

from the sidelines

Going to the game

Football is back in the news. Those of you who manage football fields began preparing for this season long ago and soon the players, coaches, trainers, managers, headset handlers, et al., will be back for practice. And you'll be trying to maintain your turf best you can. We football fans appreciate everyone's contribution, even headset handlers' (especially if the home team wins).

Throughout the country traditions connected to football, from high school to the NFL, are socially important for millions of us. In our digitized and "reality TV" world, it's special to go to a game with your family or friends to see the local side play, especially if history or geography has made the opponent a main (read: hated) rival.

The time between games lends a dramatic air to football; fans usually have a week to digest the previous game and begin chewing the fat in earnest discussing the next. Anticipation builds and by kickoff, the talk is done and even casual fans are all on their feet, **READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL.** (Those Monday Night Football guys picked a winning catchphrase.)

Football games at all levels can be true American spectacles: the bands, the fanfare, the tailgating, the cheerleaders, the beautiful green fields (though that blue field in Boise is fingernails-on-chalkboard to this fan). Then there's the best part, the actual game! Autumn afternoons well spent. Good luck to everyone's home team this season.

More on SRI: I spoke recently to a veteran Certified Sports Field Manager who has experience building fields. He related that SRI, the maker of AstroTurf, NeXturf, and AstroPlay that is now in bankruptcy, had used road gravel in building bases for at least some of their fields. That type of gravel is designed NOT to percolate but to SHED water. In contrast, this CSFM says he uses gravel with the right particle size to GET 190 inches an hour in percolation.

While the "sports turf industry" understands there is a demand for these newer turf products, there still remains a vacuum of information, for example, how to maintain them. We will attempt to address that in our next issue; in the meantime, our CSFM contact says, "There's a Catch-22 with these surfaces; they were designed to withstand more activity but the more activity you put on them, the faster they wear out." Dr. Andy McNitt is conducting research into the life of some of the newer "carpets," but final results are still years away (we'll update on his findings so far next month as well).

Finally, following up last month's column on SRI's current status, a reader asked for the company's attorney representative's contact info. Here it is: Matthew W. Levin, Alston & Bird LLP, 1201 West Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30309, 404-881-7940 or mlevin@alston.com.



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