

Mondoturf Ecofill artificial turf lets University of Missouri shine with professional-quality recreation surface

Mondo's performance benefits and maintenance aspects win rave reviews from administrators and students



The Customer

The University of Missouri was founded in 1839 and is the oldest state university west of the Mississippi River. A comprehensive research university with an enrollment of approximately 30,000 students in 20 schools and colleges, MU is home to a robust recreational sports program with nearly 6,000 unique participants, and its recreation facilities support more than 40 club sports and open play. In 2005, the venues were named the best recreation facilities in the U.S. by Sports Illustrated on Campus.

The Need

University officials had recently embarked on an ambitious, \$1.5 million renovation of three outdoor fields at Stankowski Outdoor Recreation Complex as part of a facelift of student recreation facilities.

Built in 1996, Stankowski Complex is located in the heart of the Mizzou campus and is one of the university's centerpieces. The expansive facility comprises a 1/3-mile, three-lane walking and running track, sand volleyball courts, two softball diamonds, a field house and three synthetic turf football/soccer fields that are used year-round for flag football and soccer by the university's club sports programs, sports camps and other groups.

MU students had been clamoring for years to have the 13-year-old, 140,000 square foot AstroTurf fields at Stankowski replaced with new surfaces. Feedback and research indicated the university faced a tall order in satisfying the needs of school administrators and students.

Administrators required a long-term, cost-effective solution with certain performance benefits. Specifically, they wanted MU's new fields to:

- Withstand heavy, year-round recreational usage for a variety of activities
- Remain as cool as possible during Missouri's hot summers
- Drain well when it rained
- Offer minimal infill splash, meaning infill particles would be less likely to fly up with ball or foot impact compared with other artificial turf fields
- Provide maximum play time
- Cost less to maintain than natural grass

Because the university prides itself on offering top-notch facilities with carefully designed green space and areas set aside for year-round club sports, camps and recreational activities, MU demanded a solution that would spotlight its competitive recreational edge and demonstrate its responsiveness to student needs.

Students' top requirement for the fields was having a professional-quality surface that would allow them to perform their best for soccer, flag football, lacrosse, rugby and other activities. They wanted the fields to be playable year-round, and they wanted the school to select a product that was environmentally friendly.

"Everyone here recognizes the importance of exercise and recreation as a part of students' overall educational experience, and we respect the needs of the recreational athlete," said Diane Dahlmann, director, MizzouRec Services and Facilities, University of Missouri. "If you play on inferior surfaces, you can't perform because obstacles get in your way. We wanted to remove those obstacles and provide the best surface available."

The Solution

MizzouRec compared artificial turf products and solicited input from student leaders and students who participate in the university's club and rec sports programs. In the end it was unanimous: Everyone involved wanted Mondoturf Ecofill. The surface met each requirement administrators and students had set forth.

"What really sold us on Mondoturf Ecofill was its performance and playability. We visited several synthetic turf fields during our evaluation, and Mondoturf Ecofill sold itself," Dahlmann said. "On a hot July day in Chicago, the Mondoturf Ecofill field was cool, so we knew it would be more comfortable for our recreational athletes and student officials than fields with reground rubber infill. It also clearly produced minimal infill splash. It had everything we needed."

Installed in more than 800 facilities worldwide, Mondoturf Ecofill delivers the appropriate amount of shock absorption and energy return for optimal, natural-field-like athletic performance. An environmentally friendly material, Ecofill is virtually odor free, even in hot, humid conditions, and it retains less heat than traditional black rubber granules, so it reduces the potential for athletic fatigue and dehydration and minimizes the need for fields to be watered down prior to use. It also is completely recyclable, which is an industry first.

The Results

Dahlmann said the Mondoturf Ecofill fields have drawn rave reviews.

"Students love it," she said. "One of the great things about Mondo is that it is a top performer, even on hot days and in rainfall. Students know they are playing on a professional-quality surface.

"For us, it was such a wise decision to install artificial turf fields because money is always an issue—people don't realize the expenses associated with maintaining natural grass surfaces. Mondo's fields are extremely cost effective and give us the profound benefit of never having to shut down. We have uptime, not downtime."

Artificial turf for recreational use is being installed by a growing number of schools, parks and municipalities around the U.S., and MU officials are proud that with their Mondoturf fields, the school is on the forefront of that trend. The university's enrollment has increased steadily over the past several years, and Dahlmann partially attributes those gains to Missouri's top-notch recreation facilities.

"We are thrilled beyond belief about installing this outstanding product. With the Mondoturf Ecofill fields, we are providing a quality leisure experience that takes into consideration what is important to our students," Dahlmann said. "Having Mondo as a partner in that experience, we knew we were giving students the best."