

February 2019

Attwood Equestrian Surfaces, Inc

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Steve Guerdat, world number one again!

Special new year's start for Steve Guerdat. Switzerland's rider begins 2019 as leader of the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup and world number one in the Longines ranking list. Steve Guerdat already had this honor during one month on December 2012 few times after he won the Olympic Games in London.



After an amazing season, Steve Guerdat is the new world number one. This last world ranking of the year includes all the results between January 1st and December 31st, which means the 36-year-old rider is the best jumping athlete of 2018. His consecration follows a series of impressive results last month, most notably a very emotional victory in the IJRC Top 10 Final at Geneva in front of his home crowd. An individual bronze medalist with his amazing Bianca at the FEI World Equestrian Games in Tryon last September, Steve Guerdat is also rewarded for his regularity during the year as he performed lots of great shows around the world. After nine legs, Switzerland's rider also leads the Longines FEI World Cup and will be aiming for a third victory in the final at Goteborg after he won in 2015 and 2016. The last time he reached the top of the Longines ranking list was in 2012. It was few months after he won the Olympic Games in London with his retired champion, Nino des Buissonnets.

Get full rankings and read more [here](#).

Counting Down To The Longines FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ 2019 Series



Nicola Philippaerts of the winning Belgian team at the Longines FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ Barcelona 2018 Final (FEI/Lukasz Kowalski)

The excitement is already building ahead of the opening round of the Longines FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ 2019 series which will kick off at Deeridge Farm in Wellington, Florida (USA) next month. This top-class team sport, which combines national pride and passion with super-sharp competition, is as fresh as ever as it celebrates its 110th season.

The Wellington fixture is part of the three-leg North America, Central America & Caribbean league that also includes a visit to Coapexpan (MEX) in May and to Langley (CAN) in June. There will be a single qualifier for the Middle East region at Abu Dhabi (UAE) in February, while the sole Europe Division 2 qualifier looks set to take place in Athens (GRE), with full details yet to be confirmed.

For the 10 Europe Division 1 teams the edge-of-the-seat action gets underway at La Baule (FRA) in May, and from there it moves on to St Gallen (SUI), Sopot (POL) and Geesteren (NED) in June, and then to Falsterbo (SWE) and Hickstead (GBR) in July. This league is always hotly contested, with emotions running particularly high when riders are flying their country's flag in front of their home crowd. The last of the seven legs in this division will take place in Dublin (IRL) in August, and each team has been allocated four specific qualifying opportunities, with all four results counting in the battle for a qualifying spot at the 2019 Final.

Find out about calendar details [here](#).

Building a Budget For Your Outdoor Riding Arena

If the time has come for you to build an equestrian arena, then it's certainly time to begin the monumental task of planning. On the upside, especially if you are starting from scratch, you can build exactly what you have always dreamed of. But wait one minute, when has anything to do with horses been easy? Planning an arena is a complicated thing and the choices are endless on everything from kickboards to equestrian footing. There's a lot to think about. And mistakes can prove costly down the line. An incorrectly built arena can result in injuries to horses and riders. So before imagining yourself riding in your own arena, let's look at the primary costs.

First, invest in a relationship with a qualified equestrian footing professional. The fellow down the road with a backhoe is certainly going to be less expensive but will he know how to site the arena, and where to put in the drainage system; be able to source the correct materials so that outdoor arena footing will consistently perform at its peak? Working with a trusted professional will save you headaches down the road so you can enjoy your outdoor riding arena for years to come.

One of the first things you have to decide is where you are going to site your horse riding arena. This one thing can eat up a budget faster than you could imagine. Say you want to put it in a very convenient spot next to the barn that unfortunately is the wettest part of the farm. This means you will need a very well designed drainage plan in place which could mean considerably higher costs or face days of not being able to ride at all. Help your budget out by locating your ring on a high point of the property, even if that amounts to a small rise in the land. It's better to work

with Nature than against her.

From drainage to the arena base to the footing, think of your outdoor riding arena as a layer cake. If you take shortcuts on any of one of the layers, it impacts the other layers. Sure you might save some money in the short run, but you will spend money trying to fix it later.

The next step in preparing your budget would be your choice of equestrian footing. Never decide your horse's health and happiness on a square foot price. Before you decide on what equestrian footing is best for your arena ask yourself the following questions.

How many horses will be worked in the arena on an average day? How many hours a day does that arena need to be productive? If you choose to do a sand based geo textile blend, do you have a reliable way to water it? Add in the cost of a horse arena drag and the number of hours you will spend grooming the equestrian footing. How many hours watering it to make it perfect... multiply those hours by your dream pay rate times one year, five years. Suddenly a low square foot price becomes very expensive. If you invest in a higher quality footing that doesn't need water, less grooming, the price per square foot over the years becomes more than comparable. It's an investment that should be considered carefully.

Now that you have built your dream outdoor riding arena, it's time to take good care of your investment. More often than naught, most people do not think of this as a line item for their budget. The better care you take of equestrian footing, the longer it will last, and that will save you time and money.

If you have chosen a polymer coated sand footing, you will not need to worry about watering your footing. However, if a textile blend is your choice, there are a variety of way to get the job done, starting with a simple hose and sprinkler all the way up to underground watering systems. Once again, talk to your equestrian footing professional so you can make the right choice for your budget.

Every horse riding arena has to have a drag in order to groom the surface. Of all the horse arena drags on the market, we recommend the Carolina Arena Equipment Company's DragNFly. Designed for modern equestrian footings that are a mixture of textile, fiber and sand, we think this horse arena drags have no equal. They come in a variety of sizes, which is also kind to the pocketbook. Depending on the riding arena size, sometimes a utility vehicle and a smaller drag can work very well and keep you on budget. Also, we find dragging an arena can be quite the contenting thing. Remember always go in LARGE circles.

At the end of the day, most everyone has to work within a budget. Our best advice to you when creating your arena budget is to think of your arena as an investment that pays dividends year after year. After all, there is so much is riding on it.

Product Profile: Ameritrack

This complete race track system is specifically designed and formulated for horse safety and injury reduction. AmeriTrack is engineered with a free-draining base and all-weather cushion. It incorporates a vertical drainage system which eliminates movement of the cushion to the rail and results in a consistent, no bias track.

Unlike most coated surfaces, AmeriTrack is manufactured without wax. AmeriTrack remains stable in extreme temperature conditions. During high temperatures, it will not melt or become soft, and during extreme cold, it will remain soft and pliable, rather than become hard and brittle.

Product Highlights:

- Dust-free and non-tacky.
- Consistent going
- Manufactured from premium raw materials
- Engineered for thoroughbred training and racetrack
- Reduced concussion with viscoelastic rebound
- Freeze-resistant and stable over a wide temperature range

Focus on Ameritrack



Synthetic surfaces in the horse racing industry have received mixed press over the years. In 2006, motivated by evidence that synthetic surfaces resulted in a decrease in fatalities, the California Horseracing Board decreed that all racetracks in the state should switch to synthetics. Nine years later, all except one have been axed. Add to that several others throughout the United States, and the prestigious Meydan racetrack in Dubai, all being removed, tells a devastating story. All of these racetracks were installed with wax-based surfaces, and their problems have done untold damage to the reputation of synthetic surfaces. It is widely accepted that the wax coating could not cope with the temperature variations throughout a day, and throughout the year, riding hard and fast in the colder parts of the day/year, and soft and slow in the hotter parts of the day/year.

Maintenance was therefore a real headache for the racetrack managers, and inconsistent times were a problem for riders and trainers, and racegoers. Had the racetrack owners turned to Attwood back in 2006, they would have encountered our polymer-coated synthetic surface, which is proven scientifically to vary considerably less than wax surfaces. This is because the waxes used for equestrian surfaces are crystalline solids, and as such melt when they get warm (think of candle wax). This melting can occur at normal outside temperatures, turning from solid in the morning, to liquid in the afternoon sun. This change has a devastating effect on the properties of the footing, hence on the 'going' of a racetrack. Attwood's Ameritrack polymer coating is not crystalline and does not melt in this way, so footing properties are maintained constant throughout the day, and throughout the seasons.



Footing Facts - February 2019

Footing Facts 2018 Review

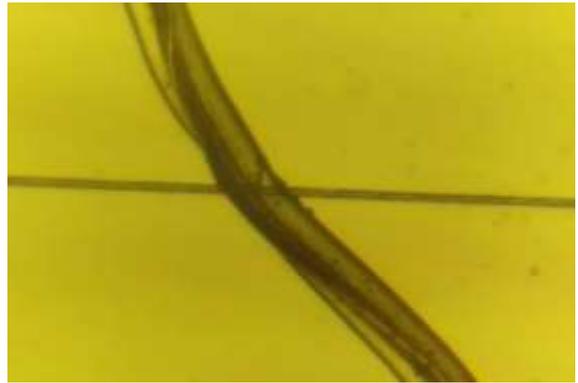
A little late this year, this month we look back at what Footing Facts brought to you over 2018.

At the start of the year, we ran a two-part series on footing maintenance. In Part 1 we explored routine maintenance, from routine manure removal to more periodical levelling. In fact, we began by pointing out that if you are in the market for new footing, maintenance should be uppermost in your mind before you even start the project. This is because different surfaces require different levels of maintenance and will need to ensure you have access to the necessary equipment and skill level to operate it effectively.

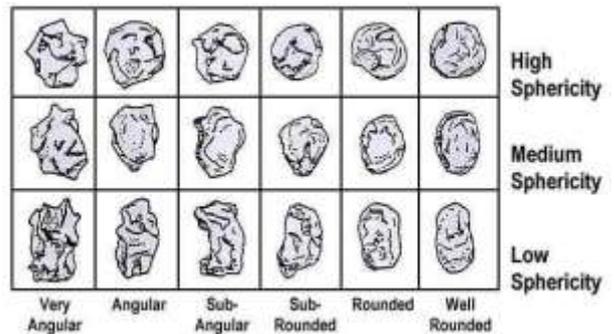
We pointed out that manure removal is vital to maintain the longevity of your footing, particularly if it is coated since microorganisms in manure rapidly break down the coating. Harrowing and levelling is also vital as riding on a compliant surface moves material around and very quickly ruts can appear on a surface. Harrowing is where skill in using the equipment is an asset. These maintenance activities are relevant when the footing is in good condition, but when the footing is starting to fail, different issues arise. So in Part 2, we explored what can be done to address a failing surface. We observed that the wax in coated surfaces can melt and migrate down to the lower depths, where it re-solidifies and forms a very hard layer. This should be broken up periodically with a deep harrow. We also mentioned the problem of the wax being removed from the sand through wear. Attwood's polymer-coated surfaces are far more robust than a wax surface so this will not be as severe, but in both cases re-coating is possible.

In April we re-visited fibres, a key component of most sand-based surfaces. Of particular note, we drew attention to the size of the fibres - not their length but their diameter. This is important because of the 'squared effect' of cylinders (which fibres are of course). If a footing contains cheap fibres from carpet for instance, the fibres will be around 50 microns in diameter. Attwood's fibres are around 10 microns. This means that for every pound, or kilogram of Attwood fibres, there will be, not 5 x more fibres, but 25 x more fibres than an inferior carpet-based surface - this is the magic of the 'squared effect'.

Underground irrigation featured prominently in 2018 Footing Facts. In May and later in July we explored this fast growing technology, drawing particular attention to Attwood's new AquaBalance system. Whilst early entrants to this market have been offering quite inferior systems for almost 10 years, Attwood studied this area more thoroughly, and last year introduced what we think is the best, and most economical system on the market today. Particular features are that AquaBalance delivers just the right amount of water to the footing, through special water-emitting pipes buried in the base of the surface, for perfect, evenly wetted surface. Because the base is not flooded with water as in some designs, the terrible build-up of slime with these systems is not a problem. What's more, AquaBalance is extremely economical.



With the holiday season foremost in the summer and thoughts wandering to the beach, we had a close look at sand, a major component of most artificial surfaces. We shared what makes a good equestrian sand, like hardness of the grains, characterised by high silica content. Many budget surfaces will use low silica sand because it is cheap, but this is a false economy as the grains are soft and will literally turn to dust in a short space of time. We also highlighted the size and shape of the grains as being important, both for drainage reasons, and 'tightness' of the footing.

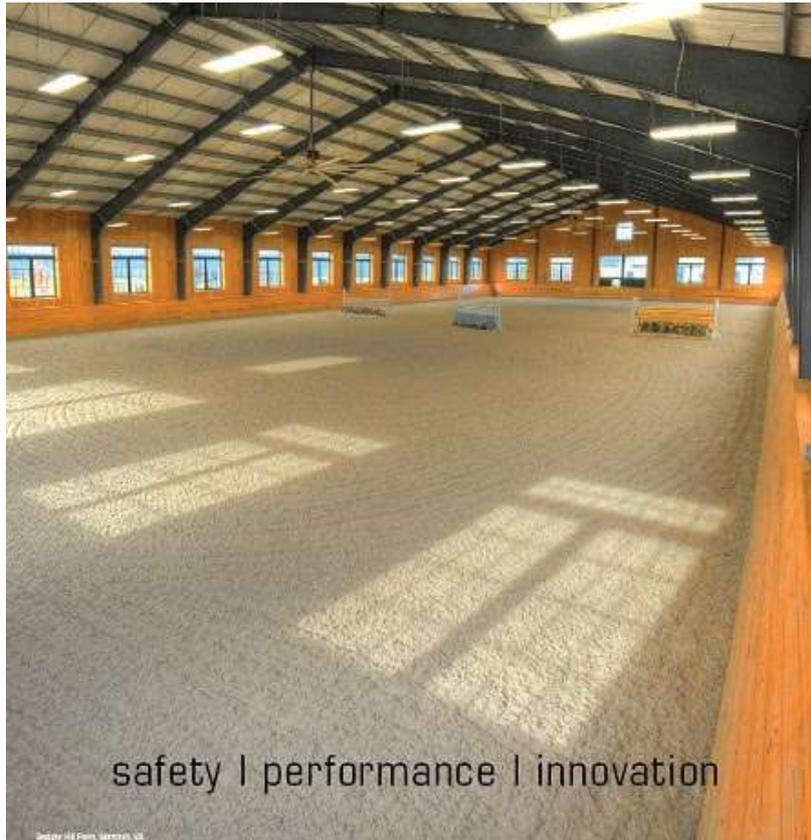


In October we introduced SoftGround, Attwood's new non-sand surface. We would normally not endorse non-sand-based surfaces, like rubber pieces, because of serious drawbacks, but SoftGround works well as a budget surface, and in some cases (for instance where suitable sand is not available, or water is an issue) is the material of choice. SoftGround consists of pieces of industrial nylon carpet, that lay flat and interlock, giving a compliant but 'grippy' surface. Since nylon fibres are the most robust known, SoftGround is extremely resilient and lasts as long as any sand surface.

As the weather grew colder, towards the end of the year we explored the problems of freezing arenas. The message here was that if your surface contains water, under cold enough conditions, it will freeze. The presence of fibres/textile will mitigate this to some extent, giving a little compliance to a frozen surface, but will not prevent freezing. We also pointed out that with waxed surfaces that are supposed not to need water, very often do contain a lot of water because the coating has failed and water has to be applied to hold the surface together - in this case, freezing is just as big an issue. Our polymer-coated surfaces suffer much less because our coating is far more robust so water is never needed.

The final issue of the year started a two-part series on the longevity of coated surfaces. Part 1 in December concentrated on what contributes to longevity (or lack of it!). We emphasised the complex chemistry involved with sticking a coating that is essentially incompatible, to a sand grain, and Attwood's understanding of this, born out of our scientific ethos. Most of our competitors don't understand this chemistry and supply coated surfaces that simply do not last.

Well, that was 2018 for Footing Facts. We hope to continue to share our knowledge and views through 2019 and beyond.



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Attwood Equestrian Surfaces provides meticulously engineered surfaces that benefit both the horse and the rider



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