

Oak Bluffs Planning Board : Please add this danger to humans on artificial turf to your project information: NFL Players Union is lobbying team owners to replace all artificial turf fields with natural grass. Statistics show dramatic injury increases...

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To: Oak Bluffs Planning Board <planningboard@oakbluffsma.gov>

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Oak Bluffs Planning Board,

I have seen some of your research for plans to install new field surfaces in town. The only surface for the health of people that use athletic fields and for the health of the earthly treasures in Martha's Vineyard is natural grass.

You've seen the pollutants artificial turf sheds, it's not recyclable (My career included 15 years in recycling in North America), and it's really bad for athletes. It's wreaking havoc on NFL players bodies so heavily that the union is now lobbying to have all artificial fields removed.

Your best approach for the health of athletes and health of Martha's Vineyard and the surrounding ocean is to never install it. Please be kind to people's bodies and Martha's Vineyard environment.

Stay safe and healthy,

Stewart Saunders
Sonoma, CA
Education and Safety Advocate

Subject: NFL Players Union is lobbying team owners to replace all artificial turf fields with natural grass. Statistics show dramatic injury increases on artificial turf, and the union wants to protect their players.

Date: October 12, 2020 at 7:53:51 PM PDT

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NFL Players Association President JC Tretter outlined artificial turf injury increases to players and the statistics behind wanting artificial turf removed. The article below tells why players want all artificial playing and practice fields removed and replaced with natural grass. Injuries increase dramatically on turf. The physics of artificial turf are simple. Because there is no longer natural grass to give and rip under stress, players bodies rip instead. Something always has to give - artificial turf increased durability and traction increases injury to players. The 49ers roster was devastated in one game on MetLife's artificial turf field.

Money and lawsuits will make the change - The NFL Players Association will convince team owners to see the human damage and financial costs to make the change voluntarily, or sue for the right to play on natural grass. USA's Women's World Cup Soccer Team sued the European ruling body FIFA to play on natural grass and has won that right. Turf was damaging too many players. World Cup Men's Soccer has always been played on real grass.

Objections to natural grass come from turf profiteers - much false and discredited information is fabricated by profiteers involved in turf buying decisions. Most common, "turf will save money". Wrong. Let's use Adele Harrison Middle School's completed artificial turf field real costs vs. a natural grass investment:

ADELE HARRISON ARTIFICIAL TURF ACTUAL COSTS vs SAVINGS IF NATURAL GRASS HAD BEEN INSTALLED

Total cost artificial turf field install at Adele Harrison.	\$1,700,000
less: drainage pond, path, fence.	-200,000
subtotal - just the turf field	\$1,500,000
less: difference in cost of a natural grass field (per supplier of Levis Stadium natural grass).	-600,000
cost difference between artificial turf and natural grass installation.	\$900,000
artificial turf replacement cost in 8 to 10 years.	\$500,000
natural grass field replacement not needed for decades.	\$0
artificial turf costs vs. natural grass for 10 year period.	\$1,400,000
INSTALLATION SAVINGS WITH NATURAL GRASS	\$1,400,000

Natural grass install money left over if artificial turf had not been purchased.	\$1,400,000
divided by 10 year period - money available per year for natural grass maintenance.	\$140,000 per year available.
divided by 52 weeks per year to determine \$ available for weekly field	\$2,692.31 per week available to

maintenance.	maintain one natural grass field.
MAINTENANCE \$ AVAILABLE DUE TO NATURAL GRASS INSTALLATION SAVINGS	\$2,692.31 per week available for maintenance.

First, it's an oxymoronic decision to install a plastic field next to the SVHS Agricultural Department farm. Bermuda grass is a durable, thick, high traffic four season grass that can handle daily team workouts. It's the choice of pros, colleges, and high schools, and the most cost effective choice as well. \$2,692.31 every week should be a fantastic budget for watering and mowing a 300ft x 200ft. plot of grass every week. Offer local landscape maintenance companies \$140,000 a year to take care of that patch of grass and see how they respond.

Sod installers do offer contracts for yearly aeration, fertilization, and seeding if needed, and artificial turf requires maintenance contracts for warranty. Lining the fields can be a team building experience for each sport being played (it's outdoor geometry), or leave it to the boosters. There is an opportunity here to save money and create teaching events. Ultimately, it's not about saving money, but about saving children from unnecessary injuries.

Schools will follow the NFL Players Association successful demand for natural grass - the NFLPA will bring to light and understanding of artificial turf injury increases to football fans everywhere. Schools eventually will use the public knowledge to choose the safest option for children's bodies - natural grass.

Adele Harrison Middle School soccer team has already had one heat injury and one non-contact injury requiring an emergency room trip and 6 months out of athletics. Both on the artificial turf. Other injuries to children that have occurred obviously are not made public.

When families of student athletes injured by artificial turf realize that school management chose the most dangerous surface to play on for the sake of durability, they have grounds to sue schools to recover medical costs for their injured child. Insurance companies will follow suit. This sea change in the NFL is further proof supporting natural grass as Sonoma Valley Unified School districts safest and smartest choice for our students. There is no "warm, safe, and dry" in artificial turf. "Overheated players, dramatic increase of injuries, and dehydrated" are proven negative effects on artificial turf.

Associated Press

NFL urged by players association to replace all artificial-surface fields with natural grass

Published: Oct. 1, 2020 at 9:33 a.m. ET

By [Associated Press](#)

Noncontact knee and ankle injuries occur more frequently on synthetic surfaces, according to an analysis of the league's official injury reports



San Francisco 49ers defensive end Nick Bosa is driven off the field after being injured during the first half of a Sept. 20 game against the New York Jets in East Rutherford, N.J. **ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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BEREA, Ohio (AP) — Fifteen NFL teams play their home games on artificial turf. Cleveland Browns center J.C. Tretter wants to see that number reduced to zero.

The NFL Players Association president cited the league's official injury

reports from 2012 to 2018 to state his case that natural grass fields provide a much lower risk for injuries, compared to artificial surfaces, during practices and games.

The analysis shows that players have a 28% overall higher rate of noncontact lower-extremity injuries on turf. Noncontact knee injuries occur at a 32% higher clip, and noncontact foot or ankle injuries are 69% percent more likely on artificial fields.

"The data stands out, and the numbers are staggering in the difference in injury rate," Tretter said Wednesday. "We all should be working toward the safest style of play, and we know the dangers of playing on turf.

"It's not good for players, it's not good for the GMs and the head coaches, it's not good for the owners, and it's not good for the fans. Increased injuries are not good for anybody."

Tretter, who detailed the data in his monthly newsletter to union members, spoke extensively on the subject before Cleveland's afternoon practice at the club's suburban training facility.

The seven-year veteran was elected NFLPA president on March 10 after winning a three-way election over Michael Thomas of the New York Giants and Sam Acho of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He has advocated for player safety while maintaining a diplomatic approach. "Anecdotally, I know how my body responds playing on turf versus grass," said Tretter, who graduated from Cornell University, an Ivy League institution. "The data backs that up, which was my main reason for writing it. It's something that from here on out, I think we need to make a priority."

The subject of field safety moved to the forefront in Week 2 when San Francisco standout Nick Bosa and teammate Solomon Thomas both suffered season-ending torn anterior cruciate ligaments in a road win over the New York Jets. Several 49ers players described the synthetic turf at MetLife Stadium as "sticky," prompting NFL representatives to inspect — and confirm the quality of — the field before the team returned in Week 3 to play the Giants.

"Until we can find a way to get synthetic turf to respond and react like natural grass, it's too much of a danger to continue to play on and expect different results," Tretter said. "It's possible to get grass in every location, and it's about pushing for that." The 6-foot-4, 307-

pounder noted that natural fields are used in cold-weather markets like Cleveland (FirstEnergy Stadium), Green Bay (Lambeau Field) and Pittsburgh (Heinz Field), in addition to enclosed stadiums in Arizona (State Farm Stadium) and Las Vegas (Allegiant Stadium).

Seventeen NFL teams play their home games on grass, while 15 franchises do so on artificial turf. The latter include the Rams and Chargers, who share SoFi Stadium in suburban Los Angeles, and the co-owners Giants and Jets in East Rutherford, N.J.

“You add in the increase in injury rate, just based on how synthetic turf is built and grass’ ability to tear away and release your ankles or your knees from compromised situations,” Tretter said. “When you put so much force and so much torque in the ground, eventually something has to give. When you’re on turf, it’s going to be your joint.” Before any surface is deemed playable, the NFL uses the Clegg Impact Tester to determine if the field is too hard, but does not measure other safety factors. The players association has a committee of engineers developing a more comprehensive method. In his new role, Tretter says lobbying for grass fields will be a key talking point in any labor negotiations with the league.

“If we know grass is significantly more safe than synthetic turf, it’s about continuing to push forward and making it a priority,” Tretter said. “This is about continuing to push to provide us with the safest work environment possible. Player safety will always be a priority for us and for the union.”

Stewart Saunders
Education and Safety Advocate