

Jay Grossman

Fri 4/17/2020 11:14 AM

Dear Oak Bluffs Planning Board and Martha's Vineyard Commission,

I have been a professional sports agent for more than 30 years and often begin serving as a family advisor for players when they are still in high school. My wife and I reside on the island full time.

I believe grass fields are a better choice for the Martha's Vineyard athletes and the island.

So it is through this lens that I disagree with the MVRHS's statement that their athletes need artificial turf to succeed or be competitive. Telling a student athlete that they need a particular surface to succeed or compete is the wrong message to send. And the MVRHS's track team has already proven this to be untrue. Additionally, in the largest epidemiological study of concussions in high school football (more than 1 million football players around the country were included), 90% of concussions were attributed to artificial turf. As someone who has had dozens of players suffer from serious concussions, I can't understand why a school would choose a surface that would increase that risk.

It is an incorrect assumption that student athletes "need" turf to pursue their dreams of playing in college and at higher levels.

My wife and I are members of ICAN - Island Climate Action Network. The world is changing quickly and so we better too. Synthetic turf just seems like an outdated product, taking the island in the wrong direction at an important time.

Finally, and it may sound ironic coming from a sports agent, I find the MVRHS's disproportionate focus on school sports to be troubling. One of the things I look for and encourage in my players is balance. A well-rounded person -- someone who appreciates the arts, music, books, family, the world at large -- is a better athlete. And so I wish the MVRHS would place far more effort, focus and money into curriculum development rather than spending all their political capital and private fundraising efforts on this one track and field.

I would be happy to further discuss this with any members of the committees.
Thank you.

JAY GROSSMAN
PRESIDENT
PUCKAGENCY