



WHITE HORSE CONTRACTORS

SOIL AND WATER ENGINEERING FOR SPORT LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

SPORTS FIELD MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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Schedule of revisions

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1. INTRODUCTION

To maintain the natural turf sports field in optimum condition and to ensure continual growth, vigour, density and overall performance it is necessary to implement a programmed maintenance regime. Failure to comply with the maintenance plan will lead to a reduction in performance and could ultimately prevent the pitches from being used for the intended duration and activity.

Maintenance activities should be undertaken by suitably trained and qualified personnel with appropriate risk assessment and methods of working in-place.

1.1 Usage

The winter sports pitches will be constructed using a Sport England Type 6 methodology. Sport England guidelines recommend that this type of construction can sustain **3 to 6 hours of use per week** (on average) for senior players and approximately 50% more than this for U15's. Usage includes matches, training sessions and any *ad-hoc* use. Increasing the level of usage beyond these guidelines may result in excessive wear and tear to the surface.

2. WINTER SPORTS PITCHES & OUTFIELD MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

This section sets out the guidelines for the routine annual maintenance of the natural turf sports field and outfield areas.

2.1 Mowing

Maintain grass height between approx. 35 – 50 mm using either rotary or cylinder mowing equipment. Frequent cutting to maintain grass height between these levels (2 – 3 times / week at peak growth) is essential to encourage and maintain a dense grass sward. 30+ cuts may be required per year depending on growing conditions. If the grass does become too long, its height should be reduced gradually by no more than 30% of its overall height in any one cut.

Grass clippings should not accumulate on the surface (frequent cutting will help to avoid this). If this does become problematic, clippings should be removed from the surface (e.g., using a grassland cut and collector) to disposal away from the sports pitch area.

2.2 Fertiliser

The following fertiliser regime is provided as a guide. The fertiliser regime should be adjusted according to grass growth and vigour, weather conditions and the results from routine soil chemical analysis.

- April See end-of-season renovation
- Jun 16-6-6 applied @ 35 g/m²
- Aug 16-6-6 applied @ 35 g/m²
- Dec 5-12-12 + 2% Fe + 1% MgO applied @ 35 g/m²

2.3 Decompaction

- Verti-drain using 25 mm dia. tines set at 150 mm spacing to a depth of approx. 200 mm. Forward speed of operation also set to achieve 150 mm spacing. Allow for 2 Nr. operations / season [e.g., April (as part of renovation programme) and October]. Only Verti-drain when ground conditions are suitable, i.e., sufficient moisture content to allow the tines to penetrate to their full depth but not so wet that the tines will cause smear.

2.4 Aeration

- Aerate using either solid pencil tines (8 mm dia) or grassland slitter to maintain an open surface. Undertake operation in-between verti-draining operations [e.g., March, May and November].

2.5 Irrigation [If Available]

- Irrigation should be applied to compensate for losses due to evapo-transpiration. Depending on rainfall, applications of up to 25 – 30 mm / week (in very hot and dry periods) may be necessary. Typical irrigation depth will be 5 - 10 mm / application. Irrigation should be applied in the evening or early morning.

2.6 Divoting

- Divots should be lifted (using a fork) and repaired after each use and filled with a divot mix comprising 70/30 (sand/soil mix) rootzone + grass seed.

2.7 Weed Control

- Apply a selective herbicide (by a qualified operative following label recommendations) to control the development of broad-leaved weeds should they become problematic (>10% ground cover). This should be applied when grass and weeds are actively growing.

Ideally, this should be timed to be applied approx. 2 weeks after a fertiliser application but before overseeding (e.g., April or August).

2.8 Pest & Disease Control

- Under advice, pests and diseases may need to be controlled using approved pesticides / fungicides as required.

2.9 Pitch Marking / White Lining

- Pitch line marking should be undertaken using a proprietary water-based paint. On no account should herbicides (or herbicide containing paint) be used to "burn out" the pitch markings.

2.10 End of Winter Season Renovation [April/May]

At the close of the winter sports season, the sports field should be renovated to include the following items:

- Scarify [intensity to be assessed at the time of renovation] to remove dead leaf matter and to remove organic matter accumulation at the surface. The arising's shall be collected and removed from the sports pitch area.
- Sand Topdressing. Supply and apply 6 mm depth of approved medium/fine sand using either a spinning disc spreader or drop spreader.
- Verti-drain to a depth of 200 mm using 25 mm dia. tines at 150 mm spacing.
- Drag mat / brush to work the sand topdressing into the surface.
- Fertilise using a 12-6-6 compound fertiliser applied at 35 g/m².
- Overseed in 2 directions using a heavy-duty disc seeder at a rate of 25 g/m² using an approved sports field seed mixture.

2.11 Drainage Infrastructure

- Provided the maintenance guidelines are followed:
 - The primary pipe drainage scheme should offer an operational lifespan of 30 years.
 - The secondary drainage scheme (Sand Slits) should offer an operational lifespan of 5 - 10 years after which time it is likely to require renewal.
- Manholes and Inspection Chambers should be inspected on a regular basis (at least twice / year) to check their condition. Any silt accumulation in the sump of the chamber(s) should be removed. The lid/cover should be inspected, and any damage repaired or replaced as required.
- Hydro-brakes and orifice plates should be inspected regularly in-line with the Manufacturers recommendations.
- Drain lines may settle due to shrinkage in the topsoil/subsoil. If settlement occurs, the drain lines should be topped-up with an approved rootzone (sand/soil mix) and then overseeded.

- Secondary drainage channels (sand slits) may also settle over time. These should be topped-up with an approved sand and then overseeded as required to maintain satisfactory surface levels.

2.12 Sports Equipment

- Goals should be checked for damage on a regular basis and repaired as necessary according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

3. CONTACT DETAILS

Confidentiality

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