

Press release

business development

TenCate gives premier league club Heracles Almelo a world first

In the 2012 / 2013 season the premier league club Heracles Almelo will be playing on an innovative synthetic turf pitch from TenCate, which is based on patented weaving technology. This is the first official synthetic turf pitch in which a number of new developments have been combined, resulting in optimum ball and playing performance and full recyclability of the pitch. The club has thus achieved a world first. These technological developments will also be used for the main pitch in the new Heracles Almelo stadium that is to be built.

TenCate has been working on innovative, multilayer, three-dimensional weaving technology, which enables a number of characteristics in a sports pitch to be combined. Through its partners such as GreenFields and Edel Grass, TenCate has gained experience in the production and installation of woven synthetic turf products. All the available technological innovations will be combined in the new pitch.

Sport and quality characteristics

A significant further improvement compared with the present generation of synthetic turf pitches relates to the sport characteristics. Certain synthetic fibres may in the course of time start to flatten, as the result of for example the impact of long-term use, which, apart from a loss of playing performance can also give the pitch an artificial appearance. The elastic fibres interwoven into the new construction will continue to be resilient despite the impact of long-term use. These fibres will also take over part of the function of the infill. Certain fibres in the tufts of grass cover the infill better. The innovative matrix weaving pattern has moreover a positive effect on the rotational resistance of the player's feet.

A great additional advantage of this weaving technology is that the fibres of the synthetic turf pitch show better bonding, because the fibres in the matrix weaving construction are interwoven into the top layer. This aspect will also benefit the sustainability of the synthetic turf pitch.

Sustainability and the environment

The TenCate weaving technology makes it easier to use exclusively raw materials of the same material type, so that the pitch in its entirety can be recycled cost effectively. The new pitch will satisfy the highest FIFA standards, making it suitable for professional football teams at the highest level.

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Characteristics of natural grass

The optical characteristics of the pitch have been greatly improved. For a premier league club this is vital, since its matches can be followed on television. Football pitches require a synthetic (polyolefin) infill in order to achieve the desired sport characteristics. However, when excessive infill is used, some players find this troublesome. The new concept represents a marked improvement on this point because the grass fibres provide better coverage of the infill.

The new pitch consists of tightly packed, individual 'tufts of grass', which are made up of fibres of a different structure and composition. The advanced weaving technology allows a number of grass yarns to be combined and these are positioned randomly in the top layer. Unlike traditional tuft technology, this new weaving technology makes it possible to weave the yarns into each structure and with varying distances into the pitch, thus preventing the formation of stripes. It will give the pitch a very natural appearance, in this way achieving greatly improved ball behaviour.

GreenFields

The construction patented by TenCate such as the one that will be used for Heracles Almelo will be brought to market as a GreenFields® system. TenCate will put synthetic turf products based on this weaving technology on the market through several of its partners, in order to achieve broad geographic distribution. These partners work together globally with local affiliated installers.

'In the past a loose natural grass tuft could affect the final score in a negative way. We can now state that the synthetic turf tuft as we produce it will make a positive difference', says Hugo de Vries, commercial director of GreenFields. 'Unlike traditional tuft methods, the new weaving technology enables us to incorporate larger tufts of synthetic turf with a different structure and height into the top layer. This gives a very natural effect, without the disadvantages of a natural grass pitch.'

For companies such as GreenFields as well as for installers the marketing of this weaving concept will also reduce the risk. The product is produced by a single party as a complete product, with fewer critical production steps. Hugo de Vries: 'The fact that TenCate is responsible for the entire production process means that end-users will have a greater degree of confidence in the performance and sustainability of the top layer. GreenFields too is constantly engaged in innovating synthetic turf systems and in improving its quality. This innovation process has been strengthened thanks to the intensive collaboration with TenCate.'

Royal Ten Cate**Almelo, the Netherlands, Thursday 19 April 2012**

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Royal Ten Cate (TenCate) is a multinational company that combines textile technology with chemical processes and material technology in the development and production of functional materials with distinctive characteristics. TenCate products are sold throughout the world.

Systems and materials from TenCate come under four areas of application: safety and protection; space and aerospace; infrastructure and the environment; sport and recreation. TenCate occupies leading positions in protective fabrics, composites for space and aerospace, antiballistics, geosynthetics and synthetic turf. TenCate is listed on NYSE Euronext (AMX).

TenCate Grass is a global leader in the development, production and marketing of synthetic turf components and the design of synthetic turf systems for top-flight sports, recreation and landscape applications. Together with its partners TenCate Grass endeavours to operate an integrated system approach. This gives users confidence in its playing characteristics, service life and sustainability. TenCate Grass has production plants in North America, Europe and the Middle East.

GreenFields bv, with its head office in Genemuiden, is a global top player within the synthetic turf sector and a specialist in the development, production, delivery, installation and maintenance of van synthetic turf systems. Diversity through development is one of GreenFields' major strong points, with sales partners in more than 100 countries, including production locations in the Netherlands, South Africa, Korea, Algeria and the United Arab Emirates and strong alliances with manufacturers in Australia, Russia and North and South America. GreenFields is a part of TenCate.

As one of the first producers in the synthetic turf industry, GreenFields has been awarded FIFA and IRB Preferred Producer status. This has led to public sector bodies recognizing the continued efforts of GreenFields to offer both the game and the players throughout the world the very best conditions.