

A Winning Combination

The PTA, Sports Field Managers, and You

For those who grew up playing stick ball on vacant lots, a request for funds to improve athletic fields may seem trivial. After all, pain is part of sports. The ability to withstand pain separates the men from the boys.

This macho myth is now being challenged and the value of sports fields is starting to be recognized.

People like me, who played high school and college sports on fields that could wreck a tank, resent the fact that our knees were shot for life at the age of 30.

We have kids beginning sports. We'd like to spare them the pain, the stitched-up knees, and the humiliation of worn out legs when they are middle-aged. We'd also like to spare ourselves the medical bills.

But, most of all, we'd like to see our kids reach their highest sports potential, something only possible on well-constructed, well-maintained fields rarely found today at schools and parks.

Two ways of reaching school and park decisionmakers are being tried. One way is through Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs) now being tried by an offshoot of the Lawn Institute headed by Eliot Roberts, (615) 277-3722. The second way is through managers of sports fields by the Sports Turf Managers Association headed by Kent Kurtz, (714) 598-4167.

There is a third way we should also try. I strongly urge everyone in the turf industries to find out more about their local fields and to make the contacts necessary to improve them. Sharing your expertise can actually save your child's legs.

It is time for a three-pronged attack on dangerous local sports fields to succeed.



Old specs and carpet salesmen

When the need for sports field improvement is recognized and supported, two more challenges arise, outdated field construction specifications and carpet salesmen.

Ironically, landscape architects, whose job it is to keep track of construction techniques, often have outdated design specifications in their files. You'll need the technical backing of the Sports Turf Managers Association to beat the old plans of architects.

Finally, carpet costs more and causes considerably more injuries than natural turf fields. This has been substantiated time and time again.

Bruce F. Shank, executive editor

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