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Artificial turf puts pressure on kids at primary school football Nationals in Belmopan

Sports — 14 June 2016— by William Ysaguirre



BELIZE CITY, Mon. June 13, 2016—The artificial turf, at Isidoro Beaton Stadium, in Belmopan, where the National Primary School Football Championships were held last Thursday and Friday, has a black rubber cushion underneath, that absorbs an enormous amount of heat during the day. Looking across the field, you can see the chain link fence on the other side distorted into wiggly lines by the heat haze from warm air rising off the field. Sitting on the side, the

breeze blowing off the field feels like it is coming out of an oven; and for the children playing on the field, it was like playing in a sauna, and many suffered from dehydration and heat exhaustion.

The field got so hot that it melted the glue of the players' boots, which did not have the soles sewed on, and many of the players, e.g. San Lazaro's star, Katie Jones, lost the soles of their boots which came unglued! They then had to borrow or change to a fresh pair of football boots!

Artificial turf also allows the ball to roll faster, but there were an unusual number of injuries, more than I have seen at any other Nationals. One Chunox player had his arm severely sprained in their 2nd game vs Stann Creek, and he had his hand in a cast on Friday morning.

(Ed. Note: National football champions Belmopan Bandits FC practice and play their home games in the late evenings or nights at the Isidoro Beaton Stadium, which received a grand make-over a few months ago, including artificial turf. The primary school games for the football Nationals were played there on Thursday and Friday of last week, from 10:00 a.m. through to the mid-afternoon. The experience Mr. Ysaguirre describes above may be a concern for organizers, as Belize is scheduled to host the football portion of the CODICADER Games 2016 at the same venue, Isidoro Beaton Stadium, in a few weeks' time, July 6-11.)

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