Certification: Your Guide to Hiring a Sports Specialty Contractor

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When you want a professional, whether a doctor, attorney or accountant, you don’t pick blindly. You ask for recommendations – and even more importantly, you look for a qualified professional. You don’t just look for the lowest price tag.

So why, when selecting a contractor to build a sports facility, are so many people just looking at low bid? Are other criteria being considered?

Think about it. The facility has to be built well enough to withstand constant use by athletes. It has to conform to the regulations of the governing bodies. It has to provide a playing surface that athletes find acceptable. And even more, it has to be safe.

Increasingly, the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA), the national association of professionals who design, build and supply materials and equipment to sports facilities, is seeing requests for proposals that require any bidding firm to have a Certified Builder on the staff in order to proceed with the bidding process.

ASBA 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, or by passing the examination again.

For information about the designation or the program, and for a list of currently certified builders, go to www.sportsbuilders.org, and select “Certification” from the toolbar at the top of the page. There are informative videos on certification available there as well.

**Recommended Reading**

**Monetizing Your Score Table and Logo Seating**

With today’s sports budget complexities, many educational systems are finding ways to monetize their equipment wherever possible to assist in covering the associated costs of funding their sports program.

**From New World Of Coaching**

**S.M.A.R.T. Culture**

Sue Phillips has a unique name for the team culture she has created for her girl’s basketball program at Archbishop Mitty High School in San Jose, Calif. Phillips’ coaching philosophy has enabled her teams to win six state championships.

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