

# Rizal Memorial gets new football pitch

The football pitch inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex was given a makeover, making it perfect to host major international events.

E-sports International managing director Audris Romualdez said compared to what was previously installed, the new artificial pitch is softer and won't bulge or harden.

"The rubber used in the past 10 years hardened. We made sure to get the best turf from Germany," Romualdez said during the unveiling of the new pitch that is in collaboration with the Philippine Sports Commission.

"What is important is that one, it is the right size and the second, it doesn't harden."

The old pitch had witnessed momentous events in Philippine football.

In 2018, it served as the battleground when the Philippines defeated Tajikistan, 2-1, to secure a spot in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

Four years later, the Filipinas won the ASEAN Women's Championship after a 3-0 win over Thailand.

However, the Philippine Football Federation used the New Clark City Stadium in Tarlac when the men's national team defeated Maldives, 4-1, in the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers last 25 March.

Acousto-scan International director Anthony Apparailly said the current artificial turf minimizes the risk of injury from carpet burn to leg and arm injuries.

Once it gets the approval from the International Football Federation, the new pitch will be immediately used for international events.

"I mean, maybe softer is not the exact word because it's still firm and you have the shock drain. But it's safer and you won't get injured," Apparailly said.

"If you fall, you will not break your arm or your legs or whatever. So, it's impossible to burn yourself on this pitch."

PSC chairman Richard "Dickie" Bachmann said the renovation will not only benefit the athletes but also the country as the venue will be used for future competitions.

"The country hosts major international sporting events that positions the country into a major sporting hub," Bachmann said.

"The Rizal Memorial Stadium remains a cornerstone for athletes for training and grassroots development. For years, the Rizal Memorial Stadium has been home for Philippine football as it witnessed the challenges of defeat and the celebration of sweet victory."

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