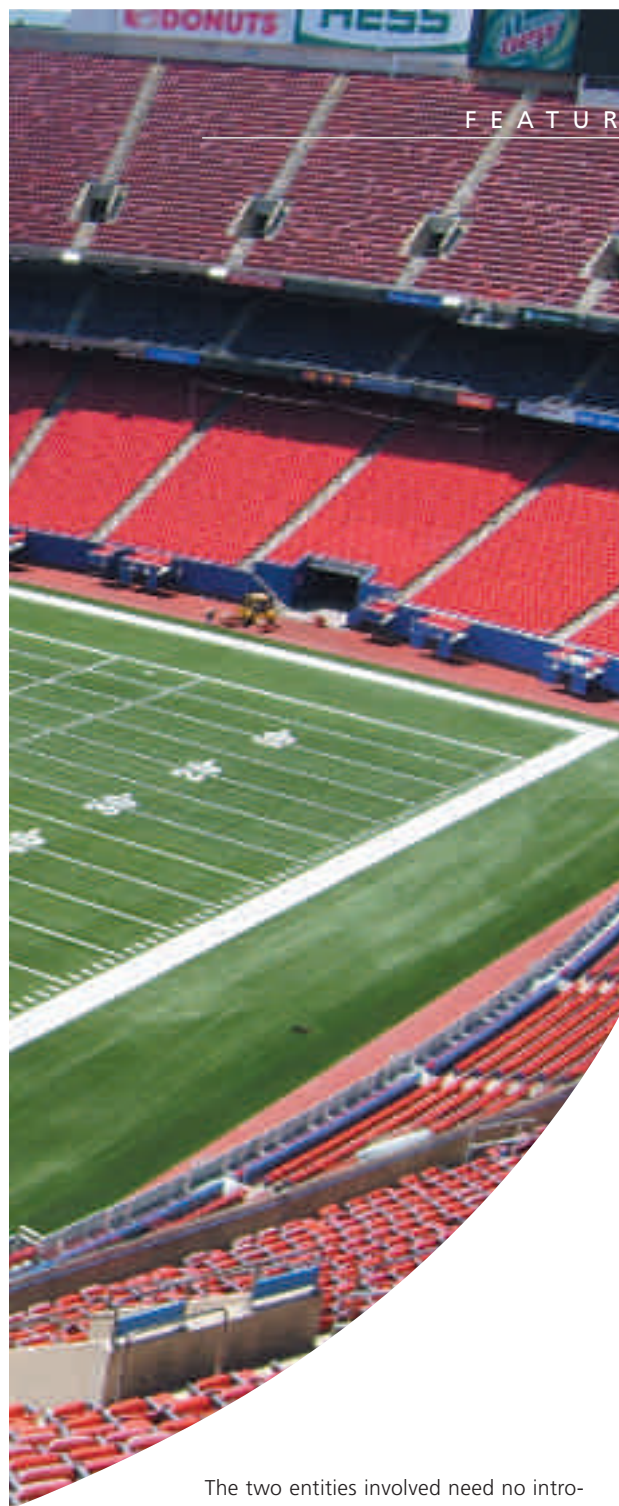


# PERFECT MARRIAGE

*Above: FieldTurf Tarkett recently installed its new, state-of-the-art, FieldTurf Duo artificial grass system at Giants Stadium — Terraplas plc has the exclusive rights to provide protective flooring systems for all of these turf systems.*

Feature-writer Simon Waterman reports on the strategic alliance now in place between the two industry giants, FieldTurf Tarkett and Terraplas plc.

When you think of the perfect marriage, you may envision partners who have many things in common, two entities that work together for the common good, two minds that can overcome obstacles and build a solid future together. Yet in the real world, this is rarely the case. However, such a relationship has been forged between two of the world's leading companies involved in the production and protection of artificial sports playing surfaces.



The two entities involved need no introduction — FieldTurf Tarkett and Terraplas. These two heavyweights, who have been collaborating for a number of years, have now cemented their relationship with some exciting new projects.

FieldTurf Tarkett recently installed a new artificial grass playing surface at Giants Stadium, home to the New York Jets and Giants. This is not just the usual FieldTurf installation, but a unique technologically-advanced 'FieldTurf Duo' artificial grass system, which uses the latest in fibre technology, amongst other remarkable developments. This duo-filament system consists of three major constituents: the 'backing', the 'infill material' and the actual 'grass fibres'. This new artificial grass, which is an exclusive FieldTurf Tarkett system, will stand up to much more punishment than any similar previous product.

### In the Mix

Before we analyse the important aspects of protection for this new generation of artificial turf, we must first delve into the ingredients that make up this fascinating playing surface. Tyre rubber is cryogenically frozen, shattered into smooth, clean, rounded particles, sized and shaped to stay 'in suspension' with the sand, which is of a similar size, shape and weight. The sand and rubber are precision layered to guarantee uniformity, with an installation process that, along with the infill mix, is patented.

Unlike traditional turf, FieldTurf does not rely on an underlying shock pad for safety, resilience and player comfort. Rather, like its natural cousin, FieldTurf's grass fibres are surrounded and stabilised by a special blend of 'synthetic earth': FieldTurf's patented mixture of smooth, rounded silica sand and cryogenic rubber granules.

Just as important as these two constituents is the 'backing' that supports them. This is made from a combination of permeable woven and non-woven polypropylene fabrics that provide superior strength and excellent vertical drainage. Each bundle of eight fibres is then carefully stitched into the backing material in very precise rows, according to a patented wide-gauge spacing formula that enables cleats to penetrate the infill material rather than the surface fibres. This unique formula supplies excellent traction for athletes and therefore

results in far fewer injuries.

Once in place, protecting the playing surface is of paramount importance, as any heavy equipment used to create seating, construct stages or rig lighting for non-sporting events or indeed the thousands of people attending, can result in serious damage if the recommended procedures are not followed. FieldTurf Tarkett has therefore given exclusive rights to Terraplas plc to provide protective flooring systems for its duo-filament artificial grass. This partnership should result in more than just a marriage of convenience and will allow venues to maximise their potential.

### Spotlight on Terraplas

The original TERRAPLAS® product was designed to protect natural grass at the old Wembley Stadium in London, but today, no matter what the event or where it is being held, Terraplas products are universally acknowledged as the only answer to protecting grass from hordes of people. Just as the old Wembley was in its heyday, the new Wembley is likely to be the busiest concert stadium anywhere in the world. The old stadium often held more than fifteen events above and beyond its annual, aggressive sports event schedule and protecting its turf became a major concern when dealing with 80,000 spectators on many occasions.

The development of TERRAFLOOR® protection tiles was a natural progression to meet the demands of the current day



FieldTurf Tarkett's CEO, John Gilman, advised that they have successfully used Terraplas products at such venues as Gillette Stadium, Ford Field and Tropicana Field to protect their FieldTurf surfaces.

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market. As with TERRAPLAS®, they have a hollow bottom that allows a significant height for natural grass to breathe and grow beneath them, or in this case give the artificial grass room to stand up and not bend. This unique design enables the passage of air, light and water through the tiles. In fact, in the case of natural turf, it acts like a greenhouse and actually encourages growth. No other system has this capability and will therefore protect grass for much longer periods of time than any other product.

TERRAFLOOR® is a solid, totally interlocking flooring system that has been designed with safety very much in mind. Once installed, it ensures there are no tripping hazards, like those associated with tarpaulins etc. The surface of each tile has an integral anti-slip surface and each tile interlocks and overlaps with its adjacent tiles to ensure the safest walking conditions, even when wet. But TERRAFLOOR® does not only protect natural grass, it was also designed, as in this particular instance, to protect artificial surfaces.

### Working Together

PanStadia asked John Gilman, CEO of FieldTurf Tarkett for his thoughts on TERRAFLOOR® and why it was chosen to protect their artificial surfaces? He advised: "We have successfully used Terraplas products at Giants Stadium, Gillette Stadium, Ford Field, Georgia Dome, RCA Dome, Tropicana Field, BC Place, HHH Metrodome and several other prominent stadiums around the world. It has proven proficiently to be the best protective system that we have put on our FieldTurf®. More importantly, we have recently introduced a new fibre technology in our ongoing effort to make artificial grass play as closely as possible to natural grass. This newest fibre does not lay over like the original fibres that were used in artificial turf.

"FieldTurf Duo combines four spined monofilament fibres, created with the most advanced

technology, and twisted together in a proprietary design — the result is a unique, eight-part fibre pile.

"Duo's spined fibres remain upright and contribute to superior aesthetics and playing properties, while the softer, flat fibres lay over to encapsulate and stabilise the infill. And because Duo is made of 'true' monofilament fibre, loaded with UV inhibitors and shaped in a manner to resist even the heaviest foot traffic, the system will last even longer."

PanStadia asked Robert Else, Chairman of Terraplas plc, for his comments on the relationship between FieldTurf Tarkett and his company, and the opportunities for stadiums to use their facilities for non-sporting activities. He advised: Terraplas plc has been in the turf protection business for nearly twenty years, and has been hugely successful in designing and manufacturing the most widely used protection products around the world — so much so that we proudly use the slogan 'World's No.1 Turf Protection Company'. This is the reason we were chosen exclusively to team up with FieldTurf Tarkett and supply proven products to protect their fields.

"Every stadium looks for ways to increase their revenue, and there is no question that the potential income from a non-sporting event can often be double that of a sporting occasion. However, maintaining the standard of the playing surface is vital, as there is no point in gaining revenue from an event only to have to spend that revenue on repairing or replacing the playing surface. Therefore, if a stadium decides to opt for the non-sporting event route, it must very carefully consider which product to purchase for their turf protection.

"There are products on the market that are considerably cheaper in their initial purchase than Terraplas products, however be very careful, this is one area where you 'only get what you pay for', and our products are proven to outperform all other products — by miles!

"Terraplas plc is proud of its product longevity and the undeniable proof of this is that the old Wembley TERRAPLAS® ➔

John Gilman, CEO, FieldTurf Tarkett.

Robert Else, Chairman, Terraplas plc.



## 2006 NFL Players Association playing surface rankings

- 1 Tampa Bay
- 2 Seattle (FieldTurf)
- 3 Carolina
- 4 Detroit (FieldTurf)
- 5 Baltimore (Sportexe)
- 6 Arizona
- 7 Atlanta (FieldTurf)
- 8 Jacksonville
- 9 Indianapolis (FieldTurf)
- 10 San Diego
- 11 St. Louis (FieldTurf)
- 12 Denver
- 13 Washington
- 14 Cincinnati (FieldTurf)
- 15 Houston
- 16 New York Giants/Jets (FieldTurf)
- 17 San Francisco
- 18 Green Bay
- 19 New Orleans (Sportexe)
- 20 Miami
- 21 Tennessee
- 22 Dallas (RealGrass)
- 23 Philadelphia
- 24 Minnesota (FieldTurf)
- 25 Buffalo (Astroplay)
- 26 Kansas City
- 27 Chicago
- 28 Cleveland
- 29 Pittsburgh
- 30 New England (before FieldTurf)
- 31 Oakland Raiders



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system is now over seventeen years old and is still in use, being rented out by a hire company. Need I say more.

"If you purchase a Terraplas product you can be confident that you have the best product available to reduce or eliminate turf repairs or replacement, and a product with a very long lifespan — making it the most cost effective purchase."

### FieldTurf Tarkett in Focus

FieldTurf Tarkett continues to lead the industry in the artificial turf market and now its association with Terraplas has given both companies new avenues to explore, new angles to investigate, new ideas and new concepts to exploit.

To appreciate the power of artificial turf — alongside its durability and considerable developments of late — you need look no further than the impact it is having on the NFL. Every two years the National Football League (NFL) Players Association votes for its favourite NFL playing surface and every stadium's field is ranked accordingly. The 2006 results, decided on by the 1,511 players who were eligible to vote, once again confirmed FieldTurf Tarkett as the leader in the artificial grass stakes. Once more the company gave the NFL's natural grass surfaces a run for their money, with their installation at Qwest Field, home of the Seattle Seahawks, being ranked second only to the natural grass of Florida's Raymond James Stadium, home to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. This marked the third consecutive survey in which the sur-



*Terraplas products incorporate a cavity of about an inch, which is exactly the height that remains after the fibres are infilled and this, coupled with the fact the product also has rounded feet that act like a cushion, means they are perfect to lay on top of the FieldTurf®.*



face in Seattle has ranked amongst the top five and signalled the highest position ever achieved by a FieldTurf® system — or indeed any other artificial turf system in the survey's history. In fact, Qwest Field ranked ahead of eighteen of the NFL's nineteen natural grass surfaces.

In addition to Qwest Field's second position, FieldTurf surfaces also scored highly at other venues, with Detroit's Ford Field being ranked fourth, Atlanta's Georgia Dome seventh, Indianapolis' RCA Dome ninth, the Rams' Edward Jones Dome eleventh, the Bengals' Paul Brown Stadium fourteenth, Giants Stadium in New Jersey — home to both the New York Giants and Jets — finished sixteenth and the Vikings' Metrodome twenty-fourth.

Overall, four FieldTurf® fields appeared in the NFL's top ten and the company senses that a number one ranked playing surface is now within their grasp. What an accolade that would be — to become the preferred surface over and above natural grass!

"I think this says it all," said FieldTurf CEO, John Gilman. "As more players have a chance to feel the difference when they plant, cut or run on FieldTurf's engineered system, our ratings keep going up. We're proud of the more than 2,000 fields we've put in the ground. But there's nothing like hearing it from the NFL football players themselves. It's the ultimate compliment. I can't express how much it means to all of us at FieldTurf Tarkett."

### Flying High

Two of the many beneficiaries of this outstanding product, as mentioned above, are the New York Giants and Jets. These two NFL franchises share Giants Stadium at the Meadowlands in New Jersey. This new FieldTurf surface will carry the teams

forward to 2010, when they are scheduled to move to their new US\$1.4 billion stadium. What better test of the strength and durability of a synthetic grass surface could you have than two separate NFL teams playing on it week in, week out, and all during the same season.

Following construction, the new stadium will be home to both teams — marking the first time a stadium has been built specifically to accommodate two NFL teams. Of course, as with all new stadiums, it will also be able to host an array of other sports and entertainment events, thanks no doubt to the use of Terraplas' products. Unusually, it will be an open-air design with no provision for a retractable roof — an apparent break with recent design philosophy — and when completed it will hold some 82,000 spectators. The stadium will form the centrepiece for the 175,000sqm project that will make up the Meadowlands Sports Complex in East Rutherford, New Jersey — a venture that has already been touched upon in PanStadia and will be looked at again in future editions.

PanStadia asked Mr Gilman for his thoughts on future stadium installations that will have both FieldTurf and Terraplas products. He advised: "In Toronto, the Canadian National Soccer Stadium, BMO (Bank of Montreal) Field, is a FIFA 2-star sanctioned venue, which will host the finals of the FIFA U-20 World Cup tournament this summer. They already have FieldTurf® installed and, as is typical with soccer venues, the field needs to be protected so that they can hold concerts and other non-sporting events without damaging the surface. This is a perfect example of where the FieldTurf Tarkett/Terraplas collaboration provides the ideal solution."

### Firm Approval

Mr Gilman went on to say: "FieldTurf has numerous FIFA recommended fields, and with this innovative new [FieldTurf Duo] fibre we have to seriously consider the implications of stadiums using the wrong type of cover when they host concerts and other non-sporting events. It would be foolhardy to think that a field covered with plywood for anything from ten days up to two weeks could be playable within a reasonable period after removing the cover.

"We needed to find a product that is not only strong enough, durable enough, and easy enough to pick up and put down, but also create a cavity between the FieldTurf and the protective floor system.

"Uniquely, Terraplas products, and TERRAFLO® in this case, incorporate a cavity of about an inch, which is exactly the height that remains after our fibres are infilled. This, coupled with the fact that the product also has rounded 'feet' that act like a cushion, means that TERRAFLO® is just perfect to lay on top of the FieldTurf and we strongly suggest every stadium owner purchases or rents TERRAFLO® to protect their FieldTurf®.

"TERRAFLO® and FieldTurf® go beautifully together, allowing stadium managers the freedom to be able to do whatever they need to do with their facility, without compromising either their field or their non-sporting events capability."

So, it would seem that in the case of the FieldTurf Tarkett/Terraplas plc relationship, you really do have the perfect marriage. 🍷