

ISSS TM 2004 in Wien Guideline to Sessions

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I am sure you realized from the invitations that today's meeting of the ISSS will follow a different format than earlier meetings. In previous meetings, you have been confronted with presentations from various experts without much time for common discussion. In this meeting we are reversing that and giving special emphasis to discussion. And we do not just want to discuss, we want to achieve results which may help to improve test procedures and testing programs. Thus, in order to fully capture all of the thoughts and ideas, the discussions will be digitally recorded and then a synopsis created and posted on the website, however, the full recording will be available to all delegates here.

Our focus of today - Synthetic Turf – is both a new and yet old subject. Given the general knowledge base represented by those of you present today, it is not necessary to use our time to review again the test methods that we are already familiar with. Rather we will move ahead to discuss the known problems and views and – if possible- to develop new solutions through creative brain-storming.

Before beginning we should first acknowledge that the ISSS as a professional society, was founded to altruistically employ the genuine competence of its' members to scientifically explore and analyze the structure and dependencies of test procedures. We can see this in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the ISSS Statutes. Although not being authorized to set 'final decisions', the ISSS seeks to operate as a 'Scientific Center of Competence' which prepares and offers technical proposals to normative corporations such as CEN, ASTM, UEFA, FIFA, FIH and others for their review and adoption.

It must further be stated that it is not the role or intention of the ISSS to interfere in the legislative competence or dictate to the groups listed or other like groups. Each group is competent in its area of jurisdiction and respect for this competence must be a two-way street. At the last AGM, in Cologne, the competence of the ISSS was publicly recognized for the technical assistance provided in the creation of test procedures for one groups standardization process. While the expertise of the ISSS was used for the development of the test procedures, the setting of the requirements for the test results was left to the regulatory body. This is an example of the symbiotic relationship that the ISSS was founded to achieve.

To aid in this successful effort, we must involve the industry as their experts have at least as much competence as the test labs. We have therefore invited such industry experts to participate in this meeting. Among those are several delegates who have attended the ISSS meetings for many years and can be addressed as 'loyal ISSS supporters'. We appreciate and thank them for this support since without this type of cooperation, the work of the ISSS would not be possible.

Now, on to the task at hand.....

Beginning around 1985, we began to see individual corporations developing Technical Rules (guidelines, standards) to gain technical control of their specific sports products. The end goal was to achieve optimal and consistent conditions for the playing surfaces. This development was on a case by case basis usually with the support of a single lab but without reference or obligation to existing standards. While these testing programs are beneficial, they have never, to the best of my knowledge, been subjected to neutral scrutiny nor have the corporations communicated with each other effectively. Therefore, this meeting is a unique opportunity for the ISSS to take care of this gap. Thus, a critical target for this meeting is set forth as:

Discussion and review of tests and practices related to synthetic turf.

Currently, there are several testing programs often employed within the same company. These are stipulated by the intended sports usage. This creates cost in both time and money for the manufacturer and often results in confusion for the end purchaser since the same test can have different names with results that are not quantitatively comparable.

This brings us to a second target for this meeting:

The comparison of like test methods with proposals for elimination of unnecessary variables, with other words for harmonization of the test methods.

In doing this, we must strive to avoid the appearance that we are criticizing these testing programs. We recognize the difficulty in establishing an initial program for overall product regulation and improvement, and acknowledge that typically errors may occur during this process and /or requirements may need to be tempered. We are fortunate to be able to base modern laboratory testing on 40 years of such experiences.

So, now after collecting experiences over many years we take on the task of scrutinizing the testing programs. The delegates are requested to use this opportunity to point out non-pertinent details of test procedures and to provide proposals for improvements toward achieving factual correctness and practicality. We ask that this be on a truly scientific level and therefore the body to whom the test 'belongs' should not be given weight or consideration. We are not seeking to create proper testing programs, but to analyze the validity of the test procedures. In this era of ISO 17025, the labs especially are asked to focus on the elements of accuracy and validity of the various test procedure. This can no longer be ignored and it will require the shared experiences of the labs to find and explore these issues.

The validity of a test method is dependant on its ability to provide meaningful data relative to both the product and property in a reliable, accurate and practical way. In the field of sports surfaces, we ought to distinguish two types of validity: *technical validity* and *functional validity*. Technical validity is based on metrologically sound or at least safe tests, while functionally validity addresses the degree to which the test and its results represent the intended sports functionality, in other words, the practical relevance of the test.

Although it is not our task to discuss the requirements referring to the test procedures this will sometimes be inevitable. Namely in cases when a discrepancy becomes obvious between the accuracy of the test and the requirements.

We have set a challenging goal for this meeting. To facilitate these discussions we are providing moderators tasked with keeping the discussions on target and drawing in all views including the view of those who may feel restrained by language. The moderators are knowledgeable men but were purposely not selected for technical expertise in the issues of this meeting so that their personal views would not bias the discussions. Thus, the moderator has a different task than a chairman of a committee. Technical Reporters will provide the technical aspects and most important details of the appropriate test procedure in a 10 minute summary to introduce the elements for discussion.

In the course of the meeting we will hear contrary views. This should not be viewed as unwanted. However, we have a limited amount of time and it is not the goal of this meeting to come to a full and complete resolution on all conflicting ideas. We hope to expeditiously resolve those that we can and identify others that will need additional exploration and discussion. Please do not feel slighted if a view you have contributed falls into the category of one requiring further exploration. It is the time constraint and not the value of the view that must guide the moderators, and we will certainly need topics for further meetings. As a reminder, we will be recording the discussions so that no contributions are lost due to time constraints.

As interesting as it might be to address all alternative test procedures the frame of this meeting requires limitation to those test procedures which have wide geographical spread and use and which have found decisive recognition in the practical international testing market. Nevertheless, alternative test procedures will be presented in the session of Juan Dura and John Willems at the end of our meeting.

So now, I conclude with my hope that we will achieve success in this meeting and leave here feeling that our time and efforts have been well utilized.