THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S PLAYBOOK

7 Questions to Ask Before You Buy a Synthetic Turf Field

The turf is only what you see. The questions below help you evaluate the entire system beneath your athletes.

☐ 01 | HOW WILL THIS FIELD PROTECT MY ATHLETES FROM IMPACTS?

Safety shouldn't be evaluated by the turf alone. Ask how the **turf, infill, shock pad and base work together** to manage impacts—and whether that performance will remain consistent as the field ages.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

☐ Complete system testing
☐ Gmax testing
☐ Head Injury Criterion (HIC) testing
☐ Advanced Artificial Athlete (AAA) testing
☐ Performance data over the expected life of the field

ASK THEM: "How does this complete system perform for impact safety—not just when it's new, but as it ages?"

☐ 02 | DOES THE FIELD HAVE A SHOCK PAD?

One of the most important components of your field may be the one you never see.

A quality shock pad provides a **consistent performance layer beneath the turf**, helping manage impacts while maintaining the firm, responsive surface athletes need to run, cut and compete.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

☐ Shock pad included in the system
☐ Long-term performance data
☐ Testing with the proposed turf and infill
☐ Warranty and expected service life

ASK THEM: "What is providing long-term impact protection beneath my turf?"

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☐ 03 | HOW HOT WILL THIS FIELD GET?

Artificial turf can become extremely hot in direct sunlight. Don't settle for claims that a system is simply *"cooler."*

Ask how the proposed **turf and infill combination affects surface temperature** and request comparative testing under similar conditions.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

☐ Infill material
☐ Independent or comparative heat testing
☐ Surface temperature data
☐ Whether cooling requires irrigation/watering

ASK THEM: "What has been done to reduce field temperature—and can you show me the data?"

☐ 04 | HOW DOES THE SURFACE AFFECT TRACTION?

More grip isn't always better.

Athletes need traction to accelerate and change direction—but their cleats also need to release appropriately during cuts and rotations. Ask how the **complete field system** performs for both stability and release.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

☐ Foot stability
☐ Cleat release
☐ Infill movement
☐ Comparison with quality natural grass

ASK THEM: "Has the complete system been tested for athlete traction—not just the turf?"

☐ 05 | WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT RAINS?

Drainage is about more than water passing through the turf.

Ask how water moves through the **turf, infill, shock pad and base—and where it goes from there.** The entire system should be considered when designing field drainage.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

☐ Complete system drainage rate
☐ Vertical and/or lateral drainage
☐ Base drainage design
☐ Performance during heavy rain

ASK THEM: "How does water move through and away from the complete field system during a heavy rain event?"

☐ 06 | WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE TURF NEEDS TO BE REPLACED?

Your first turf replacement shouldn't necessarily mean starting over.

Ask which components can remain in place for the next turf cycle. A durable shock pad may be able to serve beneath multiple generations of turf, extending the value of the original investment.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

☐ Expected turf life
☐ Expected shock pad life
☐ Components that can be reused
☐ Replacement costs
☐ End-of-life/recycling plan

ASK THEM: "What can we reuse when the turf is replaced—and what happens to each component at the end of its life?"

☐ 07 | CAN YOU PROVE THE FIELD WILL PERFORM THE WAY YOU SAY IT WILL?

Marketing claims are easy. Data is harder.

Ask for independent testing, applicable standards and real-world performance. Most importantly, make sure the data represents the **complete system you're actually considering.**

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

☐ Independent test results
☐ Applicable industry standards
☐ Complete-system testing
☐ Existing installations you can visit
☐ Performance data from aged fields

ASK THEM: "SHOW ME THE DATA."

Brock's materials specifically emphasize using Gmax together with HIC and AAA testing to develop a more complete picture of impact performance, rather than treating Gmax alone as a complete measure of safety. They also identify impact, heat and traction as the three primary areas of surface performance.

ONE FINAL QUESTION

WOULD YOU WANT TO PLAY ON IT?

A synthetic turf field isn't simply a capital project.

It's a piece of athletic equipment your athletes interact with every practice, every game and every fall.

Look beyond the color, logos and turf fiber.

IMPACT • HEAT • TRACTION • DRAINAGE • DURABILITY • LIFECYCLE

Because when you're responsible for your athletes, **the questions beneath the surface matter.**

YOUR FIELD NOTES

Project: _____

Proposed Turf: _____

Proposed Infill: _____

Shock Pad: _____

Installer / Turf Provider: _____

Questions / Follow-Up:

TALK TO A BROCK FIELD EXPERT

You don't have to become a synthetic turf expert. **That's our job.**

Brock USA has been focused on athlete safety, research and sports-surface performance since 1998.