



West Coast Turf crew installs big rolls of certified TifSport bermudagrass at McAfee Coliseum in Oakland, home of the Athletics and Raiders.

## McAfee Coliseum's turf grown locally

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est Coast Turf's adding certified TifSport availability at their Stevinson farm location in northern California came just in time for Clay Wood, head groundskeeper for the

Oakland Athletics, Oakland Raiders and McAfee Coliseum. Wood has been buying grass from WCT for many years, but in early 2007, when it was time to replace the turf after the Raiders' football season, the Tifway II he'd been planning to order from WCT's local farm wasn't quite ready. So West Coast's Greg Dunn suggested that he consider TifSport, a newer cultivar that was available at their Indio farm, about 400 miles south.

Wood made the trip and liked the look and feel of the TifSport he saw there. Shortly thereafter, WCT delivered 123,200 square feet of the sod 800 miles round trip, in 22 truckloads, to McAfee Coliseum. The installation was completed in just 3 days. As Wood explains, "We found two major advantages of TifSport versus Tifway II for our Oakland location. Because of the climate here in northern California, we routinely overseed all year round. TifSport has a lot finer blade and texture than the Tifway II, so we're getting a more uniform blend with the ryegrass. That's what really impressed me. It's a big improvement visually.

"Advantage number two is that this grass never really goes dormant. My old Tifway II would start to go off-color about mid-October, giving the turf a mottled look. There's a lot less of that with TifSport. I haven't had to change my management practices, either. My fertility's the same. My mowing height's the same. I try to keep it at about 1-inch all year long." Despite the reputation of the Georgia-bred bermudagrasses, cultivars like TifSport sometimes take a while to attract notice simply because of the excellence of their tried-and-true predecessors like Tifway 419 and Tifway 2. There's a tendency to be comfortable with something that's working well.

Clay Wood didn't go looking for a better grass, but when circumstances required a change he was quick to appreciate the difference. Clay Wood became a TifSport convert, and West Coast Turf is converting new acreage to now in northern California to make sure Clay Wood can get what he wants closer to home. ■

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Finished view of field at McAfee Coliseum.

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