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# MetLife Stadium turf, explained: Why NFL players keep getting injured against Jets, Giants

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(Getty Images)

< [NFL](https://www.sportingnews.com/us/nfl/news/metlife-stadium-turf-explained-why-nfl-players-keep-getting-injured-against-jets-giants) >

You might call MetLife Stadium's hosting of the New York Jets and New York Giants "double trouble," but the only "double trouble" during Weeks 2 and 3 of the 2020 NFL season at MetLife Stadium was for the San Francisco 49ers.

The NFL stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey has come under scrutiny due to a rash of injuries suffered by the 49ers on the field's turf in Week 2 when they played the Jets and again in Week 3 when they took on the Giants. San Francisco lost Nick Bosa and Solomon Thomas to season-ending injuries while also seeing quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo and running backs Tevin Coleman and Jerick McKinnon hurt. The 49ers even admitted that holding George Kittle out of Week 3 as he recovered from injury was due in part to the poor luck they'd had on the turf.

The NFL has examined the field and found nothing wrong, though. Here's what we know about the last few weeks of the MetLife Stadium turf saga.

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### **Turf woes hit 49ers**

The 49ers played the Jets in MetLife Stadium in Week 2. Their defensive line was ravaged by two ACL tears during that contest, with both Bosa and Thomas going down. Garoppolo sprained his

right ankle and attempted to play through it before coming out of the game and subsequently missing Week 3. Mostert sprained his MCL and missed Week 3, as well.

"Guys seemed to be getting stuck in the ground more than regularly," [Arik Armstead told reporters \(https://www.nj.com/giants/2020/09/giants-dont-know-what-49ers-are-talking-about-with-metlife-stadium-turf.html\)](https://www.nj.com/giants/2020/09/giants-dont-know-what-49ers-are-talking-about-with-metlife-stadium-turf.html) after the 49ers' Week 2 win. "A bunch of our players went down. It wasn't real fun to be a part of and see happen to your teammates."

The NFL released a statement following the 49ers' complaints that an independent field inspector had looked at the field on Sept. 12 (the day before the game) and "certified that the field was in compliance with all applicable NFL policies." The NFL also clarified that the home team must certify their home field's compliance within 72 hours of kickoff, and that that happened, too.

Giants receiver Golden Tate suggested that the heavy number of injuries in Week 2 may have been more due to the shortened offseason than to anything to do with the turf, [according to NJ.com \(https://www.nj.com/giants/2020/09/giants-dont-know-what-49ers-are-talking-about-with-metlife-stadium-turf.html\)](https://www.nj.com/giants/2020/09/giants-dont-know-what-49ers-are-talking-about-with-metlife-stadium-turf.html).

When the 49ers played the Giants in Week 3, injuries continued. Tight end Jordan Reed sprained his MCL, and linebacker Mark Nzeocha injured his quad. [Another inspection \(https://www.nj.com/giants/2020/09/new-turf-at-metlife-stadium-approved-for-giants-49ers-game-after-another-inspection.html\)](https://www.nj.com/giants/2020/09/new-turf-at-metlife-stadium-approved-for-giants-49ers-game-after-another-inspection.html) ahead of the 49ers game against the Giants and again given the turf approval.

[According to ESPN \(https://www.nj.com/giants/2020/09/new-turf-at-metlife-stadium-approved-for-giants-49ers-game-after-another-inspection.html\)](https://www.nj.com/giants/2020/09/new-turf-at-metlife-stadium-approved-for-giants-49ers-game-after-another-inspection.html), MetLife Stadium is one of 13 NFL stadiums with a turf field.

### **Is grass safer than turf? The NFLPA thinks so.**

Cleveland Browns center JC Tretter is the president of the National Football League Players Association. He posted a message on the NFLPA website Wednesday that calls for all NFL stadiums, including MetLife Stadium, to use natural grass. In his post, Tretter pointed to statistics about grass being safer to play on than turf.

*Based on NFL injury data collected from 2012 to 2018, not only was the contact injury rate for lower extremities higher during practices and games held on artificial turf, NFL players consistently experienced a much higher rate of non-contact lower extremity injuries on turf compared to natural surfaces. Specifically, players have a 28% higher rate of non-contact lower extremity injuries when playing on artificial turf. Of those non-contact injuries, players have a 32% higher rate of non-contact knee injuries on turf and a staggering 69% higher rate of non-contact foot/ankle injuries on turf compared to grass.*

Tretter also spoke with media via video conference Wednesday.

"The data stands out," Tretter said, [according to ESPN \(https://www.espn.com/nfl/story/\\_/id/30009274/nflpa-president-jc-tretter-calls-all-teams-use-grass-fields\)](https://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/30009274/nflpa-president-jc-tretter-calls-all-teams-use-grass-fields). "Those numbers are staggering, the difference in injury rate between turf and natural grass. It's possible to get grass in every location, and it's about pushing for that. We all should be working toward the safest style of play. We know the dangers of playing on turf. That's not good for anybody. It's not good for players. It's not good for the GMs and the head coaches. It's not good for the owners. It's not good for the fans. Increased injuries isn't good for anybody."

Tretter told reporters that a committee of engineers will begin examining field surfaces. Tretter also went in-depth about the Clegg Impact Tester which is currently used for surface testing - he said it is good for testing hardness, but not for testing "performance and safety."

Summing up his thoughts, Tretter said, "Until we can find a way to get synthetic turf to respond and react like natural grass, it's too much of a danger to continue to play on and expect different results."

### **What games remain at MetLife Stadium in 2020?**

A field's surface won't change overnight, so anytime the Jets or Giants play at home the rest of the season, it'll be worth monitoring the injury narrative on the MetLife Stadium turf. Here is the combined remaining home regular-season schedule for the Jets and Giants.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Home Team</b>	<b>Visting Team</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time (ET)</b>
4	Jets	Broncos	Oct. 1	8:20 p.m.
5	Jets	Cardinals	Oct. 11	1 p.m.
6	Giants	Washington	Oct. 18	1 p.m.
7	Jets	Bills	Oct. 25	1 p.m.
8	Giants	Buccaneers	Nov. 2	8:15 p.m.
9	Jets	Patriots	Nov. 9	8:15 p.m.
10	Giants	Eagles	Nov. 15	1 p.m.
12	Jets	Dolphins	Nov. 29	1 p.m.
13	Jets	Raiders	Dec. 6	1 p.m.
14	Giants	Cardinals	Dec. 13	1 p.m.
15	Giants	Browns	Dec. 20	1 p.m.
16	Jets	Browns	TBD	TBD

17 Giants Cowboys Jan. 3 1 p.m.

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