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Pitch Inspection Guidance

It is vital from the referees view point that when asked to undertake a pitch inspection, you do so professionally and remembering the overriding factor of player safety. At the forefront of your mind you must always think - is the playing surface safe to play on?

- If a pitch inspection is required (some competitions will allow the home club/venue to postpone a match), arrive in plenty of time to ensure the inspection is complete in good time. Keep both clubs informed as and when appropriate.
- Prior to reaching a decision the Referee who is making the inspection should consider the following
- Whether or not the ground (playing area) is dangerous (e.g. ice / frost)
- Whether or not conditions are or could turn farcical
- The views of the Home Club Groundsman in terms of local knowledge and draining capabilities in the event of standing water
- The existing condition of the playing surface in conjunction with the prevailing weather conditions as previously confirmed with the local weather authority
- Be seen to be active and inspect thoroughly! A professional approach must be adopted when carrying out an inspection. It is not acceptable just to take a cursory look at the field of play in normal dress (i.e. Suit / Blazer etc.). Sports kit should be worn, along with appropriate footwear (i.e. football boots). All areas of the pitch should be inspected. A ball should be used to determine whether the surface is playable (for movement and bounce).
- Fog creates its' own problems. Use perspectives from ground level and the back of a stand – check forecast (remember that there is a responsibility to paying spectators)
- When dealing with such elements as frost or ice – remember that the highest temperature of the day is usually around mid-day. Get a forecast if necessary of the projected temperature for the time when the match is due to conclude
- The manpower available to the Home Club to carry out any necessary work to make the ground playable
- The time the visiting Club are due to commence their journey
- Liaise with Managers to gauge the thoughts of both clubs



...remember the decision as to whether the match is played, is the referees.

- Once you have made your decision it's important to communicate it with the home and the away team.
- At some point it is important to also tell the competition, league or County depending on the game you are refereeing.



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