
Determining the Right Sports Field for Your Athletes

Your organization has decided to build a new sports field. This is an excellent decision that will benefit your athletes, the fans and the community. With sports participation and viewership on the rise, the focus on fitness, and the desire for environmentally friendly recreational venues, now is an ideal time to build a sports field.

As a sports turf manager, you are responsible for the quality of the new field. Most importantly, your goal is to manage it to a high level of playability and safety, thus reducing an athlete's likelihood of suffering a surface related injury. The first step is to ensure that your organization has decided to build the most suitable field based on use, budget, management expertise, and many other factors specific to your situation.

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) is developing a series of advisory bulletins. Often decisions that seem small and insignificant in the short-term can affect the quality of the field for years to come. The answers to these Assessment Questions should help to guide your organization to make the best choice for your athletes.

For more information, or assistance in evaluating your answers, contact STMA at ph. 800-323-3875 or STMAinfo@sportsturfmanager.org.

The content of this bulletin is intended for informational purposes and is not intended as a substitute for specific professional consultation.

Suggested Sports Field Assessment Questions

Overall Project Questions

1. Are there Certified Sports Field Managers (CSFM) or sports field managers available for this project? Yes No
2. Will the CSFM or sports field manager be involved with the field selection and construction process? Yes No
3. How many events are you planning to hold on the field? _____
How often will the field be used? (games and events per week) _____
4. What sports will be played on this field? _____

5. How many non-sporting events will be held on this field? _____
6. Will the field use increase over time? Yes No
7. If you increase the numbers of events on the field are you able to allocate the necessary funding to provide the additional maintenance? Yes No
8. When (what time of year) will the bulk of your events be held? _____
How does the event schedule overlay with weather limitations patterns? _____

9. How many other athletic fields at your institution do you manage? _____
Are any synthetic? Yes No
10. Have you set an appropriate budget for the number of events you are planning? Yes No
11. What time-frame has been established for completion of this project? _____
12. What are the long-term expectations and goals? _____

13. What is your estimated project budget? _____
14. What is the projected Capital budget? (usually includes equipment with purchase costs of \$1,000 +) _____

Projected Operational budget? (includes all inputs, water and labor costs) _____

15. Have the safety concerns for the field type been identified and discussed? Yes No
16. Are you in the cool season, warm season or transitional zone? Cool Warm Transitional zone

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17. Have you selected an appropriate site for the installation of the field? Yes No
- Does it have a North, South, East or West orientation? North South East West
18. Do you have standards set for quality, field conditions, and safety? Yes No
- Have you set thresholds for which you are willing to accept liability? Yes No
- Have you identified the potential health issues associated with each field type? Yes No
19. Do you have an appropriate budget for the maintenance to provide the standards noted in question 18? Yes No
20. When was the last new athletic field installed at your institution? _____
- (May indicate the projected life expectancy of the new field)
21. Have you read/are you familiar with the STMA "Guide to Synthetic and Natural Turfgrass for Sports Fields: Selection, Construction, and Maintenance Considerations"? Yes No
22. Have nearby institutions at your level of competition installed new fields recently? Yes No
- Were they synthetic? Yes No
23. What is the security plan for the area during construction? _____
- _____
- After construction? _____
- _____
- _____

Natural Fields

1. Do you allow appropriate time for renovations, re-work or repairs to your fields by not scheduling the field during these times? Yes No
- Does your budget allow for the items above? Yes No
2. Will you be able to rest the field during the prime growing season? Yes No
3. Do you have enough fields to allow for field rotation to provide the necessary rest periods for your field? Yes No
4. Are funds available for an irrigation system? Yes No
- If no, will watering costs be included in the operating budget? Yes No
5. Will there be footwear restrictions? Yes No
6. Do you have the appropriate equipment* to do the necessary maintenance on your field? Yes No
- * See Advisory Bulletin #2 – Suggested Equipment List**

Synthetic Fields

1. If you are considering a synthetic field, will you charge user fees for the removal and environmental disposal of the synthetic turf when it becomes worn? Yes No

Are you budgeting for the costs associated with replacing the synthetic material? Yes No

2. Do you or your staff have the expertise to monitor, groom or repair the synthetic field? Yes No

3. Are funds available for an irrigation system? Yes No

If no, will the cost of water to cool the turf be included in the operating budget? Yes No

4. What type of permanent field markings are desired or required? _____

What type of decorative or revenue generating logos are desired? _____

Do you intend to change field uses/markings and/or logos on the field? Yes No

5. Do you have the appropriate equipment* to do the necessary maintenance on your field? Yes No

Will the budget allow for purchase of specialty tools to maintain and repair synthetic turf? Yes No

Will the budget allow for training the staff on how to use them correctly? Yes No

*** See Advisory Bulletin #2 – Suggested Equipment List**

6. Will there be footwear restrictions? Yes No