



# Press release

## **Artificial grass market gets significant boost from UEFA acceptance**

**During a meeting held in Vienna on 10 November, the Executive Committee of UEFA decided that it will allow UEFA competition matches to be played on artificial grass as from the start of the 2005/2006 season.**

Based on information that UEFA gathered from several pilot projects and additional surveys, UEFA's artificial grass research team issued a recommendation to approve the use of artificial grass in UEFA competitions with effect from next season, provided that the pitches concerned comply with UEFA quality criteria.

In actual terms, this means that it will be possible to play matches in the UEFA Champions League, the UEFA Cup and qualifying matches for the (FIFA) World Cup and the (UEFA) European Championship on artificial grass as from the 2005/2006 season.

Some two years ago UEFA began investigating the possibility of using artificial grass at top level. This resulted in the launching of pilot projects at Heracles Almelo, Dunfermline (Scotland), Orebro (Sweden), Moscow and Salzburg. The first three projects were installed on the basis of artificial grass and backing from Ten Cate (Thiolon Grass & Thiobac backing). At Heracles Almelo they even made use of an entirely new patented fibre, LSR Xtreme, and a new type of backing. The positive experiences on this pitch and other pitches have made a major contribution to the acceptance of artificial grass at top level.

The study will be expanded to allow even greater attention to be paid to the bio-mechanical and medical aspects. Ten Cate Thiolon's Research and Development department is working closely on this with the University of Twente, TNO and the Sport & Leisure Institute and the Stichting UMC St. Radboud in Nijmegen.

Ten Cate Thiolon, together with several partners, has contacts worldwide with various stadiums that have expressed an interest, and expects artificial grass to actually be used in top club competitions in the years ahead. In this context, a programme has been running with the Amsterdam ArenA and AFC Ajax for the past three years.

UEFA expects that this decision will enable companies that are involved in the artificial grass sector to clearly see that there is a good market for artificial grass. And this is also expected to have a positive effect on future product development.

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