

# 3G PITCH MAINTENANCE

A SEASONAL GUIDE



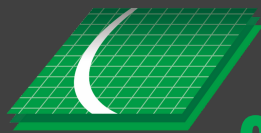
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# 3G PITCH MAINTENANCE

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REGULAR MAINTENANCE OF YOUR 3G PITCH IS ESSENTIAL TO HELP PRESERVE ITS **SAFE USE, DURABILITY, AESTHETICS AND PERFORMANCE LEVELS**. HOW LONG THESE QUALITIES LAST, AND HOW YOU MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR 3G PITCH, DEPENDS ON HOW WELL IT IS MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT ITS LIFE.

AS WITH NATURAL GRASS PITCHES, TIME AND EFFORT IS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN 3G FACILITIES. AT TECHNICAL SURFACES, WE WORK CLOSELY WITH INDIVIDUAL GROUNDS TEAMS TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE YEAR-ROUND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES TO COMPLEMENT THE CONSTRUCTION AND SEASONAL MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS OF 3G TURF.

THE **ESSENTIALS OF 3G PITCH MAINTENANCE** ARE CARRIED OUT BY THE GROUNDS TEAM. DUTIES INVOLVE BRUSHING, LIGHT DECOMPACTION, LITTER PICKING AND LEAF COLLECTION. IT IS ALSO GOOD PRACTICE TO IMPLEMENT DAILY VISUAL CHECKS - OF THE PLAYING SURFACE, ENTRANCE AREAS, PITCH SURROUNDS, DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, GOALS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT.

THESE ROUTINE TASKS SHOULD BE SUPPORTED BY **SPECIALIST MAINTENANCE**, SUCH AS THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY TECHNICAL SURFACES. THIS INCLUDES REGULAR SWEEPING, VEGETATION TREATMENTS, DECOMPACTIONS, INFILL TOP-UPS, DEEP-CLEANING AND REPAIR WORKS.

PREPARATION AND FORWARD PLANNING ARE KEY TO AN EFFECTIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME. TO ENSURE THAT YOUR FACILITY REMAINS IN PEAK CONDITION ALL YEAR ROUND, TECHNICAL SURFACES HAS COMPILED THIS **GUIDE TO MAINTAINING YOUR 3G PITCH THROUGHOUT THE SEASONS...**

Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter

#1

#2

#3

#4



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Spring



The weather conditions in spring can be problematic for 3G pitches, as rain showers and warmer temperatures encourage weed and moss growth. However, a consistent maintenance programme can help to ward off excess vegetation. Spring does provide an opportunity to review the condition of your 3G pitch now that it has emerged from the winter months. The focus should be on housekeeping – preparing the facility for increased use in the coming weeks.

## WEED GROWTH

- Due to their outdoor location, most 3G pitches will develop moss and weed growth if left untreated.
- Once established, vegetation can quickly develop and proliferate across a 3G pitch, particularly to the perimeter.
- Extensive moss levels will impact on the surface performance, including porosity levels and traction underfoot.
- Weeds should be removed as part of the Drag Brushing regime and / or daily checks, where excessive growth is noted. A little-and-often approach is preferred.
- A removal of weeds and moss can be completed by hand, and is particularly beneficial due to issues with chemical applications in inclement weather.
- Treatment with chemicals alone will simply cause the moss / weeds to break down into the infill, slowing the passage of water through the carpet.

## INFILL LEVELS

- The rubber infill supports the carpet fibres, adds weight and stability to the surface, and protects key playing characteristics such as ball roll and traction.
- It is normal for surfaces to lose infill as a result of migration, wind, rain, footfall (particularly in high-use areas - goalmouths, corners, penalty spots) and natural compaction.
- 3G pitches typically require a top up of at least 1-2mm annually.
- Infill levels and distribution should be monitored as part of the Drag Brushing regime and / or daily checks, so they can be corrected before infill displacement weakens the carpet fibres, increasing the rate at which the carpet wears, compromising the playing characteristics and impacting the life expectancy.

## LITTER COLLECTION

- Litter collection should form part of the daily checks.
- Increased participation is likely to generate more litter.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

• Weed Growth

• Infill Levels

• Litter Collection







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### Summer



Summer is the best time in the football calendar to coordinate the administrative requirements of 3G pitch maintenance, in preparation for the coming season. The dry, warm weather is ideal for deeper cleaning and line marking, and it is best practice to book these services in advance with your specialist maintenance provider, to minimise the risk of delay or postponement. If your pitch requires official testing to meet an industry standard (FIFA Quality, FA Register) contact your County FA to confirm the certification expiry dates.

## REFURBISHMENT

- With the demands on 3G surfaces often lower during the summer months, now is an ideal time to arrange for a deeper clean of your 3G pitch.
- An infill clogged with contaminants (e.g. decomposed leaves, vegetation, dirt and debris) can cause your pitch's drainage capabilities to slow down, as well as leaving the surface feeling hard underfoot and affecting playing qualities such as ball roll and bounce.
- If you notice silt, standing water and slow drainage, this is a sign that a deeper clean is required. If left unattended during the summer, the situation will worsen as autumn and winter approaches, increasing the risk of your pitch being out of action during the football season.

## LINE MARKING

- Painted lines can be added to your 3G pitch to create seasonal or temporary markings, or to accommodate new requirements post-installation.
- The weather can be a prohibitive factor when painting lines onto 3G surfaces. The paint is affected by cold and wet weather and is sensitive to the ground temperatures being appropriate to the specific system (a ground temperature above 5°C is required). Frost, snow and rain should all be avoided when painting lines.
- Allow a period of downtime during the summer for refreshing your painted line markings (approx. 24-48 hours to cure, depending on the ground temperatures)

## CERTIFICATION

- Confirm with your County FA that any FIFA / FA Register certifications are up to date.
- Where accreditation is required, indicative testing can be completed by Technical Surfaces in advance of official testing by an independent laboratory.
- Where any aspect of the play or performance characteristics are identified as requiring improvement, remedial action can be taken before official testing is completed.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Refurbishment

- Line Marking

- Certification







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### Autumn



Autumn is characterised by falling leaves, rain, high winds and declining temperatures, all of which can adversely affect your 3G pitch. As the new football season begins and teams return to training, it is important to ensure that gateway areas are suitably equipped to manage footfall and prevent mud, leaves and other debris from encroaching onto the playing surface. This time of year should also be utilised to attend to minor repairs or other areas of concern, before the onset of winter and the sudden drop in temperature, which can cause further damage to your 3G pitch.

## LEAF DEBRIS

- Leaf removal should be undertaken daily, by hand or using a suitable collector, to ensure this material is not left to break down into the infill and cause issues with contamination.
- Trim overhanging branches and clear leaf debris from outside any perimeter fencing.
- Ideally, leaf removal should be completed a minimum of once per day and should form part of the Drag Brushing regime and / or daily checks.
- Leaf removal times will vary depending on the number of trees on site and their proximity to the playing surface.

## PITCH REPAIRS

- Repairs can generally be completed in all weather conditions. However, extreme cold or heat will impact on the adhesive cure times, resulting in your facility being out of action for longer.
- Where areas of concern are noted, attend to these directly to avoid the risk of failed areas worsening as the weather gets colder.
- Allowance should be made within your 3G pitch maintenance budget for ad hoc repairs to be completed.
- Daily checks are vital in ensuring that repairs are promptly identified and actioned.

## GATEWAY AREAS

- These are highly-trafficked areas and should be protected with matting or grating to prevent damage and reduce the risk of contaminated material being transferred onto the playing surface.
- Keep gateway areas clean; treat vegetation growth, replace boot brush blocks as required, and remove any displaced rubber infill in an environmentally safe way
- Place suitable signage at the entrance to the facility advising of 'do's and don'ts' for players and spectators.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Leaf Debris



- Pitch Repairs



- Gateway Areas





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### Winter



Vigilance is key during winter, as extreme weather conditions can be severely disruptive to your 3G pitch. If maintained correctly all year round, 3G pitches can be played on in most weathers, but they cannot necessarily withstand a drop in temperature and the resulting frost and freezing conditions. As well as frost and snow, periods of heavy rain can expose underlying issues with surface drainage and infill contamination.

## FROZEN PITCHES

- A frozen or frosty 3G pitch can often be prevented by applying a specialist PDV (pure dried vacuum) salt to the surface. PDV salt has very few impurities, so is less likely to cause damage or contaminate the surface infill.
- Other products such as rock salt, grit or chemical-based solutions should be avoided, as they will break down and contaminate the infill, as well as impacting on the surface drainage and performance.
- PDV salt should be considered as a preventative anti-freeze application rather than as a de-icer. Typical guidance would be to spread a layer of approx. 250gm per m<sup>2</sup> and brush/work it into the surface so that it takes effect.
- A period of trial and error may be required to determine the correct quantity needed.
- The efficacy of this process relies on repeat applications.

## SNOWFALL

- Unfortunately, once snow is on a 3G pitch it is very difficult to move, particularly if it has been left for a day or longer.
- If it can be moved, there is also the issue of where to stockpile the snow until it melts.
- The major concern with snow removal from 3G pitches is that it also removes rubber crumb from the surface. When the snow thaws it releases the rubber granules, which are then difficult to redistribute into the surface. This can be costly to correct.
- The best course of action is to close the facility until any snow and ice thaws and the surface becomes safe to use.

## SURFACE WATER

- The need for adequate drainage is most apparent during winter, with increased rainfall and the potential for heavy snowfall.
- It is not uncommon for a 3G pitch to experience some standing water, as rubber infill retains excess water (similar to a natural turf surface).
- Surface drains and inspection chambers should form part of the daily checks, with any issues reported to your specialist maintenance provider.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Frozen Pitches



- Snowfall



- Surface Water

