



SFMANJ BUS stops at COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY & Red Bull Arena



By Brad Park

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) sponsored a unique tour of the sports fields at Baker Athletics Complex, Columbia University, New York, NY and Red Bulls Arena, home of the Major League Soccer (MLS) New York Red Bulls, in Harrison, NJ on Wednesday, November 10, 2010. A chartered bus was arranged and departed Rutgers Hort. Farm II, North Brunswick, NJ in the morning and arrived back at the Central Jersey turf research facility that afternoon after touring the two locations in New York City and Northern New Jersey.

Baker Athletics Complex at Columbia University, overseen by Kevin Malone, CSFM and member, SFMANJ, is very unique in that all sports field surfaces at this complex consist of synthetic turf. There are numerous synthetic turf surfaces present. Field hockey is played on surface called Astroturf 12 - a short pile carpet reminiscent to the surfaces present at facilities such as Giants Stadium, Veterans Stadium, and Three Rivers Stadium in the 1980's.



Robert K. Kraft Field at Baker Athletic Complex, Columbia University, New York, NY

Soccer is played on FieldTurf Duo - a sand and crumb rubber infilled monofilament synthetic surface. The fibers on this surface have a horizontal orientation to limit the kick-up of sand and rubber during play.

Attendees toured a newly-installed softball field. The outfield (FieldTurf Duraspine) consisted of

a sand and rubber infilled monofilament with a more rigid, upright orientation compared to the soccer field. The infield and warning track were constructed with soil and crushed rock materials that are conventionally installed at softball facilities.

The baseball field at Baker Athletics Complex is predominantly a sand and rubber infilled synthetic turf system (FieldTurf Duo). The home plate area is also synthetic turf. The only non-synthetic turf locations on the field are the pitcher's mound (dirt) and the outfield warning track and outfield foul territory warning track (crushed rock-type material). The foul territory warning track behind the home plate area and outside the 1st and 3rd baselines is synthetic turf.

Robert K. Kraft Field, home of the football and lacrosse teams consists of a fibrillating slit-film fiber infilled with crumb rubber and sand (FieldTurf) installed in 2005. The field is in good condition and is the oldest synthetic field at Baker Athletics Complex.

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Lunch was held in the press box above Robert K. Kraft Field and provided great views of the surrounding hillsides, Harlem River, and Hudson River.



A warm greeting provided by Dan Shemesh and the New York Red Bulls, Harrison, NJ

The bus trip left Northern Manhattan, crossed the George Washington Bridge back to New Jersey for a tour of Red Bulls Arena. The sports field is managed by SFMANJ member Dan Shemesh, Director of Grounds for the New York Red Bulls.

Attendees got a behind-the-scenes look at the turf equipment used to maintain the soccer surface and a SubAir system that can manipulate air flow through the rootzone. A major challenge faced by Shemesh

and his crew is the absence of direct sunlight on the Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass overseeded playing surface. Stadium design and roof materials appear limit the quantity of sunlight hours received by the New Jersey-grown sod. Artificial lighting is being explored.

Thanks go out to Kevin Malone, CSFM and Dan Shemesh for their hospitality and willingness to host SFMANJ on a tour of their great facilities!

Brad Park is Sports Turf Research & Education Coordinator, Rutgers Univ.; SFMANJ Board member; and

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