



Turf at Last!

by John Bowen



Soccer and field hockey players of all ages braved cold temperatures in their light uniforms to participate in the opening of West Vancouver's first artificial turf field on Wednesday, November 19, 2003. It signaled the end of a long wait, much discussion and a lot of work. Kevin Pike, West Vancouver District's Director of Parks and Community Services said, "This project is part of the long range capital plan which built Gleneagles Community Centre and which is now building the Aquatic Centre and which will soon build a new Community Centre on 21st St. *continued on p.2 –Turf at Last*



With the help of our soccer playing boys, West Vancouver Mayor Ron Wood cuts the ribbon, officially opening West Vancouver's new artificial turf facility at Ambleside. See page 2.

WEST VANCOUVER SOCCER CLUB
SIDELINES

Inside this Issue of Sidelines...

Turf at Last! by John Bowen	Page 1
Splendor in the Grass: The Quest for Top Turf by Les Meszaros	Page 3
Effective, Efficient and Empathetic Lighting by John Bowen	Page 4
Green on the Other Side Too by John Bowen	Page 4
Bench It Like Beckham: The Playtime Issue by John Bowen	Page 5
New WVSC Website in the Making by John Bowen	Page 7
From NS Peewee to Yale University to European Pro Soccer by Ciara McCormack	Page 8
WV Wildcats The Turnaround Team by Stephanie Gibson	Page 9
Mondoturf Will Last If We... by Claudia Sparling	Page 9
Rising Power: Soccer's Global Spread from The Economist	Page 10
Advance News About 2004 Tryouts by Peggy Bradshaw	Page 11

...Turf at Last (continued) Playing field improvements were an integral part of that plan and we've already done a significant amount of work on both rock dust and grass fields. This facility is the real jewel in that crown."

Artificial Turf has been talked about for 12 or 13 years in West Vancouver. The artificial turf project was a cooperative effort by WV Council, the sport community and staff – all had essential roles.

Before cutting the ribbon to officially open the field, Mayor Ron Wood thanked everyone involved in getting the project done.

During the most recent municipal elections, Mayor Ron Wood and a number of councilors including Alan Williams, Pam Goldsmith-Jones, Victor Durman, Jean Ferguson and John Clark indicated that getting the turf built was a high priority for them. Shortly afterwards, negotiations were quickly concluded, decisions were made and planning was underway – local democracy at its best.

A number of sites in the municipality were considered for the new artificial turf fields. All of them had strong drawbacks. Reluctantly then, it was decided that the only workable alternative was to sacrifice our two best grass fields, Ambleside D and E.

Ambleside Park was chosen because it was deemed to be the best for the sport groups and for the community. It is the only location where we could assure all types of transportation access, where parking was adequate, where new traffic loads could be accommodated without local affect and where the lighting system could be perpendicular to the local neighbours ie. the lights are not focused in the direction of houses. Ambleside also contains complimentary facilities nearby (plus the business district) which will help during both regular use and during special events like tournaments.

Les Meszaros, a long-time soccer coach, contributed a considerable amount of his time researching different turf products and meeting with consultants, District staff and others. If you like our magnificent turf with its particular suitability to our game, it is Les Meszaros who deserves

your thanks. Please see his discussion about turf choices in this issue of Sidelines.

Civil work on and around the fields started in June and was completed quickly. J.S. Ferguson Construction, under the direction of Scott Ferguson, built a lot of what you see and a lot of what you don't see under the turf itself.

Paul Shaflick of Shaflick Engineering installed the state-of-the-art lighting system that is essential to getting maximum use of the fields. A separate article in this issue of Sidelines describes the characteristics of the lighting system.

Doug Wournell and Ron Bowker of Athletica were overall consultants and project managers. Michael Noble of MHN Consulting facilitated the acquisition and installation of Mondoturf itself.

WV District staff Colin Campbell and Kevin Pike and others saw the project through from its conception to where it is today.

Colin Campbell did all he could to get both fields finished before cold and wet weather stopped work. "We got so close", he said. The adhesive used to bond the turf and the lines in turf requires dry weather and ambient temperatures of over 15°C.

It was touch and go getting the white and yellow lines installed in time on Ambleside D. The installers warmed up the glue and used other tricks. In the end, it became too difficult and the specialized trades people left for other projects in warmer, dryer climates.

Colin Campbell is not giving up. The crews are to come back in the spring to finish the work on Ambleside E. And if Colin can find someone who devises a practical means to finish the field in winter, to the high standards demanded, don't be surprised to see work on E resume before the spring.

We asked the fortunate coaches whose teams have played on the field what they thought. One said, "it fields nice". Someone else wrote a poem. The only less than positive remarks came from coaches who were impatient to get their chance to play on the turf. Comments written by Rick Gruneau, the coach of the girls' U15

gold team captures the common sentiment. Rick said;

"Our team has played on the artificial turf in Port Moody, Port Coquitlam, Carson Graham, William Griffin, and now, West Van.

Up until this past season, the team has been unanimous in favouring the artificial fields in Port Coquitlam and Carson Graham over Port Moody and William Griffin. Our players complain that Port Moody and Griffin play "too fast" and the ball often skips weirdly and bounces far too high on high balls. One of our players described these fields as "pool tables" with lines.

Our players tell us that Carson Graham and Port Coquitlam are softer and play a bit more like grass. But, the ball can still make some excessively high bounces on long ball and the girls don't like the fact that the little black bits of rubber get all over everything. At PoCo the rubber seems to sit right on top of the surface in many places and you can literally see it flying up with every step the kids take. There is less turf burn on falls at these fields than at Port Moody or William Griffin. But everyone likes the West Van surface best of all. The kids say that this surface plays more like grass than any surface they have played on -- in respect to the speed at which the ball runs, and the bounce off high balls. They also like the slightly softer feel when running. The surface is particularly good when it is wet. We played a cup game on it two weeks ago in a driving rainstorm and the drainage was remarkable-not a drop of standing water anywhere.

The fact that the little rubber pellets don't seem to fly up as much as the black rubber on other fields is a bonus.

For our team this turf is a fantastic contribution to the community. We practice on the turf on Fridays and the girls say that practicing on it "makes them feel like professionals."

All in all, a great product!"

To employ the old half full/half empty metaphor, it is a bit unlucky that we do not have a full glass, but after all; our glass is big and half full with the best vintage champagne. It should keep us happy until we get topped up in the spring. Cheers! 

Splendor in the Grass: The Quest for Top Turf

By Les Meszaros

Over the past three years, I researched and reviewed many infill turf products and visited artificial turf facilities throughout the Pacific Northwest. I spoke to turf researchers at Penn State University and facility owners across North America and Europe. I made personal visits to artificial infill turf fields in BC, Washington and Oregon.

Conversations were had regarding all aspects of the construction of the turf fields, ranging from civil engineering issues, site issues, design issues and quality of the turf. From these discussions it was clear that many mistakes had been made in projects locally as well as internationally, leading to turf failure, cost overruns and design flaws.

Infill Turf

Although design and civil work are important, my main focus was on finding the best field surface for our community. The main issues with choosing the actual infill turf product were determined to be safety, performance and longevity. These factors were covered by various turf specifications:

Shock Absorption(Gmax):

A turf surface can feel “hard” or “soft”. A hard surface can lead to short and long term injuries by causing joints to compress, resulting in damage to the cartilage between bones. Furthermore, falling on a hard surface can cause bruising to soft tissues like muscles. The ability of a surface to absorb the impact of a player while running or falling on the surface is called its shock absorbency.

The shock absorbency of a field is measured in a “GMax test”. Much of the basic work on shock absorbency in the US has been based on the protection of human trauma from major head impacts. Thus, to evaluate a surfaces ability to absorb impact, a mass is dropped from a standard height to simulate the major part of the impacts of the head hitting the surface. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the surface is acceptable if the maximum results are

under 200 G’s (GMax Rating). It was important to note that the threshold level of 200 GMax is considered by many to be borderline and that a result of 150 Gmax and under should be seriously considered. As an example, here are some GMax results (Milner 1985) for natural surfaces:

GMax Ratings for Selected Natural Playing Surfaces	
Good Natural Grass Field	GMax 100–250
Wet Sand Field	GMax 135+
Frozen Field	GMAX 150+

A field can have a low GMax but still be firm to play on. One does not preclude the other.

Face Weight

Most infill turf fields in North America have a face weight of 33 ounces or under. There is only one field in the Lower Mainland with a face weight of 40 ounces (Surrey, Newton Athletic Park). In simplest terms, you can relate the face weight of a turf field with that of a carpet. In principal, a 30 ounce carpet is not going to last as long as a 40 ounce carpet. The same principal can then be applied to turf products. A 40 ounce turf should last longer than a 30 ounce turf. The extra face weight can also lead to more shock absorbency, hence a safer field.

Infill Material

The type of infill material is important both to performance and safety, but also environmental. There are two major infill materials used by the turf manufacturers, all rubber, and a combination of rubber and sand. An all rubber infill turf field in the Lower Mainland is for example, Carson Graham (Confederation Park) and Surrey Newton Park, while rubber/sand fields can be found at William Griffin in North Vancouver and Burnaby West Turf Fields, by 8 Rinks.

Also, in every field in North America to date, recycled rubber has been used. These are generally shredded tires or in some cases, shredded old Nike running shoes.

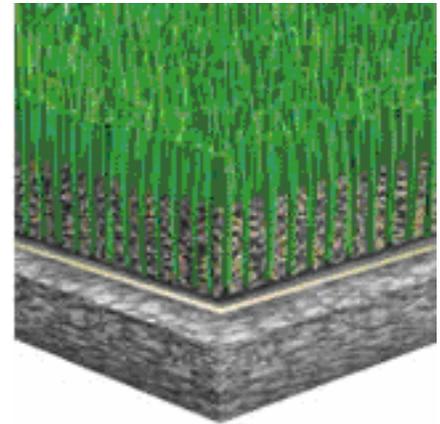
There have been a few sand/rubber fields that have been closed due to safety concerns (GMax results of over 200), for instance in Lake Oswego in Oregon. These were replaced with an

all rubber infill by the same manufacturer. There is general consensus that most sand/rubber fields have hardened over time due to the sand compacting, particularly within our climate zone of “extra” precipitation. Also, in general, Recycled rubber is harder than new rubber and will continue to harden over time at a faster rate than new rubber would.

Other Turf Product Features

Tear strength, backing material, tuft materials are also important quality issues that help determine the longevity and safety of artificial turf fields.

Why Mondo Ecofill?



Mondo Ecofill was chosen as the surface of choice for the West Vancouver Project for a variety of reasons.

Mondo Safety

Initial GMax testing of the product showed GMax results of under 100, while at the same time still providing firm footing for the player.

Mondo Performance

The Mondo surface has a face weight of 56 ounces. That is almost twice what other fields have in the lower Mainland.

Mondo Infill Material

Ecofill is an all rubber infill, that is new rubber, specially made for turf, known as EPDM It is not made from recycled tires or running shoes.

There are two different sizes and weight of EPDM rubber put into the field, one type is smaller and brown in colour and somewhat heavier than the green rubber which is laid on top. The brown rubber through extended play

and weather will eventually settle on the bottom.

Being new rubber, Ecofill is also much safer, environmentally. There are no concerns over eventually having to try and recycle this product. In fact, when replacing the old turf, we should be able to retain most of the infill rubber and put it back into the new field resulting in major cost savings. This rubber infill material can also be recycled directly back to the manufacturer who could melt it down and reproduce new infill material.

Most of the present infill turf fields have the black recycled tire material which is not easily recyclable and can contain heavy metals.

A wonderful aspect of the new rubber is that it is non static. No more little recycled black pellets will be brought home on the sides of socks and shorts.

One last side benefit of the rubber is its colour. In the middle of summer, it will definitely be the coolest artificial turf surface around.

End Result

Taking the above factors into consideration, West Vancouver likely has the highest standard turf field in North America. These are field(s) that, with the combination of firmness, face weight and EPDM rubber, exhibit characteristics most like natural grass, making the game on the field more enjoyable, and is safe for both the player, and the environment. Mondo Ecofill exceeded or met all of our safety, longevity and performance requirements. Though this industry is still relatively new, the oldest infill turf fields in the Lower Mainland are in Burnaby (6 years old). Our product should provide high level performance and safety for West Vancouver and Lower Mainland Soccer players for many years.

Comments that I personally have had back have all raved about the surface. "The ball doesn't bounce high" and "the ball doesn't keep rolling off the field". Those responses are music to my ears.

A side benefit of this product is that both UEFA (European Football Association) and FIFA (International Football Association) have both given "Recommendations" for this surface.

In fact, the first ever fully sanctioned, by FIFA, World Cup Game ever played on an artificial turf field was on a Mondo Ecofill this past summer. 

Editor's epilogue: Kevin Pike of WV District added the following comments about WV's decision to buy Mondoturf. "Mondoturf - the first in Canada and featuring new rubber infill material only - no recycled material to leach out any residues. We have a guaranteed "G Max" rating (measure of resiliency) which exceeds anything on the market and which increases the safety of this facility. We have a ten year warranty before any breakdown should be evident in the turf fibres themselves. We paid close attention to environmental issues to make sure that Pound Creek, which receives all the runoff from this field, would not (a) receive any high levels of water during storm events that could damage the creek bottom and (b) would not receive any damaging leachates from the field. 

Effective, Efficient and Empathetic Lighting

By John Bowen

On the night the new lights at Ambleside Turf were turned on for the first time, a neighbour came over to tell Paul Shaflik, the lighting engineer that soccer lights were bothering him. Eager to help alleviate the problem, Paul went with the man to his house to see the problem. To his surprise (and relief), the offending light was not one of the new turf lights, but a light at Ambleside A (gravel) field.

The fact is, the new lights are remarkable in their ability to shed excellent lighting for soccer where it is needed without spilling light to places where it might not be welcome. This trick is accomplished by the type of lights, the controls, the precise aiming and the height of the towers.

Kevin Pike, Director of Parks and Community Services for the District of West Vancouver said that the District installed *Musco Total Light Control System* because it is the best in the Musco line for control of glare and light spill from the facility. The black coloured fixtures were also options

which they specified in order to help these new elements blend into the park. The light fixtures point east and west, not north towards the residential area. The District took every effort to make the facility as unobtrusive and inoffensive as possible. It combines every element they knew or could think of to give a high quality facility to the players while at the same time minimizing impact on immediate neighbours.

The lights are programmed to come on before dusk and go off at 10PM. To save energy, the "practice setting" provides 60% of light intensity of the "game setting". 

Green on the Other Side Too

By John Bowen

Versatile and weatherproof as our new artificial turf is, we only have one field functioning now and two sometime early in 2004. Natural grass fields will still feel the impact of many soccer cleats. It is important that we continue to protect all the fields we have.

Someone on every WV team should call *Fieldline* at 604-926-6863 after 3:00PM on Fridays before a home game to find out if their grass field is open or whether the team has been moved to their alternate (usually gravel) field. If your team has been moved, the opposing team should be notified as soon as possible.

If your grass field is open on Friday but at the time of the game has standing water, soft spots or is frozen or frosted, you should take the initiative of moving to your alternate. If in doubt, consult the referee or call Bill or Claudia Sparling on their cell 604-418-3687.

You can also call Bill or Claudia to find out if a grass field that was closed on Friday for the weekend can be re-opened on Saturday or Sunday, assuming conditions warrant it. West Vancouver is the only municipality in Greater Vancouver where grass fields can, in some cases, be opened after blanket weekend closure. The Sparlings have been given that authority by WV District. 

Bench It like Beckham! The Playtime Issue

By John Bowen

Editor's note: This article is editorial in nature. It reflects the views of the editor of Sidelines and the persons quoted. It does not necessarily represent the views of WVSC board or the head coach.

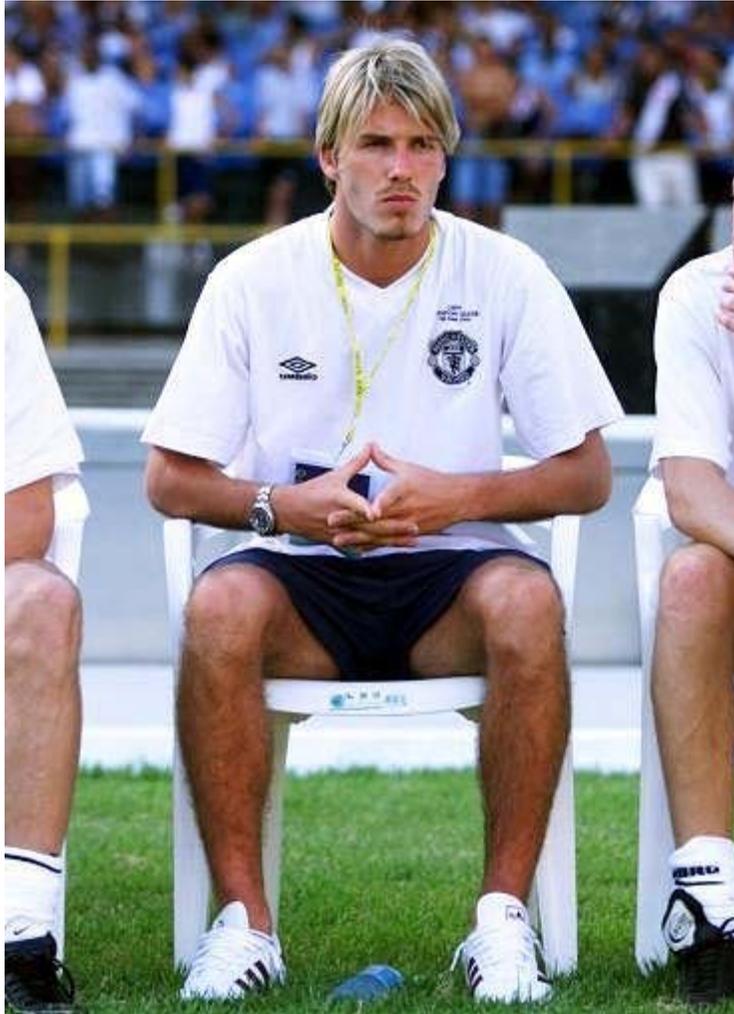
Is there any more difficult sight for soccer parents than to watch their fit and eager soccer star sit and sit and sit on the bench while many of his or her teammates play most of the game? You feel all the frustration, bewilderment and humiliation your child does, then some.

The converse of this problem is that there is probably no issue that causes coaches more angst than parents who repeatedly question their decisions about playtime and positioning. Coaches feel that they need room to strategize and balance diverse coaching objectives during important games and sometimes they resent being second guessed by parents. Most reasonable parents and players understand that a coach has his or her hands full during a game and needs some breathing room and understanding.

There are a number of reasons why players may spend a disproportionate amount of time on the bench. Typically, they are:

- fatigue or underperformance;
- misfit of positions and skills;
- some positions can be played for longer periods without rest than others;
- countering expectations of opposing teams;
- behaviour correction for misconduct or failure to heed coach's instructions;
- player missed practices;
- compensation to other players;
- referee's conduct regarding substitutions;

There are many other legitimate reasons for limiting a player's time in a game. The problem is, if the coach does not spell out why the player is spending more time than average off the field, the player will quickly doubt his or her self-worth. Developing young players is every bit as important as winning games and self-esteem and game-time learning are integral to player and team development. It is



incumbent on coaches to communicate their reasons for not playing players and indicate to them in terms they understand, what needs to be done for equitable play-time to be resorted.

As Club rules currently stand, some coaches have significant flexibility with respect to playtime. While peewee coaches are required to play players equally, each game, silver and bronze coaches need only play their players half and game and gold coaches one third of a game. Flexibility is greatly reduced of course, if the team has 17 or 18 players, all at the game.

Within the parameters of the rules, coaches differ in the extent of equality of play-time they choose to exercise. Some, if not most coaches will vary playtime for players and games according to the relative importance of the game or degree of difficulty anticipated in winning it. Important cup games, for example, will typically see more playtime disparity, in favour of the objective of winning.

Coaches, like school teachers or other authority figures in a child's life, are all different. All coaches value both winning and development. They differ in the relative weight they may assign to winning versus developing in different game circumstances. That is but one determinant of how much and in what positions they may play particular players in particular situations.

Even two coaches who place the same relative weight on winning versus developing, at the same moment with the same players, might have very different views about which players should be on the field, for how long and in what positions. While there is often general

agreement among coaches about the relative strength of most players (i.e. are they gold silver or bronze players), particular strengths and suitability in individual players are likely to be seen quite differently by several coaches.

If that is not complex enough, coaches need to remember that the player they so painstakingly assess today is a kid who will quite possibly be a different player tomorrow. Young players change quickly and often, especially during their rapid growth period.

The rarest and least probable explanation for disproportionate bench

time is unfair bias on the part of the coach. Typically, coaches go some distance to ensure that their decisions on and off the field are free from favouritism or prejudice.

To get an indication about how coaches with significant experience with young players might view the playtime issue, I asked Marc Rizzardo and Dean Howie to write a few thoughts for this article.

Marc Rizzardo is Head Coach at Langara College. He has coached male and female teams at all levels/ages and has been involved in selection of provincial and national teams. Marc said;

“The area of playing time is a very sensitive one but one that needs to be addressed by coaches at the beginning of the season. I coach a U11 girls’ house team, a U15 Vancouver girls’ Metro team and a College men’s team. I also coached the BC U18 team for the past two years, including winning the Gold medal at the Western Canada Games this past summer. The rules are different for all four teams.

The U11 team rules are set by Dunbar Soccer Club. Each child needs to play at least 50% of the game. This edict is followed by most of the coaches in the organization. The focus is to develop skill and have the girls enjoy the aspect of playing. Everyone on the team plays all the positions equally.

The Metro team is slightly different. We have a parents meeting once the team is picked and we go through all of our decisions, including playing time. It is made very clear to the parents and the players that they MUST attend practices in order to play. If a player misses practices for a non-medical reason they don't play on the weekend. This does not happen very often because the girls are all so committed to the team. However, we are very flexible regarding other sports (school). Most of our players are very good athletes and play volleyball, basketball, field hockey, etc. I encourage them to be multi-sport athletes because the cross-training is very good and their understanding of sport in general is a bonus when it comes to team strategy concepts. Everyone plays almost an equal amount with the better core players probably playing slightly more overall.

The Langara team is very clear. The goal is to WIN and WIN NOW. I don't make substitutions unless a player is playing poorly, we need another look and a different player changes our strategy as the game goes on, or we are resting/platooning certain players that play in certain positions like wingback. In some games some players will not play at all. This is not ideal but all the players know it is a possibility before the season starts. Obviously, in a blowout, we try to rotate all our players in.

The BC team is also different. All the players are rotated as we get ready for the tournament, but once the major competition starts, I only make changes for the same reasons I mentioned for the Langara team. I do believe that it is ideal to have all players 'experience the games' by actually playing, but that is not always possible. In the Western Canada Games this past summer, all my players played in two of the three games, including the Gold medal game which we won 5-1.

In summary, COMMUNICATION with the parents/players BEFORE the season starts is crucial. It has to be revisited several times as the season progresses. Otherwise players will be a negative in the dressing room.”

Dean Howie is Athletic Director and Head Coach Champlain College in Québec. He is Co-Coach Team Canada Danone U12, was Technical Director Lac St-Louis Soccer Region (largest district in Quebec 25,000 players) and is Assistant Technical Director Rive Sud Soccer Region. He is 2003 Coach to U18 girls FC Select Rive Sud - 4th in Canada has coached Quebec Provincial Select Teams 1983 - 1994 including a bronze medal at the 1993 Canada Games. He has abundant experience in coaching youth players of all levels and ages. This is what Dean has to say on the playtime issue:

“Playing time is a very important and interesting issue that is always debated and will continue to be. To be able to make the proper decision for your club you must first look towards your club for its philosophy - something that most clubs do not have. This philosophy will dictate at what ages performance is important and at what ages development should be the main

focus. If your club says (for example) that until U14 all the focus should be on development, then all decisions taken should be in this direction. Therefore, all players should play equal and at all positions. A team should also consider playing with different formations - possibly half the season with man marking and a sweeper and half the season in a zone system. Everything should be done to help that athlete for his playing career after U14. The coaches job should be to give the player enough information and exposure so as to prepare the player for the next challenge (i.e. Provincial team, Club U15 team, etc.)

Once your club's philosophy is past the development stage and you have gotten to performance stage (in the above example it is U15 and older) then you play to win so the better players play. So playing time is really related to your club's philosophy and it is the club's OBLIGATION to COMMUNICATE this philosophy to the players and parents.

I also believe that league rules should permit more freedom to players to move within a club. For example a player should be permitted to play one game a week, at any level in his age group or above. Example: The Club's U15 team is playing a weak side this week. The 2 best players could play that week for the U16 or U17 team and the U15 could use some U14's. I also believe goalkeepers at the younger age groups (U9-U13) should play one game a week as a field player with a lower caliber team.

All this said and done... Communication is the name of the game and it should be done clearly with the players and the parents prior to the start of the season.”

Marc and Dean are two coaches with broad experience, who have dealt repeatedly with the various facets of the playtime issue. While every coach will likely have a different take on the issue some common points emerge for both coaches and for players and their parents.

Points for Coaches' Consideration:

- Development can never be allowed to become the orphan objective. If playtime equity is sacrificed in one game, it should be compensated for in another;
- Divisional teams are formed through tryouts and coach assessments to have players of more-or-less equal ability. To treat players significantly differently over a prolonged period works against the interests of the team and the Club. The club regards all its players as developing resources and has no interest in seeing some players developed at the expense of others;
- When players are pulled from the field, or left on the bench, or kept in positions they would prefer to be moved out of, they should be told why, at the first practical opportunity, if it is not clear to them already;
- Judgments about players must be repeatedly re-evaluated.
- Coaches cannot please everyone, but recognition of that fact is not justification for not explaining coaching decisions;

Points for Players' and Parents' Consideration:

- There are many valid reasons why players might spend a disproportionate amount of game time off the field or in positions they do not prefer;
- Your coach needs room to move and remove players and even make mistakes without repeatedly having to explain each action;
- If players or parents are concerned after several games that the player is not playing a suitable proportion of games and no explanation has been given, they should ask the coach for reasons, in private, on a suitable occasion, but never during a game or practice;

- Coaches are volunteers who give up much of their free time. Most do their best to be fair. They deserve courtesy and benefit of the doubt;
- For one player to be given more playtime or to be moved into their favorite position, another player will need to play less than they would have otherwise or be moved to another position. Playtime and positioning decisions are seldom made in isolation. They frequently involve changing the matrix;
- If a player appears to be consistently underplayed, or is not given opportunities to play in different positions and no satisfactory explanation is received from the coach after repeated, proper requests, parents or players can write to WVSC Board of Directors. The concerns will receive fair and anonymous consideration and will be acted upon as appropriate;
- If current WVSC policy in regard to playtime is seen to be unfair, unreasonable or unworkable, parents are encouraged to think about all aspects of the issue and suggest changes to current policy. They are further encouraged to attend the AGM in the spring and volunteer their time;



- Finally, it is helpful to remember that all players at some time, including the greats, have spent more time off the field than they would have liked. Even David Beckham's bottom is no stranger to the bench. ⚽

New WVSC Website in the Making

Our current website serves us well for a variety of purposes, from posting tryout results to directing players to our fields. However, our club is growing, as is the administrative workload, without a corresponding increase in the amount of time volunteered. We need to avail ourselves of technology that will stretch our money and time further. So the Club recruited Randy Wrixen of Techsys Inc. to design us a new website. Work is currently underway.

One of the most important improvements will be ON-LINE REGISTRATION FOR 2004-2005 SEASON. Gone will be multi-colored carbon-copied application with and cheques. Starting before Spring 2004, you will be able to, and in fact will need to register your child by going on-line. If you have questions about registration or have special circumstances, you can still talk to WVSC registrar Julie Walker at (604) 922-4261.

There will be many other new features on the new website that will make running the club, from everyone's point of view, a lot easier and more efficient. To get an idea of some of these features, look at West Vancouver Field Hockey Club's website at www.wvfhc.com. Randy Wrixen designed that website too. ⚽

From NS Peewee to Yale University to European Pro Soccer

By Ciara McCormack

Editor's note: Ciara McCormack grew up playing soccer on the North Shore. She pursued her passion and was awarded a soccer scholarship to prestigious Yale University. She now plays professional soccer in Europe. Ciara, Ros Hicks, Erin McLeod, Sian Bagshaw and other highly accomplished BC soccer playing women recently formed a group called "girlsCan". They can be hired to guest coach practices. Ciara's email address is girlscansoccer@yahoo.com

As I am writing this from my room in northern Denmark, I can't help but marvel at the distance I have travelled and the many soccer experiences that have shaped my life since I laced up my little soccer boots for the first time, as my U-8 North Shore Girls Mavericks squared off on a field in Horseshoe Bay versus the West Van Firebirds on a September day back in '86. As the story goes I am told, after watching my younger brother's first game, I came home angrily demanding why I wasn't on a team too. The idea of enrolling me in soccer had never occurred to my parents, who had immigrated to Canada from Ireland 10 years earlier. They had not seen any form of organized girls' soccer before and searched diligently to find a team that they could put their obstinate seven year old on, to quell any notion of sibling favouritism. In my age group, until we had Metro tryouts just before entering grade eight, there were only five teams from NSGSC and two from West Van, a far cry from the approximately 25 teams that I can see now exist in the U-12 age group between the two clubs. I still pinch myself when I come home and see the amount of opportunity that now exists for girls who play soccer. At the very least, parents can no longer say that they didn't choose to sign their 7 year old up for soccer because they had never seen girls playing before. At least not on the North Shore!



Ciara McCormack (centre) with two of her teammates on the *Fortuna Hjørring*, her professional soccer club in Denmark

My soccer dreams started watching the '88 Olympics and vowing that one day, I would play for Canada. At the time, women's soccer wasn't an Olympic sport, which complicated things a little, but thankfully this minor detail worked itself out in '96 when women's soccer was deemed worthy of the Olympic arena. I had a lot more to worry about at the time however, as I was never the best one on my teams by a long shot, on the contrary, I was one of the last picked for Metro in grade 8. I rode the bench for much of the first one or two years, but I think I probably dreamed the biggest and had the work ethic to match. Long before the days of private coaching schools, much of my free time outside of practice was spent kicking a ball against a wall, going for a run on the Capilano River to improve my fitness, or dribbling by myself around imaginary players on the deserted fields at Klahanie Park that were a short walk from my house. This desire and work ethic led me to a spot on the Provincial Team for four years. Subsequently, a trip to tournaments to New York and Boston with the BC Team, just before grade 11, cemented my goal to go to where I felt was the best place to reach my potential, which was to the US on a scholarship. This led to my incredibly supportive Dad helping me research schools and send out hundreds of

letters blindly, as going to the US on scholarship was far from the norm at the time. After many highs and lows, expectations and disappointments, 4 recruiting trips to various schools across the States, and some scholarship offers, I was accepted to Yale, who had an incredible coach, and I decided to spend the next four years playing there. Lacking the exposure of youth national teams, private coaching and top tournaments, my dream of a scholarship to a top 10 team didn't materialize then, but after graduating from Yale, and having an extra year of eligibility because of injury, I had the opportunity to receive a full ride from a top 10 school, the University of Connecticut, where I received a masters degree, and finished my college eligibility there. Seeing a lack of opportunity at home to play and train with top-level players on a daily basis, and not yet at my goal of being on the National Team, I decided to find somewhere that would continue to push me to the limit. Subsequently, an old coach of mine from Connecticut got in touch with contacts he had at Fortuna Hjørring, my current club, and after a tryout last summer, I signed a contract. Although my bank account resembles what David Beckham probably spends on food in a day, I am happily and gratefully doing the same thing for my living.

My club, which is famous for running the third biggest youth tournament in the world every July (Dana Cup-Hjørring), won the Danish League in 2002. Therefore, last year, we played in the UEFA Cup, a tournament comprised of the best club teams from every country in Europe. We had an incredible ride, and lost in the final in front of 8, 000 people to a team from northern Sweden. My experiences here of being in a different culture as well as learning the challenges of not understanding the language around you and trying to learn as fast as you can, has made me as better a person as much as I have come along as a player. My challenges at soccer include trying not to ask for autographs, or be in awe of my teammates, as out of our roster of 14 last year, every one but two of us had national team experience and in that 14 were eight Olympians. So I encourage every player out there to dream big, believe with all your heart in that dream despite any disappointment that will come along, and match the dream with your work ethic. And be open to wherever that dream leads you, because as I write this from northern Denmark, I can honestly say, you never could possibly imagine where your dreams take you.



Mondoturf Will Last If We...

By Claudia Sparling

Mondoturf should last many, many years as long as we remember to...

- Never wear metal cleats on it;
- Clean footwear before walking onto turf;
- Keep drinks, food and all substances that may damage or stain the turf off the field. Mondo turf is great, but it does not grow back;
- Inform the team you are playing against that they must observe the turf rules and that players with six-stud or other metal cleats will not be permitted to play on Ambleside

D or E. 

WV Wildcats – The Turn Around Team

By Stephanie Gibson

Editor's Note: This time last year the U15 Wildcats silver A girls team had lost every game they had played. And it did not get any better as the season went on. Players and parents got discouraged and there was plenty of talk of players dropping out of soccer and after tryouts, the team had no coach and no visible prospect of getting one. Then it happened. Over the summer, one of the player's mom, Candace Kwinter, decided to become team manager and the team got a new coach in Stephanie Gibson. Stephanie and the girls turned their team around. Now the girls have a winning team they are proud to belong to and they are kicking bottom. Here is Stephanie's own account

So far this season, the GU16 Wildcats have won seven games, tied one and lost one. We scored 29 goals and let in 9 goals. Over the last 12 weeks the girls have developed into very nice soccer players. When I first got the girls they were used to maybe having one practice a week. I wasn't too sure where to start and what to work on first. The girls needed to get their touch

on the ball as well as learn to play together as a team.

We started by playing an exhibition game. During the game I was watching the girls and trying to figure out were to start. The girls did a great job, but I concluded a little work was needed.

We started practicing and working on our touch on the ball, as well a little on defending. We then worked on positioning and where each player should play and where she should be supporting her teammates. I thought that starting on positioning and defending would be a great place to start as a team works best when we play as a team and especially defending as a team.

I have a great group of girls and that makes it a lot easier. As the weeks went on the girls were doing great. I would find something to work on from each game and then I would make a practice out of that. We spent the first couple of practices working on defending. Although it didn't come right away, it did come. The biggest thing I tell the girls is to push the other team to the outside. If we are able to push them to the outside they can only beat us one way. The girls have been doing a great job and playing their hardest. Even though we are doing so well we are still practicing very hard to



Stephanie Gibson (left back) and her "Turnaround Team" the GU16 WV Wildcats

see how far we can go.

I have the girls playing a 4-4-2 (4 defenders, 4 mid-fielders, and 2 forwards) style of soccer. I find that this is a great way to play. The girls have been working on pushing the opposition to the outside and trying to play the ball from our defenders to our mid-fielders and then we are looking for our forwards and we move up to the field as one.

This works the best in the league that we are playing in as most of the teams we play against play a 4-3-3. They play a style that they use the 3 forwards and all they do is play a kick and run style of soccer and hope that the forwards score.

I find that this style is not very fun and the girls will not learn anything from this. The way that we play is very hard for other teams to mark and when the girls play together it is very nice to watch. As we are playing the ball around our team and not just kicking the ball up the field. The girls have learned a lot so far and they are so willing to learn more.

This groups of girls (Wildcats) is great. Every one of them wants to be there and learn something new. If they have a question, they ask it. I really find that it helps. When they are asking questions, I see that they want to learn. All of the girls are willing to play anywhere and that really helps as it is hard to find playing time only in one position.

I wanted to coach a team because I wanted to teach someone else what I have learned. If I am able to teach and coach someone something and then watch them performing what they have learned, that is so great. I really enjoy working with these girls, as they are so willing to learn.

I find that the girls listen best when I listen to them and we work together. I come with my plan but I never stay right on schedule. I come with what I would like to work on, but if the girls want to work on something or play a little game of world cup. We do it. We play the best when we listen to each other. 

Rising Powers: Soccer is Slowly Spreading Around The Globe

From The Economist Magazine
May 30th 2002

Any challenge to the established powers of world soccer is most likely to come from Africa. Twenty years ago Pele predicted that an African country would win the World Cup by 2000. His timing was over-optimistic, but top African sides such as Nigeria and Cameroon have notched up many notable victories. However, whereas the Latin American teams seem able to insulate their national sides from administrative chaos at home, at least while the World Cup is in progress, the Africans are followed everywhere by maladministration. At a recent African Nations Cup, the Nigerian side found themselves locked out of their hotel rooms because their bills had not been paid. After their spectacular success at the 1990 World Cup, Cameroon's players returned home to discover that some \$600,000 had disappeared from the national team's coffers.

But despite such stories, the performance of African teams on the pitch ensures that African football has to be taken seriously. This year's African Nations Cup in Mali was given extensive and respectful coverage on European television. As if to confound the stereotype of happy-go-lucky Africans, the tournament started with a series of stultifying goal-less draws, worthy of the grinding professionalism of the Italian league. Things got more colourful at the semi-final stage, when a coach from Cameroon was led off the field in handcuffs on suspicion of attempting to cast a spell on the Malian goal. But such incidents do nothing to put off the hordes of European talent-scouts in the stands.

African professional footballers are now represented at the highest levels of European football. In the opening game of the 2002 World Cup—France v Senegal—the Senegalese team will contain more French-based players than the French one. The bulk of the French side play in England, whereas the core of Senegal's team play for Lens, a French club side. Indeed Senegal is now dotted with soccer

schools, training up youngsters who hope to make it in the European leagues. Ajax of Amsterdam recently bought a 51% stake in a team in South Africa's Cape Town, with a view to getting first pick of their rising stars. The wealth gap between Africa and Europe will ensure for many years to come that the cream of African football makes its living in Europe.



Asian teams yearn for the sort of credibility the Africans have established. In 1996 Peter Velappan, the head of the Asian football confederation, predicted rather rashly that “by 2005 Asian soccer will be the equal of Brazil”. His words rang hollow two years later when all four Asian contenders were eliminated from the first round of the 1998 World Cup. This time around things may go better. The Japanese side has notched up some impressive victories recently, and could get as far as the quarter-finals. A successful run for the national team would be a huge fillip for the future of football in Japan. A professional league – the J-League – was established in the early 1990s, and initially did well. But in the past couple of years crowds have been falling and two teams have closed. Baseball and sumo still attract much bigger audiences. According to Jonathan Birchall, author of a recent book on football in Japan (“Ultra Nippon—How Japan Reinvented Football”), it is conceivable that Japan's professional league might ultimately fold altogether.

China's professional league, established in 1995, is going through a crucial development phase. Crowds are still increasing—paying spectators at Chinese football matches totalled 3.5m last year—and clubs have had no

**Advance News About
2004 Tryouts**

By Peggy Bradshaw

Tryouts for the boys U12 age group has been scheduled for Monday, March 1 2004 and Wednesday, March 3 2004 from 3:30 to 6:00 PM.

Tryouts for the girls U12 age group has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 2 2004 and Thursday, March 4 2004 from 3:30 to 6:00 PM. Check in on time at the clubhouse.

Beginning in 2004, a tryout fee of \$20 will be charged prior to the tryout day. You will be notified on how to register online.

Please register in advance. A tryout fee of \$30 will be charged for those who register on the first day of the tryouts, instead of pre-registering. This is because all pre-registrants are assigned pinnies in advance so that we have randomly selected groups of equal numbers. At the door registrations must be fit into the system which takes extra time. No one will be added after the first day of tryouts.

Other age group tryouts will be scheduled as we can. Currently, we cannot schedule the GU14 and GU15 tryout dates until we have complete information on cup game schedules.

Regular tryouts for U13 through U18 will be scheduled in May and early June. You can anticipate that younger age group tryouts will be scheduled earlier than older age groups, as usual.

No tryouts will be scheduled during school breaks, Easter weekend, and Victoria Day weekend. Look for information periodically on the web site late in January. 

difficulty attracting sponsorship and television deals. The passion excited by the national team's inclusion in the World Cup finals is certainly a good omen. But, as with Japan, it is too early to say that the future of professional football in China is secure.

If professional football failed to gain a firm foothold in East Asia, it would be a grievous blow to FIFA's ambitions to establish soccer as the only truly global team sport. But it might suit the big European football teams. Clubs such as Manchester United have deliberately targeted overseas markets with large numbers of football fans and weak domestic leagues. The Mancunians have opened "Reds' Cafés" in places such as Singapore and Malaysia where fans can gather to watch games and worship their heroes. Live games from the English Premier League regularly top the cable-television ratings in South-East Asia, drawing much larger audiences than domestic games.

Soccer moms

The soccer authorities in the United States, too, will have to work hard to convince soccer fans that their home league is the real thing. A new professional league, Major League Soccer (MLS), was established in America in the 1990s. Some 18m (mostly young) people in America now regularly play soccer, making it the country's largest participatory sport by far.

And there are 35m Hispanic-Americans who hail from countries where they take in soccer with their mother's milk, providing a reservoir of support for the sport. Exhibition games featuring top Mexican teams have drawn crowds of up to 80,000 in Los Angeles. But persuading the same people to go to an MLS game can be hard work. At the moment such games are drawing average crowds of around 15,000, and the league is still in what is politely termed "the investment phase"—ie, losing money. Don Garber, the commissioner of the MLS, says it is pinning a lot of its hopes on the television coverage of the World Cup, which will be used to cross-promote the domestic game.

But whether or not Major League Soccer ever really takes off in the

United States, soccer as a game is now part of mainstream American culture. The "soccer moms" who take their kids to play football at the weekend are now as all-American as a Thanksgiving turkey. And America is bringing an innovation of its own to the game: many of the kids who play soccer are girls, and the country has established itself as the world's leading power in women's soccer. When the American women won the World Cup on home soil in 1999, 40m Americans (including President Clinton) tuned in to watch the game live. The winning penalty was struck by Brandi Chastain, who immediately whipped off her shirt in triumph to reveal a Nike sports bra; either a wonderfully spontaneous celebration, or one of the most inspired examples of product placement in sports history.

Clearly it is in the interest of football as a sport to consolidate and build on the progress the game has made in Africa, Asia and North America. But ensuring that these three continents are adequately represented in the World Cup is a tricky diplomatic exercise. Matters have certainly improved since 1966, when Asia and Africa between them had just one team at the finals: North Korea. At this year's finals in Japan and South Korea there will be five African teams, four Asian sides (two of which have qualified as hosts) and three from North and Central America, out of a total of 32 teams. The Africans, Asians and North Americans claim they are still seriously under-represented in what is meant to be a World Cup. The Latin Americans and Europeans retort that the World Cup is meant to be a showcase for the best football in the world, and the best teams still come from football's traditional centres.

It is an issue that demands skilful handling by competent and impartial administrators. Unfortunately FIFA, the governing body for world football, does not meet that description. Indeed it is reeling from corruption and mismanagement charges. 

Peace



**Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah
and a Successful New Year**



WEST VANCOUVER SOCCER CLUB
P.O. Box 91172
West Vancouver, B.C. V7V 3N8

