

The Sport of Baseball - A Big Hit for Pros & Fans

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Home runs. Hot dogs in the stands. The click of the bat as a player punts hard. Sunny afternoons. Rooting for the team. All this can mean only one thing: it's baseball season! Get out your glove and your team colors, because America's favorite game has started up again. It's the best time of year for fans because, at the start of the season, anything can happen! A sleeper rookie might show new colors as a star, or maybe an underdog coach will pull a *Moneyball*-style lineup full of surprises!

One type of surprise not to get excited about is players getting muddy and injured as they bungle and slide between bases, thanks to spring rains making the grass super slippery. A synthetic turf field could save the day for your favorite team by providing a safe, dry field on which its players can attain world-record scores! The sports fans at Watersavers Turf are looking forward to a season full of fun and good surprises in both the little and big leagues.

Everyone knows baseball is America's pastime, but do you know how it all got started? There's a big myth about the game's history, and plenty of fans have fallen for the tale! Rumor has it that the game began when a young man from Cooperstown, New York, named Abner Doubleday pulled the idea out of his hat during the hot summer days of 1839. Fact: Doubleday was a true hero who helped the Union win the Civil War. Smart, brave, and strong, he was the perfect face for America's game. The only problem is that he didn't invent it! That story was cooked up decades later by an athlete, mythmaker, and sporting goods salesman named A.J. Spaulding. In the early 1900s, he wanted more people to play baseball, in part so he could sell more balls and bats. To help the game gain popularity, he came up with the tale of young Doubleday, who was an appealing poster boy for the sport's origin. The public loved the idea, and Spaulding's fortunes soared! Cooperstown, New York, became "baseball city" and home to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Nowadays, sports historians know that Spaulding's tale is far from true, even if it is pretty interesting. Baseball is actually quite similar to games that originated in Great Britain, especially cricket and its schoolyard cousin, rounders. Those games came to the shores of the US with the very first colonial ships and were played by kids and adults long before The Declaration of Independence was signed. Although America's favorite pastime started out as England's favorite pastime, over the centuries we made the game our own.

In New York City, circa 1845, a bank clerk with some big ideas changed the game forever. His name was Alexander Cartwright, he served as a volunteer firefighter on his days off, and he stayed fit as a member of a sporting group called the New York Knickerbockers. The members often played cricket, but Cartwright came up with some new rules. He created the baseball diamond, and even coined the phrase, "three strikes, and you're out!" Cartwright didn't invent the game wholesale like Spaulding claimed Doubleday had, but he did take a popular sport and make it even more compelling.

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The story of baseball is one about making things better, one new idea at a time. And one of the newest ideas in the game isn't in the rules—it's on the field! Synthetic turf wasn't even invented until the 1960s, but you see it at the top level of the game. Stadium designers are choosing the material for its soft, smooth surface that's durable and safe for all-weather play. In a sport in which games are often postponed due to spring floods, that's a major-league advantage. Pioneers in the sport are trending toward turf, and it's currently debuting at larger stadiums, all the way up to the NCAA level. In 2006, the Chillicothe Paints were one of the first teams in the world—leading the way for durable, safe, faux fields—to install a completely synthetic field, including a 3,000-pound, manmade, portable pitcher's mound.

An unexpected bonus provided by synthetic turf? Whiter balls! Without grass stains, wet fields, and dirt smears, baseballs last longer and look better. This may seem like a small savings, but for a team that's playing hard and often, the numbers really add up. Steve Malliet owns four minor-league teams, and he has some hard stats on those numbers. His Missouri team, the River City Rascals, plays on live grass while his Illinois-based Normal CornBelts play on artificial sports turf. The Rascals go through 350 dozen balls in a season. The CornBelts? Only 250 dozen! The big difference is the water. Live grass floods easily, and the dirt can take days to dry out, but an infield made from faux grass can withstand an entire foot of rain per hour without getting soggy. That means no matter what the skies look like, the game is on! The fact that an artificial sports turf field drains so well translates into it being easier on players and their equipment. With that in mind, why not hit a few pop flies of your own on a field that features top-quality, faux grass?

The pros at Watersavers Turf are scoring home runs in the artificial sports turf game. Check out our sports grass online, visit one of our California stores, or call 1-844-974-8873. To stay in touch with our fun Sports Newsletters, "Like" our Facebook page, or download a copy of the newsletter here: www.watersaversturf.biz