Project profile:

Practice Made Perfect with Profile Porous Ceramics

PROJECT LOCATION:	Cincinnati Bengals practice field, Cincinnati, OH
PROJECT GOAL:	Install a high-performing root zone mix to provide superior turf for wear-resistance during training camp
PRODUCTS USED:	Profile® Porous Ceramics in construction, aerification and DryJect applications

In 2012, the Cincinnati Bengals decided to move training camp to Cincinnati, Ohio from Georgetown College in neighboring Kentucky. Head Groundskeeper Darian Daily was tasked with ensuring that the practice fields adjacent to the Bengals' main stadium were prepared to endure the wear and tear that results from two-a-day practices in the middle of summer.

In preparation for camp, Daily made the decision to replace the original fields, which were a mix of Bluegrass/ Ryegrass, with Patriot Bermuda Grass. Explained Daily: "During the time of training camp (late July/early August) the Bluegrass fields would always be ravaged by Summer Patch and the roots would be about 1/2 inch to one inch. With field conditions like this, the fields would be unusable."

The renovation project was assigned to The Motz Group out of Cincinnati, and began on April 23, 2012. Work included the installation of a completely new root zone mix, an 80-10-10 blend of sand, soil and Profile Porous Ceramics (PPC), and sodding with the Patriot Bermuda. Construction was completed on June 8—less than two months later.

"The water infiltration has been wonderful. We noticed that even during training camp, the areas used by fans on a daily basis still allowed for good water percolation," Daily said.

Photos: *Surface being prepared and graded; Completed fields after construction and grow-in.*

The high performance matched what Daily had observed on an existing Bermudagrass practice field that had been built five years earlier with the same root zone mix. That field, he said, has continued to drain well, and maintain healthy roots, even in high traffic areas. Approval for the complete renovation of the Bluegrass fields was a direct result of the outstanding playability of the original practice field.

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Team owners had noted to Daily that the performance of the field had continued to improve each year, highlighted by a noteworthy moment in 2011 during the Bengals' playoff run.

"The team chose to practice on the dormant Bermuda grass field instead of the Bluegrass, because the footing was far superior," said Daily. "Ownership was surprised by the playability of the Bermuda field, even in late December and into January.

"Part of the success of the original Bermuda field is the use of Profile Porous Ceramics in the original root zone mix, as well as the addition of more PPC when we aerate the field using DryJect™ every year."

Lab research into root zone mixes containing Profile Porous Ceramics has proven that the porous ceramic particles add air and water-holding capacity to a root zone, help improve infiltration rates, and are significantly more stable than organics such as peat, which break down and clog a root zone over time.

"The main benefit that I see for long lasting success is that Profile Porous Ceramic seems to stay in the root zone longer, giving us the air– and water-holding capacity for a longer period of time, justifying the cost of using Profile as an additional amendment," concluded Daily.

Photos: *Root zone mix being delivered to the site; Deep, healthy roots within weeks of sodding.*

Daily's annual maintenance program includes :

- Aerification every three weeks through April and June
- Verti-cut the fields once in April and once in May
- DryJect the entire playing field in late June using Profile Porous Ceramics
- Topdress fields with sand every two weeks ongoing