CHALLENGES OF SPORTS MANAGERS IN THE ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELDS

Author: Jose Luis Felipe  
email: joseluis.felipe@uclm.es  
Co-authors: Jose Luis Felipe, Pablo Burillo, Ana Gallardo, Carlos Boned, Mari Plaza, Javier Sánchez-Sánchez, Leonor Gallardo  
University: European University of Madrid

Abstract

Abstract INTRODUCTION

Sport managers play a crucial role in the design process of an artificial turf football fields (Felipe et al., 2009). Once the facility is built, the responsibility of the sport manager becomes very important, as they are the ones who can best adapt the facility to the needs of its surroundings and provide the best profitability, both social and economic (Burillo, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify and understand the challenges and difficulties faced by sports managers in the management of artificial turf football fields. We employed 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 found was that only 33% of sports managers have participated in the design of the facility. They are the ones who know the social context, sporting and economic needs of 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 to Burillo (2009), the use 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 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 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.
References


