**Polytan Poligras Paris GT zero at St. Andrew’s School, Bloemfontein, South Africa**

**Premiere of dry hockey in Africa**

* St. Andrews School Bloemfontein inaugurates Africa’s first dry hockey pitch and receives FIH certification
* Polytan installs Poligras Paris GT zero, a climate-neutral synthetic turf that requires little to no watering
* The system is a milestone on the way to sustainable hockey at the highest level and makes hockey possible in arid regions

*Burgheim, Germany, 27th March 2024* – In March of this year, Africa’s first dry hockey pitch was inaugurated: a ground-breaking moment for hockey as a sport. The installation at St. Andrew’s School in Bloemfontein, South Africa, is an exemplary project for the entire continent, on which water is an extremely scarce and valuable resource. At St. Andrew’s, the sports surface specialist Polytan has installed a highly functional dry hockey pitch that does not require any sand in-fill or watering. The sustainable system is officially certified by the FIH. The world’s first certified “FIH Innovation Category Dry Turf Hockey Field” is a milestone in sustainable hockey, as previously, large amounts of water were needed to play professional hockey. Now, hockey can grow in popularity in the arid regions of the world.

**St. Andrew’s is the pioneer of African hockey**

South Africa’s love of sport was clear to see during the FIFA Football World Cup in 2010. Football and rugby are extremely popular there. Hockey is also increasing in popularity; however, the biggest challenge is water scarcity and sand-filled hockey pitches are widespread. In dry weather, they can barely be used at all. That’s why the prestigious St. Andrew’s School opted for Poligras Paris GT zero hockey turf from Polytan, which can be used even when dry and achieves Olympic quality with minimal watering. The sustainable synthetic turf system was installed by Trompie Sport, one of Africa’s leading sports construction companies. The new pitch will serve 33 junior teams and 10 senior teams at St. Andrew’s, who are among the best teams in South Africa.

**Poligras Paris GT zero – climate-neutral and resource-efficient**

With Poligras Paris GT zero, Polytan has developed the world’s first carbon-neutral synthetic turf for hockey. The sports flooring manufacturer is advancing the development of sustainable systems without compromising on playing quality. The filaments of Poligras Paris GT zero consist of up to 80% bio-based fibre raw materials. Combined with the recyclable polyurethane wear coat, they result in a positive carbon footprint and ideal playing properties. The high-performance hockey turf enables a precise and dynamic game while ensuring maximum player safety, even during complex playing manoeuvres. The robust hockey turf withstands changing weather conditions, such as high UV radiation, and retains its attractive appearance for many years, even with intensive use. Polytan’s Turf Glide Technology minimises surface friction, which ensures unbeatably fast ball-rolling behaviour, increased player safety and significantly reduced water consumption.

**Dry hockey as the basis for the sustainable future of hockey**

The opening ceremony of the dry hockey pitch at St. Andrew’s took place on 20th March 2024 and was attended by Deon Morgan, Member of the FIH Executive Board and President of the South Africa Hockey Association. He was visibly impressed by the project and remarked on its significance for the future of hockey: “Dry hockey is a great opportunity for the growth of our sport and I am confident that many more of these pitches will be built in South Africa and on our continent.” He thanked everyone involved, especially the global FIH supplier Polytan, and expressed his wish that the hockey players at St. Andrew’s might “train their abilities under optimal conditions and enjoy many exciting moments of hockey and friendship.”

Polytan has been committed to sustainability in sport for many years and develops sports surfaces and synthetic turf systems that enable peak performance, while being environmentally friendly. Ashley Appleby, International Sales Manager at Polytan, is delighted by the progress made in the development of sustainable hockey turf: “Our climate-neutral synthetic turf, Polytan Poligras Paris GT zero, was developed with Paris 2024 in mind. With the FIH certification, it can now be used for any dry hockey pitch – from school and club sports to international competitions like the World Cup.” Polytan has already equipped more than 25 pitches in 11 countries with Poligras Paris GT zero hockey turf. The system has proven itself in training and competition, is robust and extremely resource-efficient – a great advantage, especially in areas where water is a scarce resource. Regarding the pitch in St. Andrew’s, Ashley Appleby adds: “We are proud to have realised Africa’s first dry hockey pitch. It will enrich the entire hockey community and takes the sport one step closer to a sustainable success story.”

In January 2024, the first FIH Hockey5s World Cup took place in Oman, also on a dry hockey pitch from Polytan: further proof of the potential of dry hockey to conquer the world.

**Polytan GmbH:**

Providing the optimal surface for athletic success – Polytan has pursued this aim with its sports flooring and artificial turf systems since 1969. And the bonus is that sustainability and environmental compatibility have always been a priority for us here at Polytan. The spectrum ranges from environmentally friendly raw materials and energy conservation during the manufacturing processes to the recycling of the surfaces. In line with its motto of “We make sport. Greener.” Polytan is continuously and effectively improving the future of sports flooring. Polytan’s Green Technology line (GT) is the result of years of research and signals a new generation of state-of-the-art products and processes that combines specialised expertise with the functional and ecological benefits of renewable raw materials and resource-saving technologies.

Polytan’s portfolio is built for disciplines such as football, hockey, rugby, American football, athletics, tennis and multisport, and even offers fall protection. As well as developing, manufacturing and installing sports surfaces, Polytan also offers line painting, repair, cleaning and maintenance as part of its range of services. Polytan provides the largest sports surface installation network in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific. All products comply with the current national and international standards, and have all the relevant certifications of international sporting associations, such as FIFA, FIH, World Rugby and World Athletics.

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