



Technical Surfaces' 3G Hybrid® System – a new lease of life for synthetic pitches

Technical Surfaces, the UK's leading synthetic pitch maintenance company, has made another important industry contribution with its work on the development of a 3G Hybrid® system

The concept is simple yet effective: derived from Technical Surfaces' patented Rejuvenation®, the 3G Hybrid® system involves removing the sand infill from the carpet pile and replacing it with a specialist grade mix of new rubber granules.

For the end user, this is an exciting development; transforming the old, tired sand-filled pitch at their local sports centre into an attractive prospect for a kick about or league match. And for pitch owners / operators, the chance to increase revenue and minimise disruption and downtime is equally appealing, with the improved playing performance and drainage capabilities of the 3G Hybrid® system.

The introduction of 3G Hybrid® pitches began over two years ago, with the refurbishment in 2012 of the

synthetic facilities at Hood Park Leisure Centre in Leicestershire. The council-owned five-a-side pitches were starting to look old and tired, with bookings suffering as a result. Technical Surfaces worked together with Centre Manager Rob Bartholomew to trial their new 3G Hybrid® process on one of the pitches, with instant results:

"Following the completion of the Rejuvenation® & 3G Hybrid® works at Hood Park LC we have seen a significant reduction in booking cancellations due to poor weather, which has had a positive effect on income", explains Rob. "Interest in the booking of the pitches has also increased following the works. I have also had many positive comments from a variety of users about the quality of the surface."

Users of the newly-refurbished 3G pitch were also impressed with the transformation, praising the marked improvement in playing quality, as well as the value for money and realistic playing experience afforded by playing football on a 3G Hybrid® as opposed to the previous sand-filled surface. One player commented: "It's nice to get a game every week, even after it's been raining heavily. Before the new pitch was done, the old one used to flood or become ridiculously slippery, meaning our booking was cancelled. Since the new rubber crumb has been laid down we haven't missed a booking yet."

The new surface offered players an even and consistent playing surface to enjoy their games on, and proved so successful that the leisure centre soon opted to convert their other pitch to a 3G Hybrid®.

Now, two years on, the pitches are still performing well, and are being maintained regularly by Technical Surfaces, whose specialist MatchFit® service complements the in-house efforts of the leisure centre staff: "We have worked with Technical Surfaces for some years now, and we're pleased to have helped them trial and develop their 3G Hybrid® system, which has breathed new life into our surfaces."

When the success of the Hood Park trial became known, Technical Surfaces received calls from other customers eager to learn how a 3G Hybrid® system could help revitalise their unused, unwanted or unappealing playing surface. Amongst them was The Sports Arena in Hull, adjacent to Hull City FC's KC Stadium.

"The sand based pitch was heavily contaminated and becoming dangerous to play on", explains Mark Hagues, Sports Arena manager. "Numerous bookings had to be cancelled due to large mud patches and pools of water laying on the surface whenever it rained. It was decided we needed to

replace the pitch but having looked at the price of 3G pitches we decided to seek a more cost-effective solution. We noticed a 3G Hybrid® pitch had been installed at another leisure centre and decided to pay a visit. We then contacted Technical Surfaces for advice and a quote. Throughout the installation Technical Surfaces were happy to answer any questions and offer advice. They have also carried out numerous visits since to check on the playing surface. We have had no cancellations since it has been installed."

The 3G Hybrid® has proved hugely popular with the club's academy footballers, who had previously favoured the Sports Arena's water-based pitch ahead of the old sand-filled surface, which they felt was too hard underfoot. Following the conversion of the sand-filled pitch to a 3G Hybrid® in summer 2013, they now ask to play on the refurbished surface.

To introduce a new synthetic pitch system requires the necessary knowledge and resources to ensure it

is developed correctly. Having led the way in their industry for over 15 years, Technical Surfaces were ideally suited to take on the task. Their Rejuvenation® process uses a patented compressed-air system to extract cleanly and efficiently, without causing damage to the pile. The new rubber infill, meanwhile, is dressed into the surface using the SMG SandMatic and SportChamp machines, specialist equipment specifically designed for use on synthetic sports surfaces. The completed 3G Hybrid® system is then closely monitored and tested by Technical Surfaces as part of their ongoing research with Loughborough University.

Testing of the first 3G Hybrid® system used British Standard EN15330:1 to benchmark the data recorded, both to quantify the improvements in certain performance criteria, and to provide a scientific basis to the anecdotal evidence of players using new surface. Results demonstrated that the 3G Hybrid® was softer than the original sand-filled surface, affording a better grip, more predictable play performance and a safer surface, as evidenced by the positive feedback from players following the initial trial. Ball roll was also improved, whilst traction and ball rebound properties were brought back to standard where they were previously out of scope. The results also showed a dramatic improvement in the drainage properties, which increased fourfold.

To remain at the forefront of an ever-evolving and expanding industry is central to the success and development of Technical Surfaces. Through advancements such as the 3G Hybrid® system, ongoing academic studies into the benefits of maintenance, and the advanced technology of their Online Technical Information System (OTIS), Technical Surfaces can continue to provide quality maintenance, advice and support to its customers. To learn how a 3G Hybrid® system could help breathe new life into your synthetic sports surface, call Technical Surfaces on 08702 400700, or email info@technicalsurfaces.co.uk

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Pitch Testing