

By **Tim Richardson**
and **Andrea Kunicky**



“After seeing how much the players enjoyed the mound, I showed it to a few coaches and others in the local baseball community,” said Murphy. “It seemed to just take off from there.”

As demand for the mounds grew, he set up a side business out of his parents’ garage and made mounds at night. Murphy eventually gave up his teaching job to focus full-time on ProMounds, Inc. as the demand for the product grew. He never expected the mounds he made from his parents’ garage would ever turn into a multi-million dollar business.

But Murphy was hearing from customers that they were unaware that he sold anything more than the original mound. Since indoor facilities were such a key part of his business, Murphy wanted to upgrade his service to them. So he asked his clients about their specific needs and launched On Deck Sports, the retail division of ProMounds, Inc.

“After surveying the indoor facilities that we worked with, our catalog expanded to include the items they needed, not just our mounds,” Murphy said. “Creating On Deck Sports seemed to be the most appropriate way to demonstrate that our company was more than just the mound. Our product lined included artificial turf, netting, screens and more.”

Today, On Deck Sports’ offers over 3,000 products, including various items under their budding recycled turf operation. The company’s first entrée into recycling turf came in 2003 when it purchased an 18,000-square foot soccer field that was being removed. In purchasing the field, Murphy saw two immediate opportunities.

Coach-turned-businessman recycles synthetic turf fields

Editor’s note: This article was written by staff of Maroon Public Relations, Columbia, MD.

While recycled turf is a core business area for the retail division of Massachusetts-based ProMounds, Inc., the baseball manufacturing company was actually formed in 2001 out of a need for a different product.

Former Division I player Joe Murphy was teaching and coaching high school baseball in New England and was frustrated by the snow prohibiting his team from practicing outside. Needing a way to workout his pitchers, he developed a portable mound with a high-density foam core that could be used in the gym without harming the surface. The mound was a hit with his players and its popularity quickly spread throughout the New England baseball community.

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Murphy said, "I saw a situation that enabled us to help protect the environment by ensuring the field didn't wind up in a landfill, and allowed us to provide our clients with a quality product. Plus, it helped reduce the disposal costs for the group from whom we were buying the turf."

Recognizing the versatility of the turf, On Deck Sports recycled the turf by customizing areas for batting cages, indoor training facilities and even doggie day care centers. But the company's major acquisition in this business area came in 2005 when it purchased the turf from the Carrier Dome at Syracuse University. After that transaction, On Deck Sports began to aggressively pursue purchasing more used turf.

"This gave us the opportunity to offer our clients a quality product at a price-point that was more affordable for them than purchasing the product brand new," said Murphy.

On Deck Sports began working with a company in Georgia to store and distribute the turf to customers worldwide. Among the additional turf fields they purchased were the SkyDome in Toronto, the Louisiana Superdome, the Indianapolis Colts' field from the RCA Dome, the Duke University practice field and the field at BC Place Stadium before the 2010 Winter Olympics. On Deck Sports has donated turf to U.S. military posts for use by troops as golf mats while serving in the Middle East.

Beginning in 2006, On Deck Sports began purchasing 10-12

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fields a year, the equivalent of around 1,000,000-square feet of turf. To help accommodate this significant component of the company's business, Murphy purchased a 30,000-square-foot turf warehouse and distribution center in Georgia.

"From indoor facilities and baseball fields, residential lawn projects to custom commercial ventures, turf presently accounts for a significant portion of On Deck Sports' sales, said Murphy. "While the most popular application is for use in baseball and softball batting cages, we have provided recyclable turf to clients for use in dugouts, football sidelines, facilities for soccer, lacrosse and paintball, track covers and much more." ■

Tim Richardson is executive vice president and Andrea Kunicky associate account executive with Maroon Public Relations, Columbia, MD. Photos courtesy of ProMounds, Inc./On Deck Sports.

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