

CHALLENGES OF SPORTS MANAGERS IN THE ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELDS

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Abstract

Abstract INTRODUCTION

Sport managers play a crucial role in the design process of an artificial turf football fields (Felipe et al., 2009). Once built the facility is when the sport manager's role becomes very important. They should work to create a suitable management project to the reality of their town and provide the best profitability, both social and economic (Burillo, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to know the challenges and difficult in the management of the artificial turf football fields showed by the sport managers. We used a qualitative methodology, based on Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2002). The instrument used was a semi-structured interview. The study sample was composed of 24 sports managers from artificial turf football fields with more than 5 years of experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

· Management of the facility

The main problem we found is that only 33% of sports managers have participated in facility design. They are who best know the social context, sporting and economic where to install the artificial turf field. Therefore, they must be a key element in the proposed design of the facility (Lopez, 2001). Most of the problems identified after open the installation (inadequate system of fencing, access systems, inadequate changing dimensions, etc.) could have been solved with their participation.

One of the main advantages of artificial turf is the ability to use the facility. In our case, the average utilization is at 43.4 h. The average use of artificial grass is about 35 hours per week more than the natural grass (Synthetic Turf Council, 2008). The problem is over-exploiting the facility. According Burillo (2009), the using of more than 35 hours of artificial turf football fields generates a premature loss of

his mechanical properties, resulting in a reduction in the lifetime of the facility. According to these data, only 21% of the football fields are developing a proper exploitation, the rest can be seen as "an exploitation of the facility".

75% of sport managers said that it is impossible to achieve self-financing in a public sport facility. While social benefits are much easier to get, economic benefits are not so easy. The problem with economic amortization of an artificial turf field is that the price is between 2 and 20 times higher than natural grass (Claudio, 2008) and when the field is hired, is being charged a public tax and not a price to the user, which only covers some of the cost of service offered.

Thus, it is essential that the manager has done a proper cost study, to know exactly the price per hour of use of the facility, and to establish a use rate that covers 100% of the costs incurred. Nowadays this fact is not happening. 40% of sport managers do not control any variable costs (electricity, water, gas, etc.). In addition, nearly 60% of the managers say they do not know the hourly cost for the facility that remains open. This means that 20% of managers, who claim to know the variable costs of installation, have not bothered to do a cost study, so we can say that their management is not efficient.

· Maintenance of the facility

It is alarming to see how more than 40% of sport managers do not know the cost of maintaining of the facility. This means that maintenance aims to extend in time the mechanical properties of the fields (ESTO, 2008). As the total annual cost of maintenance, the average has been € 9,181. Several studies show that maintenance can range between € 3,000 and € 12,000 depending on the tasks performed and their frequency (Sports Turfs Managers Association, 2005).

CONCLUSIONS

1. Many of the problems founded after the facility is open could have been resolved with the advisory of the sport manager on the use, management and subsequent maintenance of the facility. Thus, the architect could design the facility adapted to the needs of the context.
2. 21% of the artificial turf football fields are suffering over-use.
3. For sports manager the social amortization of the facility is achieved, but the economy amortization is almost impossible to achieve during the life of the artificial turf field.
4. Most of sports managers do not control key parameters in the management of the facility such as variable expenses or the study to establish the cost per hour of use of the facility.
5. 40% of sports managers do not have a specialized maintenance plan to prevent the premature deterioration of the surface.

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