



## **Sports Fields . . . . Clearing the Clutter** ***What Matters Most in an Artificial Turf System ?***

by Darren Gill

Consider the following injury data published in the **American Journal of Sports Medicine** in a report titled "Incidence, Mechanisms, and Severity of Game-related College Football Injuries on FieldTurf Versus Natural Grass: A Three-Year Prospective Study":

The heavyweight synthetic turf field tested proved safer than natural grass, with:

- **85 percent fewer muscle tears**
- **58 percent less ACL trauma**
- **48 percent fewer ligament tears**
- **32 percent fewer substantial injuries**
- **35 percent fewer severe injuries**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FIELDTURF

While other companies will try to confuse you with ounces per square yard, customers should focus on what really matters to you and your athletes—proven player safety and system durability.

When it comes to durability, only heavyweight systems have stood the test of time. Companies installing lightweight turf systems on the other hand, all share one of two problems:

1. Their fields are failing very early on, many years before their guaranteed lifespan.
2. Their company is new to the business, and they simply do not have any fields that have been installed for long enough to prove any durability claims.

Either one of these deficiencies should raise major red flags.

The long-term durability of heavyweight turf systems is not a fluke. These systems last because of their design. Lightweight field fibers break down due to lack of infill, fiber wear and exposure to UV rays. The infill is actually a component of the field which hardly wears down, and could likely be recycled for the life of two more fields before it would need to be reprocessed into another use.

Now you can see why putting more fiber into a turf system does not make sense: The more fiber, the faster the field will wear. This is a critical difference.

As the customer, you have the choice. The system that you know will be the best for your athletes, or a cheaper solution to "save money." While buying the cheaper system may seem like a solution for some budgetary constraints, you will end up sacrificing long-term cost savings (heavyweight systems last longer delivering a significantly higher financial value to our customers) and player safety (heavyweight systems are the only ones with any independent safety data that concludes they are safer than natural grass).

**Only one question remains—what matters most to you?**

~ *The End . . .* ~