



HUSKY STADIUM RENOVATION

Special Section Index DJC.COM

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Old turf field recruited for park duty

■ *Ohno Construction quarterbacked removal of the turf from Husky Stadium and reinstallation at Montlake Playfield.*

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When Yoshio Ohno, president of Ohno Construction, found out that the turf at Husky Stadium would be replaced, he immediately took steps to acquire it for Montlake Playfield just a mile away.

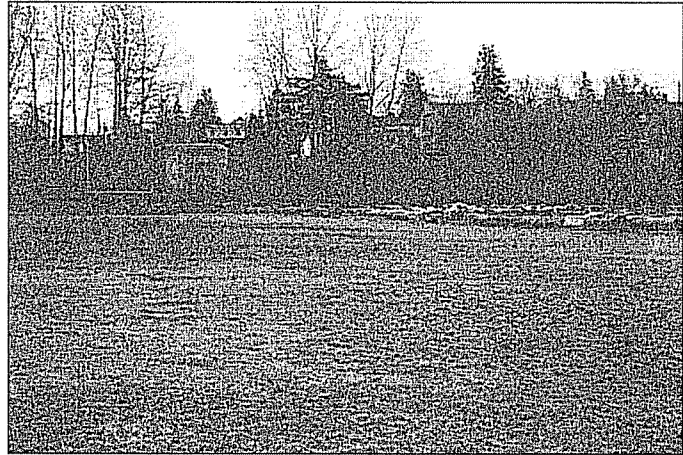
Seattle Parks and Recreation stated: 'The University of Washington, which is better funded than Seattle Parks, is a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association and as part of its assets management program, must replace its synthetic turf every three to four years and is in the process of doing so. Ohno will bring the turf, which is still in good condition, and install it at Montlake Playfield for free.'

'The existing field has been a muddy mess for most of its past 40 years due to the fill soils at the site and very intensive use. The synthetic turf would accommodate the intensive use and avoid the ongoing turf management that has been incurred on several occasions in recent years when we have tried to renovate this field.'

Why Montlake Playfield?

Yosh attended Seattle Preparatory High School and played on Montlake Playfield in the early 1960s. He knew firsthand what a struggle it was to play there and leave practice covered in mud. Since Yosh has been an active alumnus of Seattle Prep for all these years, the school and Seattle Parks had asked him to help address the mud problems at Montlake Playfield on numerous occasions.

Yosh was the right man for the job because Ohno Construction has done landscape construction projects throughout the region for almost 50 years for clients such as the University of Washington, Seattle Prep and Seattle Parks. Some of that work involved constructing \$11 million in fields and wetlands at Magnuson Park in three phases.



[\[enlarge\]](#)

Montlake Playfield was a muddy mess for most of its past 40 years due to fill soil and intensive use.

Ohno also worked with Turner Construction, the general contractor at Husky Stadium, on athletic field projects, most notably the base work at CenturyLink Field.

Ohno Construction was started by Yosh and his brother, Natch, while Yosh was studying landscape architecture and Natch was studying accounting, both at the University of Washington.

The year before this Husky turf project, Ohno tackled a mud issue on a community service project at Garfield High School for Seattle Parks. Because of insufficient funding, Ohno gathered partners to help redo fencing and convert a baseball infield to synthetic turf. The old field was unusable for months of the year and was susceptible to questionable activities.

At Montlake, there was a previous failed attempt to convert the playfield to synthetic turf but because of the collaborative efforts of all the parties involved, this project eventually went through.

Seattle Prep graduate Steve Koehler was a liaison between the school, the UW and Turner Construction. Parks Committee Chair Sally Bagshaw and Interim Parks Superintendent Christopher Williams were instrumental in paving the way. Robert Stowers, manager of South Parks Region, helped with the permitting process. Seattle Prep President Kent Hickey negotiated funding for the project in exchange for usage rights.

Since the UW had to comply with NCAA regulations, it put out a competitive bid to sell the used turf and Ohno won it. Ohno then had to follow stringent performance specifications in order to work with Turner's tight schedule on the new stadium.

A unique opportunity

The turf was cut into sections and rolled up, including the sand and rubber infill. Each roll was labeled and a map was made so the pieces could be placed in the right locations at Montlake Playfield. The rolls were extremely heavy because of the infill and they were still very wet. The drain mats were also rolled up to reuse as well. Nelson Trucking donated its services to get the turf to the park for storage until the rolls could be placed in the spring.

When the time was right, the muddy layer was scraped off to expose the sand layer below and the existing drainage was left intact. Northwest Linings donated the filter fabric to place on the sand before the drain mats were re-laid.

Synthetic turf rolls are normally installed without the infill so they are routinely handled with smaller equipment. The tremendous weight of this turf with the infill required much heavier duty equipment to lay it down, as well as some innovative tools to shift it into place and glue all the seams. Northwest Cascade donated steel plates to keep the equipment from tearing up the materials while laying the turf. Capital Industries donated some specialized tools and Ohno had to create additional tools specifically for this project. Northstar Electric donated its services by pulling power from the building over to the field for a portable scoreboard.

Happy endings

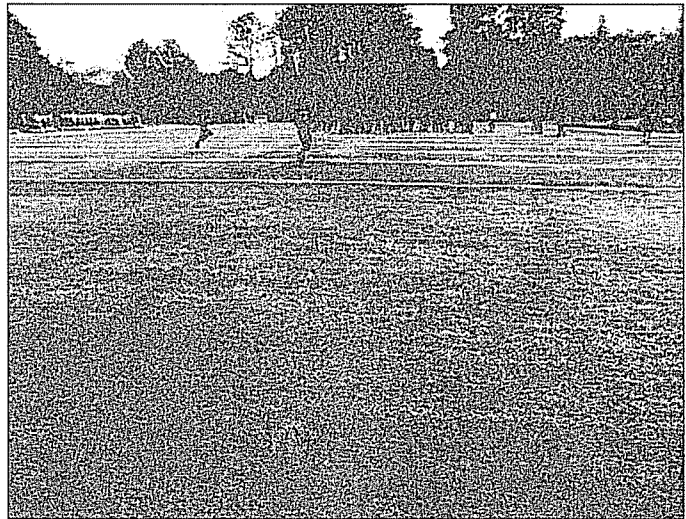
Yosh repeatedly says, 'It's how you leave a job that people remember.'

Seattle Prep was so pleased with the result that it had an opening game ceremony and unveiled a new scoreboard with 'Ohno Field' at the top. Now it is able to safely use the field for more football practices and games, as well as additional activities such as lacrosse games and gym classes.

Turner Construction was not held up by Ohno's removal process and now it can add this to its portfolio of green initiatives. The UW can use Montlake Playfield as a goodwill gesture to the neighborhood that endures game-day parking issues and traffic.

Seattle Parks announced the park reopening, stating: 'Ohno Construction recently removed synthetic turf at the University of Washington, installed it at Montlake Playfield at no cost, and added several yards of soil to build up the marshy area -- at no charge! Ohno's crews spent hundreds of hours completing the work and the field is now available for scheduling. There is minor work still to be done on the track and the end zone. The renovated field increases playable hours, promotes safety with an even surface, reduces year-round and annual costs of field maintenance, reduces field preparation expenses, conserves water, and reduces the use of fertilizer and soil amendments. This was a very generous gift!'

Barbara Ohno is vice president of business development at Ohno Construction Co., an award-winning general contractor working along the West Coast, with current projects from Kodiak, Alaska, to San Diego County, California.



Photos courtesy of Ohno Construction [\[enlarge\]](#)

The repurposed turf takes the mud out of football.



[\[enlarge\]](#)

Heavy equipment was needed to install the old turf, which was weighed down by the sand and rubber infill.