

Celebration, which is gaining favor for sports fields in the South, is a patented, proprietary Bermudagrass developed by Sod Solutions of Mt. Pleasant, SC.



Martin J. Katz Memorial Soccer Park, Village of Royal Palm Beach, FL

The turfgrass is licensed in Florida only to qualified members of the Florida Sod Growers Cooperative, a trade association of more than 70 independent turfgrass producers in the state. Elsewhere, it is available through a network of licensed producers across the southern half of the U. S.

At the University of Arkansas, a multiyear study of 48 Bermudagrass cultivars found that Celebration had the fastest recovery from divot injury among all vegetatively

propagated Bermudagrasses. A 2005 study at North Carolina State showed similar results noting, "From zero cover, Celebration achieved the greatest recovery at 86% after four weeks." The next best were two cultivars each with 70% recovery after four weeks.

"It's really, really, really good for athletic fields," says Dave Dymond, general manager of H&H Sod Farm in Kenansville and president of the FSGC. "If anybody asks me if we've got anything better than [the popular cultivars] for athletic fields, I get excited about Celebration. Its recovery is far and above what you normally see and that's usually what [the buyers] want. It makes a rapid recovery from any wear. It's an aggressive grower and will fill in those divots and stuff very rapidly."

Dymond continues, "Sometimes they have low-maintenance scenarios and [Celebration] seems to hang in there fairly well under those conditions.

You could say it tolerates a high school or municipal budget, too. That's a perfect way to describe it."

Mike Pope, sales manager of Bethel Farms in Arcadia agrees. "The nice thing about Celebration, it's so aggressive and its growth habit is so tight that it actually squeezes out competing weeds, even common Bermudas. When sports facilities renovate their fields, one of the big issues is that you seem to get a lot of weed pressure a year or two after the renovation



Louisiana State University baseball field

and the grass is hard to maintain after the renovation."

"Celebration pretty much takes care of any competing weeds. Your herbicide application rates are much lower and it actually gets you playing on that field a whole lot quicker after installation," says Pope.

As for softness, other findings from North Carolina State University confirmed that "Celebration exhibited the lowest surface hardness" of any cultivar tested noting that, "Excessive surface hardness has been directly correlated to an increase in player injury on athletic fields."

In addition to softness and durability, Celebration has been hailed as an extremely drought tolerant turfgrass. Midway through a 5-year study at the University of Arkansas, Celebration produced 53% more roots under drought conditions than any of the other five cultivars involved in the study. In

addition, Celebration had the highest evapotranspiration rate (meaning it displayed the most efficient use of water) and had less leaf firing.

These attributes and others caught the attention of Bill Ward, parks and recreation manager for the city of North Port. Ward was looking for a grass for his new soccer complex that encompasses more than 300,000 sq. ft. of playing surface. He wanted something that would take more wear and tear, and offer greater stability than the cultivars currently



Gulf Stream Park Track at  
Hallandale Beach, FL

popular for Florida sports fields.

He visited the polo fields at nearby Lakewood Ranch, where Celebration was installed, and his first impression of the turf was "how carpet-like it looked." He was equally impressed with how well it has held up under polo play. Two-months after installation of the rolled sod, Ward is impressed with how quickly it tacked down and that it was already "thick and green."

Gary Bradshaw, manager of SMR Farms, which supplied the Celebration for North Port and the polo fields and golf courses at Lakewood Ranch, is confident Ward made the right decision. "The grass is holding up real well," Bradshaw said. "Everybody who deals with it, they just love it. It holds a little deeper green color and it's a lot more dense and the recovery time for spike marks, divots and wear and tear is a whole lot less than for [a popular cultivar]."

[Sod Solutions, Inc.](#) is an international turfgrass developer that has patented and released several improved warm-season varieties of turfgrass.