

Field turf presentation:

As many of you won't know who I am. My name is Andy Nutton. I teach at the high school, Coach the schools sailing team and assist with the coaching of our Field hockey squad, I've been involved in coaching sport for the last 25 years, both here in the US as well as in the middle east, across mainland Europe and in Great Britain. Personally, I play many different sports, but specifically Field hockey since the age of 8, and I have competed at a high level in the UK, so I believe that I come to this discussion with more experience of how sport in general is coached and played around the world than most, and I have seen the hugely positive effects a turf field has on any sporting community in which it is placed. I, having played Hockey in a parking lot in Dubai, on shale in Devon England, turf in Toulon France and Davidson, North Carolina as well as the fields we have here in the Vineyard, I cannot express enough the huge difference that turf makes to the ability to train and play regularly in a safe and enjoyable environment. The points made that poor surfaces make better player is just blatantly not true, poor surfaces make learning harder and less safe. Both of these things massively reduce retention of new players, thus reducing overall participation and the lowering of the local communities' levels of physical

health and mental wellbeing. You would never ask someone to drive a car with flat tires, or play a piano with broken keys, but that is what is currently happening to our students here at the high school.

We have heard plenty from both sides of this argument focusing on the environmental effects this project may or may not have, how this turf will affect our varsity teams and their abilities to compete with off island schools, and how Mike and his team cannot possibly keep the fields in any kind of condition to be able to play American Football or Soccer, let alone Lacrosse and Field hockey. The point I want to raise is the huge effect a high-capacity turf will have on the schools sporting community as a whole. When I started to play field hockey everyone played on grass, at this time head injuries were commonplace, as a hockey ball hit by a fully grown man or woman can easily bounce up and cause injuries, in addition to this, the ability for young people to get into the sport was much reduced due to the innate athletic ability it takes to just get started when playing on grass. My first club had fantastic grounds staff, with a huge budget, but even they couldn't come close to the consistency a turf field offers. As time went by it became apparent that if I wished to progress, I would need to leave my home club and travel a 50 mile round journey to play for a team that had a turf. This made all the

difference to me, my game improved due our practices and games were never cancelled due to inclement weather as well as me being able to learn skills that were simply impossible to do on grass. This had a profound effect on my physical health, but almost more importantly my mental wellbeing. I'm dyslexic and needed sport to provide me with much needed success, and without regular Hockey I was not a happy young man, and without the opportunity to play regularly, I would certainly have had a far harder time seeing my way through to the end of my fulltime education.

Now as an Island the ability for parents and their children to travel to locations with quality facilities is much harder, and as we know there are far too many families that this is simply not possible due to financial reasons. That is why this turf is SO important. Don't you all agree that the kids of this island deserve the same facilities as their pers from the cape and Nantucket enjoy.

Across the UK when, a turf field is put in the participation of 8- to 18-year-olds has a marked increase. Clubs and teams found new life, numbers increased thus so did the wellbeing of the individuals as well as their families.

In a time that our Mental health and physical wellbeing is being tested to the limits, having a facility like this not only effects our school pupils but the island as a whole,

as parents who seeing that their children are content both physicals and mentally this will in turn reduces their levels stress. I think we can all agree that this can only be a good thing. In a time that we as a species are becoming more sedentary, lacking in social graces and generally less fit, this community deserves this facility. To allow 12 year old girls and boys to pick up a hockey stick and see what field hockey is all about, without having to worry about trying to play on a pitch so bumpy that even experienced players have a real hard time in completing the simplest of tasks.

I ask you to look at all the facts, provided by the appointed experts, ignore all the hyperbole coming from either non-professional opinions or non-applicable data and focus on what this project will do for not only the school but our island as a whole. I ask that those of you who have publicly stated in writing or by personally funding the objection or support for this project to recuse yourselves from this process, to make sure that this monumental discission is made by unbiased commission members.

Sport is the release that so many of us rely on, so to quote Mike Singletary "Do you know what my favorite part of the game is? The opportunity to Play. I implore this committee to pass this application, so that our kids can play.

Thank you for letting me speak.