

From Carter Henderson, Associate Athletic Director - Public Relations & Communications

“The comments made about turf fields by Amy Griffin, assistant women’s soccer coach, are Amy’s personal views and do not necessarily reflect an official university positioning.

However, as an athletic department, we have made a commitment to exploring alternative turf fill options once our current fields are up for renewal.”

From Chip Lydum, Associate Athletic Director - Operations and Capital Projects

- University of Washington uses Field Turf with a mix of SBR and sand. This makes the field firmer, faster. More similar to grass fields as far as density and feels more organic. Can run faster with the sand mix, is important for UW to be competitive.
- They replace their fields every 7 to 10 years, whereas other places could replace fields every 10 to 15 years. He said some of this is due to being on TV, the fields need to look in good shape.
- He said often high school fields or recreational fields choose to go without sand, this makes the turf more soft like a trampoline feel. Can cause more fatigue.
- He said one is not better than the other.
- He said he has a good relationship with Amy Griffin, who is the UW keeper coach. She isn’t an authorized spokesperson for the University of Washington but is free to share her concerns. He said she fears the correlation between the turf fields and keepers who are getting sick. She says it’s a curious coincidence that should be checked out. She wants answers and so does the university.
- Athletic administration is not adopting her theory, but do want the safest product for their athletes.
- Chip said his own kids play on turf fields, and the administration care about the safety of their athletes.
- The university has asked turf companies for a lot of reactive data about the infill. No data has been conclusive and a lot of research is ongoing.
- So far, not enough data to discourage the university from using crumb rubber on the fields. However, they encourage and welcome more study and research.
- He said if the research proves otherwise, the university will consider other infill options.
- The quantity and quality of play is difficult to achieve in the Pacific Northwest without turf fields. Potentially more danger to athletes playing on muddy/slick fields.
- He would encourage us to ask any company we are considering going with to give us their plan for disposal of the fields at the end of their life. He said disposal of fields is not easy. He said Bellingham should put in their specifications that any company they hire propose an environmentally friendly way to pull fields and dispose of them. Could go a long way for a community that is concerned about sustainability.

- The ugly side of turf fields is the end of their life, what to do with them?
- There was a peak period when the fields were in the media and the community was reaching out to the university, but that has calmed down.
- The university continues to use crumb rubber.
- “Operationally the turf fields save our bacon in the northwest, truly a game saver.”
- University of Washington uses Field Turf, they have been happy with the company they are great to repair/fix fields and are responsive.