

Tip-Off

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

The Supreme Court:

Talking Tennis

According to NGI Sports President Rick Burke, inquiries regarding tennis court reconstruction from parks and schools in the first quarter of 2008 were up by more than 300 percent over the previous quarter. Burke acknowledges that the challenge of maintaining or refurbishing a tennis facility can often seem like an overwhelming endeavor.

To assist agencies, he has put together the following tips for officials who are bidding out a court renovation, as well as a few maintenance tips for those looking to extend the life of their existing courts.

Have an experienced expert examine the site for suggestions. An industry expert can provide a site analysis and recommendations—even if his or her product is not the best fit.

Stay away from asphalt overlaying. It is not a safe alternative for cracked courts and not a guaranteed fix. In fact, many crack again within one year.

Insist on a reasonable warranty. Beware of the snake-oil salesman who offers a 30-year guarantee, but do look for a multi-year (five- or 10-year) warranty.

Don't waste money on budget resurfacing. If you have more than 100 linear feet of cracking, implement an overlay system, not a crack repair.

Explore a softer playing surface. The end user will enjoy the experience—plus, it is a great way to bring seniors



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back to the game. Softer playing surfaces should be considered with any project, particularly if you have a high concentration of seniors using your courts.

Use the correct products for the site. Putting thick layers of an adhered acrylic cushion on a concrete deck is not a good risk, as you'll stand a 50 percent chance of bubbling.

Consider the following tips to help extend the life of your existing tennis courts:

Repair cracks immediately. Don't wait for the elements to get into the base and wreak havoc. Replace lost base materials and fill entire pavement depth with hydraulic cement.

Keep tennis areas free of mud, silt, and dead vegetation. Build-up can damage the surface and even start a cracking problem. Set up a major cleaning at least annually.

Water, water, water. More than 75 percent of court problems are caused by

water. Inspect your site to make sure that water is draining away, not over and under.

Make a date with your courts. Little problems are easier to overcome. Set up annual inspections to avoid being surprised by the big ones.

Look at the top of the fence line. The fence line should be even and straight.

Courts are for tennis only. Keep skateboarders and roller hockey at the skatepark. And remember, tennis courts are not ice rinks or parking lots.

Finally, consider getting involved in Tennis In the Parks, a partnership between NRPA and the United States Tennis Association that provides resources and support to communities that are committed to growing and improving tennis programs, infrastructure, and advocacy efforts in their local communities.

Participating agencies receive marketing support for programs, expert technical assistance, discounts on tennis equipment, facility construction and maintenance support, and more.

For details, visit www.nrpa.org/usta.

NGI Sports is a division of sports-surfacing supplier River City Athletics LLC. Web site: www.ngisports.com.