Algae, Mold and Mildew

Algae, mold and mildew most frequently occur in damp, low traffic areas of a tennis court surface and can be avoided by using cultural control methods (reducing the conditions which promote growth). For example, while trees can enhance the aesthetics of a site and provide shade for players and spectators, shade from trees can provide a cool, damp medium for growth. For that reason, allowing trees to overhang or shade courts is generally not recommended.

Keeping the surface clean is another factor which can minimize growth of algae, mold and mildew. Clean surfaces do not support fungus growth. Therefore, all spills should be cleaned promptly with a mild cold water detergent solution and a soft brush, and rinsed well with plain water. All debris and stains, including leaves, twigs, grass, tree sap, fruit, dead insects and bird droppings, should be removed as soon as possible.

Acrylic-Coated Courts

If mold, mildew or algae have appeared, pressure washing the surface with chemicals approved by the local environmental regulatory agency may be effective. However, since these organisms reproduce by spores which are difficult to kill, repeated cleanings may be necessary to completely eliminate the problem and since the spores are found in the environment, if conditions which promote growth continue, the problem is likely to reoccur.

Bear in mind that if mold, mildew or algae has been allowed to remain on the surface for a period of time, natural bleaching of the color coating may have occurred around the growth. Unfortunately, it may be difficult to correct such bleaching. Touching up a bleached area (which has been properly cleaned) by dabbing on leftover surfacing material, while effective, may not match the surrounding area. The best solution to this problem is prevention. Clean up mold, mildew and algae promptly and, if necessary, repeatedly to prevent staining.

Fast Dry, Clay and Sand-Filled Synthetic Surf

Growth of mold, mildew and algae on fast dry, clay and sand-filled synthetic turf courts, also is encouraged by shade, dampness, spills and contamination, and by lack of use and poor maintenance practices. Use of water sources that are high in nutrients, such as recycled water or pond water, also may promote such growth.

For sand-filled turf systems, manufacturers recommend the use of a non-film-forming soap solution to loosen and kill the growth. Allow a day for the soap solution to penetrate and do its work. Then, remove any contamination by agitating the area using a power broom or power rake. Finally, top dress the area with clean infill. On new sites where shade and/or moisture are known to be factors, perforating the turf prior to its installation may help to prevent growth.

For clay and fast dry court, these organisms do not penetrate very deep into the surface, frequent use of a stiff bristle type brush will keep the surface agitated enough to discourage growth while reducing the need for chemical controls The use of any chemical control inconsistent with its labeling is unlawful and is not recommended under any circumstances.

Differences in site, weather and soil conditions require variations in construction and repair methods and materials. Readers are advised to consult a qualified contractor or design professional before undertaking construction or repair of a court. Rev. 6/08