

## **Alveosport shock pads for enduring excellence**

### ***Recent study proves that artificial turf fields still meet top quality standards after ten years of use***

Artificial turf football fields based on a shock-absorbing layer continue to meet stringent FIFA quality standards after ten years of use. This was proven by a practical study completed earlier this year. "Over the past decade we have consistently monitored synthetic football pitches", explains Frenk Stoop of Alveosport. "Of the 41 artificial grass football pitches we studied, 28 are built on a shock pad". The earliest fields with a shock pad in the study date back to 2006. "At that time serious concerns were raised about SBR granulate being detrimental to both public health and the environment. The city of Utrecht wanted to avoid any doubt and henceforth decided to no longer accept quotes which would include SBR granulate to be used in artificial grass football fields during the installation. That's why only alternative infill material has been used in all new artificial grass football fields that have been installed since 2006."



Frenk Stoop,  
Key Application  
Manager Alveosport  
at Sekisui Alveo

### **Constant performance over the years**

In the study, the fields were subjected to the same tests used by test institutes to determine whether an artificial turf system meets FIFA One-Star or FIFA Two-Star standards. The results show that the shock absorbency and the ball-bounce characteristics of fields with a shock pad remain high for a longer period of time than for fields using so-called rubber-infill systems instead of a shock pad. Knowledge that a field with a shock pad will still deliver the required performance after ten years of use is decisive for clubs and municipalities that want to choose a high-quality field with the lowest long-term cost.

### **Safest playing surface**

"The elastic properties of the field that are important for the comfort and health of the players are delivered by the shock pad underneath the

artificial grass carpet", explains Frenk Stoop, "properties such as shock absorption and energy restitution of the field". These have a major impact on the joints, tendons and muscles of the players. In rugby, shock pads are essential to prevent injuries to the head (HIC) too. "The requirements set by the International Rugby Board (IRB) with regards to the elasticity of the field are such that use of a shock pad is inevitable to ensure the long-term safety of an artificial turf rugby field", says Frenk Stoop.

## Higher initial cost but best long-term investment

But aren't artificial grass fields with a shock pad and an alternative infill expensive? "Strictly speaking, this is true", says Paul van Berkel of Van Kessel Sports Fields, part of the Volker Wessel Group. "The price of such fields can be tens of thousands of euros higher than that of artificial surfaces in which SBR granulate is used. They are, however, easier to maintain. The layer with granulates is thinner. In addition, the TPE has a homogeneous and rounder shape which is maintained over time. Therefore, it is less likely that it will compact." Considering technical performance, maintenance expense, replacement cost, and service life, an artificial grass field with good strong fibres and with a shock pad turns out to be the best long-term investment.



Paul van Berkel,  
Van Kessel Sports Fields

## Reuse saves costs, time, energy and material

According to Paul van Berkel, shock pad fields have an additional big financial benefit: easy reuse. "A good-quality shock pad such as Alveosport can, like the alternative infill material, be reused when a field is being renovated. An investment in an artificial grass football pitch with a shock pad and alternative infill is an investment that can be used for several cycles." It is expected that both the infill and the shock pad can be used in at least two artificial grass pitches. "When the carpet appears to be worn out after a number of years, one will only need to invest in a new carpet. This saves significant costs." It also saves time, energy, and



Artificial turf system with  
Alveosport

material – and minimizes the interruption so the players can return very soon to a comfortable, healthy, high-performance field.

## Hidden advantages of insulation

Artificial grass football fields e.g. in the Netherlands must be built on a 50 cm thick foundation. This thick layer of sand serves as a drainage bed to prevent frost heaving in the winter. Because shock pads have an insulating effect, the foundation thickness may be reduced by up to 30%, meaning far fewer trucks are needed to supply new sand and carry the old sand away. This leads to lower fuel consumption, lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, less sand used, less time needed, and lower costs. What's more, Alveosport has the great advantage of being a closed-cell material, adds Paul van Berkel: "It is our preference. Sekisui Alveo has always been a pioneer in the field of shock-absorbing material. Their product has a high insulating value."



Alveosport Shock Pad material

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### Sekisui Alveo AG – Company profile

Sekisui Alveo AG with head office in Lucerne, Switzerland, develops and produces extruded and cross-linked polyolefin foams, which are used in: Adhesive Coating, Automotive, Construction including Artificial Turf as well as Industrial and Consumer Goods. The solutions are developed in close cooperation with processing companies and manufacturers, and tested and approved in the company's Application Services Laboratory.

Sekisui Alveo was established in 1971 and today employs 500 people. Beside the head office in Lucerne (Switzerland) and the three production plants in Roermond (Netherlands), Bad Sobernheim (Germany) and Merthyr Tydfil (UK) the company has local offices throughout Europe and in South America. Sekisui Alveo is owned by Sekisui Chemical Co. Ltd.

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