



CASE STUDY OLD ORCHARD BEACH

SITUATION

When it first opened in 1984, The Ballpark in Old Orchard Beach, Maine, was referred to as “the prettiest ballpark in creation” by *Sports Illustrated*.

But in the summer of 2008, almost 15 years after being abandoned, it was little more than a vacant green space overrun with trees and weeds.

“Every bit of growth that could have been on that ballpark, it was there,” recalled Al Lappin, the volunteer field manager for the renovation project and owner of Al Lappin Landscaping Co. “The beautiful ballpark was as desolate as it could get.”

Lappin and a host of volunteers were called upon to rehabilitate the former gem of a diamond that had played home to two Triple-A affiliates during its heyday. The project ran solely on donated materials and elbow grease. But no corner would be cut in restoring the charm to The Ballpark just because it was a volunteer operation running on private donations.

Fortunately, some outstanding field conditioners were donated to the effort by John Deere Landscapes: six tons of Turface® All Sport™ and two pallets-worth of Turface® Pro League® Red infield conditioners.

PROBLEM

To be considered a success, the stadium facelift had to recreate the field’s original major league look. And because the field wasn’t going to have a dedicated grounds crew to constantly look after the field when it was finished, the conditioners used on the field had to be the best.

As Tom Lachance, who spearheaded the renovation effort, put it: “The products we used had to be self sustaining with as little maintenance needed as possible.”

The field also had to endure the Northeast’s unpredictable weather patterns that often wreak havoc on baseball season. A 20-minute downpour in Maine can bring a deluge of water onto the playing surface. It can be the difference between playing ball or rolling out the tarp.



The success of The Ballpark's renovation leaned heavily on Turface products to produce a major league field in appearance and playability.



Volunteers put down an infield mix along the first-base line that includes Turface All Sport.



Volunteers survey the field given a major-league look by Turface All Sport and Turface Pro League Red.



The finished renovation ensures an entire community will have a playable field to use no matter the weather.

SOLUTION

Turface® All Sport™ and Turface® Pro League® Red gave the field its desired major league appearance while keeping the diamond playable in unpredictable weather.

Turface All Sport was incorporated into the infield mix when the field was first installed, and has also been beneficial as topdressing on the field to create a consistent and level playing surface while helping to prevent rain outs. The All Sport conditioner absorbs excess moisture and improves drainage due to its high percentage of pore space.

For some color variety and a more major league look, the diamond has also been topdressed with Pro League Red.

"These are the kinds of products you see at nearly every major league facility," he said. "There's no way you can play ball on this field without Turface. It makes for an absolutely nice field and gives true hops for the players."

RESULTS

The Ballpark reopened with a youth game on November 14, 2009, but its first full season of baseball games — more than 100 by October — was planned for 2010.

The durability of the Turface® conditioners donated by John Deere Landscapes has already paid dividends. The Ballpark hosted the United States Collegiate Athletic Association national tournament in May, which featured 17 games in four days. The field held up.

Turface's capacity to absorb water has helped The Ballpark stand out from other local diamonds. Lachance said The Ballpark has garnered a reputation for remaining playable even during many of the unpredictable rain showers that routinely sweep through Old Orchard Beach.

Lappin cited one specific incident this spring, when a downpour swept through the area before a slate of men's league games were set to start at four ballparks in the Old Orchard Beach area.

"A Northeast-style rain storm blew in and dumped a large amount of rain in only 20 minutes," Lappin recalled. "Every other field was washed out for the day. But we were playing ball shortly after thanks to Turface."

Lachance said leagues of all kinds in the area are now routinely sending games over to The Ballpark from other sites.

"We can play on our field in spite of heavy rain because of Turface," he said. "Right now we're the most desired field in the city because unless it's lightning, we're not cancelling."

