



FIFA | World Rugby | FIH presentation at FSB 2017 in Cologne

From community fields to the Olympic Stadium – how FIFA, World Rugby and FIH are encouraging innovation in the synthetic turf world

Synthetic turf sports pitches have changed the sporting landscape; no longer is a harsh climate or the need to sustain high levels of use a barrier to providing high quality sports fields. Innovations in yarn and surface technologies have all allowed what was once considered a poor simulation of natural grass to become a viable alternative and for an increasing number of sports. In some instances, for example hockey, synthetic turf has become the preferred surface for community and/or elite competitions.

The benefits of synthetic turf surfaces have been welcomed by FIFA, the FIH and World Rugby, and the three sports have adopted similar approaches to ensure the surfaces meet their player welfare and sport-specific needs. Each sport is continuing to innovate and challenge the synthetic turf industry to meet the increasingly complex challenges society presents. Come and hear about some of their latest thinking.

Marc Douglas from **World Rugby** will speak about the ONE TURF CONCEPT, a ground-breaking consensus for community-level multi-sport third-generation (3G) playing fields that identifies best practice as recognised by the three sports. It is hoped that the One Turf Concept will revolutionise how shared sports fields are used and enjoyed around the world. After many years working together on this project, including detailed discussions with industry leaders, the three governing bodies have managed to balance player welfare and performance with community playability for the initiative, launched earlier this year. Marc will also discuss a number of challenges facing World Rugby in the delivery of quality surfaces and how they have been addressed.

Hockey was the first sport to embrace synthetic turf internationally, and the Rio Olympic Games marked the 40th anniversary of top-level competitions on the surfaces. But even with such a history, hockey still sees the need for innovation and **Alastair Cox** from the **FIH** will speak about current FIH initiatives that, at the community level, are aiming to increase the sustainability of hockey turfs. This includes the ability to facilitate the sharing of community fields with sports that also like to play on the short-pile synthetic turfs preferred by hockey. At the elite level, the FIH is looking to reduce the amount of water required to irrigate a field and determine which turf colours create the best backdrop for TV coverage. All of these initiatives help to serve the objectives of the Hockey Revolution, the FIH's ten-year strategy to make hockey a global sport.

Football at the community level has also embraced synthetic turf as it allows far greater use of pitches and allows good quality fields to be built in regions of the world where natural grass is unsustainable, for whatever reason. But synthetic turf is also being used in more and more competitions at professional level. **Katharina Wistel** from **FIFA** will speak about the use of synthetic turf surfaces in

stadium environments and will describe some of the many challenges that FIFA has experienced when hosting major tournaments on synthetic turf surfaces. She will outline the design, installation and maintenance considerations for a stadium when converting from grass to synthetic turf.

Further information about the FSB can be found here: <http://www.fsb-cologne.com/fsb/index-2.php>