

STAFFORDSHIRE FA END OF SEASON WORKSHOP

9th March 2022



GROUNDS
MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION



Making sport possible

PAS Regional Pitch Advisor Introduction

Kevin Duffill – Central West



- Involved in the programme since it's inception in 2014
- Often referred to by colleagues as a 'GMA Veteran!'
- More than 20 years grass roots club experience in grounds management and as a committee member.

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What support is available?

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Football Foundation Funding:

- The Football Foundations Grass Pitch Improvement Strategy is a **ten-year plan** to improve 20'000 grass pitches to the GMA “GOOD” standard by 2030.
- The Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund is a six-year grant, providing **up to £2500 inc. VAT** per 11 a side pitch, (£2,000 for 9 a side and £1,500 for Mini Soccer) 100% funded in the first two years and tapered down over years 3-6.
- This grant can be used to **employ contractors to carry out specialised works, purchase materials,** and purchase a **soil sampler.**
- Amount of funding available per pitch will depend on the **Performance Quality Standard** rating received.
- Produce your own maintenance schedule based on the recommendations in your **Pitch Power Assessment Report** to improve your pitch and sustain or enhance the pitch to the GMA's 'GOOD' PQS standard.
- Football Foundation Small Grants are available to support purchase of pitch maintenance equipment and machinery.
- The above grants are to improve grassroots community pitches. Pitches used for Step 7 are eligible so long as the predominant usage is for grassroots community teams. (The Football Stadium Improvement Fund is a fund which may be available for teams/venues at a higher level within the football pyramid).



Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund considerations:

- The funding is made available to support **enhanced maintenance works** recommended to raise or sustain the pitch towards/at the GMA's PQS standard of 'GOOD'.
Routine grass cutting and line marking are excluded from operations for which this funding can be used.
- There is a requirement to submit a minimum of two PitchPower assessments annually
the submission windows are:
 - (One of) April 1st – June 30th
(Or) July 1st – October 31st
 - (Mandatory window) November 1st – March 31st
- If the grant is awarded, two members of the organisation or club will need to complete the GMA's online Level 1 Winter Pitch training course.
- The club or organisation is responsible for organising and supervising works carried out by appointed contractors; recommended works should be completed on all pitches for which funding was applied.
- Site visits may be carried out to monitor performance progress.
- The funding rate for year 1+2 at 100%, 66% years 3 + 4, 33% years 5+6 – thereafter the pitch is required to be sustained at the GMA's PQS standard of 'GOOD' or above.

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End of season maintenance and pitch renovations...



End of season renovation, the basics....

- **Prepare – Reduce HOC**
- **Clean out - Scarify**
- **De-compact – Deep Aerate**
- **Restore evenness – Top Dress**
- **Restore grass cover - Overseed**
- **Grow in – Irrigation?**
- **Weed control – Timing?**



Preparing

- **Planing as early as possible is crucial...**
- **Mowing the grass down shorter will help facilitate effective renovations.**
- **Between 15-20mm is ideal.**
- **Mark up any services, pitch corners etc.**
- **Get a head start on any heavily worn areas.**
- **Consider a soil analysis early spring before committing to significant granular fertiliser order.**



Clean out

- Its important to disturb and remove dead grasses and organic matter that have built up over the season.
- Depending on budget and time this process can vary, less or more aggressive.
- Rake, scarify, chain harrow etc.
- Arisings must be collected and disposed of as appropriate.
- Best carried out in dry conditions.



Aeration / De-compaction

- Relieve the soil compaction that has taken place during the season.
- Vertical and not Linear.
- Better penetration of water, air and fertiliser in the soil.
- Improve rooting capacity (allows the roots space to increase depth and density)
- Improves turf health.
- Improves drainage.



Restore Pitch Levels

- A true even surface is crucial to player experience and safety.
- This can be achieved through top dressing.
- As a minimum look to top dress any bare and undulated areas particularly goal mouths and centre spots.
- Ideally the whole pitch should be top dressed.
- Typically, the aim is to apply approximately 6 - 14kgs/ m² /year (This equates to between 60 100tonnes) for a full size pitch eg (100x64m).
- Sand should be brushed or drag matted in after application. Keep sand dry and only spread in the dry.



Restore grass cover

- Through overseeding.
- To increase grass cover in a worn or thin area.
- To increase the population of desirable grasses and reduce the % of annual meadow grass.
- There are various types of seeders.
- Disc-seeders offer the highest germination yield in established pitches.
- Disc seed in 3 directions at a rate of 35 grams per square metre
- Approximately 10-12 x 20kg bags of Perennial Ryegrass seed for a full-size pitch (you may need to increase or reduce the rate depending on your grass coverage).



Grow in

- If you don't have access to irrigation seeding between mid-May and August is considered high risk. Consider 'splitting' the overseeding.
- Given the right conditions Perennial Ryegrass will typically germinate in 7-14 days.
- If you can, try and provide a means of watering areas that are likely to be bare at the point of seeding, such as goal mouths.
- Ideally, pre-seeder fertilisers are generally applied either prior to or just after seeding
- If you only have an adequate budget for 1 or 2 applications a year, try and choose a controlled or slow-release granular fertiliser that will offer several months steady nutrition a typical analysis for spring/summer usage might be 18-5-18 (N-P-K).
- Consider liquid alternatives – especially during the summer months.
- Grass height before mowing (rotary recommended), is usually around 40mm, this allows better root development and generally means the grass is adequately established. Alternate direction of cut to encourage tillering. Never cut more than a 1/3rd of the grass leaf at any one time.



Weed control

- Broad spectrum selective herbicide should typically be applied once per year by a fully qualified professional with the appropriate equipment and paperwork.
- It should generally not be applied within 6-8 weeks prior to or after seeding (refer to product label) .
- Typically mowing should not take place for 3 days before and 3 days after application. (Do not apply in drought conditions it may damage the turf and will not treat weeds effectively)
- Selective herbicides should be sprayed in the dry with little to no wind. Most selective herbicides are rain fast within 24 hours of application.
- Work with the contractor to ensure the selective herbicide chosen covers the weeds on site. Most good quality systemic selective herbicides should control common weeds such as Daisy, Dandelion, Greater Plantain, Clover etc.



Q&A Session...

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THANK YOU

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