

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Heat Potential of Artificial Turf
Poses Increased Health Risk

Rolling Meadows, IL, Spring, 2002—High temperatures, strenuous athletic activities and artificial turfgrass can be a serious, perhaps even fatal combination according to officials at the Turf Resource Center (TRC).

Doug Fender, TRC executive director, warns parents of young and even experienced athletes, “as we tragically saw last year with both professional and college football players working out on a hot day, the desire to prove athletic abilities can overcome our natural instincts and we push ourselves when we should be resting and rehydrating. Temperatures on artificial turf fields can be much higher than the surrounding air temperatures and the combination of strenuous exercise and lack of proper hydration can be serious. If the athlete has a significant medical condition such as asthma, it could become fatal.”

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Citing a classic scientific study conducted at Texas A&M University as far back as 1985, Fender said, “properly maintained Bermudagrass was measured at 88° F, while synthetic turf in the same area was 158° F. That’s a 70° difference, nearly 80 percent hotter, between these two types of playing surfaces.”

“I’m neither a doctor nor a coach,” Fender said, “but I am a parent and a grandparent, so I feel an obligation to keep an eye on this type of situation and insist that practices not be conducted on an artificial field on hot days. Regardless of the type of field or temperature, athletes should be provided adequate fluids and encouraged to take proper breaks to keep from over-heating and potentially encountering very serious health problems.

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