

Following the Huskies into the Dog House

Madison Square Garden Selects Championship Turf Services to Maintain Playing Surface at Rentschler Field

Connecticut's new state-of-the-art sporting facility – East Hartford's Rentschler Field, new home of UConn Huskies Big East football team – now has a state-of-the-art turf manager.

In an agreement with Madison Square Garden, which manages the Rentschler facility, Championship Turf Services took over maintenance of the playing surface on August 4th. The assignment puts us in partnership with UConn athletics, state officials, MSG's experienced facility managers and a dedicated corps of vendors – all of whom are working together to make Rentschler Field not only an exceptional sporting facility, but also a great economic and cultural asset to the state. We are excited to be part of the team.

A sand-based field

Like most professional and high-end collegiate venues,



Rentschler Field, ready for game day.

Rentschler Field's playing surface uses a sand-based design, which means the Husky gridiron has more in common with a USGA putting green than the neighborhood ballfield. The design uses carefully specified sand and gravel layers and underground drainage to allow maximum removal of water during heavy precipitation (field tests indicate Rentschler can drain 3-4 inches of rain per hour). Without standing surface water, the field is always ready for play, damage

to turf from gameplay is minimized, and traction is maintained, resulting in fewer injuries.

Maintaining the superior playability of a sand-based field involves essentially the same techniques used on a natural-soil field, but the variables influencing turf management – such as fertility requirements, nutrient needs and microbial activity – are magnified many times, requiring careful agronomic analysis. While we

(continued on reverse)



Championship Turf Services Announces the Launch of turfchamps.com

Southern New England's leading athletic field contractor now maintains a home on the World Wide Web. With the launch of www.turfchamps.com, facility managers, athletic directors and others with an interest in quality sports turf are a click away from instant access to information about our company. At turfchamps.com you will find...

- An overview of our services – from sports field construction, renovation and maintenance to agronomic consulting and other ancillary services

- Case studies that show approaches to solving common sports field problems
- A photo gallery of our outstanding athletic fields, both past and present
- Sports field tips to help you succeed in your projects
- An overview of the SISIS turf equipment line (and a few products by BLEC), represented in New England by Championship Turf Services.
- Back issues of our newsletter – for reading online or downloading

We hope the attention to detail, functionality and eyebrow-raising

appearance that we bring to our athletic field projects is also reflected in our web site. Let us know what you think! We welcome your feedback at info@turfchamps.com or by calling us at (800) 562-5860.

You can also fill out the online form at turfchamps.com to request further information on our services or products, sign up to receive *FieldNotes* on a regular basis, or schedule a no-obligation site walk. We're happy to meet on your turf to discuss your sports field projects.

Protecting the turf when “The Boss” comes to town

Heavy foot traffic will take its toll on any athletic field. That’s why special steps are taken to protect UConn’s gridiron during non-athletic uses of Rentschler Field. To accommodate concerts and other cultural events, the stadium turf is covered with **Terraplas**, a system of interlocking tiles that allow air, light and water to penetrate the turf, yet bear the brunt of the impact of chairs and appreciative fans. The system had its debut at Rentschler Field (see photo below) when Bruce Springsteen’s band visited East Hartford for two shows in September.

Terraplas presents challenges for turf management, to be sure. It is optimally applied in dry conditions, and after turf has been mowed lower than usual. Because prolonged moisture and humidity beneath the matting can invite disease, turf is treated with systemic and contact fungicides (and other applications as necessary) before the flooring is laid down. Yellowing is common after the tiles are lifted, but with proper measures, the injured turf will generally recover quickly.

While we’re not anxious for the stadium to host sell-out concerts every weekend, the Terraplas system seems to have worked well in its debut at Rentschler (staging and vehicular traffic on makeshift roadways around the field’s edges had a bit more of a heavy-handed impact, however, leaving room for future improvement). When MSG books this exciting facility for entertainment events, we’ll be there taking the necessary steps to ensure that the playing surface stays in tip-top shape for Husky football.



Rentschler Field (con’t)

work to maintain the field’s top quality appearance – a task aided by the built-in advantages of a sand-based field – we are even more focused on the rootzone, with the goal of making the turf as lean and mean as it is green.

Our commitment

Championship Turf’s responsibilities at Rentschler Field include

all aspects of field maintenance, including mowing, lining, irrigation, aerification, topdressing, overseeding, repair, fertilization and other cultural practices to ensure turf vitality. Our staff, led by project superintendent Tim Michaud, a 30-year veteran of sports turf management (including 17 years as a golf course superintendent), is on site during every athletic use of the field, and will typically spend 12 to 15

hours at the stadium on gameday. We also oversee the field during other entertainment uses of the stadium (see story above).

Championship Turf Services is proud to continue our relationship with

UConn athletics. We have had several other assignments on the Storrs campus in recent years, including renovation and maintenance of Memorial Stadium (the former venue for Huskies football) and



the construction of new practice fields for the football team. We also rebuilt the baseball and softball fields and renovated Morrone Stadium – which was soon followed by a national championship for UConn soccer.

While UConn football fans take in the exciting action at Rentschler Field this fall, our turf managers will be on the job to ensure that the Huskies have solid grounds for achievement.

CTS at Fairfield University

Fairfield University has retained Championship Turf Services to provide total care of its athletic fields as of July 1. The 12.75-acre complex – home to NCAA Division I Fairfield Stags – includes a modified-soil field dedicated to soccer competition, baseball/softball field, practice football/lacrosse field, rugby field and ancillary practice fields. The facility also includes an astroturf field and a crumb rubber infill field. Championship Turf will provide all aspects of turf management, including mowing, cultural services, lining and preparation of softball and baseball infields. Our on-site project supervisor, Richard Fitzpatrick, received his masters degree in turf management from UConn in 2001 after a 20-year career with the Coast Guard. Rich reports directly to Fairfield Athletic Director Allen Gibson.

BLEC Ground Breaker

We are pleased to announce the addition of the BLEC Ground Breaker to our arsenal of turf management tools. Ideal for heavily compacted and waterlogged fields and fairways, the Ground Breaker relieves compaction to a depth of ten inches, providing a drainage network of continuous slits. The aerifier’s hardened blades strike the ground with enormous power, breaking up the subbase between slits. Unlike other aerifiers, the Ground Breaker does not lift up plugs, stones or other debris, so your field is left level and immediately ready for play.

We were so impressed with the Ground Breaker that we not only bought the machine, but also became a dealer for U.K.-based Blec Equipment (which also manufactures the Blecavator, the market’s premiere reverse-tine tiller). Contact us for more information!



BLEC Ground Breaker in action

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