

CEN TC 217 "Surfaces for Sports Areas"

Reports and Comments on Activities and Results

General Remarks

For the past 20 years, the ISSS – an association of laboratories, scientists and engineers -- served the international community through meetings and technical seminars in an effort to promote the discussion of common problems and issues related to testing methods and procedures. Outside of these official meetings additional work and discussion take place via the exchange of e-mail and occasional individual meetings. Through this scenario the ISSS successfully provided services the Governing Bodies of IAAF and UEFA. The ISSS, as an organization, was not included in the development of the FIFA test project or CEN standards due to the restrictions of those organizations. This has allowed the ISSS to maintain an open mind and thus offer independent review and comments. It is now hoped that the ISSS will do the same for the activities and results of the CEN TC217.

The CEN Technical Committee and Working Groups are structured so that the delegates are required to represent the views of their national standards organizations and not express their own technical opinions. This was necessary as each nation was required to make compromises, sometimes stringent and hard-fought compromises, to reach a unified international standard. Once finalized, the success of the document will require total support of all involved. Naturally, official minutes of such meetings and proceedings reflect only the positive aspects.

In the following articles/papers the activities of the CEN TC217 are reported and commented on by an independent observer in an effort to inform the laboratories of the sports-related community about these important proceedings and to initiate an open and independent discussion on any of their facts or thoughts felt to be detrimental or inappropriate. Since it is difficult even for ISSS members/representatives to freely state their opinion within the ISSS out of consideration for their own dependencies, the papers published here have been discussed with several leading ISSS members, but do not necessarily represent the official views of the ISSS. Thus, they are produced and signed by an individual author with the ultimate goal of supporting the efforts of the CEN TC217 by communicating their most important results to a greater audience and also by encouraging discussion of problematic compromises in order to facilitate possible improvement and/or clear acceptance of the work presented.

One could ask why this activity of the ISSS was not started earlier. The simple answer is that it took more than 15 years now to achieve reasonable progress of the standardisation process. In individual working groups more than 500 documents were produced until a final standard was reached. Fortunately, the situation has changed since about 2 years. The process was accelerated by the TC decision that work items which were not ready for at least enquiry in April 2005 would be deleted. It is the merit of Bob Stratton of the TC217 Secretariat to put the negotiations back on tracks. Now it is worth to pursue the proceedings and report the results of the TC217 and its WGs.

With this said comments, protests and additional input on the papers presented are encouraged and welcomed.

HJK
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