



NEWS RELEASE

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Real Field of Dreams Found at California High School

School's synthetic turf field turned around an athletic program on the brink of closure

(Atlanta, Ga.) – In a true story of David vs. Goliath, the football team at Salesian High School in Richmond, California went from the brink of closure to defeating an “unbeatable” team with players twice its size. It was Salesian’s first game on their brand new synthetic turf field – a field that is now being hailed the Grand Prize Winner of the Search for the Real Field of Dreams. The national contest, conducted by the Synthetic Turf Council (STC), searched the country for the high school with the most compelling story behind its synthetic turf field.

Salesian High School unveiled its field for the varsity football Homecoming game in 2007. They were up against a school with three times as many students and an offensive line that looked like an NFL team. Nearly 1,000 fans packed the stands as Salesian High School defeated its opponent 40-37. The headline in the next day’s newspaper read, ‘David Slays Goliath.’

“We ‘play up’ on our synthetic turf field because the facility is a reflection of who we really are – a great school with great students destined for great things,” said Janet Wilks, the school’s Director of Development and Communications. “We attract better coaches and better competition. It’s been pivotal for our sports program.”

Located in a city with one of the country’s highest murder rates, the students at Salesian High focused their efforts on academics – the school boasts a graduation rate near 100 percent. And although 70 percent of students are involved in athletics, the conditions of their grass field were so poor that the soccer and football teams were on a three-year notice to be shut down. That all changed when the school raised funds to install a synthetic turf field. Salesian’s inspirational story is just one of 10 selected by an independent panel of judges as winners of the STC’s first annual Search for the Real Field of Dreams.

On the eve of Earth Day, it has become apparent that all the winning schools have made a positive impact on the environment. A typical synthetic turf sports field reduces annual water consumption by at least 500,000 gallons, eliminates the need for thousands of pounds of fertilizer and pesticides yearly, and uses 25,000 recycled tires that would otherwise end up in landfills.

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Other Real Field of Dreams winners include First Runner-Up Junction City High School in Junction City, Kan. and eight National Finalists: Germantown High School, Philadelphia, Pa.; Uniontown Lake High School, Uniontown, Ohio; Oak Hills High School, Cincinnati, Ohio; Rutland High School, Rutland, Vt.; Virginia City High School, Virginia City, Nev.; Walton-Verona High School, Walton, Ky.; Wyoming City Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio; and Zanesville High School, Zanesville, Ohio.

Judges for the Search include Bob Vecchione from the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, Christine Sima of *Parks and Rec Business* and Christine Bolger of the National Association of Sports & Physical Education.

About the Synthetic Turf Council:

Based in Atlanta, the Synthetic Turf Council was founded in 2003 to promote the industry and to assist buyers and end users with the selection, use and maintenance of synthetic turf systems in sports field, golf, municipal parks, airports, landscape and residential applications. The organization is also a resource for current, credible, and independent research on the safety and environmental impact of synthetic turf. Membership includes builders, landscape architects, testing labs, maintenance providers, manufacturers, suppliers, installation contractors, infill material suppliers and other specialty service companies. For more information, visit www.syntheticurfCouncil.org.

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