



Guidance to Coaches for Pitch Inspection

Pre Inspection

Be aware of the weather and its potential impact on your up-coming game(s) – keep an eye on the forecast in the days leading up to your game(s). You might want to warn the opposition in the days leading up to the match of the possibility of cancellation. Adrian Bush will also be in touch if it looks like the week's preceding weather will have an impact.

In some cases Adrian will have cancelled the match for you, but he might leave it to your judgement on the day or weather conditions may change quickly. Adrian will let you know if other groups have advised the club that we cannot use the pitches.

On the morning of the match make an inspection of the pitch early bearing in mind where your opposition are coming from and what time they would need to set out. If you decide to postpone, telephone the opposition in good time.

When carrying out a pitch inspection, try to wear suitable footwear so that you can make as accurate an assessment of the playing surface as it would be in a game i.e. get your football boots on if you can. In addition, it is also great to get a football that you can take onto the pitch too to see the effect any potential surface problem will have on a rolling/bouncing ball.

The Inspection

On your own and without any vested interest opinion (if possible), inspect the field of play.

Inspect all areas of the field of play but pay specific attention to areas of high traffic i.e. goal/penalty areas, the central third of the pitch from goal to goal/penalty area to penalty area... this is where the majority of the game will be played. Look to see that the playing surface is safe and/or playable i.e. not frozen/icy, not waterlogged and not covered in snow.

If the pitch is frozen/icy, are there ruts from previous games that would be dangerous i.e. they could cause twisted ankles etc. if stepped into and/or could cause cuts to legs/arms if slid over? If this is so, postpone the game.

When completing the field of play inspection, other areas for close inspection, are places covered in shadow from buildings or trees. They are more likely to be frost bound, rather than those areas basked in sunshine.

A surface which does not yield any purchase to studded boots is dangerous, and the game should not be sanctioned. This includes any part of the surface that does not yield, no matter how small an area.



If the pitch is waterlogged, does the ball run feely and/or bounce true i.e. does it gets get stuck in puddles/not bounce back up having hit the ground? If this is so, postpone the game.

If the pitch is covered in snow, are the pitch markings visible and/or does the ball run feely and/or bounce true i.e. are the lines covered in snow and/or does the ball get stuck in the snow or gather snow onto it as it rolls/not bounce back up having hit the ground? If this is so, postpone the game.

Take your time to assess the current weather conditions and be fully aware of the local forecast for the next few hours. If, as an example, the pitch is close to being waterlogged and heavy rain is falling and will continue to do so, will you be able to finish the game if you were to start it?

If a delay to kick off is possible, by all means consider this if it means the game can take place i.e. if kick off is 10.00am but a delay to 10.30am to allow the temperature to rise will allow to pitch to become safe then consider this (be mindful though of games that might follow yours, this might not be an option available to you). This is especially pertinent in respect of fog-bound pitches; a small delay could allow the game to take place safely.

Having said that, frozen or icy pitches will not become playable in a short space of time, they will need a substantial increase in the temperature to unfreeze – if the weather forecast doesn't support this happening, postpone the game

Post-Inspection

If you are in doubt about whether to play the game or not – postpone the game. It is better to postpone the game and be wrong, than play the game and be wrong!

Make a decision in your mind and stick to it (unless something really drastic occurs that would need you to change it i.e. the weather completely changes in a very short space of time).

If the game can go ahead, ensure you remind all those concerned that if for some reason things do change that cause you a real concern for the safety of players and yourself you do reserve the right to reverse your decision to preserve the safety of the players and yourself.

This is just a caveat in case of need; if you are in doubt about whether to play the game or not – postpone the game.

The reference point for your decision is always the safety of the players and yourself. If this cannot be guaranteed for the whole of the game re the playing surface/pitch conditions then postpone the game.

If you don't think you will finish the game... don't start the game.

DO NOT FORGET – To advise the league that the game was postponed immediately.