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Synthetic surface is a hit with players



By ALLEN GEMAEHLICH The Daily Sentinel

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Sherilyn Stoffel was almost afraid to step onto Mesa State Stadium soccer field.

When she did, the Mesa State College sophomore women's soccer player was pleased.

"I feel special playing on this," Stoffel said. "It's perfect in every way."

Stoffel, her teammates and the Mesa State men's soccer team finally got to play on its own field for the first time after grand opening ceremonies Saturday.

Players on the men's and women's teams helped conduct a youth clinic on the field in the morning and then had scrimmages on the field in the evening.

The men played Colorado Mountain College, a two-year school, before the women played a game against the alumni. The Mavericks defeated Colorado Mountain in the unofficial game. Mesa State is not allowed to report the game according to NCAA rules. A near-capacity crowd attended the scrimmages.

"We played well being our first game," Mesa State senior Nick Gumpert said. "We set the tempo early and were able to get the jitters out.

"We didn't know what to expect. We haven't played in a game atmosphere."

Gumpert admitted the jitters were as much from playing the first game on the new field as it was playing its first game together as a program.

This is the first season for men's soccer at Mesa State.

"It was in everyone's head a bit," he said. "Everyone knew what was on the line. Luckily, we played well."

Although it was the men's first game as a team, many of the players had already played on a synthetic grass surface.

"I've played on this surface in the high school playoffs," Mesa State sophomore Stephen Hofer said. "It plays the same. You stick in more. The traction is good."

Gumpert played on a similar turf while playing for Limestone (S.C.) College.

"It's good stuff," Gumpert said. "Mesa invested the time and money to go into it."

The Mesa State women loved the turf as well.

"It's really soft," Alina Hartfield said. "This helps make passes sharper. We've been wanting this forever. Everyone was so pumped to play on it.

"It helps with ankle injuries. There are not holes all over the place."

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Allen Gemaeulich can be reached via e-mail at agemaeulich@gjds.com.

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