

Grass Pitch Quality Performance Standard

What is it?

The Performance Quality Standard (PQS) provides a recommended minimum quality standard for the maintenance and construction of pitches. Specifically, it sets the basic standard recommended for natural grass pitches, which may be located at a variety of locations including a Club site, within a park or recreational ground.

Principally, this recommends that a natural grass pitch must:

- Have adequate grass cover
- Low level of weed coverage
- Be flat
- Have the ability to drain water

If met, the PQS ensures a flat drained surface suitable for 'recreational' and competitive football activities up to Step 1 of the Non-League pyramid.

Why was it developed?

There has been no commonly recognised basic technical standard for a natural grass pitch. In order to ensure that any funding produces pitches of sufficient quality for community and non-league competitive use, it is recognised that a performance quality standard has needed to be developed for all future projects.

How was it developed?

A voluntary technical consortium was established, with representation from the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI), National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) and the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG).

Whose standard is it?

The PQS has been adopted by Sport England as a basic quality standard for natural grass pitches, funded under their Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces programme. Whilst it was a programme specific standard, The FA has worked with Sport England in 2004 to adopt and develop the standard for its own project programme.

Who has used it?

The standard has been used during 2003/04 in relation to 871 pitches, strips and outfields across 226 projects (funded through the Playing Fields and Green Spaces programme).

Why are the tolerances set so high?

Tolerances were set as a direct result of input from the voluntary technical consortium. This body was established to agree on a common technical approach to be utilised under the programme. This included the development of the PQS.

Are you going to change it?

Sport England is currently undertaking a data checking exercise, in order to quantify the technical aspects of pitch improvement/construction. This technical data will be an important 'legacy', which will be passed onto The FA. This will allow us to benefit from the 'lessons learned' under the programme, particularly with reference to the implementation and measurement of the PQS.

Natural Grass Construction Upgrade Performance Quality Standard

Element	Limits	Method of use
Sward Height mm	20-60 PS 20-75 SM	BS 7370 : P3 A3
Hardness in g	35-200	STRI method of test using a 0.5kg Clegg Impact Hammer from a drop height of 0.55 m
Water infiltration rate mm/hr	5	BS 7370 : P3 A8
Evenness - 2 meter straight edge	< 20mm	BS 7370 : P3 A4
Slope – Direction of Play Across Play	< 1.25% < 2.5%	BS 7370 : P3 A5
Ground Cover %	> 70 for SH 25-30 > 80 for SH 30-35	BS 7370 : P3 A6