GREENING SPORTS: HOW ATHLETIC FACILITIES CAN IMPLEMENT CHANGE TO SAVE MONEY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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The American sports industry is one of the most influential and powerful industries in the country. Every year, millions of sports fans attend their favorite team’s games, often times not realizing that these events use a tremendous amount of water and energy, while producing tons of landfill waste. Today, the “greening” of sports is taking over athletic organizations across the nation at all different divisions and levels. A new concern for our country is now: how can we continue enjoying our beloved sports while not harming the environment around us? The aim of this study is to promote sustainability within the sports industry and to identify ways athletic facilities can alter their current practices to lessen their environmental impact. I analyzed the University of Washington Athletic Department’s sustainability initiatives and determined ways the department could improve their energy efficiency and water usage. I found there were several ways to create positive impacts on their billing and efficiency. Many suggestions I offered to the department focus on attainable operational changes, in addition to potential structural changes. In addition, I thoroughly researched into several other collegiate and professional athletic facilities to identify who the leaders are in this movement and who has yet to start. From my research, I found that there is still much to be done in regards to environmental sustainability within the sports industry. Many sport organizations are only beginning their journey of achieving sustainability and with this research there are now several ways to make their journey easier.