



SPORTS AND FITNESS

How a New Track and Field Complex Is Elevating Sports at the University of Hartford

BY TARKETT SPORTS

When University of Hartford alumnus Kevin Grant, '82, and his family decided to make a significant contribution to his alma mater, Kevin looked to his own lifelong passion: running.

A marathon runner who has also scaled Kilimanjaro, Denali, and Everest, he saw an opportunity to share that passion in a tangible way.

The much-anticipated, state-of-the-art Grant Family Track and Field complex opened last October and reflects the university's ongoing commitment to making meaningful upgrades across its academic, residential, and recreation spaces. More directly, it elevates the student-athlete experience while serving as a valuable resource for the entire campus community.

Featuring innovative post-tension concrete that supports long-term performance and

durability, it also helps position the University of Hartford as a potential host for NCAA regional and national tournaments.

To accommodate the expectations of athletic personnel, both local and visiting, the school entrusted the track surfacing, design, and construction to leading experts with a history of success.

The Foundation of Excellence

The facility's 400-meter, eight-lane track features a post-tension concrete foundation designed by engineering firm CHA Solutions and built by Connecticut-based Classic Turf,

an industry pioneer with its leading technology installed at venues across the country.

This foundation offers a multitude of benefits that contribute to longevity and sustained quality. Unlike traditional concrete or asphalt bases, post-tensioning involves embedding high-strength steel cables (tendons) within the concrete during the pouring process. Once the concrete has cured, these cables are tensioned, creating internal compression within the slab, making the concrete slab nearly indestructible.

This technique is key to reducing cracking while improving resilience and stability. The extended lifespan of post-tension tracks minimizes costly repairs and resurfacing, resulting in significant long-term cost savings. Fewer repairs also mean a more sustainable solution with less material waste and resource consumption.

Above the foundation sits a high-performance full-pour polyurethane track system manufactured by Beynon Sports, a globally recognized
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leader in track and field surfacing. The BSS 1000 system is designed for optimal performance, consistency, and athlete safety, focusing on providing excellent traction and cushioning. Among the world-class venues that use Beynon tracks is Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon, a frequent site of record-breaking performances.

Classic Turf and Beynon Sports are both part of Tarkett Sports, a world leader in sports construction and surfacing.

A Hub for the Entire Community

The new facility comes at a critical moment for the University of Hartford, which completed

its transition to becoming an NCAA Division III school in July. Viewed as the best path for realizing a range of academic, campus experience, and athletic goals, the new designation will continue to foster an environment that encourages participation and excellence across a wide range of sports, including track and field.

For years, Hartford's student-athletes practiced on sidewalks or at nearby schools like Trinity College and Hall High School, used traveling toe boards, and made do with available resources. Now, with a world-class facility that also boasts a throwing area, high-jump pit, and sand pits for triple jumps, they have been empowered with the tools to help them reach their full potential.

Having a place to call home will also allow students across varsity and intramural sports, recreation activities, and general fitness to enjoy a sense of camaraderie while fostering a culture of health and wellness on campus. This inclusive approach reflects the university's commitment to providing valuable resources that benefit its entire community.

Start of a New Era for Track & Field

In April, the Grant Family Track and Field complex hosted the inaugural Rage in the Cage Invitational. It was the first meet hosted by the Hawks in the history of the track and field program. Both the men's and women's teams finished in second place, combining for 12 first-place finishes across all events.

It was an early but crucial step in the University of Hartford establishing a legacy of excellence on its home track. As more students experience and benefit from the facility, a testament to modern athletic infrastructure, the university believes the combination of athletic achievement and community engagement will have an enduring impact on the school's reputation and overall student experience.

More About UHart's New Track System

The Benefits of Post-Tension Concrete from Classic Turf

- **Reduced cracking and enhanced durability.** The internal compression created by post-tensioning significantly

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counteracts forces that typically lead to cracking in other surfaces. This translates to a track less prone to ongoing cracking, improving its aesthetic appeal, and extending its lifespan for decades.

- **Stability and resilience.** Post-tension concrete offers increased resistance to settling and heaving, even over unstable soils. It also eliminates cold joints around posts, creating a more uniform and stable surface. This stability is crucial for athletic performance and athlete safety.

BSS 1000 Track System from Beynon Sports

- **Optimal performance.** Beynon Sports track surfaces are engineered with an area elastic base, known as the Force Reduction Layer, and a point elastic finish, known as the Wear Layer, making the BSS 1000 a true dual durometer sports surface. This "fast" surface helps runners maximize their speed and efficiency.

- **Durability and weather resistance.** Beynon Sports surfaces are built to withstand the rigors of constant use and varying weather conditions, ensuring consistent performance and appearance over time. Through innovative polymer formulation and production, the BSS 1000 can be Tuned™ to achieve a range of force reduction values to meet IAAF performance parameters and can be constructed at the IAAF-certified thickness of 13mm or 10mm for additional value.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Tarkett Sports is a world leader in sports construction and surfacing. Providing architectural design, full-scope construction services, and a comprehensive portfolio of industry-leading sports surfacing solutions, Tarkett Sports delivers a seamless turnkey experience for its clients.

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At a major university residential expansion project in the Southeast, collaboration and cooperation among the construction management firm, window and door manufacturer, and installation contractor resulted in a several stunning projects recreating the look of the surrounding century-old buildings. All totaled, Hope's Windows, Inc., supplied over 1,200 unique windows made from custom hot-rolled steel profiles and nearly 100 high traffic and fire-rated door assemblies made from 10 and 12 gauge cold-rolled steel.

According to Sean Farrell, senior project manager at Layton Construction, establishing collaborative relationships is key to successful construction projects. One of the best examples of this maxim is a multi-phase university project for which Layton Construction is serving as construction manager. Layton, part of the STO Building Group, is a nationally-ranked commercial contractor with ten offices around the United States. The firm specializes in healthcare, industrial, warehousing, and higher education projects. As construction manager, Layton hires the sub-contractors and manages and oversees the project as part of a team.



“Since we were building windows and doors to make a brand new college, we needed a company with the methodology to produce the product like it was done 100 years ago.”

— Sean Farrell, Sr Project Manager
Layton Construction

Hope's Brian Whalen, Vice President of Sales, acknowledges that the project was a real test of Hope's capabilities. He is especially proud that they Hope's was able to expedite the schedule even in the face of design changes and in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The shop drawing approval process – including preparation of blueprints of windows and doors with all setting conditions, sizes, customized designs, and required testing – took longer than normal. Changes were made along the way that might have pushed back the delivery schedules for some, but Hope's made adjustments during the production process to deliver all materials on time. Whalen gave a nod to Joey Riggan and the team at Alexander Metals, the frame and glass installer team, saying the overall project went extremely smoothly once the frames were on site.

Says Whalen, “It was a fantastic collaboration among all the parties. Hope's worked closely as the manufacturer to fulfill the architect's design vision, and then the installer worked closely with us to make sure everything was installed executed properly.”



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Hope's® Windows, Inc., is a business based on 100 percent customized work design and manufacturing. Hope's provides a specialized skillset to assist clients in design and production of unique window and door assemblies. Meeting the expectations of Layton Construction in combination with the aesthetic vision of the client and architect was definitely a challenge. The overall experience was a testament to the quality standards of the university and an honor to be a part of. In business since 1912, Hope's had the global experience to make it happen.

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