turf surfaces, as well as Laykold tennis and track surfaces.

"The addition of Sportec ensures Balsam's commitment to establishing a foothold in the tennis surfacing marketplace," explained Dale Orrick, president of Balsam Corp. Richard Burke, president and chief operating officer of Sportec, commented, "We are now part of a corporation solely dedicated to the sports and recreational surfacing industry."

The purchase of Sportec by Balsam did not include the All-Pro golf and playground products. Those surfaces will continue to be marketed by Tecsyn from All-Pro offices in Dallas.

Balsam will serve as an umbrella over its separately operated divisions. Omniturf will continue to compete against its sister company, AstroTurf Industries, according to Mike McGraw, vice president of marketing for Balsam Corporation. All-Pro turf has been assimilated into the Omniturf Division based in Rome, GA. The Sportec group, offering Laykold, Omnigreen and Omnicourt, will be headquartered in Chattanooga, TN. The AstroTurf Division will continue to operate from Dalton, GA, providing both AstroTurf and Balsam athletic turf surfaces.

Industry analysts predict that Poligras and D.L.W., two other West German-based manufacturers of artificial sports surfaces, will increase their marketing efforts in the U.S. as a result of Balsam's purchase of Sportec.

SOUTHERN TURF NURSERIES OPENS FACILITY IN SPAIN

Southern Turf Nurseries, based in Norcross, GA, has opened a sod production facility near Malaga, Spain. It is the first international production facility of an American-based turfgrass producing facility, according to the firm. The company also

has sod farms in Tifton, GA, and Lake Wales, FL.

Tim Bowyer, president, said the facility was added in response to the need for high quality hybrid bermudagrasses in the tropical and subtropical regions of Europe and Asia generated by the expanding worldwide golf course market and the exportation of American golf course architecture expertise.

Both Tifway 419 and Tigreen 328 are being produced at the new facility. Larry and David Cooper, who have been involved in farming and agriculture in Spain for many years, are partners with Southern Turf Nurseries in this venture.

TWINS SIGN LEASE TO TRAIN IN FORT MYERS

The springtime residents of Fort Myers, FL, were disappointed two years ago when the Kansas City Royals left Terry Park for Boardwalk & Baseball in Orlando. For 18 years the Royals had trained each spring at the old stadium and park maintained by the Lee County Parks Department.

County officials quickly sought another franchise to replace the Royals and succeeded this summer with the signing of a 20-year lease by the Minnesota Twins. Instead of playing at Terry Park, the Twins will play at a new 80-acre training facility scheduled for completion by February 1991. The \$14 million complex will include an 8,000-seat stadium, four practice fields, a clubhouse/office building, two full-size soccer fields, and four tournament-quality softball diamonds.

The site will be developed for the Twins as well as a community park, explained Jim Lavender, director of planning and construction for the Lee County Department of Community Services. The architect for the project is Lescher & Mahoney of Tampa. Case Construction of Plant City will work with the architect under a design/build arrangement. Many of the contractors working on the project also built the Texas Rangers training facility in Port Charlotte.

Lavender said the Twins will send their minor league teams to Fort Myers beginning this spring, but the major league players won't work out there until 1991. The park maintenance staff, under the direction of John Yarborough, was trained by Royals head groundskeeper George Toma. "The stadium will have a grass infield instead of the artificial surface at Terry Park," said Lavender.

Terry Park, on the other hand, is being prepared to serve as home stadium for a new Senior Baseball League franchise. In this league, retired professional baseball players play a three-month season before spring training begins. Fort Myers baseball fans will be able to watch professional baseball from late October until April.

IOWA UNIVERSITY COMPLETES CONVERSION TO GRASS

The University of Iowa Hawkeyes, who have been playing football on artificial turf in Kinnick Stadium for the past decade, will play their first home game on grass this September. Turf Services Inc., of Spring Lake, MI, completed installation of a P.A.T. System this past May.

Kentucky bluegrass sod is now flourishing on the 80,000 square foot stadium field. Beneath the turf lies more than a foot of sand rootzone contained by a plastic barrier. The automatic drainage and subirrigation system is in operation with roots extending six inches down in less than six weeks. David Heiss, president of Turf Services, says the project was completed a week ahead of schedule.

Like Soldier Field in Chicago, IL, and Del Amo Park in Carson, CA, centrifugal pumps were installed instead of diaphragm pumps to provide suction to four separate drainage and subirrigation sections of the rootzone. And like Soldier Field, Huber Ranch Sod supplied the mixture of Northrup King Kentucky bluegrasses grown on sand.

"The interesting thing about this particular project," explains Heiss, "is the field in 41 feet below street level and there were no tunnels large enough to get trucks from the street to the field. All the excavated soil and all the sand had to be moved in small loads down a steep stairway covered with dirt. The sod was brought in a small tunnel underneath the stadium with fork lifts."

SAN ANTONIO PROCEEDS WITH DESIGN FOR DOME

Flexibility is the primary goal set by the San Antonio City Council for the city's new 65,000-seat dome stadium. Since passage of a \$100 million voter referendum this January, the city has been on a fast track to complete the stadium by the beginning of the 1992 National Football League season. This summer it launched the design process by hiring HOK Sports Facilities Group of Kansas City, MO.

A design team headed by Ron Labinski is rushing to complete the initial design by this fall. "We have the opportunity to create the most flexible multi-event center possible," said Labinski. The stadium is to accommodate professional football, concerts, trade shows, and conventions. The dome will not be retractable and therefore the stadium will utilize artificial turf.

HOK is also working on designs for the New Comiskey Park in Chicago and the Camden Yards Twin Stadium Complex in Baltimore. The company has reportedly been involved in every professional football or baseball stadium during the past six years.