



QUESTIONS WITH...

Tobias Owegeser, CEO, SMG Sportplatzmaschinenbau

What challenges does the sports industry still face when it comes to artificial turf?

The quality of artificial turf systems has improved greatly in recent years. Be it on the lawn for soccer, hockey or tennis. The manufacturers of artificial turf are innovative and always want to offer the best possible sports surface. Our task as developers of machines for the installation and maintenance of artificial turf is then to be able to handle this innovation in a user-friendly manner. What handling means in this case is making tools, devices and machines available that make installation practicable for the construction company and maintenance through operation.

Infilling material for artificial turf is also adjusted regularly. Our job then also consists of machines for processing of organic infilling material such as cork for example.

How have your own practices changed as a result of Covid-19, if at all?

As an engineering and production company, we were in the need to organize and adjust our daily work during the pandemic. We can proudly say

that we were one of the first companies in the region that adapted to the circumstances of the pandemic and to meet all hygiene, distance and employee protection requirements. With a lot of instinct we grouped our team in our production facility, let them work in the home office or even let overtime and vacation be reduced. In addition, we also supported employees who had to look after their infants or themselves.

What are the best maintenance processes required to optimize the condition of turf carpets?

While artificial turf has been sold with the advantage of being maintenance-free for many decades, the attitudes of manufacturers and end customers are gradually changing and the understanding of common-sense solutions is increasing. Nowadays, a distinction is made between artificial turf maintenance as routine and/or advanced maintenance, where the client can decide, based on his budget or available manpower which machine or service he will use.

The ideal turf care solution is a combination of regular/routine maintenance; based on the playing hours on a weekly basis and an annual basic and deep cleaning.

Has the methodology of installation changed in 10 years? If so, what evolution has the industry seen?

What I have seen is if artificial turf is accordance with DIN or an elastic base is used, the fibers are slightly shorter than laying directly on an unbound base. It is a little easier with short fibers, however must also be done precisely in order to get a uniform and level filling level. Further evolutions in regard to eco-friendly infilling materials are under process in the industry.

What do you think will be next big innovation for turf and sport surfaces?

Rather than one particular breakthrough being much more important, at least in our industry for the synthetic sports flooring industry, the level is standardized internationally. There are still far too many countries where young people, and athletes of all ages do not have access to state-of-the-art sports surfaces that offer the usual requirements for safety and safety, or where there is even knowledge of the availability of such areas. ■

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