

SURFACE ATTRACTION

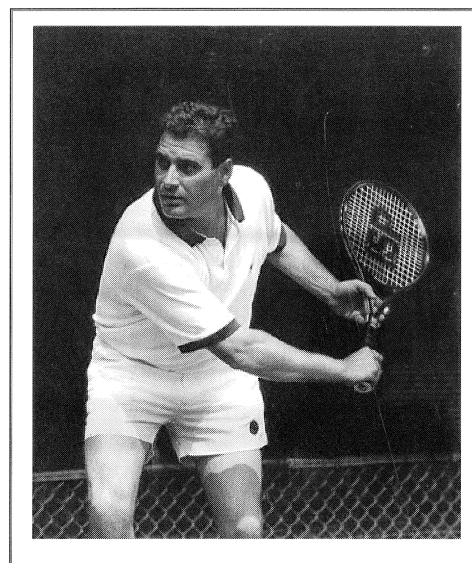
What's the best tennis court for your game ?

by Sandra Dolbow

As a tennis player, you think a lot about the equipment you use. Chances are you even think about the clothing you wear. But how much thought do you give to what's under your feet? Dave Meharg, one of the new co-owners of Putnam Tennis Courts in Plainfield, calls the tennis court the "forgotten piece of equipment." But thanks to the International Tennis Federation, that may be changing, he says.

And he ought to know. A 17-year veteran of the court construction business, either as a designer, supplier and now, as general manager of Putnam, he's also an accomplished player whose grandfather was a teaching professional at DuPont Country Club. He played on the University of Miami (Florida) tennis team and later was assistant tennis coach at Rutgers University where he completed a degree in landscape architecture and environmental planning. His first job, working for Sheldon Westervelt at Global Consult in Manasquan, N.J. one of the leading tennis court design firms in the world, combined his love of the game with its technical aspects. "It was a perfect marriage," he says.

Dave's first job in the industry was as national sales manager for ISP Mineral Products, the Hagerstown, Md.-company that produced Har-Tru. From there, he moved to California Products, near Boston, where he headed up DecoTurf, the playing surface of the U.S. Open since the event moved to Flushing Meadow in 1978. As a result, Dave has spent much of the past three years working with the U. S. Tennis Association and National Tennis Center executives as well as traveling around the world to assist international sales for the brand. In addition, since DecoTurf is the playing surface of many other professional tournaments, including the 100th Davis Cup at Longwood Cricket Club, he has spent a lot of time working with the International Tennis Federation, Association of Tennis Professionals, and Women's Tennis Association and assisting tournament directors with their surface needs.



In late February, he and partner Brian Cerruto acquired Putnam Tennis Courts, the oldest and one of the best-known tennis-court contractors in New England and an authorized Decoturf applicator, where he will serve as general manager and Brian as project manager. Under their leadership, Putnam will continue its "full-service" approach to tennis-court construction.

Dave is looking forward to getting involved in the tennis scene in the states Putnam serves—Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island and will maintain his seats on the boards of the Tennis Industry Association and the U.S. Tennis Court and Track Builders Association. Along with his wife Andrea and their three children, all avid tennis players, Dave will be moving to Litchfield soon.

Dave took some time from his busy schedule to discuss tennis court technology with *Court Time* senior editor Sandra Dolbow.