



WOMEN'S PYRAMID OF FOOTBALL
GROUND GRADING CATEGORY D – TIER 4



For clubs seeking promotion to Tier 3, they should read the latest Women's Grade C ground regulations.

Clubs should note these are the minimum requirements and should aspire to exceed all criteria where possible.

1. GROUND

The ground must give an overall appearance and impression of being a football ground suitable for the highest levels of the Women's Pyramid of Football.

1.1 Security of Tenure

Where a club does not own the freehold of their ground then evidence of adequate security of tenure for one season must be provided.

1.2 Club House

There must be a clubhouse facility either on or adjacent to the ground, which should be open on match days to provide refreshments and toilet facilities to spectators, officials and players, unless provided for elsewhere in the Ground.

1.3 Car Parking

There should be adequate car parking facilities on or near-by to the ground.

1.4 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

Subject to the provisions detailed below, there must be a permanent fixed barrier ideally 1.1 m high as measured from the spectator side, of sound construction (e.g. concrete and steel) and free from all sharp edges, surrounding the pitch on all sides that may be occupied by spectators. Existing barriers/rails not at 1.1m high may be acceptable, provided they meet the requirements set out in this clause.

Any barriers installed at new grounds should be purposely designed, with integrated infill panels as required and be made from UPVC or coated metal. The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction, must be infilled so that the ball cannot pass through or under it. Plastic multi-purpose hi-vis fencing is not considered suitable for infill. A barrier need not be erected on any side not open to the public.

Immediately in front of an area of seated accommodation the boundary of the playing area may be indicated by means other than a permanent fixed barrier, provided that the Club is able to provide assurances that no spectator will be allowed to stand in this area to watch the match.

Where there is a walkway in front of a standing terrace which is itself fronted by a crush barrier that has been subject to an annual risk assessment and, if necessary, tested, an alternative to a fixed barrier (e.g. A-frames) may be used, provided no spectators are allowed to stand in this area to watch the match. The Club must implement a safety management system to ensure this and also to protect the integrity of the playing area.

It is important to distinguish between a pitch perimeter barrier/rail, which exists to separate spectators from the playing area and a crush barrier, which has been constructed and tested according to the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. Where the structure cannot be designated as a crush barrier, e.g. its height exceeds 1.1m, the maximum depth of standing behind it is limited to 1.5m and this must be borne in mind in any capacity calculations.

It is recognised that the above may not be an issue for normal attendances but, when a larger crowd is anticipated, the Club should be mindful of the associated management issues and, if necessary, take professional advice.

Whatever system is employed, a club should be mindful of its responsibility to ensure spectator safety and minimise the possibility of unauthorised incursions on to the playing area.

NB where A-frames are utilised instead of a fixed barrier, they must be continuous.

1.5 Pitch Standards

The playing surface will be grass, unless otherwise authorised by the respective league Management Committee, and must be of a high standard. It must be level and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1:41 in any direction.

The playing surface must be maintained to the highest possible standards.

3G football turf

3G football turf may only be used provided conditions (i) to (v) below have been met (the "Performance Standard"):

- (i) The pitch must be surfaced with 3G football turf that has laboratory type approval according to the FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf (2012 & 2015 editions) – FIFA Recommended One Star/Quality level.
- (ii) The 3G football turf pitch must be listed on The Association's register of 3G football turf pitches by no later than 31 July and tested as per FA requirements at the Club's expense.
- (iii) Where a 3G football turf pitch is not yet listed on The Association's register (for example if it is a newly installed pitch), a Club must obtain a Laboratory Performance Test Certificate or Laboratory Report and submit it to The Association by no later than 31 July.

(iv) The Association reserves the right to instruct a Club to have its pitch tested at any time in order to ensure that it meets the Performance Standard. All such tests shall be at the Club's expense.

(v) The 3G football turf, including run-offs, shall be one continuous playing surface and shall be green in colour at least one metre from the outer edge of the touchline and goal line. All line markings shall be in accordance with the Laws of Association Football.

1.6 Playing Area

The playing area to be a minimum of 95 metres by 50 metres (105 yards x 55 yards) and should conform to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

Ideally, clubs should aim for the playing area to be a minimum of 100 metres by 64 metres, although this is not a requirement until Women's Grade C.

Goal posts and goal net supports should be of professional manufacture and conform to the current safety requirements and to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

NB Reference should be made to the Goalpost Safety information published by The Football Association and, in particular, it should be noted that the use of metal cup hooks is prohibited.

1.7 Technical Area

Two covered trainers benches clearly marked "Home" and "Away" or "Visitors" are to be provided. They should be at least 3 metres apart. They must be on the same side of the pitch ideally either side of the halfway line, ideally both equidistant from it and ideally a minimum of 3 metres apart and provide an unobstructed view of the playing area. Each box should accommodate at least 8 persons on fixed seats or benches.

Clubs should be mindful of the fact that clubs may require up to 11 seats in the technical area. Where the trainers bench does not have enough seats, then additional seating must be made available alongside or behind the bench, a minimum of 1m away.

Portable trainers' boxes are permitted and must be securely fixed when in use.

A Technical Area, as defined within the Laws of the Game should be marked out round each trainer's box.

1.8 Secure Walkway

There must be a safe, unimpeded passage for players and match officials between the dressing rooms and the pitch.

The use of protection designed products such as permanent structures or retractable tunnels to separate spectators and players/officials is recommended.

The design of the safe walkway will inevitably differ from ground to ground and it will rarely guarantee the safe passage of players and match officials unless supplemented by stewards.

2. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

2.1 Toilets

The following minimum toilet facilities must be provided:

- 2 Ladies WC's
- 1 Gents WC
- 2 Urinals or equivalent

In addition, there must be at least one hand basin in each Ladies and Gents toilet area with hot and cold running water. Warm air hand driers and/or paper towels with an appropriate dispenser together with a supply of toilet paper must be provided.

All toilet areas must be in working order, with a roof and operational lighting, supplied with toilet paper and maintained to a high level of cleanliness.

The location of all toilet facilities must be indicated with appropriate signage.

2.2 Disabled Facilities

A club must take full account of the needs of disabled spectators and be mindful of its obligations under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. Reference may be made to the publications / data sheets issued by the Football Foundation.

No specific requirement is currently included in the ground grading criteria, but The Football Association strongly recommends that access is provided to both a covered viewing area and toilet and refreshment facilities.

3. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and be heated, well ventilated, free from damp and secure on match days.

3.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the ground. Existing dressing rooms dimensions will be in order provided that they are of a minimum of 12 square metres. However, clubs wishing to progress should be aware of the need to increase to a minimum of 18 square metres. Where clubs are planning to build new changing rooms, these must be planned to be a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room must have the following:

- A shower area comprising of at least 4 showerheads

At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin together with a warm air hand drier and/or paper towels in an appropriate dispenser.

- All must have hot and cold running water

There must be access to a treatment table which is clean and in good condition for both the Home and Away teams.

3.2 Match Officials

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for match officials, the minimum size of which shall be 4 square metres excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room must have the following:

- At least 1 shower
- At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin together with a warm air hand drier and/or paper towels in an appropriate dispenser.

Provision should be made for separate changing accommodation for both male and female match officials.

There must be an audible electronic warning device (bell or buzzer) located in the match official's dressing room, which is linked to the player's dressing rooms.

All dressing room areas to be maintained to a high level of cleanliness and secure on match days

3. Medical

There must be a suitable qualified person (minimum F.A. Introduction to First Aid in Football) in attendance.

All clubs must provide first aid equipment at their ground.