

## FIELDTURF IN THE MEDIA: SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION

Following the recent story in the New Jersey Star-Ledger and a number of subsequent pieces that have also either told only one side of the story or twisted the facts, we think it is important to clarify some of the key misconceptions that may have arisen.



### FICTION:

*FieldTurf fields in New Jersey are defective and failing – and this is just the beginning.*



### FACT:

*New Jersey Duraspine fields were not, and are not, defective.*

- The Duraspine UV issue has not caused, and will not cause, fields to fail during their warranty periods in New Jersey.
- New Jersey is not a high-UV area that would experience the issue we have seen, primarily in the South and Southwest, with Duraspine fields wearing prematurely.
- The numbers speak for themselves:
  - Of the 114 Duraspine fields installed in New Jersey that have passed their eight-year warranty period, only 14 have been replaced.
  - Those replacements were due to normal wear, and 12 of those customers chose a FieldTurf field a second time.
  - The other 100 of these fields that have passed their warranty period are still being played on.



### FICTION:

*Turf fibers splitting apart and coming loose = clear signs of a defect.*



### FACT:

*This is normal for fibers over time – it's how they age.*

- It is inaccurate to claim that a field is defective simply because it does not look the same when it nears the end of its warranty period as it did when it was first installed.
- Just as a tire loses tread over time, some amount of splitting and breaking is normal for fibers.
- Most of our customers know and appreciate this situation – just because the reporters for the Star-Ledger did not doesn't change the fact that all artificial turf fields, regardless of type of field or manufacturer, age over time.

**FICTION:**

*The story broke new ground and revealed that many FieldTurf customers are upset with how their fields have performed.*

**FACT:**

*The story and subsequent news coverage have shown that in most cases the opposite is true – customers are happy with their fields.*

- The overwhelming majority of customers who have been contacted by the media have had good things to say about FieldTurf and have been pleased with their purchase.
  - Even one of the Star-Ledger reporters [recently admitted](#) that, “We did speak to, I would say, a significant portion of New Jersey coaches who were very pleased with the product that they got from FieldTurf.”
  - The list of customers publicly stating their satisfaction with their FieldTurf and Duraspine products has only grown. Examples can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
  - Further, it is telling that the Star-Ledger/NJ.com’s sister publications, the Cleveland Plain Dealer and Staten Island Advance (they are all part of the Advance Media group) could not substantiate the story in their markets.
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**FICTION:**

*The story relied upon damning scientific evidence to prove its contentions about Duraspine.*

**FACT:**

*The testing cited by the story has been found to have numerous flaws by a well-regarded third-party expert.*

- In a recent [report](#), scientists at the highly respected CTT Group identified many issues with the testing cited by the story.
- For example, the testing cites results from just three specimens per field, on just three fields, which is insufficient – industry standards recommend obtaining 10 valid result on at least ten specimens.
- When it comes to the actual, data, the report notes that tensile tests resulted in strength averaging 2.7 lbs, which is well above the threshold value of 1.8 lbs put forth by the Star-Ledger, but then the report disingenuously discards these results.
- Additionally, the report author’s technique of cutting the fibers lengthwise into three pieces and then taking the sum of the force testing results on each piece ultimately underestimates the force the entire fiber can bear, since this cutting technique is inexact and doesn’t preserve the complete fiber’s ability to bear force. This is clearly a way to pre-condition the fibers to get inferior results.
- CTT Group’s own testing found tensile strengths of greater than 2.45 lbs on 20 specimens, and found “no evidence of major degradation.”

**FICTION:**

*FieldTurf staged a cover-up, proving they did something wrong.*

**FACT:**

*We did not hide from this and have worked to make it right for customers.*

- The suggestion that FieldTurf “covered up” or “stonewalled” customers around the Duraspine issue is simply not true.
  - In 2011, we sued our fiber supplier, publicly declaring what we believed the defect to be—inability to stand up to the sun — and stating which types of customers we expected to be impacted.
    - To be blunt, if we believed the issue would cause a significant number of fields in low-UV markets like New Jersey to fail before the end of their warranties, we would have said so and asked for more money in the lawsuit.
  - In fact, the emails in the Star-Ledger story were taken from the public record in that litigation.
  - While we did not proactively reach out to every customer on the Duraspine issue, since it did not impact every customer, we have been proactive in dealing with the issue.
  - While we are not perfect, when customers have been affected we have worked hard to make it right for them and will continue to do so.
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**FICTION:**

*How much a field is used and how it is maintained doesn't matter – FieldTurf is just shirking responsibility by saying that.*

**FACT:**

*We have lived up to our commitments and responsibilities and have been public about the issues with Duraspine.*

- The reality is that like many other products, how a field is cared for and how frequently it is used do impact how it wears. For this reason, FieldTurf instructs each customer on the proper use and maintenance of their field.
- When it comes to taking responsibility, FieldTurf has been proactive in dealing with the Duraspine problem, and began manufacturing its own fiber to ensure quality control.
- In high-UV markets where Duraspine has been an issue, we have replaced fields and cooperated closely with our customers.
- We have worked hard to make things right for these customers, and the vast majority have been happy.
- The headline of the Cleveland [story](#) says it all: FieldTurf’s Duraspine fields have been a worthwhile investment, Northeast Ohio football coaches and administrators say.

**FICTION:**

*Issues related to this story or others could threaten FieldTurf's ability to deliver for customers.*

**FACT:**

*FieldTurf and Tarkett are financially strong and customers have nothing to worry about.*

- One of the advantages that distinguishes FieldTurf from others in the industry is that we have significant resources and financial backing, given that we are the North American subsidiary of Tarkett.
  - Tarkett is a more than \$2 billion (based on market capitalization) French-based publicly-traded company and fully supports FieldTurf's stance on this issue.
  - This is beneficial not only because it means we are continuously investing in the business and in innovative new products, but also means we are well-positioned to handle short-term challenges such as negative press or legal/political issues.
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**FICTION:**

*Where there is smoke there is fire – Questions and concerns from local politicians mean FieldTurf did something wrong.*

**FACT:**

*We stand behind our products and have done right by customers.*

- FieldTurf stands behind its products and customers, and will cooperate with any government inquiry.
  - However, we are fully confident that when considered in full, the facts will show that customers in New Jersey were well-served by FieldTurf.
  - It is understandable that, based solely on the one-sided interpretation of the facts in the Star-Ledger story, people and organizations would have concerns – but we are committed to setting the record straight.
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**FICTION:**

*Kids are getting hurt – the criticisms in the Star-Ledger article relate to player safety.*

**FACT:**

*This is not about player safety and any reporting to the contrary is irresponsible.*

- Many of the news stories reporting on the Star-Ledger article have mistakenly reported that the accusations in the article and the issues with Duraspine in high-UV markets relate to player safety.
- This is not true, and so far every news outlet who has mistakenly reported this has corrected their stories after reviewing the facts.
- The fiber component of our fields largely serves an aesthetic purpose, so that the field looks like natural grass. We believe our customers choose FieldTurf because our proprietary design and patented system delivers superior performance and safety.
- These claims are backed up by independent peer-reviewed studies published in leading sports medicine journals (see [here](#) and [here](#)). The infill, not the fibers, is what protects athletes.

**FICTION:**

*The Star-Ledger story was sparked by angry customers complaining that they were ripped off.*

**FACT:**

*We believe the story was driven by competitors for financial gain.*

- In a recent radio appearance discussing the story, the Star-Ledger reporters admitted that [“It all started with an email tip.”](#)
- Based on their description of the email, we believe that this anonymous emailer is either the same person, or affiliated with, a tipster who for years has been emailing FieldTurf customers making disparaging statements about our company and products.
- Through recent [legal action](#), we have learned that this “Turf Insider”, as he calls himself, is a former FieldTurf employee and a current employee of a competitor.
- We believe the connection between the individual who likely planted this article and those who are benefitting from it financially is an important piece of information for our customers and the public to be aware of.