



European Synthetic  
Turf Organisation

ESTO PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

## **SYNTHETIC TURF – ESTO communication to international women’s footballers regarding FIFA Women’s World Cup**

The European Synthetic Turf Organisation (ESTO)– the trade and consumer body for Synthetic Turf has decided to issue a statement with regards to The FIFA Women’s World Cup 2015. The European Synthetic Turf Organisation includes members such as turf manufacturers to football associations.

In particular, ESTO wishes to counter the inaccurate and emotional communication by certain potential players from especially the Canadian and USA Teams regarding the usage of synthetic turf at The FIFA Women’s World Cup.

In regards to:

### **Discrimination**

Some Women’s players believe FIFA are discriminating against women because the surface will be synthetic turf. The facts are that it is the Local Organising Committee that chooses which surface matches should be played on.

History has shown many FIFA Competitions, especially men’s Competitions being played on synthetic turf. This also includes the FIFA Under 20 World Cup in 2007, also in Canada, where 29 of the 52 matches were played on synthetic turf. Many other more recent competitions have been on synthetic turf or a combination. The usage of synthetic turf in elite football has a long history. Many other FIFA Men’s competitions have been played on synthetic turf.

FIFA and also UEFA allow synthetic turf to be played on in qualifying competitions should the home side wish to.

Elite men’s professional leagues such as Seria A, French Premier League, Dutch Premier League and many others all allow synthetic turf. Many Scandinavian countries have a far greater use of synthetic turf for over a decade. Again because of the excellent playing conditions and durability this is certainly another reason why the women’s game in Scandinavia has been strong.

ESTO advises the Women’s players who are “against” synthetic turf to understand the facts, the history and the performance benefits of Synthetic Turf for elite football. This is not about discrimination but about embracing change, technology and how synthetic turf enhances performance for both men and women.

There is no discrimination. More that synthetic turf improves access and performance at all levels and genders.

### **Performance and Medical**

Medical Studies carried out by FIFA, F-MARC (FIFA medical Assessment and Research Centre, led by Professor Jiri Dvorak), UEFA (Led by Professor Jan Ekstrand), clearly highlight in conclusion *“There is no significant differences in all studies”*. The research carried out by football performance and analytics company Pro Zone even alludes that synthetic turf is more attacking. Again ESTO wishes to point out this research was based on synthetic turf against the best natural grass. If this comparison was made against average/poor natural grass, Synthetic turf would be more beneficial for the development of football. In reality not many natural grass surfaces are good quality – that is the reality of football.

### **Performance – All year round**

Synthetic Turf in Club professional football is good all year round. This is because of the durability of the surface and that it is not affected severely by weather conditions. 64% of the Dutch Professional Coaches Association (Coaches BV) through a study commissioned by ESTO saw synthetic turf as the future of the game.

### **Synthetic Turf helps develop sustainable and accessible elite football**

Synthetic Turf because of its all year round durability helps develop sustainable football. No longer is the sign on the pitch *“Keep off the Grass”*. Synthetic turf is accessible for players in stadiums all year round (to train and play), and through this enhances a good club structure with youth teams and women’s teams now able to have teams (which is not possible on natural grass). Many ESTO and FIFA studies have shown how no longer it’s one team playing in the stadium, that it is 10 plus teams – training and playing. This makes the football pyramid stronger – a solid club structure. In reality for many professional clubs the playing surface is the main asset. With synthetic turf that asset can be sweated. With natural grass it is not possible.

### **Good Synthetic Turf, Good Natural Grass**

Like any product or service it can vary and that is true of both surfaces. With Synthetic Turf there are very high performance and technical standards to mirror THE BEST of natural grass. This is realised through the FIFA Quality Programme and its standards for synthetic turf. So good synthetic turf surfaces should have this quality of which no doubt the FIFA Women’s World Cup will have.

### **Advice from ESTO to “A GROUP OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN FOOTBALLERS”**

Please consider the independent facts, the guaranteed performance, the wider benefits of synthetic turf and why in ESTO opinion Synthetic turf will ensure great playing performance at the FIFA Women’s World Cup. *“If the women wanted to have a voice and raise their profile on gender issues in football they should have picked another subject as the facts, history and playing performance on synthetic turf in both men’s and women’s professional football all undermine their opinion”*.

## **References**

<http://www.theesto.com/esto-publications/esto-and-coaches-by>

<http://bjsm.bmj.com/content/40/12/975>

[http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/footballdevelopment/pitch&equipment/50/16/14/turf\\_roots\\_1\\_11166.pdf](http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/footballdevelopment/pitch&equipment/50/16/14/turf_roots_1_11166.pdf)

## **ESTO Communications Division**

The European Synthetic Turf Organisation was officially established in 2010 as a non-profit organisation and offers neutral and unbiased information about the development of synthetic turf and aims to promote the numerous advantages and benefits.

All enquiries should be sent to [info@theesto.com](mailto:info@theesto.com)