Chapter 8

The Athlete's Invisible Opponent: Synthetic Turf Risks in Sustainable Stadiums and Green Chemistry Solutions

Necip Zeki Budak[1]

Yavuz Selim Ağaoğlu[2]

Recep Bozdemir[3]

Abstract

The modern sports industry is witnessing the global proliferation of third-generation (3G) synthetic pitches, positioned as an economic remedy to the maintenance challenges inherent in natural grass. However, styrene-butadiene rubber (SBR) granules, widely utilized as an infill material in these fields and marketed as a sustainable investment, present a profound paradox regarding human and environmental health. This chapter critically examines the physiological impact of chemical constituents in synthetic surfaces on athletes and explores the role of Green Chemistry principles in mitigating risk. The study analyzes the potential of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), heavy metals, and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) embedded in SBR granules, with a particular emphasis on their "outgassing" potentials in warm climate zones, such as Turkey, and the synergistic toxicity they impose on athletes. Furthermore, microplastic pollution resulting from granule migration is evaluated as a significant ecological threat. In the solution-oriented section, bio-based alternatives, including cork, thermoplastic elastomers (TPE), and olive pits, which align with Turkey's agricultural potential, are compared in terms of cost, performance, and toxicological profiles. Ultimately, the chapter argues that for sport to remain a holistic health practice, stadiums must be redesigned not merely for performance but through Green Chemistry solutions grounded in biological and ecological compatibility. Concrete implementation frameworks for local governments and policymakers are subsequently presented.

1 Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, necipzekibudak@gmail.com, 0009-0002-3286-8448

2 Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, yavuzselim.agaoglu@gop.edu.tr, 0000-0001-9604-9252

3 Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, recep.bozdemir@gop.edu.tr, 0009-0007-7760-8574

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1. Introduction: The Chemical Transformation Of The Sports Industry

Sport is intrinsically linked to the pursuit of health; yet, a fundamental paradox arises when the playing surface itself compromises human well-being. With the industrialization of the modern sports sector, stadiums and training facilities have evolved from mere venues of athletic performance into complex micro-environments where athletes interact with sophisticated chemical compositions. The prohibitive maintenance costs, high water consumption, climatic limitations, and durability issues associated with traditional natural grass have precipitated the rapid global adoption of third-generation synthetic pitches (Pronk, Woutersen, & Herremans, 2020).

This transition has introduced a profound "sustainability paradox." Synthetic fields are marketed as environmentally friendly investments due to water conservation and lifespans exceeding a decade. However, the primary component of these fields—styrene-butadiene rubber (SBR) granules derived from end-of-life vehicle tires—raises serious concerns regarding human and environmental safety (European Chemicals Agency [ECHA], 2017; Ryan-Ndegwa, Zamani, & Martins, 2024). The European Union's 1999 directive banning the landfilling of waste tires incentivized their repurposing as infill for sports fields; yet, the health implications of this "recycling" solution were not rigorously scrutinized at the outset (Grynkiewicz-Bylina, Rakwic, & Słomka-Słupik, 2022).

Transcending the issue of chemical toxicity, synthetic pitches are now recognized as one of the most significant secondary sources of terrestrial microplastic pollution. SBR granules, carried by rainwater and drainage systems into sewage networks or directly into natural water bodies, exacerbate the physical pollution load in aquatic ecosystems. It is estimated that a single football pitch loses between 1 and 4 tons of granules to the environment annually (ECHA, 2019). This reality transforms sports fields from mere sites of exposure into active sources of contamination.

The primary objective of this chapter is to systematically evaluate the chemical risks associated with synthetic football pitches from the perspective of athlete physiology and to propose sustainable solutions based on the principles of Green Chemistry. The principles of Green Chemistry, established by Anastas and Warner (2000), advocate for the design of non-toxic alternatives, waste minimization, and the utilization of renewable resources. Within this framework, the aim is to redefine sport not merely as physical activity, but as a holistic health practice conducted within a healthy environment (Budak, 2025; Budak & Aktürk Bozdemir, 2025; Budak & Keçeci Sarıkaya, 2024).

2. Defining The Invisible Opponent: The Chemistry Of Synthetic Surfaces

2.1. Anatomy of the Pitch: A Multi-Layered Polymer System

An examination of the anatomy of a synthetic football pitch reveals a complex polymer and infill structure beneath the visible green synthetic fibers. Third-generation synthetic fields typically comprise four fundamental layers: polyethylene or polypropylene synthetic grass fibers on top, a silica sand layer providing vertical stability to these fibers, a shock-absorbing infill material, and underlying drainage infrastructure (Phillips & Moya, 2014; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], 2024). The component most critical to athlete health, and which determines system performance, is the infill layer covering seventy to eighty percent of the field's surface area.

The most prevalent infill material is black SBR granules derived from recycled automobile tires. While economically attractive for waste tire utilization, this material is a complex mixture of petrochemicals. Similar to tire manufacturing formulations, these granules contain high proportions of carbon black (approximately 28%), zinc oxide (2%), sulfur (1%), and various low-molecular-weight organic substances (Grynkiewicz-Bylina et al., 2022). These additives, comprising extender oils, vulcanization accelerators, antioxidants, and organic peroxides, along with impurities from production and recycling processes, lead to the accumulation of potentially hazardous constituents within the granule matrix.

2.2. Chemical Profile of SBR Granules: Hazardous Components

The chemical profile of SBR granules stems from their petroleum-based origins and hosts multiple hazardous groups. The most debated among these are Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), heavy metals, and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs).

Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) represent the most critical risk group due to their carcinogenic potential. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies certain PAHs, such as benzo[a]pyrene, as Group 1 carcinogens. A systematic review by Ryan-Ndegwa et al. (2024) indicated that PAH levels exceeded the European Landfill Directive limits in 80% of the 25 studies examined. A comprehensive meta-analysis by Karatela et al. (2025), summarizing data from 18 laboratory studies, reported that total PAH levels in synthetic turf tire infill varied widely, ranging from 0.4 mg/kg to 3196 mg/kg, with median values between 5.8 and 2836 mg/kg, depending on the study and source. While the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) recommends a limit of 20 mg/kg for eight priority PAHs in synthetic turf infill, certain studies have reported values significantly exceeding this limit, reaching as high as 450 mg/kg (National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health [NCCEH], 2025).

Regarding Heavy Metals, zinc appears as the dominant element, found in SBR granules at concentrations ranging from 500 to 5000 mg/kg (Pavilonis et al., 2014; Karatela et al., 2025). These values consistently exceed the 50 mg/kg limit set by the European Landfill Directive. Lead concentrations have been detected at levels ranging from 10 to 100 mg/kg, and mercury at levels of 0.1 to 1 mg/kg (Marsili et al., 2015; Bø et al., 2024).

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) include substances such as benzene, styrene, toluene, and benzothiazole. These components are released into the air through a process known as "outgassing," which occurs particularly when ground temperatures rise (Formela, 2022). However, the literature on VOC levels presents conflicting findings; some studies report air concentrations below one $\mu g/m^3$, leading to an ongoing debate (Bley, Lehner, & Bolte, 2018). The EPA's (2024) extensive field research noted that VOC/SVOC transfer from granules to air generally did not exceed environmental background levels but concluded that "measured exposure levels were within acceptable limits for the studied scenarios" rather than declaring "no risk," highlighting significant data gaps.

2.3. Chemical Risk Table

The following table summarizes the primary chemical risk groups detected in SBR granules, typical concentration ranges, and potential health effects found in the literature:

Table 1. Chemicals Detected in SBR Granules and Health Effects

Chemical Group	Example Components	Typical Concentration	Potential Health Effect	Source
PAHs	Benzo[a]pyrene, Chrysene, Benzo[a] anthracene	1-10 mg/kg (median >20 mg/kg EU limit; some samples >450 mg/kg)	Carcinogenic (IARC Group 1); leukemia, lymphoma risk; absorbable via skin and inhalation	Ryan-Ndegwa et al. (2024); Karatela et al. (2025)
Heavy Metals	Zinc (Zn), Lead (Pb), Cadmium (Cd), Mercury (Hg)	Zn: 500-5000 mg/kg; Pb: 10-100 mg/kg; Hg: 0.1-1 mg/kg	Neurotoxicity, developmental disorders, gastrointestinal distress, and environmental bioaccumulation	Pavilonis et al. (2014); Marsili et al. (2015); Bø et al. (2024)
VOCs	Benzene, Toluene, Benzothiazole, Styrene	$<1\ \mu g/m^3$ (air emission; increases with temperature)	Respiratory irritation, asthma-like symptoms; carcinogenic potential in chronic exposure (controversial)	Bley et al. (2018); Formela (2022)
Phthalates	DEHP, DINP, DBP	Variable (below regulatory limits in most studies)	Endocrine disruptor; potential risk to the hormonal system and reproductive health	ECHA (2017); Perkins et al. (2019)

While the data in this table suggest that individual chemicals may fall below legal limits, the "cocktail effect" (simultaneous exposure to multiple chemicals) combined with high thermal stress creates a threat potential exceeding current regulatory risk models. The level of risk is influenced by exposure duration, routes of contact, the intensity of the sport, and field conditions. Distinguishing between hazard (the potential to cause harm) and risk (the probability of damage at a specific exposure level) is crucial for accurately interpreting scientific discourse in this field (NCCEH, 2025).

3. Athlete Health And Exposure Mechanisms

The impact of chemical risks in synthetic fields on athlete health is directly correlated with the increased metabolic rate during physiological activity.

From an exercise physiology perspective, increased ventilation rates, elevated dermal perfusion, and profuse sweating during physical activity imply that the absorbed dose can be significantly higher than that of sedentary individuals, even at identical environmental concentrations (Kenney, Wilmore, & Costill, 2022). Exposure to SBR granules occurs through three primary pathways: inhalation, dermal contact, and ingestion.

3.1. Inhalation Exposure

During exercise, an athlete's minute ventilation can increase tenfold to twentyfold compared to resting states, reaching up to 100 L/min during intense activity. This results in a significantly higher intake of ambient pollutants into the lungs. Particularly in summer months, black SBR granules absorb solar radiation, dramatically increasing surface temperatures. Research by the Centre for Sports Surface Research (2018) indicates that on days with an air temperature of 35°C, synthetic surface temperatures can soar to 70-80°C. Unlike natural grass, which cools itself via transpiration, synthetic surfaces trap heat; this excessive thermal load maximizes chemical outgassing from the granules (Vyrlas et al., 2024; Formela, 2022).

Marsili et al. (2015) demonstrated that rising ground temperatures could increase VOC and PAH emissions by up to 200%. Bley et al. (2018) suggested that the increased PAH load reaching the lungs due to elevated ventilation rates during exercise could raise leukemia risk by 1.5 to 2 times. Conversely, the EPA's (2024) comprehensive field study maintains that inhalation risk is "acceptable" and reports VOC levels remaining below regulatory limits. Similarly, a study by Menichini et al. in Italy found total PAH levels in open fields to be as low as 2.3-4 ng/m^3, calculating the excess cancer risk at a *de minimis* level of 10^{-6} (Karatela et al., 2025).

A fundamental deficiency in risk assessments is the oversight of the "cocktail effect" or synergistic toxicity. Athletes on the field are not exposed solely to PAHs but simultaneously to heavy metals, high ambient temperatures (thermal stress), and dehydration. This state of physiological stress, characterized by increased dermal perfusion and cellular barrier permeability, can potentiate the biological impact of chemical concentrations considered safe in isolation. Consequently, single-substance toxicity in laboratory settings does not fully reflect the cumulative burden experienced in the field.

3.2. Dermal Contact and Absorption

The most common traumas observed on synthetic fields are abrasions resulting from sliding and falling, referred to in the literature as "turf burn." These abrasive lesions disrupt the epidermal barrier, enhancing the potential for dermal absorption of granule particles and their chemical constituents (Schneider et al., 2020). Ryan-Ndegwa et al. (2024) reported that PAH absorption from open wounds could reach ten to twenty percent.

Goalkeepers represent the highest risk category due to the continuous diving and sliding, which necessitate intense contact with the ground. Pavilonis et al. (2014) showed that goalkeepers experience forty percent more knee and arm contact than other players, with increased dermal absorption facilitated by sweating. In a comprehensive risk assessment conducted in the Netherlands using samples from 100 synthetic fields, Pronk et al. (2020) identified the highest exposure group as goalkeepers who regularly play from the age of four to fifty, ingesting 0.2 g of granules per session.

However, migration experiments using artificial sweat and skin simulation fluids have shown that only a minute fraction of PAHs and metals leach into these fluids. Approximately nine percent of total PAH content may leach into artificial sweat and gastrointestinal fluids, with volatile PAHs (such as phenanthrene) thought to have higher bioavailability. While the NCCEH (2025) notes that dermal cancer risk is negligible in most scenarios, it emphasizes the need to re-evaluate these results under "reasonable worst-case" scenarios involving indoor fields, very hot climates, and the more permeable skin of young children.

3.3. Ingestion Exposure and the Cancer Debate

Oral intake can occur through granules adhering to the face via sweat, splashing into the mouth, or direct ingestion. Ryan-Ndegwa et al. (2024) reported that ingesting 0.1 to 1 g of granules per hour is possible, with pica behavior in child athletes increasing this risk. The EPA (2024) noted that gastrointestinal absorption of heavy metals (lead, mercury) could reach up to fifty percent, though chronic doses are associated with non-cancer effects (neurotoxicity).

The clustering of lymphoma cases among goalkeepers at the University of Washington in 2014 ignited the debate on the link between synthetic fields and cancer. In a review published in the *Rhode Island Medical Journal*, Bleyer and Sullivan (2018) reported no statistically significant association between synthetic fields and the development of lymphoma/leukemia. Similarly, Pronk et al. (2020) calculated that the excess lifetime cancer risk due to PAHs remained at 3×10^{-6}, even in the highest exposure scenario, hovering just above the "negligible risk" (*de minimis*) threshold of 10^{-6}.

Toxicologists, however, argue that these risk assessments have significant limitations. Bleyer et al. (2017) emphasized that "safe limits" are established for adults, and the cumulative exposure of children (years of training) has not yet been fully modeled. Massey et al. (2020) stated that most existing studies rely on short-term measurements, with minimal long-term cohort studies and biomonitoring data (athlete urine/blood PAH metabolite levels). Consequently, the bulk of the literature suggests that SBR granules pose a "low but non-zero" risk of cancer and toxicity under current usage patterns; therefore, transitioning to less toxic alternatives and implementing measures to reduce exposure represents a rational approach aligned with the precautionary principle.

4. The Turkey Perspective: Current Practıces And Rısks

In warm-climate countries like Turkey, outgassing from granules is estimated to increase by up to 150% compared to Northern European nations. The country's unique sports culture, particularly the prevalence of neighborhood "carpet pitches" and their intensive use by children and youth, differentiates the risk profile.

4.1. The Reality of "Carpet Pitches" in Turkey

In Turkey, synthetic turf pitches are not exclusive to professional leagues but have become a routine part of daily life for children and youth through neighborhood facilities, municipal venues, and schoolyards. It is estimated that there are approximately 50,000 such pitches across the country, with SBR granule usage rates exceeding 90% (Turkish Football Federation [TFF], 2023). Systematic public data regarding the origin, composition, and chemical quality control of granules used in a significant portion of these fields is nonexistent.

International standards, such as FIFA Quality Pro, focus predominantly on surface performance (ball bounce, roll, sliding coefficient, and shock absorption); however, it remains unclear whether PAH, heavy metal, and VOC levels in granule content are systematically monitored (ECHA, 2017). Uncontrolled imported granules or sub-standard domestic recycled products may contain PAHs far above permitted limits. This combination of "unregulated pitch density + high usage by child athletes" places Turkey in a specific risk profile regarding SBR exposure.

4.2. The Climate Factor: Synthetic Field Usage in the Hot Zone

In many regions of Turkey, particularly the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Southeastern Anatolia, air temperatures in summer reach 35-40°C, while synthetic surface temperatures under direct sunlight can hit 70-80°C (Vyrlas et al., 2024). Unlike natural grass, which cools itself via transpiration, synthetic surfaces trap heat. This excessive heat not only increases the risk of heat stroke for the athlete but also maximizes chemical gas emissions from the granules. For instance, in a projection based on black body radiation principles and local meteorological data, it is theoretically inevitable for a pitch with black SBR granules to exceed a surface temperature of 75°C at noon on an August day in Antalya or Adana (with an ambient temperature of 34°C). This thermal load causes pore expansion in the granule polymer matrix and leads to trapped VOCs mixing much more aggressively into breathing air via 'thermal desorption' (outgassing).

Based on the work of Marsili et al. (2015), outgassing from granules in hot climate countries, such as Turkey, can be up to 150% higher than in Northern Europe. This carries the potential to increase PAH inhalation by two to three times during summer matches (Bley et al., 2018). The fact that many neighborhood pitches in Turkey are located in areas surrounded by buildings with restricted air circulation exacerbates this risk.

However, there are no specific field studies on synthetic field surface temperatures and granule outgassing levels under Turkey's specific climate conditions; this stands out as a significant gap in the literature. Therefore, while the chemical risk of playing on synthetic fields in Turkey during summer is likely higher than existing European and North American data suggests, it remains quantitatively undefined.

4.3. Lack of Regulation and Standards

Current international standards focus heavily on surface performance, relegating "chemical health" criteria to a secondary status. Although ECHA and some national agencies have introduced limit values for PAHs and certain metals, there is no clear legislation in Turkey that enforces these limits or mandates regular inspections of fields against these criteria.

Mandatory architectural/installation standards for mechanical ventilation, fresh air exchange rates, and temperature control for indoor synthetic fields, as well as regulations regarding the use of low-toxicity or organic infill in fields predominantly used by children, have not yet been developed. This gap represents both a risk and a policy development opportunity for municipalities and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

5. Green Chemıstry Solutıons And Stadıums Of The Future

Green Chemistry is based on the twelve fundamental principles established by Anastas and Warner (1998), which aim to "design chemical products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use or generation of hazardous substances." In the context of synthetic fields, this approach necessitates a shift from high-toxicity petroleum-based granules to materials with better toxicological profiles, biodegradability, or at least low leaching potential. Eliminating chemical risks without sacrificing the maintenance convenience of synthetic fields is achievable through Green Chemistry and bioengineering solutions.

5.1. Organic Infill Alternatives

In recent years, various organic infill materials have been developed and introduced as alternatives to SBR granules (NCCEH, 2025; Ryan-Ndegwa et al., 2024). Limiting SBR usage will naturally require new strategies for waste tire management. From a circular economy perspective, utilizing waste tires for energy and raw material recovery via pyrolysis technologies, rather than spreading them on sports fields, stands out as a more sustainable waste management strategy in terms of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA).

Cork granules, with their 100% natural structure, contain no toxic substances and possess a significantly cooler profile compared to SBR. According to ECHA (2017) data, surface temperatures in cork-filled fields remain approximately 10-15°C lower than those in SBR fields. Cork also offers a long-lasting alternative as it does not rot when wet. Its PAH and heavy metal content is negligible compared to scrap tire-derived SBR.

Coconut fiber and rice husks are options fully aligned with Green Chemistry and circular economy principles regarding the valorization of agricultural waste. While these materials exhibit near-zero VOC emissions, their organic nature renders them more susceptible to biological degradation and infill loss, potentially increasing maintenance and replenishment requirements.

Olive pits hold the potential to be a unique "indigenous and green solution" for Turkey. As one of the world's leading olive producers, Turkey generates approximately one million tons of olive pit waste annually. Ground olive pits are biodegradable, odorless, and do not create microplastic pollution. By utilizing olive pits in this domain, products can be developed that are PAH-free, offer elasticity performance close to SBR, and possess high shock absorption capacity. Since limited pilot applications and toxicological evaluations exist in this area, field-based R&D studies on the chemical leaching profile and mechanical durability of olive pit infill are required. However, for hard biomasses like olive pits to be used as infill, rounding off sharp corners during the grinding process is a critical production parameter to prevent athlete injuries.

The common advantage of organic infills is their significantly lower PAH and heavy metal content compared to SBR, as well as their minimal contribution to the microplastic burden. Conversely, technical challenges such as mechanical durability, water retention capacity, mold growth, and biological degradation remain areas to be addressed.

5.2. New Generation Synthetic Materials

Thermoplastic Elastomers (TPEs) stand out as fully recyclable structures produced from primary raw materials, rather than recycled tires, and are free of heavy metals and PAHs, making them suitable for use in food-contact applications. According to EPA (2024) data, PAH concentrations in TPE granules remain below 1 mg/kg. The NCCEH (2025) review reported that in three studies, the total median of eight ECHA PAHs was 0.23-27.6 mg/kg for TPE, compared to around 15.3 mg/kg for EPDM.

However, TPEs are not entirely neutral; long-term exposure data regarding additives used in their production and potential VOC/SVOC emissions are still limited. Nevertheless, recyclability and low heavy metal content can be considered a significant advancement over SBR from a Green Chemistry perspective.

5.3. Facility Management and Green Building Certification

Another critical area is the operational and design principles of existing and new facilities. Mandating HEPA-filtered mechanical ventilation systems and fresh air exchange rates compatible with ASHRAE-like standards in indoor synthetic fields can significantly reduce athlete exposure. Facilities certified under the U.S. Green Building Council's (2022) LEED v4.1 standards have reported reductions in PAH emissions by up to fifty percent.

Shifting summer usage hours to cooler morning and evening periods, periodic monitoring of ground temperature and air quality (VOC/particles), and installing brush and grate systems at exits, along with shoe cleaning stations, are among feasible and low-cost measures.

Table 2. Comparison of Infill Materials in Terms of Sustainability, Cost, and Performance

Criterion	SBR (Tire Granule)	Cork (Natural)	TPE (Synthetic)	Olive Pit (Bio-Waste)
Toxicological Risk	Moderate/High (PAH, Metal)	Low/None	Low	Low/None
Warming Potential	Very High (>70°C)	Low (Keeps cool)	Moderate	Low
Initial Investment Cost	Low	High	High	Moderate (Potential low in Turkey)
Maintenance Need	Low	Moderate (Requires hydration)	Low	Moderate
Microplastic Risk	Present	None (Biodegradable)	Present (Recyclable)	None (Biodegradable)
Turkey Compatibility	Current status	Import dependent	Import dependent	High (Domestic raw material)

6. Conclusıon And Recommendatıons

The sports industry must transform its performance-oriented approach into a health-oriented paradigm. Sport must be defined not only as physical activity but as a holistic health practice conducted in a "healthy environment." A comprehensive literature review suggests that SBR granules in synthetic fields pose potential health risks to athletes, particularly in hot climates such as those in Turkey, as well as in indoor settings.

Most existing epidemiological and risk assessment studies reveal that exposure to SBR granules is associated with a "low level of excess cancer risk" in the scenarios examined. Scientific data does not render a verdict of "definitely causes cancer," nor can it declare "absolutely harmless." This uncertainty, under the "Precautionary Principle," necessitates a shift towards safer alternatives, especially for children.

Policy Recommendations

Recommendations for local governments and the Ministry of Youth and Sports are as follows: The use of SBR granules should be prohibited in all new public sports facilities; instead, low-toxicity infills such as cork, olive pits, or TPE should be mandated. A phased conversion schedule should be determined for existing fields, prioritizing facilities heavily used by children.

Mandatory mechanical ventilation, temperature control, and regular air quality measurements in indoor fields must be codified into legislation.

Regarding academic studies, there is an urgent need for longitudinal studies examining VOC emissions and PAH metabolite and heavy metal levels in athletes' blood/urine through samples taken from existing fields in Turkey during the summer months. Funding field temperature, granule chemistry, and athlete exposure studies specific to Turkey's climatic conditions is critical to closing the national data gap.

In terms of awareness and education, sports schools and families should be educated on the importance of post-training hygiene (showering, shaking out clothes, removing granules from the body) in reducing chemical exposure on synthetic fields. A "Synthetic Fields Chemical Safety Guide" should be prepared at the national level, publishing practical recommendations for field operators, coaches, referees, and parents.

Ultimately, for sport to fully realize its health-promoting potential, the ground on which it is played must also be "healthy." Synthetic surfaces can approach this goal through proper design and material selection; however, in a model where chemical risks are overlooked, an invisible opponent will always be present on the field, particularly for child athletes. Material innovation based on Green Chemistry principles, a robust regulatory framework, and risk assessments specific to Turkey's climatic/socio-cultural conditions can minimize the impact of this opponent.

7. Conclusion

The chemical risks, representing the athlete's invisible opponent, are not insurmountable. Green Chemistry principles and bioengineering solutions enable us to construct sustainable stadiums without compromising performance or health. Due to its potential for agricultural waste utilization (such as olive pits) and climatic imperatives, Turkey has the opportunity to be a pioneering model developer in this transformation rather than a follower. The stadiums of the future must be arenas where not only the score is won, but ecological and physiological health are also secured. Therefore, the solution is not to reject synthetic fields entirely, but to alter the chemical DNA of the pitch through bioengineering and Green Chemistry principles.

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