

THE MAGAZINE FOR LEADING CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES

US **Builders** Review

Rabbitbrush Run
Apartments, Enriching
Nevada's Gold Boom

**Ormaza
Construction**

Where Tradition Meets
Technology

**Portland
Stone Ware
Company Inc.**

Constructing Terravita
Luxury Apartments

**The Murray
Franklyn Family
of Companies**

Cover Story Page 70

Kirksey Architecture

Houston's Family of
Sustainability-savvy Professionals

Paragon Sports Constructors LLC

Crafting World-class Sports Fields and Tracks

Produced by Keri Fitzgerald & Written by Jeanee Dudley

Paragon Sports Constructors LLC (PSC) is a small, specialized contractor in Fort Worth, Texas. William Chaffe, president of PSC, purchased and incorporated the company in 2009 along with his partners. PSC has since become a regional leader in the construction of high-end natural and synthetic turf sports fields and running tracks. “We’re a pretty small company, but a fairly large sports construction contractor,” says Chaffe.

The company was previously known as Sports Constructors

Inc., and Chaffe says, “We retained virtually all of the former company’s employees.” The company started as an asphalt paving company in the ’80s under the name Track Masters, initially a family-run business that sold when it grew too big for the management structure.

The original business started in paving roads and parking lots. Management took on a few running track paving projects and found that not only was the work more precise, the



profit margins were also much better. After finding success in running tracks, Track Masters branched out to install sports fields. After all, most tracks surround a sports field, and one can't be built without affecting the other.

While paving a running track may not sound like a big job, industry standards are exceptionally precise. A running track typically has a 1-percent cross slope and the grade of the track can't vary more than one-eighth of an inch over a length of 10 feet. Running tracks are also typically surfaced with synthetic surfacing, which provides safety, traction and uniformity to the running surface. Newer track surfaces are often rubberized with crumb rubber from recycled tires or shoe soles that are glued together and adhered to pavement with polyurethane.

Synthetic turf sports fields have also become far more technical and precise. The newer generation of infilled turf systems bears little resemblance to the original green carpet fields invented in the 1960s for domed stadiums.

"Older turf systems were basically padded carpet on concrete or asphalt," says Chaffe. "The latest generation of turf systems looks and plays much more like natural grass."

Another difference in the progression of turf systems is in the way they drain. Newer infilled systems drain vertically, through the turf and into a permeable stone base where the water is collected and drained out of the field. "The in-ground drainage system, stone base, turf installation and infill must all be designed and installed properly or problems can occur," Chaffe explains. Proper installation is PSC's policy, but perfection is the team's goal.

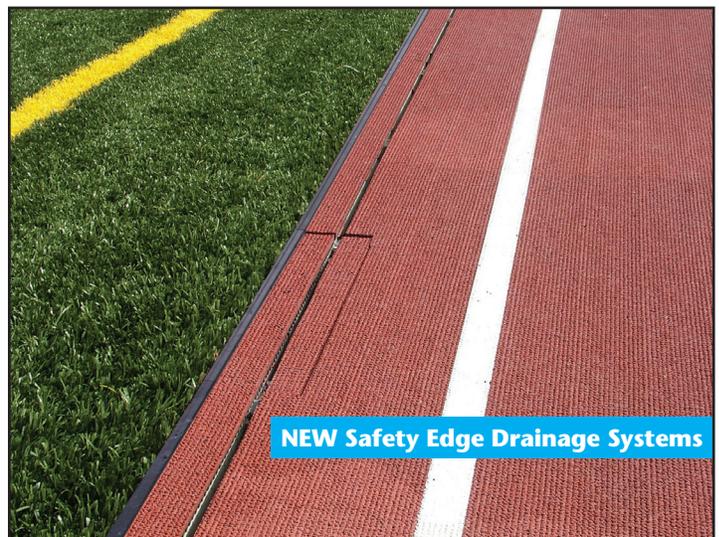
Turf Wars

According to Chaffe, the number of synthetic turf fields has steadily increased over the last 10 years, and so has the number of players in the industry. PSC is different in that the team self-performs every aspect of sports field installation.

"We generally don't sub out work," Chaffe states. "We do the earthwork, excavation, concrete, liner, drainage, stone and turf installation. We even install the goal posts." Because of the demanding tolerances of sports field construction, specialized companies like PSC are the most qualified to properly construct both the field and install the turf.

"Landscaping companies, paving companies and general contractors try to do what we do," Chaffe continues. "But if they don't have the experience, then problems can occur."

According to Chaffe, contractors and turf suppliers without



NEW Safety Edge Drainage Systems

- Available on System 2000, 3000, and 4000
- 0.5" w x 0.75" h cellular (thermoplastic elastomer) TPE rubber edge
- Provides a soft, safe edge to help reduce injury to athletes
- Integrally cast into the polymer concrete to prevent delamination
- Weather resistant to provide a long service life



Visit our website to see our full range of ACO Sport products.

ACO Polymer Products, Inc.
(888) 490-9552
(800) 543-4764
www.acousa.com

Follow us on:



the necessary experience to perform these installations could explain a wave of highly publicized failures of synthetic turf. When low-quality turf is installed it can disintegrate, split, or the fibers can pull out of the turf's backing. These problems can be magnified especially if an inexperienced contractor has installed a poor base or improper drainage.

In order to ensure quality, PSC installs only Desso Sports Systems synthetic turf. These turf systems are durable, affordable and are manufactured by a Belgian carpet and flooring solutions business that has been manufacturing synthetic turf for over 30 years. "Desso is a worldwide leader in synthetic turf, but is not as well-known in the U.S.," Chaffe says. "But I know when we put their product down I can sleep at night, knowing it's going to perform well throughout its expected life."

Lasting Investments

Chaffe has seen an increase in business as more schools invest in synthetic turf. He is currently working with some surprising clients, including three local middle schools. "Almost every high school around here has converted to synthetic turf, or wants to and is trying to find the funds," he explains.

The three middle schools total nearly \$4 million, and Chaffe says it is rare to see that kind of investment in middle school sports fields. Although the investment doesn't always seem to make sense, the expense can pay off big time for the client over the long term in saving maintenance costs and increasing the frequency of the field's use.

"Especially at land-locked schools, sports fields get a



tremendous amount of use," Chaffe says. "Football, soccer, gym class, marching band practice ... that's a lot of wear on natural grass." Chaffe estimates synthetic turf to sustain roughly four times as much use as natural grass, and holds up better to inclement weather.

PSC operates fairly close to home, but Chaffe says the company's geographic footprint spans "as far as we can drive in a day." PSC has even performed an installation as far away as Illinois. "If you're self-performing, you've got to move your labor and equipment and live in a hotel room somewhere," Chaffe explains. "Getting stretched out too far doesn't work. It's a good way to lose control and put down crummy work. We don't choose to do that."



PSC believes the team's work speaks for itself and the company maintains a consistently honest and customer-driven approach to sports construction. Whether installing a track at the local middle school or constructing a field for a professional sports franchise, the team's dedication to quality and safety makes Paragon Sports Constructors LLC the premier sports construction specialist in its market. •