

Southeast Polk High School Pleasant Hill, IA 50327

August 28, 2007

Mr. Chuck VanHecke:

We are starting our 5th year with FieldTurf --- I know we were the first high school field to install it -- when we were checking it out I went to look at Wartburg's and was impressed.

In 2003, SE Polk High School planned the renovation of their natural grass field. The old field was constructed in the 1960's, and soil from a nearby creek bed was trucked in as fill. Over years of constant use, this finely-grained soil became hard and compacted. Water would run off easily, and after a few games every year it was not a safe playing surface. The final game played on the old field was a mud bowl. Something had to be done.

We entertained the ideas of a prescription athletic turf (natural grass), as well as synthetic surfaces. We had to keep in mind our limited practice field facilities, due to increased enrollment and building construction on our campus. We decided to go with FieldTurf for 2 major reasons: 1. Installing a natural grass surface does not protect you from mother nature, and 2. Installing FieldTurf would allow us the flexibility to host and schedule multiple practices and events without maintenance worries.

No one in our District realized the full range of benefits to the installation of FieldTurf at our stadium. It is used for all the District's football games, grades 7 -12, and all football practices 10 - 12. This year, the SEP Youth Tackle Football League will use the field every Saturday in September and October from 8:00am to 5:00pm. All soccer games and practices are held on the turf. Physical Education classes use it on a daily basis, and the marching band was the first organization to utilize it. It has greatly benefited our track program, and there is little doubt it has been a major contributing factor to the success of our football program in recent years. During the recent hot spell, football practice was held at night under the lights. Since so many events are held on the game field, we can film every practice, meet, match, or game from 2 angles due to cameras we have installed on our scoreboard and press box. Weather permitting, athletes have even used the surface during seasonable winter days for workouts.

Community organizations such as the Cancer Relay for Life, the Pleasant Hill Soccer Club, and the previously mentioned SEP Youth Football use the "turf". Our stadium has been utilized/rented by Central, Morningside, and Simpson Colleges, Drake University, as well as by Women's Professional Football and the Altoona Campus (YMCA). Youth football and soccer camps are conducted every fall and spring.

With all the activity described above taking place on FieldTurf, the best testimonial is the lack of maintenance required and the condition of the surface well into our 5th year of use. The savings on field maintenance and care has been significant. You never have to worry about field conditions, even under the worst of circumstances. As a result, our INJURIES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED, especially ankle and knee injuries. We talked to 3- 4 turf companies before deciding to go with FieldTurf. The competition maintained that FieldTurf would become "hardened" and unsafe over time. We have not found that to be true. The turf has maintained its color, and all yard lines and markings are in the same shape as when it was installed. In the midst of our 5th year, I feel we can confidently expect another 10 years of use before considering replacement.

Even those initially opposed to the installation of FieldTurf now realize that it has been a tremendous asset to our community and educational programs, not just athletics. We are constructing a new high school to be opened in the Fall of 2008. We are strongly considering adding a second FieldTurf surface at the new site as an additional practice and physical education facility.

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