

# The NFL's Field of Dreams



**Figure 1 The Super Bowl is the biggest game so it should have the best field of play**

When it comes to the Super Bowl, most pundits and fans are interested in which quarterback can lead his team to victory, how good the halftime show will be, and which advert will be remembered and talked about incessantly on social media. Anyone concerned with [online betting on the Super Bowl](#) may also be looking out for the color of the Gatorade poured over the winning coach. But the field of play is not usually high up the conversation list.

That changed last year though, when repeated instances of players falling and slipping made the surface the hot topic. Apparently, the grass was over-watered before being transported to the State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, not allowing it enough time to dry in sunlight. When so much is on the line, the condition of the grass is probably the

last thing that Super Bowl players and coaches want to have to think about.

Super Bowl LVIII will be hosted by the Allegiant Stadium in Paradise, Nevada – home of the Las Vegas Raiders – and will, once again, sit on a tray that is only moved into the stadium shortly before game day. This is the same situation for the Raiders' grass all season long. The grass gets the sunlight it needs outside before being switched inside for games. Interestingly, the Raiders are the only team that plays on real grass in the stadium, with other college teams using artificial turf.

The best football players in the world expect the best surface to play on and last year's Super Bowl grass was lovingly prepared for two years before the Chiefs and the Eagles went head-to-head last February. The turf used was Tahoma 31, a newer breed of grass that had been developed with the funding of the United States Golf Association. Mixing two types of Bermuda grasses and rye grass, scientists developed what they thought would be the ultimate surface for such a grand occasion – before the over-watering incident made all the headlines instead.

Although we always look to find the best deals possible here, in order to help readers with their horticultural exploits, the NFL is quite happy to pay millions to get its turf just right in its biggest game of the season. But, as last year showed, it is not always in the best condition and some pundits criticized the league for prioritizing the durability of the grass to endure the halftime show over how it would stand up for the athletes battling it out in front of a multi-million global audience.



**Figure 2 The NFL will be hoping that the grass at the Allegiant Stadium is better than last year's Super Bowl surface**

The grass to be used for this year's Super Bowl is to be brought in from a farm in California and then re-sodded. The NFL will be keen that everything goes without a hitch this year, especially as the Raiders field has had its detractors during the regular season, with noticeable wear and tear in the end zones. The grass used for a Super Bowl is always specifically grown and developed though, so there was never any chance of substandard Raiders grass being used for the championship game.

Although artificial turf has been used in the NFL extensively since the 1970s, players have regularly preferred real grass, as the give it provides means that there are fewer non-contact injuries. Artificial turf may be cheaper to maintain but it is now possible to look after real grass in any climate – as

[recent games in Buffalo](#) and Kansas City have shown. There is also a traditional argument that the Super Bowl should be played on grass.

Whoever wins Super Bowl LVIII, the NFL will just be hoping that no one is talking about the grass this year.