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## Warriors stinging from stadium FieldTurf cuts

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There is a 36-day break between last Friday's season opener and the Hawai'i football team's next home game.

That might be enough time for the FieldTurf-induced scrapes to heal.

Several Warriors noticed that the 6-year-old FieldTurf, installed in 2003 as part of the requirements for keeping the Pro Bowl in Hawai'i, no longer offers a soft cushion. The "blades" are worn down, and the paint coating, several Warriors noticed, provides a rough surface.

"It's not very forgiving," said UH quarterback Greg Alexander, his left shin covered with salami-colored abrasions. "It feels like you're playing on concrete sometimes."

Cornerback Jeramy Bryant did not work out Sunday because of a "deep incision" on his right leg caused after he slid on the FieldTurf. He said the cut might require a couple of stitches.

Left slotback Greg Salas' right forearms also were marked with cuts.

"The turf is hard," Salas said. "It hurts when you get tackled on it. ... It was that way last year. I've always had scabs (from turf burns). They never go away because I always rip them off in games when I get tackled."

On the plus side, the turf offers good traction, helping increase a player's speed. The downside, defensive end Paipai Falemalu said, is the FieldTurf feels like "carpet. It doesn't give too much."

Falemalu's knees were covered with abrasions.

UH head coach Greg McMackin said he noticed there were more reports of turf-related cuts.

"I don't know if it's just worn down," McMackin said. "It does seem a little thinner than last year. I have no answers."

Regardless of the condition, Alexander said: "You can't do anything about it now. It's football. You can't complain. If you fall down, you're going to get scraped. Whatever. You have to keep playing and not worry about it."

McMackin said he was told a new artificial turf will be installed next year.

"I know (stadium manager) Scott Chan and his staff do a great job, and they've got plans in the future," McMackin said. "Both teams have to play on it. Nobody has an advantage."

#### **SALAS HONORED BY WAC**

Salas' move from left wideout to left slotback has paid off.

After catching seven passes for 180 yards, including the 66-yarder that set up the winning touchdown, Salas yesterday was named the Western Athletic Conference's Offensive Player of the Week.

"It's great for the WAC to give that honor," said Salas, a third-year junior from Chino, Calif.

Smart move to slotback?

"For one game, anyway," McMackin said, smiling. "He's a good player. He'll be good wherever he plays. He has great hands. He's quick. And he's strong. He's hard to bring down. There are a lot of missed tackles on him because he's such a powerful guy. (Defenders) aren't used to those kind of big guys (playing) inside (receiver). And he's as quick as any slotback."

In past summers, Salas returned to California, where he trained at several locations. This year, he decided to remain in Hawai'i during UH's first summer session.

"It paid off," Salas said. "It helped me get chemistry with the quarterbacks. I got to know their tendencies, and they got to know mine. We're comfortable with each other now."

Alexander said: "I probably threw to him every day over the summer. We've got a really good feel for each other. He makes a lot of good plays. He made a lot of big plays for us Friday night, and he's going to be doing that for us all year."

Salas also said he benefitted from watching videos of former UH slotbacks Davone Bess and Ryan Grice-Mullins.

Salas said he focused on "how they got open, and what they did. I watched a lot of film. I tried to get into my playbook and really study it."

