

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

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Associated Landscape Contractors of America,
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American Association of Nurserymen (National
Landscape Association), 1250 I St. NW, Suite
500, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 789-2900.

Golf Course Superintendents Association of
America, 1421 Research Park Dr., Lawrence, KS
66049-3859; (913) 841-2240.

International Society of Arboriculture, P.O. Box
908, Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 328-2032.

International Turfgrass Society, Crop & Soil
Environmental Sciences, VPI-SU, Blacksburg, VA
24061-0403; (703) 231-9796.



National Arborist Association, The Meeting
Place Mall, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031-
1094; (603) 673-3311.

National Golf Foundation, 1150 South U.S.
Highway One, Jupiter, FL 33477; (407) 744-
6006.

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, 2021 Coffey Rd.,
Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 292-2601.



Professional Grounds Management Society, 120
Cockeysville Rd., Suite 104, Hunt Valley, MD
21031; (410) 584-9754.



Professional Lawn Care Association of America,
1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite C-135,
Marietta, GA 30068-2112; (404) 977-5222.

Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment,
1155 15th St. NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C.
20005; (202) 872-3860.



Sports Turf Managers Association, 401 N.
Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611-4267; (312)
644-6610.

Turf and Ornamental Communicators Associa-
tion, 421 West Travelers Trail, Burnsville, MN
55337; (612) 894-2414.

AS WE SEE IT

JERRY ROCHE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



A giant step in athletic turf safety, economy, aesthetics?

Athletic turf management moves as a
turtle in the sand.

Every five or six years, sports turf man-
agers discover a new grass blend that
works slightly better or researchers find a
little bit faster way to germinate grass for
overseeding.

So, as we prepared our special athletic
turf report that some of you will receive
this month, we were hard-pressed to find
anything radically new. But lo and
behold—just in time to follow up for this
issue—we saw a report on CNN about the
new grass infrastructure (can we call it
that?) being used at the University of Utah.
It's an unusual blend of natural and syn-
thetic turf.

We dispatched managing editor Terry
McIver to Salt Lake City (where he was to
attend a PLCAA board meeting anyway) to
find out more about this new product
called SportGrass.

It was invented by Jerry Bergevin,
president of Turf Systems International.
Its playing surface is more level than
either a natural or artificial turf surface.
There's much less divoting, if any, and it's
safer than a fully artificial field.

"The field looked great at the time of
my visit, and certainly was a more even
surface," McIver reports. "The crown of
the plant is protected by the synthetic fab-
ric. Management is identical to that for a
usual turf surface; you can even aerate
with 1/8-inch solid tines or a Hydroject."

And of course, SportGrass doesn't have
to be replaced, as do most high-use fields.

Utah Coach Ron McBride told us the
field was in great shape after two games
and is a fine playing surface. "It's the best
thing going in football," says McBride,
who adds that the field plays fast, and is
"great for kickers."

Back in the 1970s, it only took a few
years for synthetic grass (now mistakenly
referred to as "turf" by most sportscasters)
to catch on. It quickly became the surface

of choice in the Astrodome and at other
multi-purpose fields on the professional,
collegiate and even high school levels.

The swing back to safer natural grass—
though well under way now—is taking
longer, much to the dismay of most ath-
letes. Not surprisingly, the first major U.S.
installation of this new hybrid product
called SportGrass came as a rash of new
synthetic turf-related injuries hit the
National Football League.

In the early stages of training camp,
the Cincinnati Bengals' top draft choice,
running back Ki-Jana Carter (who played
collegiately on Penn State's natural turf)
tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his
left knee, and is out for the season. In the
first week of the regular season, the same
thing happened to Pittsburgh Steelers' All-
Pro safety Rod Woodson. Both injuries
were sustained, shamefully, on synthetic
turf. And both were "non-contact"
injuries, in that other players were not
involved.

The debate over artificial versus natural
turf is always a compelling subject, and
always timely indeed. As always, we're
interested to hear your initial thoughts on
the product, by mail, fax, phone or e-mail.

Only time will tell if SportGrass is a
partial solution to the problems of safety,
economy and aesthetics that have plagued
sports turf managers for years. For now,
it's an interesting development that holds
bright promise for athletic field managers
and athletes alike.

Jerry Roche