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## SPORTS

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### 'We've got a home' Lighthouse Christian plays true home opener at new football field

By Bradley Guire  
Times-News writer

It's as evergreen a solution as the southern Idaho sports microcosm has ever seen. Today, the Lighthouse Christian Lions debut their new artificial-turf football field, located on the south portion of the old Anderson Lumber property which is the fellowship's future home.

For the Lions, getting the Lighthouse Athletic Complex means putting down roots in Twin Falls - even if the grass is fake.

"We've got a home," athletic director and football coach Nick Karavedas said.

And that home will be dedicated today at 4 p.m., just in time for the homecoming game with Sho-Ban.

While the fellowship and school have had semi-permanent location, for years the Lions have been the nomadic tribe of District IV sports, moving from park to park, school to school to play "home" games. The football team has been confined to Twin Falls High's Bruin Stadium and the junior high school fields at Robert Stuart and O'Leary. Now they'll play on the same type of turf that the University of South Carolina uses.

"We beg, barrow, steal and rent anything we can for our athletic program. Now, this is ours. The people know it, the students know it, the players know it," superintendent Kevin Newbry said. "It's a whole different mindset."

#### Sowing the seeds ... sort of

Forgoing the tradition of blades of Kentucky bluegrass, fertilizer and a watering schedule, Lighthouse Christian turned to a low-fuss alternative. Professional Turf Solutions, the company contracted to perform the work, estimates that artificial turf saves organizations \$20,000 per year in maintenance.

Professional Turf Solutions installed the first artificial playing surface for a high school at Eagle in 2006. It will do the same for Meridian's new Rocky Mountain High School. Demolition of Anderson Lumber's asphalt began in August, and because the ground was so compacted and level, all Lighthouse Christian needed was a little drainage system and the turf to complete the transformation.

The turf comes like carpet, usually in rolls 10 yards wide. Any specialty logos, such as the lion's head at the 50-yard line, are separate pieces. When asked if the fellowship had considered blue turf like Bronco Stadium in Boise, Karavedas joked, "We checked into it, but the cost was astronomical. We did get the end zones in navy with the white. When you first look at it, you say, 'Is that paint? Is it a stencil?' No, it's actually navy threads. It's all glued and sewn together."

Once the pieces of turf are glued and sewn together, particles of cryogenically frozen rubber are worked into the "grass" fibers to provide more padding, and the turf should be raked once per week.

The scoreboard is ready to go as is seating at the complex. Lighthouse Christian will be able to meet the minimum seating requirements to host Class 1A postseason games should they make the Division I playoffs. A permanent solution for a public announce system and lights for night games are in the works as well.

#### Giving back

Although the end zones read "Lighthouse Lions," football is just a portion of what the complex will host.

"On the church side, we'll have children's ministries, VBS (Vacation Bible School), barbecues, picnics. For the school, we'll have recess and P.E.," Newbry said. "Anytime we go outdoors, we'll be on that baby."

The fellowship was fortunate to make this project happen through generous donations of not only money, but time, labor and other resources. From offers to run machinery to Donnelley's Sports donating field-goal posts and benches, Lighthouse Christian intends to open the estimated \$500,000 complex to anyone who asks.

"We're open to talk and see what could happen for both sides, because we need to give back," Karavedas said. "We've been on every park in the city at one point or another. We'll definitely talk to whomever."

Karavedas and Newbry figured that cost to complete the project was nine-to-one, with the nine in the form of various donations.



ASHLEY SMITH/Times-News  
Members of the Lighthouse Christian High School football team huddle Thursday during their first week of practice on their new field in Twin Falls.

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"That's why I feel so strongly about giving back to those folks," Karavedas said. "Whether it's putting up their banner or hosting the (Magic Valley Junior Football) championship here - really paying back that debt, so to speak."

It could be youth soccer, youth football, high school football playoff games, church kickball, community barbecues or a practice field for the 8-man Shrine South football team. Lighthouse Athletic Complex is for everyone.

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**Turf enough**

For more information about Professional Turf Solutions and the art of artificial surfaces, visit <http://www.proturf solutions.com>

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