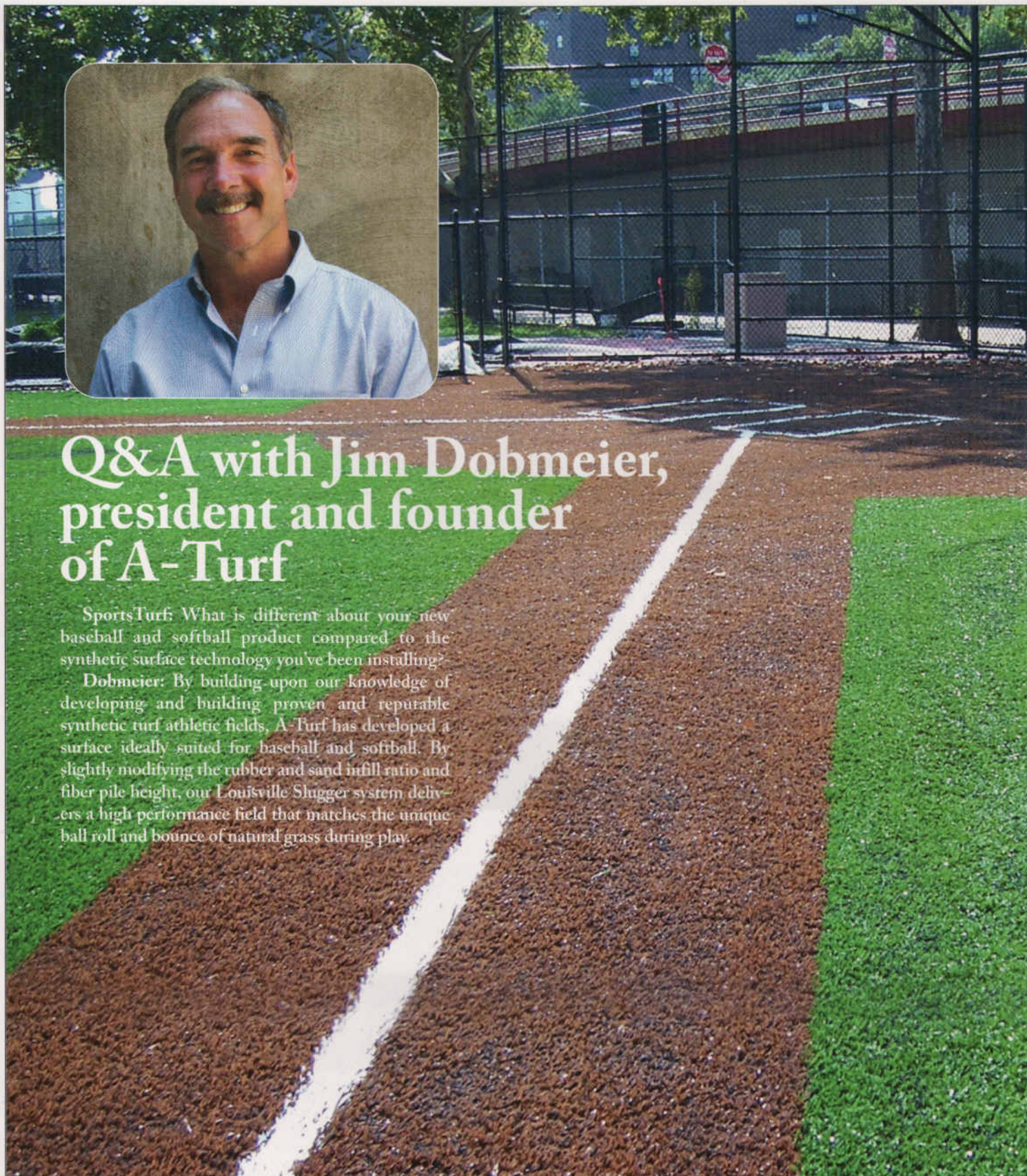




Q&A with Jim Dobmeier, president and founder of A-Turf

SportsTurf: What is different about your new baseball and softball product compared to the synthetic surface technology you've been installing?

Dobmeier: By building upon our knowledge of developing and building proven and reputable synthetic turf athletic fields, A-Turf has developed a surface ideally suited for baseball and softball. By slightly modifying the rubber and sand infill ratio and fiber pile height, our Louisville Slugger system delivers a high performance field that matches the unique ball roll and bounce of natural grass during play.



While A-Turf builds many fields with the traditional dirt infield, synthetic grass in a color to simulate dirt or clay can be used in place of dirt, providing a natural ball response throughout the field.

All our systems are always built with quality materials: turf fibers, rubber, sand and adhesive. That will never change. Nor will the company's commitment to providing superior craftsmanship and responsive customer service.

ST: How did you determine there was a market for such a product?

Dobmeier: Traditionally, the athletic field business has been oriented more toward what is known as the oval or rectangular-type fields for football, soccer, lacrosse and field hockey. Over the years, as schools realize the multi-sport benefit of synthetic grass, more and more are installing fields designed to maximize the investment, which means larger, contiguous fields including baseball and softball.

Over the years, A-Turf has seen an increase in demand for stand-alone synthetic grass fields for baseball and softball. We offer options to enable us to give our customers a field that best suits their specific needs.

ST: Are there differences in maintenance procedures for this new product vs. what you have been selling?

Dobmeier: No. A-Turf fields are environmentally friendly, using



hundreds of thousands of pounds of recycled, post-consumer rubber per square foot in its infill, saving millions of gallons of water and hundreds of pounds of chemicals per year.

ST: Is there anything new in terms of maintaining existing synthetic fields that turf managers need to know?

Dobmeier: While all A-Turf synthetic grass systems eliminate the need for cutting, watering, fertilizing and reseeding associated with natural grass, most contracts include a Greens Groomer, which



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attaches to the back of a utility vehicle and is used to periodically groom the fibers and infill. Most fields are groomed once or twice a month. It takes about two hours to groom the entire field. A Parker Sweeper, which is also pulled by the same type of vehicle, is sometimes purchased as well. It works much like a street cleaner and is used to remove trash and debris from the field.

ST: Do you believe using a disinfectant product is necessary for your synthetic surface? Why and what do you recommend.

Dobmeier: No. There is no need to use a disinfectant product on A-Turf synthetic grass fields.

ST: What criteria do you think are most important for officials to use in determining what synthetic turf systems to buy?

Dobmeier: A synthetic grass system is a big, and often a high profile, investment. So, it’s critical that decision-makers ask ques-

tions early on in the process, not only about the system and the type of components going into the system, but also about the company building and installing the field.

Consider the following:

- The company’s track record within the industry.
- Does the company have proven experience in building fields with a similar scope of work?
- Is the company financially sound?
- Type and length of warranty being offered.
- Quality and volume of material components being used.

Field building is a specialized construction, which means challenges will arise, flexibility will be required and communication is essential. Look for a company with a history of listening, presenting options and delivering results based upon your needs.

If you ask the right questions, chances are you will make the right decision.



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ST: I hear about installation problems for synthetic turf. What are the keys a buyer should focus on during installation to get a satisfactory result?

Dobmeier: The installation is crucial to the project and ultimately has a substantial impact on the long-term success of a field and satisfaction of the client.

Because an overwhelming majority of synthetic grass fields are installed on some variation of a crushed stone base, a sound base is essential to the long-term performance and aesthetics of the field. The three fundamental characteristics of a properly constructed crushed stone base are:

- **Planarity** – A base free of undulations (high and low spots) and other imperfections is required. It is imperative that the crushed stone base be graded to specification.
- **Porosity** – The proper mix of stone sizes and types is necessary to achieve adequate percolation to the drainage pipes.
- **Compaction** – Proper mix of stone size and types is also required to achieve the specified compaction level. Proper compaction prevents undesired post-installation crushed stone base settlement.

It is important to have a highly developed network of installers. Before settling on a company, ask about the quality and expertise of the installation crew. When speaking to references ask about the

quality of workmanship and the crew's ability to stay on schedule and handle challenges as they arise.


ST: What are A-Turf and/or the Synthetic Turf Council doing to address the issue of toxicity that some claim is associated with synthetic turf infill material?

Dobmeier: Safety is at the forefront of every A-Turf field built. As a member of the Synthetic Turf Council (STC), a big part of what A-Turf does is educate our clients and prospective clients about the benefits and safety of synthetic fields. The recent findings of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) validate what we have long known to be true and what we continue to share with people who have questions. We have found that many initial concerns are quickly put to rest when addressed by honest and factual answers based on science.

We take every precaution to use only infill materials that are tested and proven. Education is the best tool for evaluating the safety of a synthetic turf system. As a partner to our clients, A-Turf is committed to answering questions and addressing concerns that may arise. Certainly, the Synthetic Turf Council is also another great resource. For more information on the safety of synthetic turf visit www.aturf.com or www.syntheticurf.org. ■

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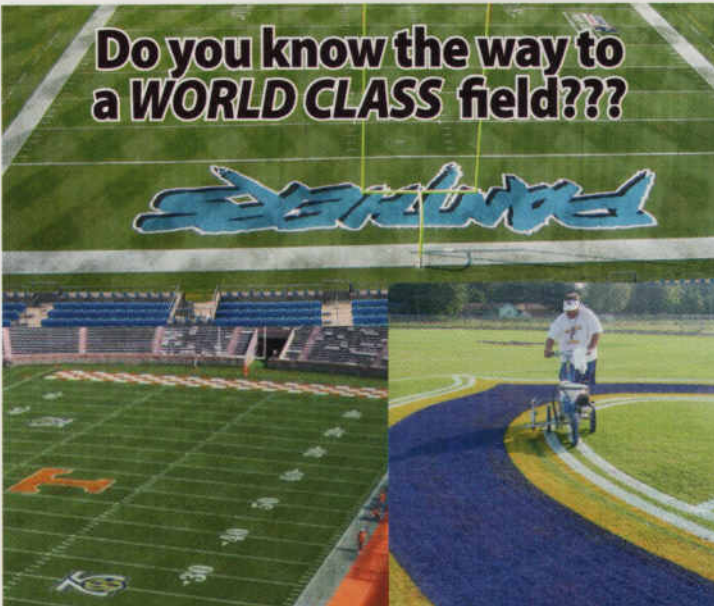
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