



Graphic by Shawn Bird

'Turf's up' at Autzen

By Steve Turcotte
Of the Emerald

For more than seven years, the Astroturf playing surface at Autzen Stadium has endured Northwest rainstorms, blazing sunshine and an unending number of athletic events.

Now, after Duck football, intramural soccer, Oregon Jam II and more, the turf shows signs of needing replacement. Players slipping on routine cuts and linemen sliding to make blocks have been common occurrences of late.

"You just can't stand up on it on a wet day," complains Oregon football coach Rich Brooks. "A new turf should have been put in years ago."

Visiting players and coaches agree something needs to be done to the Autzen surface.

"That turf is a farce," said UCLA safety Don Rogers following the Oregon-UCLA game.

"It is really slick, especially when it rains," says Washington State University football coach Jim Walden. "With all the rain and pounding, it needs to be replaced."

Netters to play Portland State

Oregon's volleyball team, fresh off an upset of San Jose State University Saturday, faces NCAA Division II power Portland State University tonight in Portland.

Oregon, 23-16, already has earned a spot in the NorPac Conference four-team playoffs. The Vikings have a 35-match winning streak against the Ducks and own a victory over 18th-ranked Oregon State University this season.

Tonight's match begins at 7:30 p.m. Friday, the Ducks meet top-ranked University of Pacific in league playoff action.

Oregon Athletic Director Rick Bay says the time has come to remedy the situation. Bay indicates it will cost in the neighborhood of \$500,000 to replace the turf and that money will have to come from sources outside athletic department coffers.

"This would fall under special projects," says Bay.

This is not just a spur of the moment idea. Oregon's AD has been

'That turf is a farce'
— Don Rogers

trying to get the ball rolling on this project for a while.

"I'm committed to doing it," says Bay. "The turf is in terrible shape. You see players slipping all the time — especially on the visitor's side."

Bay has a couple of alternatives he can take. He can choose to stay with Astroturf, or he can select another form of artificial surface — Superturf.

The two are priced competitively. The cost to retain Astroturf for Autzen Stadium would be about \$6.50 to \$6.75 per square foot, according to an Astroturf sales representative. Superturf runs about \$6.50 per square foot. At

\$6.50 per square foot, the cost to replace the turf at Autzen Stadium would be about \$500,000, Bay's magic figure.

Oregon's turf dilemma is not unique — Washington State University encountered the same problem three years ago. Athletic department officials at WSU decided to go with Superturf instead of Astroturf at Martin Stadium. It cost WSU \$6.08 per square foot to returf the stadium.

Walden has had no complaints with the Superturf itself, but he says the padding underneath it is as hard as a rock. Many WSU officials claim that's because ash from Mt. St. Helens sank into the turf and hardened the pad.

Still, Washington State's situation hasn't deterred Bay from closely examining both turf products.

"We have played on Superturf at Ohio State this year and the players liked it," says Bay. "Superturf is a little less expensive, but it really depends on who you talk to."

Whether it's Astroturf or Superturf, Bay stresses that a change will be made, and soon.

"We need to get going on this because it is a liability to leave that turf out there," says Bay. "It's just too slippery and too hard."

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