

Underlayment can affect drainage, hardness



In Boulder, CO, Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) has more than 50 schools serving nearly 28,000 students. BVSD's operations department manages the sports and athletic programs for the district's six high schools. Given Colorado's harsh climate with extreme temperature variations and intense sun exposure, field maintenance is one of the biggest challenges for the department.

For a recent field installation at Monarch High, BVSD, having decided on a synthetic field, assembled a complete team of architects, engineers and contractors to review their various options. They then chose a Tarkett Prestige (29mm average sand/rubber infill) turf system, as well as a base system by Brock USA comprised of polypropylene beads.

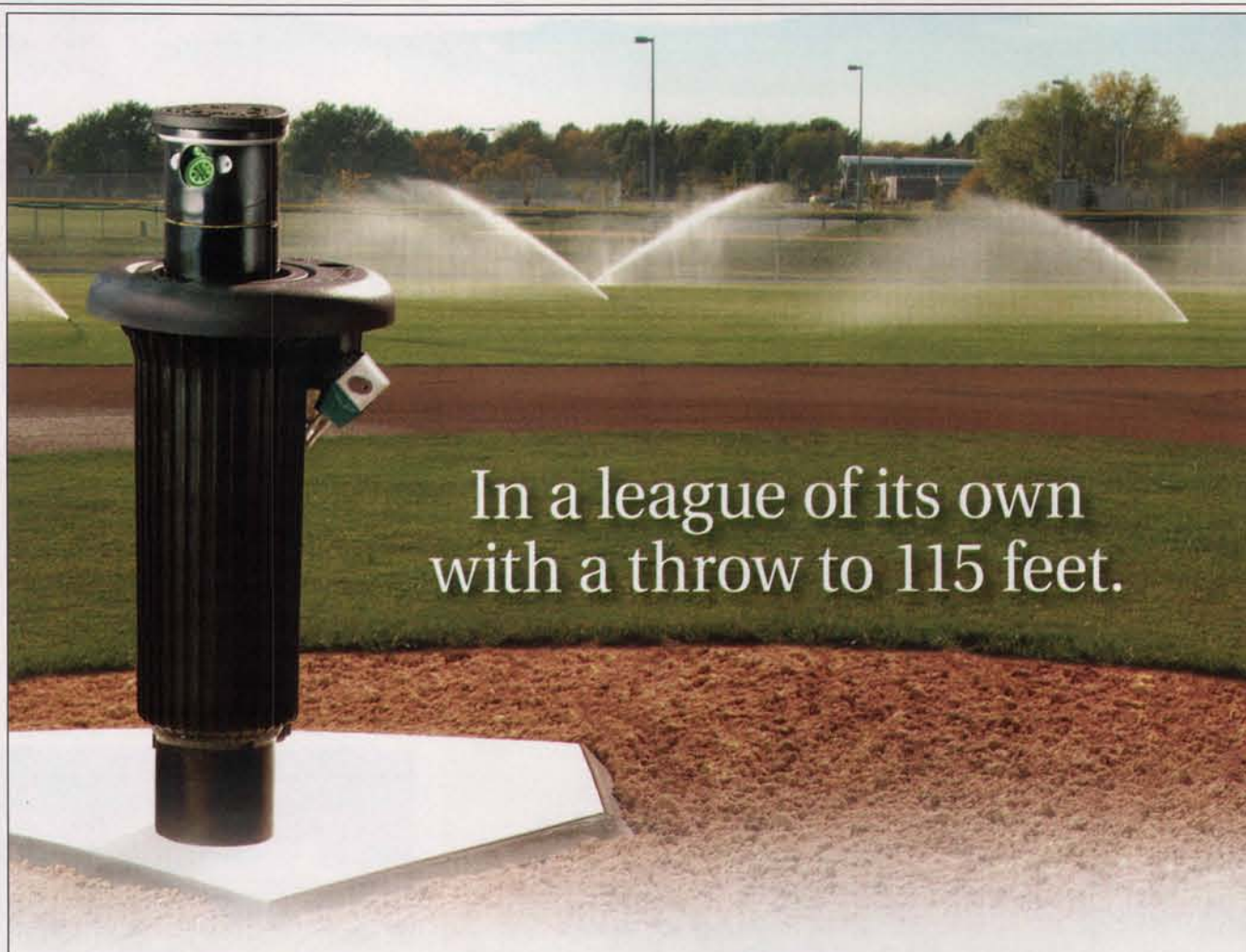
According to school district project manager Lou Novak, "To date there has been no adverse drainage incidents. We did have an intense 1-inch downpour late last summer and there was no noticeable effect on the field.

Traditional under-turf systems lower the G-max rating (a common measurement of field hardness). Softer may make safer but also slower. Brock USA says its product has the ability to absorb impact without affecting the speed performance of the field.

"The field plays very fast. We are aware of this because the District has three fields with "e-layers" under them and they are noticeably softer and slower playing," Novak says. "We had the field tested by Biomechanica last October using the ASTM F1936 and ASTM F355 methods. The average field G max was 93, which would indicate a soft field."

Brock USA says its system provides rapid water drainage both vertically and laterally, actually draining water faster than the turf itself, so in many cases a simpler drainage system can be used. The system's 4 x 4-foot mechanically interlocking panels are installed completely flat to secure a foundation for the artificial turf. The final field profile is around 4-5 inches including the turf.

According to Novak, "We were able to go with less of a drainage structure, which saved money. Other



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systems we researched can take 5 days to lay and 8-10 days to cure but our installation time was 3 days.

"Maintenance involves regular brushing to pick up debris, during heavy-use periods, weekly or bi-weekly, during lighter periods, monthly," says Novak. "We don't do much in grooming or raking as the brushing adequately raises up the turf blades. Also, given the low g-max, we don't need to soften up the infill mix. We have plowed snow from the fields on a couple of occasions and had to redistribute some of the rubber granules that were pulled up," Novak says. **ST**



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