

# Artificial Turf, MRSA & Athlete Infections

## *Stopping Infection in the Wash*

By Haley Jorgensen

“When you put in a turf field, you can use it a lot more,” says Cindy Suess, head softball coach at University of Wisconsin Oshkosh (UW Oshkosh). “But, when you install a turf field, infections and MRSA will be an issue. In warmer months, the temperature of turf reaches more than 100°F, which helps breed bacteria.”

Suess—like many coaches—believes artificial turf increases the number of abrasions and resulting infections experienced by athletes. Once infected with MRSA—an antibiotic-resistant staph bacteria—athletes generally stay infected for just under 10 days, according to the MRSA Research Center at the University of Chicago Medical Center. During that time, they cannot practice or play in games.

MRSA—the cause of many locker room infections across the country—recently reared its ugly head at Steinert High School in Hamilton Township, near Trenton, N.J. The outbreak struck 11 students and put three in the hospital, according to CBS. “Dr. Seth Rosenbaum, an infectious diseases specialist, explained that MRSA can be contracted when ‘Someone shares a towel, someone shares sporting equipment [or] a piece of apparatus that’s been infected with the bacteria.’”

Whether there’s turf or not, the threat of infection in locker rooms and athletic facilities is one of growing concern ...

### **Stopping MRSA in the Wash—Sports Laundry Systems**

One way high schools, colleges and professional sports facilities are combatting the spread of infections caused by MRSA, and other bacteria, is by disinfecting athletic



laundry in the wash. Sports Laundry Systems, like the one in place at UW Oshkosh, disinfect athletic laundry—killing the microbes that cause and spread infection.

“Viruses and bacteria can be eliminated in the wash using a balanced system of ozone injection, chemicals, water temperatures and mechanical action,” according to Steve Leib, of Sports Laundry Systems, in Oshkosh, Wis. “When performed correctly, this process prevents contaminated and soiled clothing, uniforms, ropes and towels from infecting other athletes.” The problem, according to Leib, is that most laundry solutions fall short. They do not disinfect.

### **Sports Laundry Systems Proven to Disinfect**

Sports Laundry Systems, however, are proven to disinfect and eliminate 99.9 percent of all bacteria and superbugs, including MRSA, hepatitis and C. diff., during the wash process.

They disinfect athletic laundry by automatically combining the right washer water temperatures and levels with the proper mix of cleaning chemicals, extract speeds and

rotation action. Then, ozone gas—a powerful and safe cleaning agent—is delivered into the wash cycle at precisely the right time, in the right amounts, and at the correct water temperature. A patented injection system customizes and controls the amount of ozone delivered into the wash based on the soil levels of the linen and temperature of the water. This is critical to proper disinfection, according to Leib. “Too little ozone delivered at the wrong water temperature will not disinfect,” he said.

“As a retired teacher and college-level football coach, I know how critical it is to stop the spread of infection among athletes,” he added. “It’s important to disinfect laundry during the wash process. You don’t want athletes sick and unable to practice and play.”

Disinfection, according to Leib and Suess, is crucial to the wash process—a must for keeping athletes and coaches healthy.

*To discover more about MRSA, visit <http://www.niaid.nih.gov>. To find out more about Sports Laundry Systems, visit [www.sportslaundry-systems.com](http://www.sportslaundry-systems.com), or call 920-230-8550.*