

SNAPSHOTS

The sports greening movement is so widespread that it's impossible to feature all of the impressive accomplishments, even just at the professional level, that are leading the industry in environmental stewardship. Below are a few snapshots of noteworthy professional greening successes that help demonstrate the reach of this trend.

NATIONALS PARK, HOME OF THE WASHINGTON NATIONALS

First North American Professional Sports Venue to Be Awarded LEED Certification (Silver), and First to Install a Green Roof

Nationals Park in Washington, D.C., was awarded LEED certification (Silver) by the U.S. Green Building Council on April 14, 2008.¹ The stadium was the first major sports facility in North America to pursue and achieve LEED certification for New Construction, and it was able to do so while meeting its target schedule and budget. “In the end, we were able to create a ballpark that not only preserves our precious environment, but also preserves the history and traditions of baseball in the nation’s capital,” said Stan Kasten, then president of the Washington Nationals, when announcing the accomplishment. “The whole design team went above and beyond the call by achieving LEED Silver Certification—it’s like we asked them for a home run and we got a grand slam.”² Noteworthy green building features include a 6,300-square-foot green roof, stadium construction using 95 percent recycled steel from a regional plant, and energy-conserving light fixtures that have reduced energy consumption by 21 percent.

The Nationals also have a single-stream recycling program that diverts about 80 percent of the stadium’s waste from landfills. Nationals Park has water-conserving plumbing fixtures that save approximately 3.6 million gallons of water each year. The park also has an intricate water filtration system that separates water used for cleaning the ballpark from rainwater, treating each source individually to reduce the amount of total processing. In addition, the park’s location makes it easily accessible by public transportation, and the parking lot has more than 250 bicycle racks.³ The Nationals are now working on replacing all fluorescent lighting for stadium walkways with LED lighting. They are also investigating onsite wind turbines and solar canopies and the possibility of a new green roof.



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POCONO RACEWAY, HOME OF NASCAR

Largest Solar Array at Any Sports Facility in the World

In August 2010, NASCAR's Pocono Raceway in Long Pond, Pennsylvania, became the largest solar-powered sports facility in the world. Pocono installed a 25-acre, 3-megawatt array in a former parking lot adjacent to the track. It consists of 40,000 American-made photovoltaic modules and is large enough to be seen from outer space. The solar array, which offsets more than 3,100 metric tons of CO₂ annually, provides enough power to operate the entire raceway and 1,000 homes nearby (the raceway sells the energy it doesn't use to local utilities).⁴ Members of the NASCAR community realize that this is an important milestone for the sport. "Pocono Raceway strongly believes in the commitment to operate in a more environmentally responsible way and is proud to be the first racetrack to power our sport with clean, renewable sunlight with the world's largest renewable energy project to power a sports facility," said Brandon Igdalsky, president and CEO of Pocono Raceway. "This solar power system, built with timber, steel and solar panels made in the U.S., satisfies all of the raceway's energy needs while helping to power local homes. This project demonstrates real sustainability and proves that any business that truly wants to go green can do it."⁵

Other tracks around the country have followed suit, such as the Infineon Raceway in Northern California.⁶ In the summer of 2011, Infineon installed 1,652 solar panels, which supply 41 percent of the raceway's energy. The raceway also installed a low-energy video board using 57,600 LEDs, which consumes 50 percent of the energy that the old board required.

O.CO COLISEUM, HOME OF THE OAKLAND ATHLETICS AND RAIDERS

First Major League Sports Venue to Implement a Facility-Wide Composting Program

O.co Coliseum (the former McAfee Coliseum) became the first major league sports venue to implement a composting program and use compostable cups in May 2005. The Coliseum's extensive waste diversion program, with many recycling and compost receptacles placed throughout the stadium, has decreased its trash-hauling costs by more than 20 percent. "The economics have caught up with the vision: the coliseum is saving a significant amount of money by composting and recycling,"⁷ said George Valerga, the venue's director of maintenance. "It took about eight months to a year to get down to where it now costs the same in labor. And we're saving \$10,000 to \$20,000 a month on our garbage bill."⁸

While bottles, cans and paper discards go into recycling bins, almost all other products are composted. Cups, food waste, grass clippings, landscape trimmings, and other organic waste are collected and sent to a composting site managed by Norcal Waste Systems.⁹ The O.co Coliseum diverts about 400 tons of recyclables and composts 200 tons of organic wastes annually. Each year its environmentally preferable purchasing program prevents the use of three tons of fossil fuel-derived plastic cups.¹⁰ The stadium's concessionaire, ARAMARK, donates all unused prepared food to local food banks as well.

The Oakland Athletics reach out to fans to be part of their game-day recycling and composting programs, among their other green initiatives, by providing well-marked receptacles throughout the stadium every game. In 2009 the team also started a weekly electronic waste drive called "Oakland A's E-Waste Saturday," presented by the recycling company AER Worldwide, where fans can drop off electronic items during the two and a half hours leading up to the first pitch of the Saturday ballgame. Fans who recycle an electronic item receive a two-for-one Oakland A's ticket voucher for an upcoming game.¹¹

SHOWARE CENTER, HOME OF THE SEATTLE THUNDERBIRDS

First LEED Gold-Certified Facility for New Construction in North America

On January 2, 2009, ShoWare Center in Kent, Washington, home to the Seattle Thunderbirds of the junior Western Hockey League, became the first arena in North America to be certified LEED Gold for New Construction.¹² Designers implemented several unusual green features, such as the use of excess heat from the ice-making equipment to heat the ground under the ice rink.¹³ "I'm extremely proud of this achievement," said Kent Mayor, Suzette Cooke, at the award announcement. "Receiving LEED Gold certification reaffirms our efforts to balance economic development with being good stewards of the environment. It's also pretty cool to be the first LEED Gold-Certified new arena on the continent!"¹⁴

LEED-qualifying features include a stormwater collection system that sends runoff to adjacent wetlands, storage for bikes, use of low-VOC paints and adhesives, use of green cleaning products, and low-flow fixtures that reduce water consumption by 40 percent to save 380,000 gallons annually.¹⁵ The ShoWare Center's energy-efficient lighting and upgraded HVAC systems reduce energy use and CO₂ emissions by more than 37 percent. Its urban location maximizes opportunities for fans to use public transportation, lowering total greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollutants. During construction, most building materials were locally manufactured, 50 percent of wood used was certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, and more than 90 percent of construction waste was recycled.

HOME DEPOT CENTER, HOME OF THE L.A. GALAXY

First Outdoor Stadium to Be Awarded ISO 14001 Certification in North America

The Home Depot Center, home of the L.A. Galaxy pro soccer team, became the first outdoor stadium in North America to be awarded ISO 14001 certification for its environmental management system in November 2011.¹⁶ “The ISO certification adds structure and transparency to our environmental stewardship commitments by putting all our ideas, programs and best practices on paper,” said Katie Pandolfo, general manager of the Home Depot Center. “By having all of our goals and initiatives tracked in one place, the ISO keeps everyone on the same page and holds each of our divisions and employees accountable.”¹⁷ The Home Depot Center’s energy-saving features include motion sensors connected to the HVAC and lighting systems so these systems are active in a given space only when that space is occupied.¹⁸ To further enhance energy efficiency, the stadium also participates in Southern California Edison’s Demand Response programs, which enable it to manage energy use to avoid statewide demand peaks. “One of the things we take pride in across our venues like the Home Depot Center is that sustainability isn’t just a buzzword, but part of our smart business operations,” said Jennifer Regan, global sustainability director at AEG, which owns the facility. “By cutting back our energy and water use, our participating venues not only reduce their environmental footprint, but also cut their operational costs, which has a direct impact on our bottom line.”¹⁹

The L.A. Galaxy demonstrates its commitment to spreading environmental awareness in the greater Los Angeles community by participating in the Greener Goals Week campaign. As the MLS Cup Champion in 2011, the Galaxy participated in the Bonneville Environmental Foundation’s Solar 4R Schools program, which installs solar panels on a school in the winning team’s region. This year’s 2.1-kilowatt solar array was awarded to KIPP Los Angeles College Preparatory School, located in East L.A. The panels are anticipated to produce 3,034 kilowatt-hours of clean energy per year. Solar 4R Schools also provides students and teachers with hands-on tools to help them learn about the importance of solar, wind and other renewable energy technologies. The kickoff event also included a garden planting project with Galaxy players helping to plant fruit, vegetables, and herbs in the school garden.²⁰

FENWAY PARK, HOME OF THE BOSTON RED SOX

Oldest Major League Baseball Stadium Undergoes Facility-Wide Sustainability Upgrade

Built in 1911, Fenway Park is the oldest Major League Baseball stadium currently in use. Despite the venue’s age, the Boston Red Sox have undertaken a variety of green initiatives to improve the operations and efficiency of their historic venue. “As stewards of such a storied venue, we recognize our unique position and ability to raise public consciousness about important issues. Our decision to enhance the ballpark’s environmental attributes is one born out of a sense of personal responsibility and professional duty,” said Tom Werner, the team’s chairman, in 2008 during the launch of the Fenway Greening program, which was initiated in partnership with NRDC. “For us, this announcement marks some of the first steps in an ongoing process to make America’s most beloved and oldest ballpark also one of America’s greenest.”²¹

In 2010, Fenway completed an energy audit to investigate ways to reduce energy use and save money. The park now uses LED lighting, which is 90 percent more efficient than the previous lighting. The ballpark also installed 28 solar panels across the roof of the Red Sox dugout. The array supplies 37 percent of the energy needed to heat Fenway’s water, thereby avoiding the release of 18 tons of CO₂ each year, the equivalent of planting 4.86 acres of trees.²² The stadium has also implemented many plumbing renovations, including the installation of waterless urinals, dual flushers, and water-efficient fixtures. Together, these have reduced overall water consumption by 30 percent, saving more than 360,000 gallons each year.²³ All building renovations use locally sourced materials, and new construction has reused more than 800 tons of old bricks and recycled other construction waste. Fenway also plans to install sensor-controlled fluorescent lighting.²⁴



Fenway also has a Going Green recycling program, which involves a game-day green team of volunteers collecting recyclables and 100 solar-powered BigBelly compactors located around the park, each one able to hold 55 gallons of recyclables. Fenway uses 100 percent recycled content paper for most paper products, including *Red Sox Magazine*, in offices as well as the ballpark. Their concessionaire, ARAMARK, is committed to offering more local, organic food options and using cups, containers and napkins made from recycled content.²⁵ “With the help of our dedicated staff and valued sponsors, we are continuing our commitment to make Fenway Park friendlier to the environment,” said Werner. “We hope that by incorporating both big and small changes in our daily operation, the cumulative effect will mean future generations can enjoy the great game of baseball in a cleaner and more environmentally friendly world.”²⁶

TARGET CENTER, HOME OF THE MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES

First Professional Sports Arena in North America to Install a Green Roof

In September 2009, the Minnesota Timberwolves installed the first green roof on any North American arena, spanning 2.5 acres (115,000 square feet) across the Target Center in Minneapolis.²⁷ Currently, this is the nation's fifth-largest green roof on any facility. The roof captures nearly 1 million gallons of stormwater a year, which saves \$10,000 annually in stormwater charges and prevents runoff into the Mississippi River. In addition, the green roof helps alleviate the urban heat island effect. The roof is planted with a variety of native Minnesotan prairie plants, including lupines, to support the endangered Karner blue butterfly.²⁸ "The city wanted to make a sustainable choice with this roof," said Tom Reller, senior director of operations for the Target Center.²⁹

The Timberwolves have pursued other sustainability initiatives as well, including switching to using a plane for team travel that is 30 percent more energy-efficient than the type previously used; the plane also has an onboard recycling program.³⁰ The Timberwolves also partner with Juhl Wind, Inc., a wind power developer, to take part in Think Green month, which encourages fans to implement a more eco-friendly lifestyle.³¹ At each home game during the month, the Timberwolves honor organizations or individuals helping to preserve the environment and air an in-game public service announcement that promotes the importance of greening. "We are very excited to be part of this interactive and informative program," said Corey Juhl, vice president of project development at Juhl Wind. "We enjoy working with the Timberwolves organization to spread the word and provide education to the community on how each of us can contribute to the preservation of our environment."³²

CONSOL ENERGY CENTER, HOME OF THE PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

First National Hockey League Arena Awarded LEED Gold Certification in North America

The Pittsburgh Penguins' Consol Energy Center, built in 2010, was the first NHL arena to be awarded LEED Gold certification on August 4, 2010.³³ The project received high marks for water use reduction, recycled materials, regional materials, demolition and construction waste diversion, use of certified wood, and energy efficiency. LEED-qualifying features include increased green space around the outside of the building, locally procured construction materials, improved indoor air quality, efficient lighting and HVAC, maximized use of natural light, use of low-VOC paints and adhesives, purchase of renewable energy for a portion of energy use, and water-efficient plumbing fixtures. "The sustainable building practices that helped the center to achieve LEED Gold certification truly make this facility a world-class arena for Pittsburgh's world-class hockey fans and set a great example for future facilities of this type," said Edward G. Rendell, governor of Pennsylvania at the time.³⁴

The Penguins are also committed to supporting the local community. The stadium's concessionaire, ARAMARK, has a menu that emphasizes locally grown ingredients. The Penguins participate in the Rock and Wrap It Up! program, donating unused concession food on game nights to local food banks. With 20,057 pounds of food donated in 2011, the Penguins ranked first among the 24 U.S.-based NHL teams participating in the program that year. "We thank our partners at ARAMARK for their commitment to this very important community program," said David Morehouse, CEO and president of the Penguins. "Food that otherwise would have gone to waste is now being turned into thousands of meals for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank to provide to those in need. We're proud to be a part of it."³⁵

CITIZENS BANK PARK, HOME OF THE PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

Greatest Purchaser of Green Power in U.S. Professional Sports

In 2008, the Phillies became the first Major League Baseball team to join the EPA's Green Power Partnership program, which encourages organizations to buy certified renewable energy. In June 2012 the Phillies purchased more than 22 million kilowatt-hours of Green-e certified renewable energy in renewable energy certificates (RECs) to offset 100 percent of Citizens Bank Park's electricity use with local clean energy. According to the EPA, this is the largest single purchase of renewable energy to date in professional sports.³⁶ The annual environmental benefit of this purchase is equivalent to planting 285,000 trees and growing them for a decade. By electing to purchase locally sourced wind- and solar-generated power, the Phillies are also investing in regional clean energy jobs.³⁷ "We're proud to join Major League Baseball in bringing awareness to fans about how to become more environmentally conscious," said Phillies president, David Montgomery.³⁸

As part of their Red Goes Green campaign, the Phillies and Citizens Bank Park also have a strong recycling program. Throughout the ballpark are 40 oversized, 80-gallon recycling containers that accept cardboard, paper, e-waste, plastic, aluminum, and glass. A Red Goes Green Team, consisting of Phillies ball girls and volunteers, collect recyclables during games to boost the diversion rate. The venue has a recycling center for all departments, enhancing back-of-house recycling efforts. In a 2010 carpet replacement project, the Phillies recycled 1,755 pounds of carpet, which is equivalent to the waste generated by one American in a year. The Phillies also participate in the Rock and Wrap It Up! food donation program, giving unsold prepared food to local charities.

CITI FIELD, HOME OF THE NEW YORK METS

Leader in Use of Recycled Materials for Reconstruction

The New York Mets focused on sustainability when constructing their stadium, Citi Field, which opened in 2009. Among other initiatives, the Mets used 95 percent recycled steel—approximately 11,875 tons. “In developing and constructing Citi Field, we set out to create a world-class environment that would be fan-friendly and environmentally friendly,” said Jeff Wilpon, chief operating officer for the Mets.³⁹ The most notable installation was a 15,000-square-foot green roof, which reduces energy demand by acting as extra insulation, retaining cool air in the summer and heat in the winter. It is one of only three green roofs installed on professional sports facilities in the country. The green roof also reduces water consumption and diverts approximately 80 percent of stormwater runoff.

The ballpark is also equipped with a temperature-control system that reduces energy consumption by up to 50 percent using energy-efficient air handlers, pumps and chillers that adapt their operation to current conditions.⁴⁰ Inside the stadium, waterless urinals and automatic low-flow toilets and faucets save about 4 million gallons of water a year.⁴¹ The Mets are also members of the EPA’s EnergyStar and WasteWise programs. “The Mets understand that their responsibility to New Yorkers doesn’t end with the third out in the bottom of the ninth,” said New York’s mayor, Michael Bloomberg. “They’ve taken the initiative to be bold, innovative and environmentally responsible.”⁴²

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