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## TURF TIP TIME #14 with the NJTA:

### Rotate Growth Covers to Extend the Playing Season

Football fans and soccer moms can attest to the fact that cold temperatures do not stop the time clock. Many fall sports continue long after temperatures drop when the turfgrass on the fields recovers at a much slower rate. To extend the playing season, Dan Shemesh, the Director of Grounds at Red Bull Arena in Harrison, NJ, suggests rotating growth covers.



Growth covers help trap in heat. These specially designed tarps create a greenhouse effect and retain a beneficial amount of warmth and moisture around the grass beneath them. They also provide a protective barrier from the elements.

It may not be feasible to cover large areas of play for budget, schedule, or logistical reasons. In those cases, consider blanketing the specific places that suffer from the most traffic. For example, between football and soccer goal posts

and within golf course tee boxes are two areas notorious for heavy wear and tear.

“You can use full size growth covers as part of a rotation on multiple fields or smaller custom pieces to address certain wear spots,” Dan said. It doesn’t have to be all or nothing. If you only have one field to manage, you can still take advantage of the benefits of growth tarps by covering only half of the field at a time.

“During the last off season, we rotated covering each of our four grass fields at Red Bull Arena and the Red Bull Training Facility,” Dan explained. “We don’t experience much down time from field demands so being able to maximize any of those windows with growth covers has really helped provide consistent playing surfaces.”



When using growth covers, remember to always monitor the activity underneath the blankets because the long duration of leaf wetness can promote fungal diseases. Also, be prepared for the chance of heavy winds by securing the perimeter and seams.

Overall, interchanging a set of growth covers can be a useful tool as part of your maintenance plan to help provide the best playing surface possible. They can be beneficial for early spring green up, fall recovery, or winter renovations.



**NJTA's TURF TIP TIME Brought to You By:  
Dan Shemesh, NY Red Bulls**

Dan Shemesh graduated from Penn State in 2003. He spent seven years working for the Philadelphia Eagles, where he helped open Lincoln Financial Field and maintain the practice fields at the Nova Care Complex. For the past ten years, Dan has worked as the Director of Grounds for the New York Red Bulls. His team is responsible for the pitch at Red Bull Arena in Harrison, NJ and Red Bull Training Facility in Hanover, NJ.



**NJ Green Expo**

**December 10-12, 2019**

2019 Green Expo: Engage, Experience, Excel  
The Borgata Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ

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**Early Registration Closes Monday, November 11**

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