



Be certain all bidding is the same. Will the contractor raise the clay level? Will they remove the sod and lower the surrounding lip to solve the problem? They won't know unless you tell them. (L to R): Ken Gregory from Sports Turf One and Marshall Jennings from Jupiter Stadium.

# Value bidding:

assembling, receiving and analyzing competitive bids for field construction

By Dell Haverland

I have often wondered why so many public and private sports field projects have failed to produce good work and value for the end user. Over the years I began to realize that many projects produce unsatisfactory results because of poor preparation of the pre-bid documents, plans and specifications. This is especially true on public work because so much emphasis is put on the legalese. The hundreds of pages of boilerplate language may keep purchasing people and their lawyers happy, but it only serves to dwarf the scope of the work. It is almost as though the project itself can become secondary and inconsequential.

I recently received plans for a new park with ball fields. The three spec books *each* weighed more than 60 pounds, along with three sets

of plans weighing even more. And yet the documents pertaining to the actual scope of construction were merely a few standard pages of State Department of Transportation specifications for the grassing of roadways.

Another special section made several references about sports field construction with very vague stipulations about soil and turf. This situation forces the bidder to make assumptions and requires him/her to bid from those assumptions.

Similarly the civil plans for this project were contradictory, with bits of information on the landscaping pages, the paving and drainage section, and a little more in the "SP" section. This entire bid package was built from cut and paste pieces from past projects



with little or no thought given to this particular site. There was absolutely no regard at all for the end user and maintenance. It was obvious that the Parks & Recreation people had not participated in the preparation of these plans.

The engineers and their consultants are probably capable of doing a great job of building the roads, but it is clear that this park's sports fields would be a catastrophe; poor layout, poor soil specifications, poor turf planning, poor dugout design, poor drainage and the poor, poor taxpayer who has to pay for this park! Unfortunately, down the road, the taxpayer will pay again and again to fix the future troubles this park will encounter. This is not a unique project and yet my colleagues tell me the problem is quite common not only here in Florida, but across the nation.

Smaller renovation projects have similar problems as well. For instance, if you were the park manager of an existing ball field, it should be simple to get a price on laser grading the skinned areas, right? Not so. When contractors are left to their own devices, even something this simple can become a disaster. The less experienced contractors don't understand how much work is needed, so they plan for less work and bid the work at a cheaper price. If you don't say you need it, they probably won't include it. And the majority of decision makers who examine these bids have no field experience, so they jump on the cheaper price. It is extremely important

for any project big or small to be bid with the proper scope, including concise specifications on appropriate forms, determining the *best value* not the best price is achieved. How is this accomplished?

Let's start with a basic outline for achieving a good and competitive bid:

**THE GOAL**—Outline the goal of the project, e.g., "The goal of this project is for the complete renovation of four football fields to improve drainage, playability and safety."

To achieve this, the contractor is to remove the existing turf, install a completely new irrigation system, provide soil amendments, laser grading and install new Celestial Green turfgrass.

Where did "the goal" come from? How was it decided? Typically the athletes, coaches or players' families will complain about conditions. Those complaints travel to the right ears and a call is made to the park manager. "We need to get some prices on renovation the fields." The people in the Parks Dept. already know about most of the problems and understand people's expectations. Meetings are held and out of these meetings develop "the goal."

The project goal is important for two reasons. Number one of course is so that people authorizing money for the project as well as the bidders are aware of what is expected. Secondly, and not as obvious, it is a means to get all parties on the same page.

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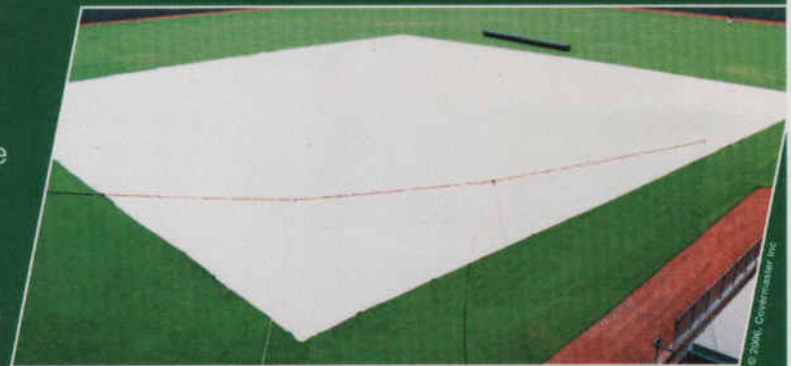
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# FACILITY & OPERATIONS



From the complete renovation at Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter FL, spring home of the Marlins and the Cardinals. This shot shows the new Celebration bermuda turf just after installation during the first topdressing. If you look closely you can see the guy in motion putting out the 90/10 USGA mix. Picture taken by Sports Turf One VP Bill Gillan; pilot was Dell Haverland.

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It is not uncommon for projects to go off track and turn into something else. For instance, our company once bid a golf course project several times to a private country club. The original intent was to improve the playability of the golf course to attract new members. After several of the key committee members moved on, the focus of the remaining committee turned the job into a landscaping project with no improvement of the golf course whatsoever and no new membership.

**THE SCOPE**—Determine the scope of the project and specifications. The goal above was an overview. Now it's time to be more specific. Hire an engineer who specializes in sports field construction to develop plans and specifications. The engineer must be interviewed, visit the site, and be included in all meetings so that he or she is on the same page as everyone else. "If we don't have funds for an engineer or consultant, how do we accomplish this?"

On smaller projects where an engineer may not be needed, the turf manager can ask sports field contractors in the area to come down to the site for a "walk & talk." Try to get contractors with local knowledge that specialize in the type of work for this

particular project. Walk the site and ask for their opinions and recommendations for the renovation. If the contractor can provide a budgetary bid proposal from the visit, so much the better. Let each contractor do the measuring and provide his scope and quantities. You will both learn from this experience and it will give you an idea of each contractor's experience and integrity. Additionally, the contractor will gain first hand knowledge from you as well as familiarity with the site, thereby improving the accuracy of the bid.

Once you have had three or four contractors out to the site, you can prepare of summary of the scope, including types of materials to be used, quantities, time needed for construction and some idea of the cost. This information can now be passed on to the decision makers along with your own recommendations. Now also is the time to decide whether there was more to this project than previously thought. It may be necessary to have other professionals get involved.

**HOW TO PROCEED**—Determine if you can handle the preparation of the work documents or if it is necessary hire a professional. After discussing the infor-



mation gathered from these first two items, it is time to decide how to proceed.

Sometimes a seemingly simple project becomes more involved and it is necessary to seek help. As with contractors, if engineers and consultants are needed on a project, they must also be interviewed and provide you with information to help with the bidding process, as outlined above. Summarize their ideas and try to get some budgetary costs on their services and the project as well. It usually takes about 10 minutes to figure out who knows what they are talking about and who doesn't. It's important to work with decision makers who truly get a feel for the complexities of the project.

If on the other hand you are totally confident in handling this project without the professionals, great. This will speed things up and the fewer people involved the faster the project can move.

**THIS STEP IS REALLY IMPORTANT SO LISTEN UP!**—At least 30% of the work my company does each year is redoing, repairing, refinishing or replacing work previously done by others and left in a poor or incomplete state. The original bid documents, particularly the scope of work, was never properly outlined and/or understood. The contractor qualification section was not included or the follow up was never done. More often than not the contractor was not qualified for the specialty athletic field construction project.

**Put together a scope of work for the bid package that is specific, simple, & covers all the bases.** I like unit price bids with estimated quantities because we have everyone bidding the same thing. Some contractors are not good at plan take-offs or even measuring in the field. This is a shame. But to protect yourself, include a realistic, not optimistic, estimate of quantities. Of course, include a nice spread sheet style form with all the items to be bid shown in unit prices. Some items are better left lump sum if the quantities are difficult to quantify or prove. Always state however, that these are approximate quantities and estimates. It is the contractor's responsibility to bring to your attention any bid item or quantity he feels is incorrect. You will not get complete and accurate bids if you do not have everyone bidding the same scope. The dramatically lower priced contractor probably intends on doing a whole lot less than you expect. If your bids come in closely priced, the bid package was probably very concise.

**CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATION**—Include a form to be filled out, showing the contractor's experience, number of years in business, etc. Five years is a good minimum time in business.

**CONTRACTOR REFERENCES**—Most contractors should have these documents ready to include with the bid package. Include a form to be filled out anyway. Be sure to call all of those references. If you know that the contractor has worked on a job recently and it is not on his list, you want to be sure to call that one!

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## SAMPLE BID EVALUATION FORM

Project Name: Sample Project

Project Budget: 10,900.00

Bidding Contractors:	Joe's Contracting	Deb's Grassing	Pete's Sod
Amount Bid by Each Contractor	\$10,000.00	\$8,500.00	\$11,500.00
Completeness of bid	5	2	4
Experience level	5	5	3
Good references	5	3	1
Site visit (0 points if not done and 5 if done)	5	5	5
Bid on time?	5	5	5
Is the business location local?	3	5	4
Past jobs w/this contractor: Quality of work?	0	2	5
Were past jobs w/this contr. in on time?	0	-4	4
Price: (lowest price is 3 point, highest is 1)	2	3	1
Points	30	26	32
Value Bidding (Price is worth 55% of bid points)	13.5	14.3	14.4
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>46.4</b>

At first glance, the best value is probably Pete's sod with 32 points but wait, is it? Pete's Sod priced the job at 15% higher than Joe's Contracting. We haven't worked with Joe before, but his references and experience levels are outstanding. Price is worth 55% of the bid points, so let's add that in and see what happens when you consider value bidding. Take the lowest bid of 26 and multiply it by 55%. You get 14.3. The other bidders get the remaining 45% each. Pete's sod may still have the highest score, but his price is over our budget of \$10,900.00.

After reviewing references and past histories, the **BEST VALUE** for the project budget is Joe's Contracting with 43.5 points.

**BID EVALUATION FORM**—You may have to argue with the Purchasing and Legal Department on this one, but give it a go. The key elements for determining a good value are:

Split the bid up by percentage or give values on a scale of 1 to 5 or similar with 5 being the best. Here are some examples: Completeness of bid: 0-5, Experience: 0-5, Good references: 0-5, bid in on time: 0-1, Site visit: 0-1, etc. Then run a total for each contractor. This value may be worth 35% of the bid. Using the 0-5 scale, rate your prior experiences with the contractor: (i.e. unsatisfactory, unable to complete the project, poor, good, excellent).

Price is worth 55% of the bid, but only for contractors with complete bids. All incomplete bids need to be thrown out or re-bid. Be sure to research the financial stability of the contractor. Ask for credit reports and bank references.

**PAYMENT AND PERFORMANCE BONDS**—These are a safeguard and may be necessary. On smaller projects, using contractors with higher points, the bonds can be waived and this money can then be put to use on other projects.

Obviously this is an over simplification but for most projects, this system will work. It certainly beats the typical "go with the low bidder" system that has never worked well, and yet it is still widely used by many short thinking, hurried individuals who think only of price and not of value. ■

*Dell Haverland is president of Sports Turf One, Inc., Boynton Beach, FL, [www.sportsturfone.com](http://www.sportsturfone.com)*



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**EWING**

# Greater than yourself

This is the third in a series of six articles in the new Ewing Professional Development Series. STMA and Ewing have partnered in this series to bring sports turf industry professional development and career issues to the forefront.

By Steve Farber



**“I just seem to meet the right teachers at the right time.”**

*Editor's Note: At the upcoming 20th Annual STMA Conference and Exhibition, STMA members will be treated to lessons in Extreme Leadership from leadership expert Steve Farber.*

*Farber's new book, "Greater Than Yourself: the Ultimate Lesson of True Leadership," will hit bookshelves early in 2009. Here, he has allowed us to pre-print the Prologue and Chapter 1 of his new book:*

**T**he obsession seized me with all the subtlety of a sumo wrestler hopped up on anabolics. I'd been playing guitar for 35 years, and I'd owned a couple of decent ones from time to time, but suddenly I needed—needed—that 1959 Gibson hollow-body electric hanging on the rack at Vintage Brothers Guitars in Carlsbad, CA.

I don't know what it was. I'd seen nicer guitars, to be sure. There was nothing unusual about its sunburst finish, and with only one pickup in the middle position, the ES-330 wasn't considered the most desirable of collectable instruments. But other than a few minor nicks on the headstock, it was in perfect condition, and as I sat in the store's small demo room, playing it hour after hour, I fell deeper and deeper in love. The neck was fast, the tone, sweet, rich and mellow. Yeah, I was in love, man, but not all love and obsession winds up in marriage, so eventually I put it back on the rack, inquired just one more time about the price, and walked out into the salty, San Diego, Pacific Ocean air.

I've played better guitars, I kept telling myself, and I've seen better deals on vintage instruments. But as I walked towards my car, I

couldn't shake it. Then the sumo got me, spun me around and shoved me back down the parking lot from where I'd come. My pace quickened as I approached the shop, and my wallet was out before I even got through the door. I paid the price and grabbed the case, and minutes later, grinning a grin that tested the limits of my cheek-muscles, I tucked that baby into the passenger seat and buckled it in like the prize it was.

I had to have that guitar. Had to.

And now, just a few days later, I know why.

I'm not really sure what to call it when things line themselves up without my slightest knowledge or influence. It's like someone is executing a profoundly interlaced conspiracy to make all the random pieces of my life fit together. What is it? Karma? Kismet? Synchronicity? I don't know, but it happens to me a lot, and more often than not it works out well. I just seem to meet the right teachers at the right time.

I've been blessed (maybe that's the word) with the opportunity to work with some of the world's preeminent thinkers in business leadership, like Tom Peters and Jim Kouzes to name a couple. And in recent years, under extremely odd and seemingly fortuitous circumstances, I've learned directly from some of the masters of Extreme Leadership, like William Maritim and Agnes Golden and Ted Garrison, names that'll be familiar to readers of my previous books.

I've done a pretty good job of conveying the lessons I've learned along the way, and I think that's why I've made a bit of a name for myself in certain circles. Some have even used the words "Steve Farber" and "leadership guru" in



# FACILITY & OPERATIONS

the same sentence, which, although gratifying to my ego, makes me squirm like I have a load of wet worms in my socks.

Right teachers. Right time. Odd circumstances.

I was thinking I should print that on my business card, because it was starting to happen all over again.

I was back in my apartment on the bay side of the Mission Beach area of San Diego. The ocean and its frenetic boardwalk were a couple of blocks to the west, but calm, tranquil Mission Bay lay just a few short yards to the east of my building, affording a view through my living room window worthy of tourist's post card.

I had returned from Carlsbad a couple hours earlier, cleared my agenda by taking care of a few time-bound tasks, and was now finally ready to spend some quality time getting intimate with my new companion.

I gingerly placed the tattered, 49 year-old, mottled brown guitar case on the dining room table, flipped open the latches, lifted the top, and let my gaze linger over the sunburst-colored curves of my new six-string babe.

Sitting on a bar stool with the guitar propped in my lap, I twisted the tuning knobs until the sound was just right and fired off a couple of quick blues licks in the key of E. I'd plug it in later; for now I was enjoying the smooth feel of the Brazilian rosewood fingerboard and the muted, rich sound resonating off its un-amplified, maple body. I was just about to settle in for a few hours of serious playing (which sounds like an oxymoron but it's not), when something in the case caught my eye. I set the guitar in a stand and got up to take a closer look.

Farber points out the simple but profound truths of how an ethical leader becomes so; becoming, in effect, a leader who considers others greater than themselves.

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The pink, plush lining on the inside bottom of the case was pulled slightly back at the seam and a small, yellowed piece of paper stuck out from under the fabric. I pinched the corner and pulled on it gently. It slid easily from under the velvet and revealed itself to be a handwritten note.

I felt a voyeuristic jolt similar to what an architect must feel when finding a relic that gives a glimpse into another's life in another time.

"Dear Jessica," the note began. "This guitar is my gift to you. It was made in 1959, 31 years before I taught you your first lesson. What a player you've become in just 5 short years, and now that you're old enough to vote and on your way to school and the distractions of adult life, you'll need this guitar to remind you of your wonderful musical gift. And may it help you to become a better player than I ever hoped to be. I have no doubt you will.

You have brought this old teacher of yours

more joy than you could possibly know and I want you to know that I'm very, very proud of you.

"Your friend and teacher, GZ"

"You've been around, haven't you?" I said to the guitar in the stand.

I read the note one more time and tried to imagine the teacher, the student and the strong bond that had obviously existed between them. It was an unusual thing, that kind of connection. I'd been lucky enough to experience that student-teacher bond in my professional life, and I knew how rare and priceless a thing it could be, so, naturally, I found myself wondering where these people were today and what, if anything, had happened with Jessica's life as a guitarist—or if she even continued playing at all.

The way I figured it, (I had to use a calculator, I admit), this note was written somewhere around 1995, and if Jessica had just been reaching college age, that would put her in her early 30's today.

Had "GZ's" pride been well-placed? Had Jessica grown into the kind of adult he'd hoped she would? And why, if their relationship had been as special as the teacher's note implied, had Jessica eventually gone on to sell this wonderful and sentimental gift? And you'd think if she'd returned even a little of her teacher's affection, she'd at least have kept the note.

I know I would have.

Given my sudden and intense curiosity about all this, I found myself faced with two possible paths: I could either make up imaginary answers to these questions, or I could snoop around to see if I couldn't uncover the real story of Jessica and GZ.

And I bet you can guess which road I traveled by. ■

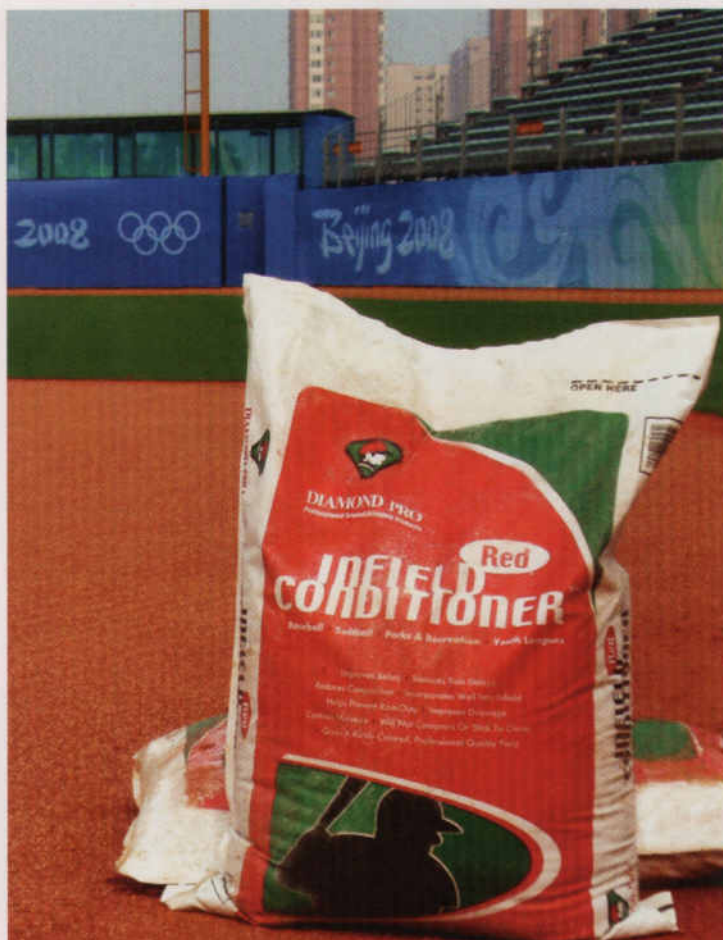
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## The "Greater Than Yourself Challenge"

Ethical, effective leadership starts with servant leaders. "Real leadership is not about calling yourself 'leader,'" rather, it is about taking up the cause to change some piece of the world for the better," says Steve Farber, a leadership speaker who counts Tom Peters among his mentors.

In his latest book, "Greater Than Yourself," Farber uses an entertaining part-truth, part-fable tale about a special 1959 Gibson guitar and "creators of masters" to point out this core truth about ethical, effective leadership: Use your life experience to start raising someone else up. He calls it a "Greater Than Yourself" philosophy. Farber points out the simple but profound truths of how an ethical leader becomes so; becoming, in effect, a leader who considers others greater than themselves:

- Expand yourself • Give yourself
- Replicate yourself

There are resources more vital than money that "greater than yourself" leaders can give:

- Talent • Knowledge • Confidence
- Trust • Time

In order to give yourself to others in a significant way to the progress and expansion of another person, "you have to expand yourself first," Farber writes. "Self-expansion is a perpetual enterprise. And because it is the foundation of whatever you do for others, expanding yourself is the furthest thing from selfishness. You expand yourself in order to give yourself to others." He compares self-development to a storehouse with no walls and no ceiling. "No matter how smart you get, no matter how many times you travel the world, no matter how many great people you think you know, you can always learn more, you can always experience more, and love more." You constantly ask yourself, "will doing X add to your inventory?"

The first element of "expand yourself" is to shift your perspective from isolated to connected, and from alone to interdependent. Most of all, there needs to be a shift from "me" to "us," Farber says.

"A practical idea for a leader who wants to maximize his or her contributions to others," Farber notes, "is to make several lists about themselves, such as ones about 'lessons I have learned' and 'things I do well.'"

The task of leadership can become so overwhelming that good intentions fade to obscurity, Farber notes. That is why he suggests building a legacy of service "one brick at a time." This is done by picking one person to make your "greater than yourself" project. "Raise that person; boost him or her above yourself. Start there and see what happens."

Through CEO Cat Cassidy (you have

to read the book to find out more about this fascinating character), Farber points out that the corporate benefits of having a "greater than yourself" philosophy woven into daily operations include having dramatically lower turnover and higher efficiencies. This is because employee loyalty is higher, and their better development leads to greater innovations, higher customer satisfaction, and by extension, higher profits.

The summarizing idea of Greater Than Yourself, also spoken by Cassidy, is: "We want our lives to be more than just about ourselves. To 'philanthropize' your life means developing radar of sorts. It is about growing your sensitivity to the needs of others and cultivating your desire to promote their welfare, success, and capacity for achievement." ■

For more information on "Greater Than Yourself" and Steve Farber's writings and other books, visit his website <http://www.stevefarber.com/>

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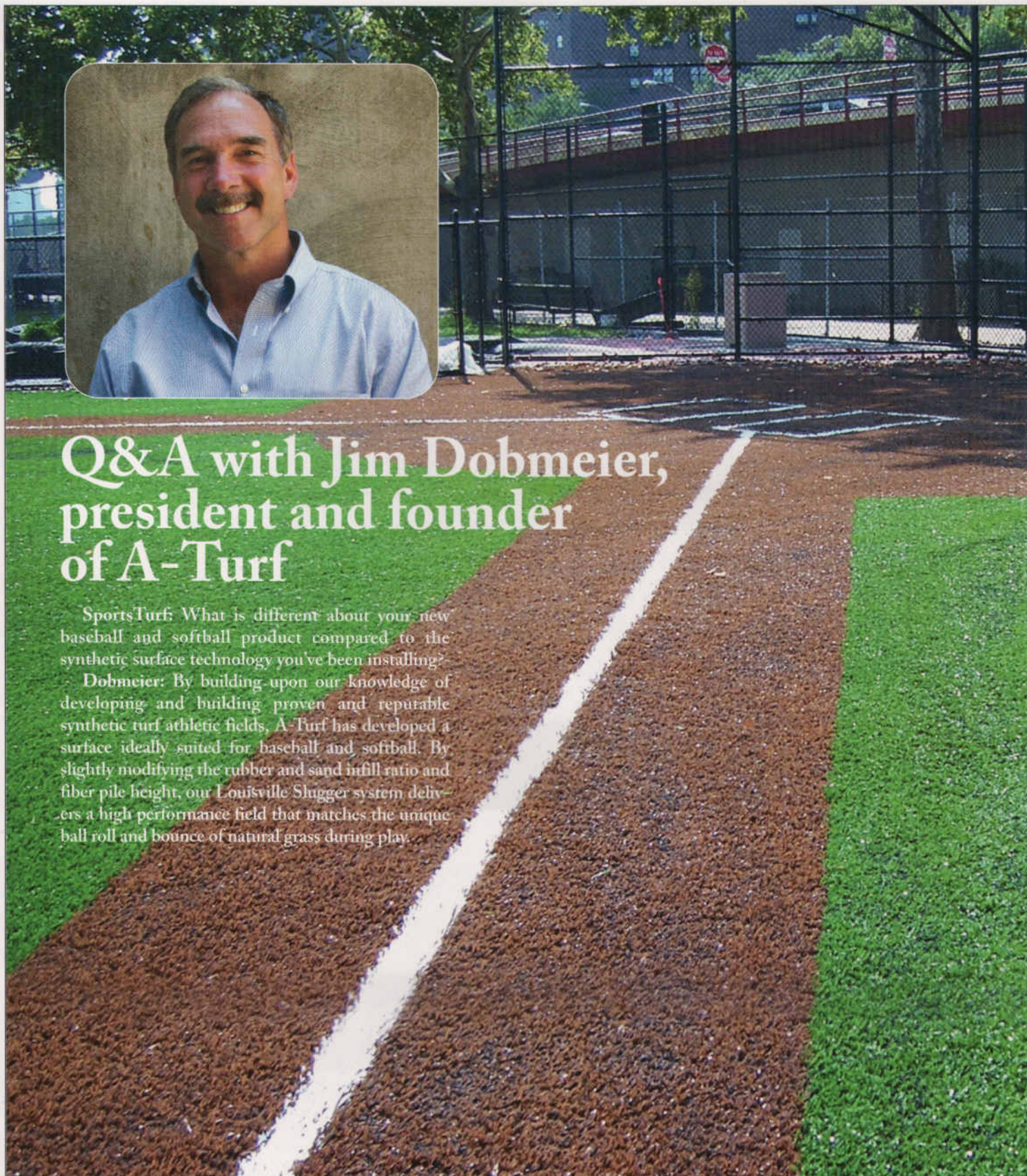




## Q&A with Jim Dobmeier, president and founder of A-Turf

**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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# FACILITY & OPERATIONS

“A synthetic grass system is a big, and often a high profile, investment. So, it’s critical to ask questions early on in the process, not only about the system and the type of components going into [it], but also about the company building and installing the field.”

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](http://www.aturf.com) or [www.syntheticurf.org](http://www.syntheticurf.org). ■

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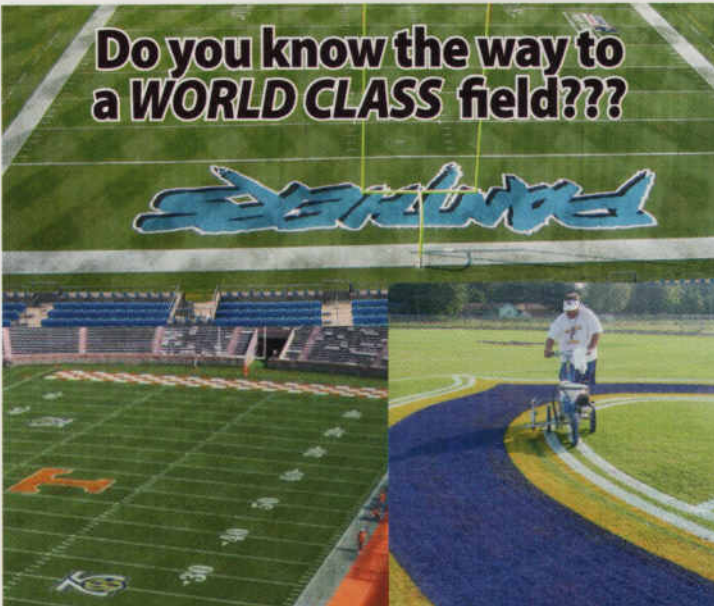
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