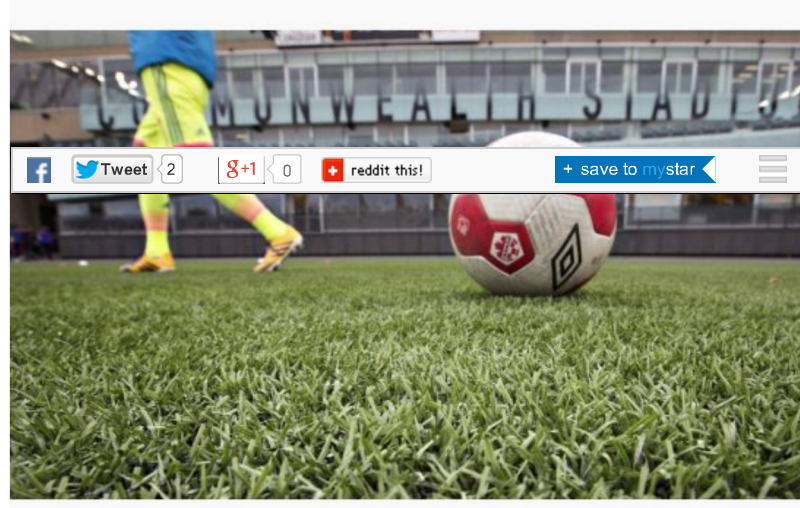


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Sports / Soccer

Women's World Cup turf lawsuit adds 'retaliation' claim

Soccer players claim FIFA, CSA threatened to take away national team spots if gender discrimination suit continues.



JASON FRANSON / THE CANADIAN PRESS
Japan's national women's soccer team warms up on artificial turf at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton on Saturday.

By: **Josh Rubin** Staff Reporter, Published on Mon Oct 27 2014

The Canadian Soccer Association and FIFA, the sport's world governing body, have told players heading for next summer's **women's World Cup** that they risk losing national team spots if they take part in a lawsuit alleging gender discrimination for being forced to **play on artificial turf**, according to an updated filing Monday.

The suit was refiled with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario late Monday to include a claim of "retaliation" by FIFA and the CSA. There was no immediate response by either soccer body.

"They don't have a right to . . . take the law into their own hands and threaten players with suspension. It is blatant violation of Canadian and Ontario human rights law to do so," said Hampton Dellinger, the U.S. lawyer spearheading the players' suit.

Monday's filing also says some players who pulled out of the suit claimed they had never agreed to join, a suggestion Dellinger denied. The updated suit asks FIFA, the CSA and other national federations to cease and desist from telling players their national team spots are in jeopardy if they participate in the legal action.

"Attempts to silence applicants serve to perpetuate the discrimination that the Human Rights Code is designed to prevent," the updated suit argued.

According to Dellinger, there are now 62 players in the lawsuit, up from just over 40 when it was filed in early October. Dellinger calls the proposed use of artificial turf at next summer's tournament in Canada "game-changing, dangerous and demeaning."

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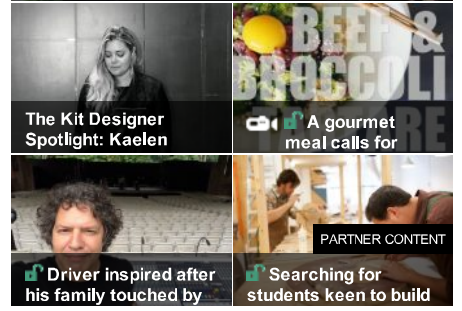
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