

## Toronto FC stars don't like artificial turf either

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TORONTO — Elite female players have every reason to sue FIFA and the Canadian Soccer Association over plans to use artificial turf at next summer's women's World Cup, Toronto FC stars Michael Bradley and Steven Caldwell say.

"I don't pretend to know the specifics of the lawsuit ... but if you ask me, soccer is a game that 100 per cent, without a shadow of a doubt, has to be played on grass," says Bradley, a U.S. national team veteran who played at this past summer's men's World Cup in Brazil.

There's no way anyone would have ever wanted the sport's marquee event on artificial turf, he suggested.

"Playing on turf, especially bad turf fields ... changes the game, and I think when people watch on TV, when people come to the stadium, for players, for coaches, we all want the best version of our game, and there's no doubt that that's played on grass," said Bradley.

TFC's captain Caldwell went even further, saying he'd like to see artificial turf disappear altogether.

"I don't like it at all. I think that we should eradicate turf from football. It's an alien surface to play on. It's not good for the joints. It can be very dangerous at times as well," said Caldwell, who said he supports the suit by several top women players.

"I'm fully behind them. I don't think they should be playing the World Cup or any games on turf in any professional league. So fingers crossed that it's a precedent for the future, and that we can get into a position to eradicate turf from all professional leagues," said Caldwell.

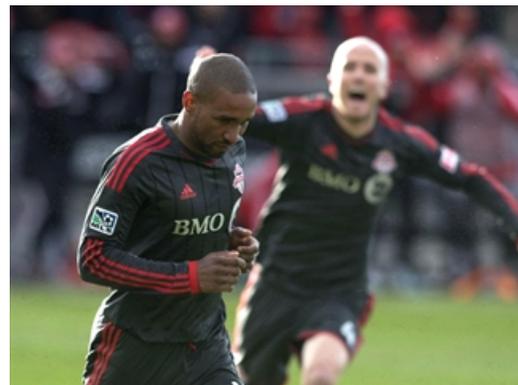
Also on Friday, Bradley dismissed criticism from U.S. national team coach Jurgen Klinsmann, who said recently that top players are hurting their international careers by leaving top European leagues to play in Major League Soccer (MLS).

"There's no denying this league is on the right track. I don't think anybody is trying to sit here at this moment in time and that it's on par with or better than the Premiership or the Bundesliga or Serie A or La Liga. That's my opinion and there should be no shame in saying that," said Bradley.

The proof, he said, is in the pudding.

"When you look at the number of players who come here and then go away with national teams and perform so well or get a World Cup and represent themselves in the best possible way, I think there can be no denying the fact it's a very good league, and one that continues to improve and improve," Bradley added.

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Toronto FC fans may have seen the last of Jermain Defoe. The 32-year-old England striker has aggravated a groin injury and will miss Saturday's home game against the Montreal Impact.