Isn't It Time You Felt More Confident About the Contractor Working on your Sports Venues?

By Mary Helen Sprecher

You have a CPA do your taxes. You wouldn’t dream of having a doctor who wasn’t board-certified. So why aren’t you looking for the same level of confidence in the person who builds or renovates your sports venues?

While it’s easy to take the word of a colleague that someone did a great job on a sports field, tennis court or running track, that’s not always going to mean that person has displayed a knowledge of the most current methods of construction. It also doesn’t mean that person has shown industry involvement.

The American Sports Builders Association has an answer to that: its voluntary certification program. Through this program, the Association offers three designations: Certified Tennis Court Builder (CTCB), Certified Track Builder (CTB) and Certified Field Builder (CFB). These programs are available to those who have documented evidence of experience in the industry on specific types of projects, and who are able to satisfactorily complete an examination on all areas of construction of that particular facility. (The designation of Certified Field Builder can be a comprehensive designation, CFB, which demonstrates expertise in both natural and synthetic turf; or a builder may choose to specialize in one type of field, by passing the exam for CFB-N (Certified Field Builder-Natural turf), or CFB-S (Certified Field Builder-Synthetic).
Certification remains a voluntary process within ASBA; however, within the sports facility construction industry, there is a growing number of bid documents stating the requirement that the chosen company have a Certified Builder on staff.

In 2008, the Association scored a major legal victory, when in a decision by the Attorney General of Massachusetts, the Office of the AG upheld the right of a local school district to mandate its bid requirement that the bidder for a running track project employ an ASBA Certified Track Builder.

The Certified Builder program is kept up to date to reflect developments in the industry. Individuals within the association can apply for, establish their qualifications for, and sit for the exam at various times throughout the year.

Certification is a voluntary program and is undertaken by an individual, rather than a company. In order to become a certified builder, and to use the designation, an individual must meet specific criteria set forth by ASBA. He or she must:

- Complete an application that shows proof of a set amount of experience in the construction and maintenance of the specific type of sports facility (such as tennis courts, running tracks or sports fields);
- Pass a comprehensive exam on that facility’s construction and maintenance;
- Maintain the designation by recertifying every three years. This is done by documenting a sufficient level of continuing education activities in the sports facility construction industry, showing current activity in the industry by working on those specific facilities, or by passing the examination again.

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