



NRDC is Leading the Way in the “Greening” of Professional Sports



Since 2004, NRDC has been a leader in the greening of professional sports. As the principal environmental advisor to Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA), the National Hockey League (NHL), Major League Soccer (MLS), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and the United States Tennis Association (USTA), and one of the advisors to the National Football League (NFL), NRDC’s work greening North American sports leagues is the most comprehensive and successful sports greening initiative in the world. As a result of NRDC’s work, more than 100 professional teams have adopted environmental initiatives at their stadiums or arenas, and countless “Jewel Events” by the leagues have benefitted from NRDC’s guidance and expertise. As the principal advisor of professional sports greening, NRDC is routinely asked to speak about its sports greening work at league conferences, industry meetings, colleges and government agencies nationally.

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SERVING AS A TRUSTED ADVISOR TO LEAGUES AND TEAMS AROUND THE NATION

“Greening” is the process of reviewing day-to-day operations and supply chain relations with a focus on reducing ecological impacts. An integral part of NRDC’s efforts is *The NRDC Greening Advisor*, a customized online environmental resource guide designed to help team staff and stadium operators identify what they can do in their city and stadium to pursue environmentally and economically superior operations and supply chain options. This location-specific guide has been distributed by league offices to 106 MLB, NBA, NHL, and MLS teams, and has been posted by the USTA. All the teams have been encouraged to reach out to NRDC for individual assistance. The NRDC Greening Advisor earned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Environmental Merit Award in 2008.

NRDC has worked on larger league-run events such as the MLB, NBA, and NHL All Star Games, the World Series, league playoffs and championships, and the U.S. Open. In addition, NRDC led a variety of green initiatives at these events including:

- purchasing renewable energy;
- switching to recycled paper products;
- installing recycling infrastructure;
- “greening” the red carpet with recycled plastic;
- promoting mass transit and other fuel efficient transportation;
- leading volunteer-based green teams to collect recyclables; and
- creating PSAs from players and NRDC Trustee Robert Redford promoting environmental efforts.



NRDC's pro-sports environmental work includes:

- energy audits at stadiums, arenas, and other team facilities;
- urging the installation of on-site renewable energy systems at facilities or the purchase of renewable energy by teams;
- encouraging installation of water-efficient fixtures and water-conserving measures at venues;
- developing comprehensive, fan-based recycling programs at venues;
- switching to recycled paper products for team print collateral and bathroom tissue; and
- shepherding Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification of facilities.

To date, ten teams have LEED certified stadiums or arenas, several others are currently pursuing certification, and many others are using LEED guidelines when making facility improvements.

NRDC INNOVATION: DOCUMENTING AND SHARING ENVIRONMENTAL BEST PRACTICES IN SPORTS

Leagues and teams are working to implement data gathering systems designed by NRDC. These systems collect baseline environmental data from teams, stadiums, and arenas, in order to develop and measure environmental progress league-wide. Data are collected about energy and water use, waste generation and recycling, and paper use. This is a significant achievement for NRDC's sports greening program as this is the first time that professional sports leagues have implemented programs to collect league-wide data for the purpose of documenting environmental practices and sharing information about environmental efforts at stadiums.

Additionally, all leagues (MLB, NBA, NFL, NHL, and MLS) distributed a publication produced by NRDC and the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) entitled *Solar Energy for Your Stadium or Arena: A Guide to Understanding the Opportunities of On-Site Photovoltaic Solar Power Generation* to all 138 teams in 62 markets, and to all stadium and arena operators in the United States. The document encourages arena and stadium operators to install some form of on-site solar technology at their facility, and provides detailed information and guidance about the process including: physical requirements, costs, available funding and incentives, and proposals. This NRDC/BEF Solar Development Guide has been very well received and to date: seven major league venues feature on-site solar systems, one is currently under construction, three teams have installed solar at their practice facilities or team headquarters, and two teams are using the NRDC/BEF solar guide to evaluate solar feasibility at their sites and build a request for proposal (RFP) for the system they will be putting on their event center roofs.

THE GREEN SPORTS ALLIANCE: AN INTERLEAGUE PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT THE ENVIRONMENT

NRDC has also formed the Green Sports Alliance (GSA), an inter-league collaborative initiative among several professional sports teams and stadiums based in the Pacific Northwest. NRDC serves as a founding member on the GSA Board, and the group currently encompasses teams from six major league sports (MLB, NBA, WNBA, NFL, NHL, and MLS), including the Seattle Mariners, Portland Trailblazers, Seattle Seahawks, Seattle Sounders, Vancouver Canucks, and Seattle Storm. It is the first time that teams from all six professional sports leagues in the United States have collaborated on a common environmental agenda, and this unprecedented interleague partnership makes a powerful statement to the leagues and the rest of the sports community. By publicizing the savings achieved through environmental initiatives, the group aims to provide an advanced environmental model for sports facilities and operations across the country. NRDC and the GSA are currently organizing an inaugural Green Sports Summit to be held in August 2011, a conference designed to gather facility managers, event producers, and marketing directors from around the country to discuss the importance of greening sports and sharing best practices.

