



## Season 25/26 – Pitch Conditions

22/08/25

Several Clubs have expressed concern that pitch conditions have meant that players have been unable to prepare adequately for contact in league matches. This is the third time in 4 seasons that this issue has occurred, with the added challenge that pitches may be determined as unfit for play on opening weekend of September 6<sup>th</sup>. In order that we can manage and mitigate any impact on the league programme, the following protocol should be followed.

### 1) Clubs in National League 1 & 2:

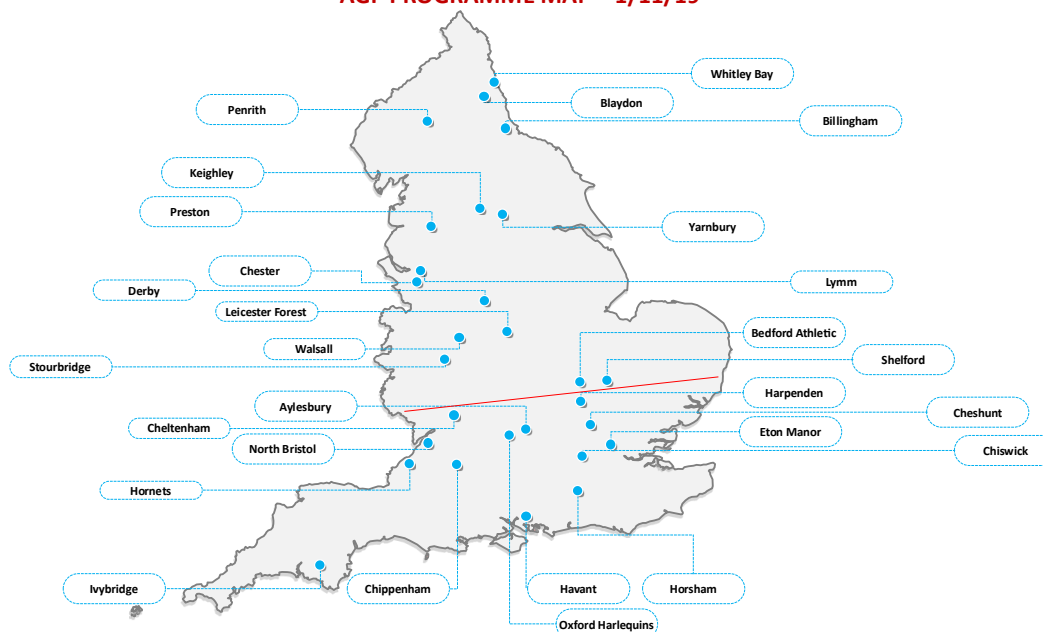
- NLR Exec should liaise directly with National League clubs, who may by virtue of their status have made appropriate plans for both training and matches.
- NLR is delegated to determine if matches on Week 1 can proceed and if not suggest alternative arrangements.
- Any dispute would be dealt with in the normal manner.

### 2) Clubs in Regional & Counties level:

- Where fixtures are scheduled for Week 1 (Sept 6<sup>th</sup>), Clubs should advise their opposition and their league secretary of any concerns by Noon on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August, one week ahead of the fixture.
- The League Secretary will advise clubs of the following options:
  - If either club has concern over player welfare (insufficient contact training) then the match can be postponed to the NAW.
  - If both clubs are satisfied their players are 'contact ready' and if the home club has concerns over pitch conditions, which are unlikely to change significantly, they should approach the away club to determine if switching the fixture is possible. Such request to be discussed with league secretary by Noon on 29<sup>th</sup> August.
  - If there are no concerns over contact preparedness but neither pitch is fit to play, then clubs should seek alternative pitch or AGP to fulfil fixture. This is by agreement between clubs and if no agreement then match is postponed to NAW.
  - At all times the league secretary MUST be advise and involved in the discussion.

Please note clubs can also gain access to the RFU AGPs by contacting [Rugby365@rfu.com](mailto:Rugby365@rfu.com). The attached a map that shows the locations of the RFU AGPs should anyone require it. It is fully appreciated not all clubs are local to these sites, but RFU will do their utmost to accommodate any requests.


AGP PROGRAMME MAP – 1/11/19





## Further information & resources to support Pitch Maintenance:





- [Managing rugby pitches in drought conditions.](#)
- RFU Facilities [Twitter](#)
- <https://linktr.ee/RFUFacilities>
- NTP Surface Risk Assessment (below)



# NATURAL TURF PITCHES

## SURFACE RISK ASSESSMENT

This document is designed to identify common sense considerations and risk factors when reviewing the safety of the surface of a natural turf pitch for rugby union matches and training

 <h3>PITCH TOO HARD</h3>	<p><b>Typical injuries: impact injuries; lower limb, shoulder, concussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Does it take a stud?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Does a pitch fork penetrate the surface easily?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> How much grass coverage (which absorbs impact) is there?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> If you have a clegg hammer; is the reading below 75?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is the ground harder where pitch markings have been 'burned' in?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is the pitch showing any signs of cracking?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> If frosty, what is the weather forecast?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> If frosty, is any of the pitch permanently in shade?</li></ul>	 <h3>FOREIGN OBJECTS ON PITCH</h3>	<p><b>Typical injuries: lacerations; infections, abrasions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is there any dog fouling on the pitch?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is there any glass or other sharp impediments?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is there any general litter?</li></ul>
 <h3>UNEVEN OR CRACKED PITCH</h3>	<p><b>Typical injuries: lower limb injuries (sprained ankles, knee ligaments)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Does the pitch have a lot of high and low spots?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you already identified that the pitch is hard? Undulations are more dangerous on a hard pitch.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Are any of the low spots holding water?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Are there any cracks in the pitch?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Are there any holes in the pitch?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Are the cracks/holes significant enough to affect a player's contact/interaction with the pitch?</li></ul>	 <h3>WATERLOGGED PITCH</h3>	<p><b>Typical injuries: joint injuries eg sprained ankles; knee ligaments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is there any standing water?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What is the weather forecast?</li></ul>

## REMEMBER

PLAYER SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT AT ALL TIMES  
SPEAK TO THE GROUNDS PERSON TO GET THEIR INPUT ON THE STATE OF THE PITCH  
100% OF THE FIELD MUST BE SAFE. IF A SMALL AREA IS UNSAFE THEN THE PITCH SHOULD NOT BE USED

Please note: whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this guide, any party who makes use of any part of this document in support of a risk assessment shall indemnify the Rugby Football Union (RFU), its servants, consultants or agents against all claims, proceedings, actions, damages, costs, expenses and any other liabilities for loss or damage to any property, or injury or death to any person that may be made against or incurred by the RFU arising out of or in connection with such use.

Kind Regards

Terry Burwell  
Chair, Adult Competitions Mgt Sub Committee

Dave Livesey  
National Competitions Manager