

Athletics



An aerial photograph of Alumni Field, which has been refitted with Sprinturf, a state-of-the-art artificial surface.

Exploring New Turf

Millsaps College received a gift of \$575,000 to be used towards a new athletic field, and work began in March on preparing Alumni Field for the installation of a new artificial

surface. "We are thrilled to have what will be the only new-generation artificial surface in Mississippi that

doubles as a playing field for our men's and women's soccer teams in addition to football," said President Frances Lucas.

She added that the anonymous gift, from a former

Millsaps College athlete, would have an immediate impact "not only on our student-athletes, but on our entire athletic department and virtually all of the Millsaps College family."

The new field was installed by Sprinturf Inc., based in Wayne, Pennsylvania. The artificial surface is a marked improvement over older synthetic models, such as AstroTurf, which have been common since the 1970s. This new surface is more giving and safer for student-

"This gift will also provide one of, if not the best, venues in Mississippi for high profile sports camps."



athletes than natural turf. Line markings are composed of water-based paints, which allow for relatively rapid reconfiguration for both soccer and football.

“The new Sprinturf surface will allow us to provide a consistent, even surface for our competitive NCAA Division III teams,” said Director of Athletics Ron Jurney. “And at the same time we will be able to realize significant savings in maintenance costs and countless hours of grounds-keeping, while we forgo over \$350,000 of necessary planned upgrades to our soccer field by using the Sprinturf field for this sport.”

In addition, Millsaps College will be able to host summer sports camps over an expanded period. “This gift will also provide one of the best venues in Mississippi for high profile sports camps, such as the one we have scheduled with New Orleans running back Deuce McAllister,” Jurney said. “We’ll also be able to host high school championship competitions in men’s and women’s soccer in addition to football, not to mention serve as a professional sports venue for soccer exhibitions, lacrosse, and other sports which require a larger athletic field.”

—J.Y.



Alumni Field during the transformation.

Major Strides

The Millsaps spring sports programs wrapped up successful seasons with the culmination of the 2004 Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference Spring Festival in Atlanta. The Majors fielded teams in baseball, softball, tennis (men’s and women’s), and golf (men’s).



Garner Wetzell in a game against Mississippi College. The baseball squad turned in its best record in Millsaps history.

The baseball squad, under the guidance of Head Coach Jim Page, turned in its best record in school history. Its 33-9 mark topped its previous record of 30-10, set in 1996. This year’s edition was crowned the 2004 SCAC Western Division Champions by virtue of their sterling 17-3 conference record. At one point, Millsaps had won an astonishing 22 of 23 games.

Coach Joe Kinsella’s softball team nearly made the NCAA tournament field as it reached the finals of the SCAC Tournament, only to lose a 2-1 heart-breaker to Sewanee. The Majors finished strong, winning 10 of their last 12 games to post a 24-20 slate, 9-3 in the SCAC.

The tennis team made strides in 2004 under the direction of first-year head coach Scott Pennington. The women finished 9-7, while the men posted an 8-10 mark. No. 1 singles player Matt Chow will be sorely missed next year, but a strong nucleus returns.

First-year coach Dill Gunn guided the men’s golf team to a seventh-place finish in the SCAC. Gunn will have to replace

No. 1 player Charlie Spence, along with Chris Hallmark and Jim Bush.

The women’s golf team, under first-year coach Denny Hayles, sent one member, Betsy Powell, to the SCAC Tournament.

—Denny Hayles