



# Kent County Rugby Football Union



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## ALL-WEATHER PITCHES MAINTENANCE PROTOCOL & ADVICE TO CLUBS THAT USE / HIRE THEM

An increasing number of clubs in Kent have – or have access to and use of artificial pitches, which are used both for matches and training.

This document:

- Explains World Rugby's and the RFU's Regulations on the use of All-weather pitches;
- Sets out the obligations of clubs that own/operate them, either for their own use and/or hire them out to other rugby clubs and third parties;
- Provides advice to those rugby clubs and schools that hire all-weather pitches for matches and/or training.

### World Rugby and RFU Regulations

World Rugby Regulations state that rugby may not be played on any artificial surface that does not meet its Artificial Rugby Turf Performance Specification, as stipulated in World Rugby Regulation 22 (Standard Relating to the Use of Artificial Rugby Turf) and Law 1 of the Laws of the Game.

RFU Regulation 13.7.2 states that, where an artificial pitch is to be used, the club where the pitch is situated must comply with World Rugby Regulation 22.

### If your club possesses and operates an all-weather pitch...

It is the manufacturer's responsibility in the first instance, to ensure that any product being installed has been previously tested in the laboratory by an Accredited Test Institute (ATI), to ensure it meets the requirements set out in World Rugby's specification.

After an artificial pitch has been installed, it is the host club's responsibility to ensure that:

- Artificial pitches are well maintained, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions;
- they are inspected regularly (both by the club - we suggest each month - and at least every two years by the manufacturer/supplier) for wear & tear and faults, with date of inspections and any faults identified recorded;
- any and all faults are repaired immediately; and
- that adequate and appropriate insurance is in place.

Referees will, as with grass pitches, inspect AGPs before each match, to ensure that they are fit for play.

Clubs acquiring and/or responsible for the maintenance and/or management of the Artificial Rugby Turf surface should not rely solely upon the two-year ATI inspection.

Some artificial pitches may, between ATI-accredited inspections, become damaged or show signs of wear and tear, for example through over use, resulting in the 'carpet' lifting or being damaged in other ways that make the surface no longer fit for playing. This has obvious risks for player safety, for example if they were to trip and hurt/ break their ankle.

For player welfare, health and safety and insurance reasons, all artificial grass pitches that host 'contact' rugby union must be tested upon installation and then retested at least every two years to comply with World Rugby Regulation 22.

The test must be undertaken by a World Rugby accredited test house, of which there are two operating in the UK:

- Labosport: Contact Colin Young, 0115 681998, [Colin.Young@labosport.co.uk](mailto:Colin.Young@labosport.co.uk)
- Sports Labs: Contact Keith Macpherson 7943846611, [keith@sportslabs.co.uk](mailto:keith@sportslabs.co.uk)

If the test demonstrates that your facility meets the relevant standard, formal permission will be granted by the RFU for the next two-year phase.

### **If your club (or school) is proposing to hire an all-weather pitch...**

Any rugby club or school wishing to hire the use of an all-weather pitch from another club or school, either to play matches or for training, should satisfy itself that the host club (or school) can demonstrate that the artificial pitch is fit for use, by requiring to see copies of both the latest ATI Inspection certificate, and the host's public liability insurance certificate. It is advised, also, and where possible that a potential hirer seeks to carry out a visual inspection of the pitch before any rental agreement is signed.

If any previously unidentified damage is spotted during the hiring period, the host club should be informed of this by the hirer as soon as possible after use.

### **Clubs' Responsibilities for matches**

Clubs proposing to use an AGP in any match or matches in an RFU competition, must inform the competition Committee in writing at least 30 days before the start of the season or, if during the season, at least 30 days (or such a shorter period as the Committee may agree in an emergency) prior to such artificial pitch being used for a match in any RFU competition

### **Further details**

Further information is available on the RFU's website (<http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/club-support/facilities-kit-and-equipment/artificial-surfaces/artificial-grass-pitch-testing/> ) and at World Rugby (<http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/playingsurfaces> ).

David Clent, Chairman, Game Development Committee  
Phil Mooney, Chairman, Club Development Committee  
David Oliver, Chief Operating Officer, KSFRUR