

# Turf call looms for Cooperage

Kunaal Majgaonkar | TNN

**Mumbai:** While Mumbai's grand, old and rickety footballing venue, the Cooperage, nears its date with acquiring an artificial turf, the exciting venture may have brought with it a set of glitches even before work on the greens begin.

The installation of the turf is part of FIFA's 'Win in India with India' project where the football world body is gifting ten such turfs to the country. Netherlands-based artificial turf experts Greenfields have been roped in for the venture and if Western India Football Association's (WIFA) assistant secretary, Wali Mohammed is to be believed, Cooperage wearing the swanky turf is only a matter of time. Rob de Heer who manages the



Rob de Heer of Greenfields believes the artificial turf will aid India

Greenfields global natural grass division was in the city on Thursday to give a presentation on the turf. "These turfs have been used at training centres in most of the major football playing countries and will definitely ben-

efit India," said de Heer.

But amid all the buzz that the project seems to have generated, it could find an unhappy lot in the three city-based I-League clubs. The installation process takes a minimum of 120 days and with the I-League tentatively scheduled to kick-off in November, the possibility of Cooperage as a venue will be ruled out for three months atleast, robbing the Mumbai clubs of a home advantage.

"We are considering Kolhapur and Pune as alternate venues for the Mumbai clubs' home games. You have to make sacrifices to gain something. The clubs will agree," asserted Mohammed.

An official from a city club who pleaded anonymity felt the decision of 'away-home' games is ridiculous.

## TURF TRAVAILS

### Pros

- \* Maintaining an artificial turf is almost one-third the cost of maintaining a natural one.
- \* Seasons and the weather won't affect ground conditions.
- \* It does not require watering

### Cons

- \* It tends to become much hotter than grass under the sun.
- \* Abrasions are common because of the synthetic material on the turf than compared to grass.

"It's unfair that we suffer on this count. Three months is a long time and playing our home games in another city will go against us," he said.

The WIFA also spoke of the possibility of renovating the entire stadium and installing floodlights along with the work of relaying the turf.

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