

## **Decision making policy related to fitness of pitches**

(Jan 2014)

### **Context.**

The primary consideration when deciding upon the suitability of the playing surface relates to the health and safety of the users.

Secondary to that are discretionary considerations relating to other requirements around the event/activity in question.

The above applies to all playing surfaces, grass and ATPs at Timperley Sports Club, though each will have their particular characteristics the same principle and process applies.

Our intention is that there should be a single decision-making process, agreed by the Club Executive Committee that will guide all those empowered to take a decision and provides support when required.

### **‘External’ Hires.**

Where hire of playing surfaces by external organisations, clubs, teams, individuals are concerned the ‘contractual agreement’ is between the club and the hirer. This includes any match, event or activity that is not directly organised by any of the constituted sports sections within TSC. Consequently, any decision to declare any playing surface fit or unfit rests with the clubs Club Manager in consultation with TSC’s groundsperson and Bar staff who may be present when conditions change.

It is usual custom and practice, when a decision to declare a playing surface unfit to make attempts to contact the hirer and inform them of that decision.

This decision can only be reversed if, in the opinion of the Club Manager / Groundsperson / Bar Manager if conditions have changed or by the Club Chair or Club Secretary and where possible should be after personal inspection and assessment

Timperley Junior FC, Manchester University and MMU are NOT a constituent of TSC and therefore are an ‘external’ hirer.

### **‘Internal’ Hires by TSC sports sections**

This relates to matches, training and other activities directly organised and managed by one of TSC four constituted sports sections at Timperley Sports Club only.

Assessment of the suitability and safety of all playing surfaces at TSC is made on a daily ongoing basis and regular maintenance work is normally scheduled around known bookings and matches.

Unless otherwise advised, it should be assumed that the playing surfaces are in a usable and safe condition and that all properly advised/confirmed bookings and matches are clear to go ahead as scheduled.

If something changes (ie pitch damage or weather), then this is the process the Club exec has adopted.

Firstly, if in the opinion of the Club Manager, based on consultation with the clubs Groundsperson, and/or Bar staff, some or all of the clubs playing surfaces (grass or ATP) are then deemed unfit or unsuitable to use, then a reasonable effort to contact the relevant section chair and/or usual person with responsibility for a specific session will be made as early as possible to inform them of that decision.

In most instances it is hoped that the above decision will be final.

However, it is understood that conditions change and on a few occasions, opinions may differ about the suitability and safety of the pitches.

Secondly,

If a team captain, coach or other individual with responsibility for the management of the session in question believes that a decision concerning the safety and suitability of a playing has been misinterpreted, then that individual may call upon their section chair to re-assess the situation.

The original decision by the Club to declare any/all playing surfaces unfit can only be reversed if the section chair personally conducts their own assessment. At which point the section chair should re-establish contact with the Club Manager to discuss the issue further and if possible, reach agreement.

Thirdly, If agreement is not possible, then the section chair can refer to either the TSC Club Chair or Club Secretary who's decision is FINAL.

### **Guidance.**

In such circumstances it is important to remain objective and focus upon the clubs responsibilities with regard to users health and safety and as such this supersedes ALL other considerations.

The focus should be on the 'objective dangers' introduced by weather and other natural occurrences and the issue being if the prevailing conditions now collectively present a danger to health.

There may be a possibility of minimising that objective danger by some maintenance or other remedial work, but in so doing those concerned, should be mindful that one danger is simply not replaced by another.

The Club has insurance cover for its 'Directors and Officers' and this extends to members of the Executive Committee (including the section chairs of Cricket, Mens Hockey, Ladies Hockey and Lacrosse) and its full time permanent employees. It is thought reasonable by our insurers that such persons should generally have suitable experience of the proposed activity gained over a number of years.

Our insurance cover does not extend to visiting officials, team captains, coaches, individual players, spectators or others purporting to have experience in this area. Their views and opinions have no standing whatsoever. Decisions concerning the safety of TSC pitches remain with the TSC Executive Committee and its employees – no one else.

End.