

# Old turf prompts \$1 million Rotch Field renovations



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 Sophomore men's soccer goalkeeper David Kemp said the old turf affected the team's playing style. Photo by Anissa Gardizy / Beacon Staff

Emerson spent around \$1 million on renovations to Rotch Field this summer, according to a college official.

The college paid for the [project](#) through an annual budget called “Renewal” that allocated the money for renovations years ago, according to Senior Associate Director of Real Estate Art Mombourquette.

“It is used to replace systems and facilities that need upgrade,” Mombourquette said. “Two or three years ago when we knew the field was coming to the end of its useful life we put money aside within the

Renewal budget to do that project.”

The college utilizes Rotch Field for practices and home games for soccer, lacrosse, and softball teams through a public and private partnership between the college and the Parks and Recreation Department of Boston.

“We pay for the maintenance and upkeep of the field,” Mombourquette said. “In return we get to use it when we need it.”

Renovations included the replacement of the synthetic turf field, an upgraded LED lighting system, and new dugouts. Fundraising by the Athletic Department paid for other renovations that occurred at Rotch Field this summer, according to Athletic Director Patricia Nicol. These renovations included the new team locker rooms.

“This was the college’s commitment to the program. The college demonstrated a very significant commitment to the athletic program to keep us on par with the [New England Women’s and Men’s Athletic Conference],” Nicol said.

The project originated from the need to replace the 13-year-old turf field.

“[The turf] had about a ten-year lifespan, and that ten years was up,” Mombourquette said. “We try to maintain things based on the manufacturer’s recommendation, and it was recommended that we replace it. While we were there it made sense to improve the lighting and do the dugout work at the same time.”

Sophomore David Kemp, the men’s soccer goalkeeper, described the condition of the old turf field.

“I thought it was way below standards that I have experienced before. It was just old, dirty, and it affected our playing style,” Kemp said. “We had a joke—we called it the ‘Rotch bobble’ because it is the only turf field where you would hit a pass and the ball would do something you didn’t want it to do.”

The old turf led Kemp to keep his skin covered while playing to avoid getting turf burn. Kemp said with the new turf he only plays in long sleeves due to cold weather.

“In the preseason in the middle of August I had to wear long sleeves. It was horrible,” Kemp said. “The first day of preseason I just wore a t-shirt, and my whole arm opened up in the first hour. It was awful.”

The college considered renovations to the field like they would consider renovations for any other college venue.

“We appreciate the support and commitment that the college has extended to athletics. It’s greatly appreciated,” Nicol said.

Kemp said he appreciates the renovations and how they will impact future athletic seasons.

“It’s a really great investment. It speaks volumes about how Emerson athletics is progressing and how the teams are progressing,” Kemp said. “The women’s team made history this year, and I think the field really helped them play their soccer the way they wanted to.”

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