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For Immediate Release

Arthur Ashe Stadium the latest to tap Birdair

Tennis is all about getting the advantage, and the [United States Tennis Association](#) (USTA) and [ROSSETTI](#), the architect of record for the Arthur Ashe Stadium, scored a match point when they tapped [Birdair](#) to design and build a retractable roof for the high-profile stadium. The venue, which serves as the home for the [US Open](#), will be protected with a retractable roof from Birdair. The 210,000-square-foot, PTFE membrane, retractable roof is expected to be installed by 2016.

“The Arthur Ashe Stadium is an iconic tennis facility and home to one of the most prestigious events in tennis,” said Doug Radcliffe, Project Manager, Birdair North America. “We are confident that Birdair’s innovative PTFE membrane roof will add beauty, protection and increased functionality to the stadium.”

The new stadium was designed by [ROSSETTI](#) with general contractor [Hunt](#), engineering firm, [WSP](#), and mechanization engineering firm, [Geiger](#). Hunt has contracted with Birdair for their design and installation expertise as well as their unique [PTFE membrane roofing system](#). PTFE, or polytetrafluoroethylene, is a Teflon®-coated woven fiberglass membrane that is extremely durable and weather resistant. The PTFE fiberglass membrane roof will provide fans with much-needed comfort and protection from the elements and allow daylight to reach the stadium’s tennis courts.

Arthur Ashe Stadium, which opened in 1997, is part of the [USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center](#) located within Flushing Meadows-Corona Park in the New York City borough of Queens. The stadium features state-of-the-art broadcast and audio systems, 90 luxury suites, five restaurants (including media and player dining), a two-level players' lounge, and individual seating for 22,547 fans.

A Long and Anticipated Enhancement

The USTA and frustrated fans have long-desired a retractable roof on Ashe Stadium, especially after five consecutive years of weather delays to the men’s final at the US Open. However, adding a retractable roof has proved to be a particularly difficult design challenge because of the facility’s size. Ashe stadium is the largest stadium in tennis, needing a roof three or four times the size of the one at Wimbledon’s Centre Court.

Adding to the challenge is the swamp-like soil underneath, which made adding the weight of a roof an engineering challenge. Over the last 10 years, the USTA conducted multiple studies trying to find a roof plan that was functional, financially feasible, aesthetically pleasing and

structurally stable. The USTA has consulted with every architect who has been involved in the design of a stadium roof in North America trying to find a solution. The winning plan finally came in 2010 from the ROSSETTI firm, the original architect and structural designer of Ashe Stadium.

To deal with the soil conditions, eight tree-branch-like columns will sit on massive concrete bases, each of which will be supported by 20 piles driven 150 to 200 feet deep. The lightweight PTFE roof will close from two sides, on glides, in five to seven minutes. It will cost more than \$100 million, but that is half the price of previously considered plans.

“PTFE is an excellence material for façades and roofing,” added Radcliffe. “First and foremost for this particular job, this lightweight membrane provides a cost-effective solution because it requires less structural steel to support the structure. An added bonus is the long spans of column-free space that it offers spectators. In addition, the membrane typically offers building owners reduced construction and maintenance costs compared to traditional building materials.”

The Ashe Stadium roof is part of a five-year renovation of the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, home of the US Open. The transformation, set to be completed in 2018, will also include two new state-of-the-art stadiums and a series of enhancements to enrich the overall experience for fans and players alike.

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***About Birdair:** Birdair, Inc. is the leading design build contractor of custom tensile structures throughout the world. In addition to pre-construction services such as design assistance, budgeting, construction methodologies and project scheduling, Birdair provides design build solutions in all aspects of project design, fabrication, installation and maintenance. The company offers a selection of architectural fabric membranes, including PTFE fiberglass, ETFE film, PVC and Tensotherm™, an insulated tensioned membrane system. Birdair, based in Buffalo, NY, is a member of the Taiyo Kogyo Group, with operations serving North and South America and other international locations. For more information about Birdair, [like us on Facebook](#), call 1-800-622-2246 or visit www.birdair.com.*

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