

Cover the bases: Optimising synthetic turf performance with interlocking panels

Recent studies have shown that traditional stone sub-base installation practices prevent the artificial turf market from reaching its full

potential. In response, though, technologies are being developed to transform the way in which synthetic turf fields are constructed.

“For more than 10 years, my mission to replace rock-and-gravel base construction with what I refer to as panel-base technology has been met with extreme optimism and enthusiasm by many and caution by a few,” says Dave Barlow, president of parent company Innovative Base Technologies.

The development and global acceptance of the company’s Tour Links putting green system nearly 10 years ago was a big step forward for panel systems, with the new structural interlocking systems dramatically reducing outdoor site preparation, material, labour and time. Further enhancing this change in outdoor installations is the ease of indoor panel installations, which have captured the attention of the industry.

As its technology matured, Innovative Base Technologies decided to capitalise on the success of the Tour Links panels and its decade of installation experience. “My job was to design the ultimate system that addressed all of the specifications needed to perform the task of replacing rock- or asphalt-base sub-bases,” Barlow continues. “The sports field industry has seen the emergence of alternative base systems but the missing element has always been the strong structural support that a proper base system needed to provide.”

Many impressive products have infiltrated the market, improving drainage flow or enhancing impact performance.



The UltraBaseSystem provides safety and performance benefits to synthetic turf

UltraBaseSystems has been developed to perform all these tasks, as well as to create the structure that would eliminate the immense labour and expense associated with compacted rock-base systems. The product is lightweight, easy to transport and simple to install, while maintaining the required structural base integrity. It also provides notable impact and player performance benefits, as well as excellent drainage.

Installation at Home Depot Center

The recent installation at the Home Depot Center in California – home of the LA Galaxy MLS team – exemplified the benefits of employing panel base technology.

In only six days, an 82,500ft² (7,665m²) natural grass football stadium was transformed into a state-of-the-art, multi-purpose field that would host the AstroTurf NFLPA Collegiate Bowl, as well as the California High School Football Championships and the Doble Clasico Centroamericano soccer tournament.

The existing sod was quickly stripped away and the ground was graded and compacted. The AstroTurf crew of 11 went to work installing 15,000 patented, recycled, polymeric panels. In fewer than 18 hours, the stadium was outfitted with base system and in under a week, from start to finish, the new synthetic

turf field was constructed without so much as a single teaspoon of additional rock-base material. In addition, the field was disassembled and made ready to be moved to a new permanent home after the prestigious events were played.

Top score

Independent testing clearly proved the safety and performance characteristics of the panel system, which – when coupled with a great turf product – delivered impressive g-max numbers as well as meeting the requirements of the Synthetic Turf Council’s performance testing guidelines. These guidelines are same as those prescribed by FIFA 2-Star standard. The creation of a faster playing surface, while improving injury prevention and drainage characteristics, has been a goal in the synthetic turf market for a long time and is one that will have a lasting effect on athletes for years to come.

“Installing fields permanently or temporarily in a variety of locations, with reduced time, manpower and equipment – while creating a playing surface with optimised appearance, drainage, player performance and safety – has been our goal for more than a decade and one that we are excited to see being embraced by the global turf industry,” Barlow concludes. ■

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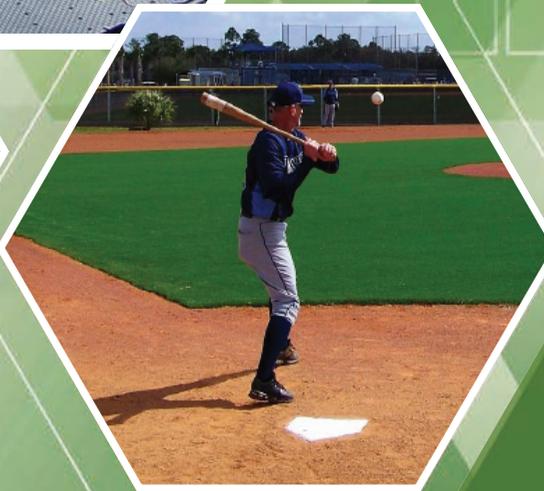
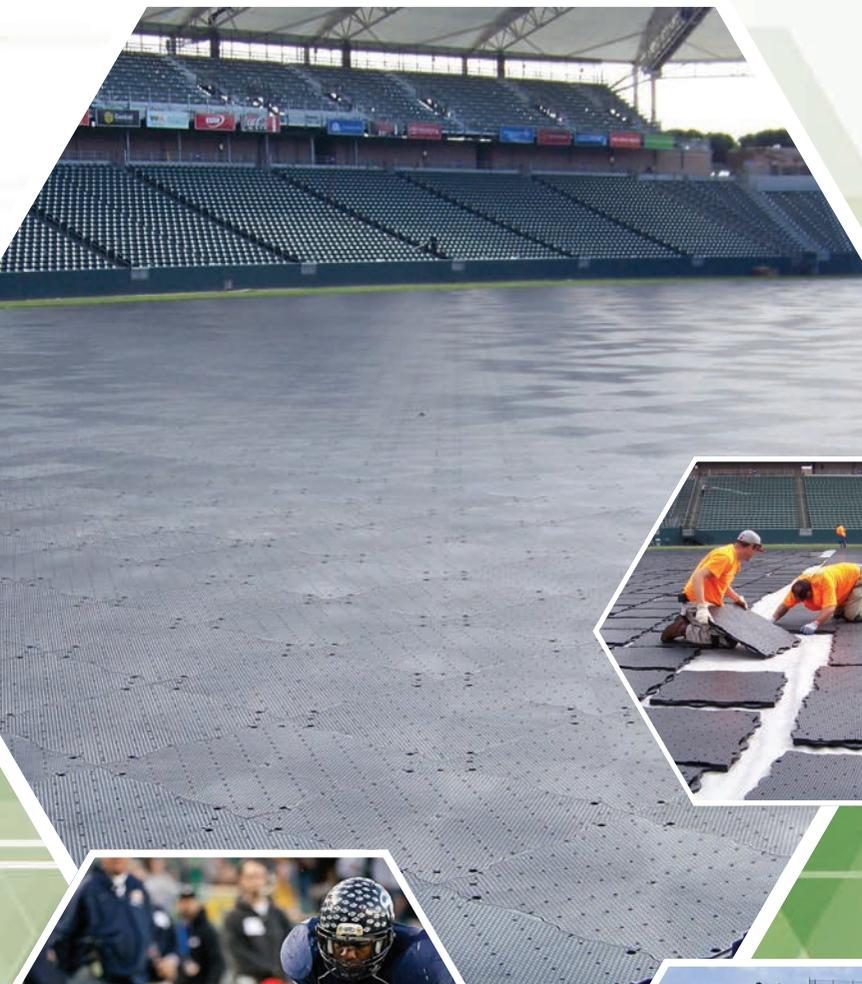
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Our Base,
One Goal**

To build the safest, best performing synthetic turf fields in the world. Let us show you just how easy perfection can be.