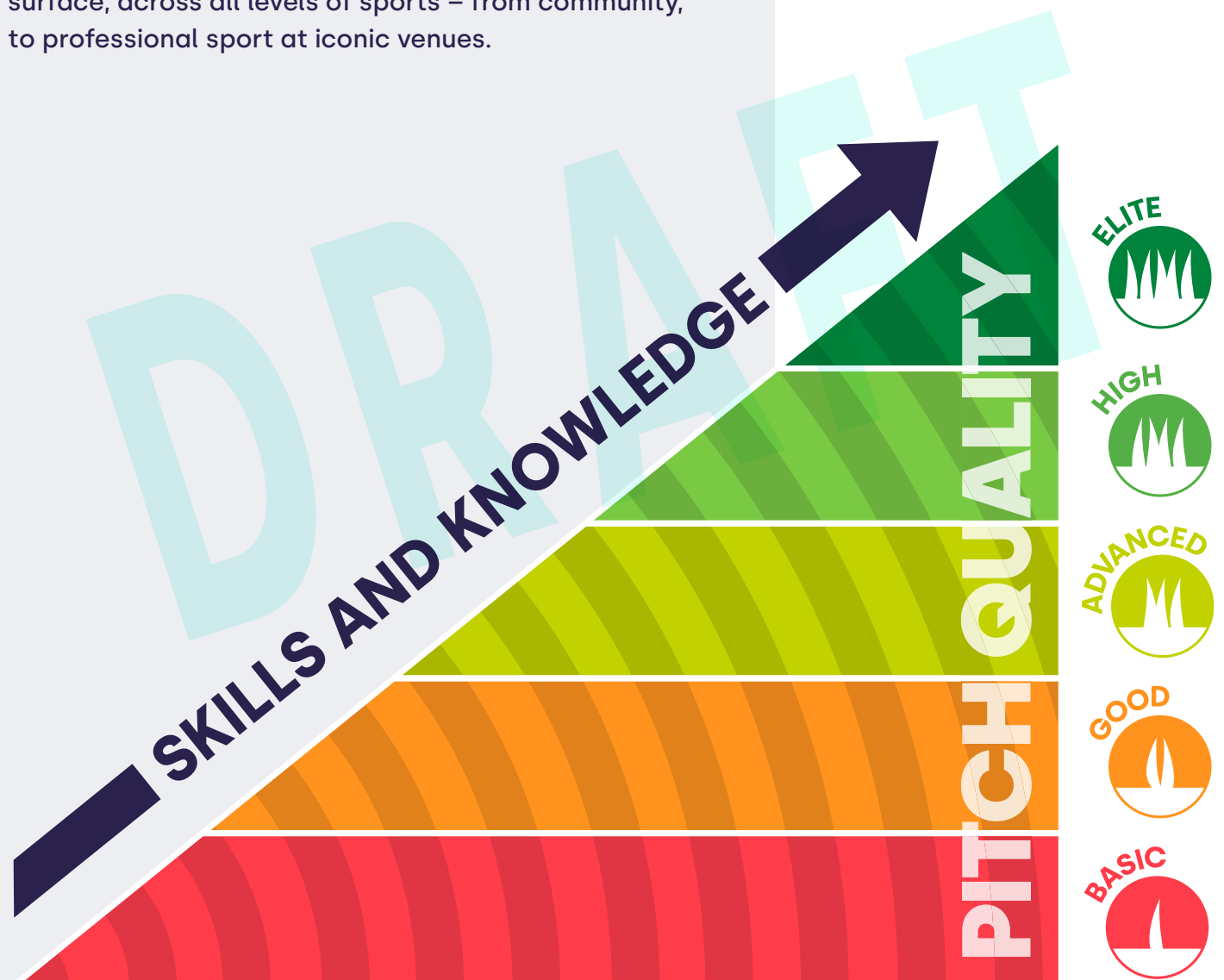


PITCH GRADING FRAMEWORK

for the professional and volunteer

This framework uses a highly tested and developed set of parameters to benchmark the quality of each surface, across all levels of sports – from community, to professional sport at iconic venues.



BASIC



What does this mean?

A pitch/surface that is safe for recreational sport and meets the minimum playing needs and expectations of community players nationwide.

The Playing Surface

The pitch, court or green is of a quality that provides a safe environment for players. The player experience will be limited as the quality of the surface may restrict the range of skills possible. It is likely to perform reasonably well during good weather however the pitch would deteriorate during extended periods of high intensity usage or inclement weather.

GOOD



What does this mean?

A pitch/surface that is good quality and safe for recreational sport. It meets the playing needs and expectations of community players nationwide.

The Playing Surface

The pitch, court or green is of a quality that provides a good experience for recreational players providing a surface that is reliable and consistent. The pitch should be able to sustain a reasonably high level of activity without significant deterioration of the surface. It would have some resilience during periods of adverse weather however this capacity will still be limited so usage during these periods will need to be managed carefully.

ADVANCED



What does this mean?

A pitch/surface that is high quality and meets the needs of top-level recreational sport. It meets the playing needs and expectations of both community and semi-professional players nationwide.

The Playing Surface

The pitch, court or green provides a high quality experience for all users and can host significant levels of activity. The playing quality of the pitch would be very good and provide a consistent and reliable surface for users to demonstrate their skills.

It is likely that the pitch would have a good functioning drainage and irrigation system which would make it resilient during periods of adverse weather. It should also be able to sustain periods of high intensity usage without significant deterioration of the surface.

HIGH



What does this mean?

A pitch/surface that is of a very high quality that meets the needs of professional and semi-professional sport in the UK. It meets the playing needs and expectations of professional and semi-professional athletes nationwide.

The Playing Surface

The pitch, court or green provides an excellent experience for users and is resilient to adverse weather conditions. It will be able to host significant levels of activity and be able to meet the needs and demands of professional athletes.

It also needs to be able to provide a high quality surface throughout the playing season with the aim of improving player performance and spectator enjoyment.

ELITE



What does this mean?

A pitch/surface that is of an outstanding quality and meets the standards of play for elite sport in the UK. It meets the playing needs and expectations of professional athletes, both nationwide and globally.

The Playing Surface

The pitch, court or green meets all the needs of professional sport and provides a top-class playing surface for players to demonstrate their skills. It is virtually fully resilient to all adverse weather conditions and can host very large levels of activity throughout the year.

At the heart of these pitches are maximising player performance and increasing spectator enjoyment.

Pitch Grading Framework


FOOTBALL




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Football - Start of Playing Season - July to October

Performance Standard				Unit of measurement		Basic	Good	Advanced	High	What this means	
<div><div>GROUND MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION</div><div><div>PITCH GRADING FRAMEWORK</div><div><div>SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE</div><div>PITCH QUALITY</div><div>ELITE HIGH ADVANCED GOOD BASIC</div></div></div></div>	Length of grass	mm	Between	60 - 75	45 - 59	35 - 44	22 - 34	The measured min/max cutting heights in mm for the season stated. In dry weather. It is often appropriate to increase grass mowing height.			POOR/UNCLASSIFIED A pitch/surface that fails to meet the minimum standards of the GMA's Pitch Grading Framework and could be deemed to be of poor quality.
	Total grass cover	%	Between	65 - 74	75 - 84	85 - 94	>95	The measured % extent of grass cover, incl. unwanted grass species as well as desirable grass species.			
	Weeds	%	Between	11 - 15	6 - 10	3 - 5	<2	The maximum % of weeds, moss, algae and lichen within each sampled area.			BASIC A pitch/surface that is safe for recreational sport and meets the minimum playing needs and expectations of community players nationwide.
	Thatch	mm	Between	8 - 10	6 - 7	2 - 5	<2	The maximum depth of thatch, integrated thatch, or buried fibre averaged over the samples taken.			
	Root depth	%	Minimum	70	85	100	125	The measured healthy root penetration in the sampled core.			GOOD A pitch/surface that is good quality and safe for recreational sport. It meets the playing needs and expectations of community players nationwide.
	Topsoil	mm	Minimum	100	125	150	175	The measured depth of topsoil.			
	Goal posts	Visual	Compliance	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Uprights are to be at right angles to the surface of the pitch (taking into account the gradient of the pitch). Crossbars are to be at right angles to the uprights. All posts to be in accordance with NGB guidelines and should conform with BSEN 16579 (2018) Safety Standards. Posts will be visually assessed and designated as Compliant or Non-compliant.			ADVANCED A pitch/surface that is high quality and meets the needs of top-level recreational sport. It meets the playing needs and expectations of both community and semi-professional players nationwide.
	Line marking	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	Above standard: Line markings are always clear and straight Standard: Line markings are always visible but not straight Below standard: Line markings are not visible or have been applied using a non-standard material e.g. herbicide.			
	Drainage	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	Above standard: Free draining - no standing water Standard: Slow draining - The pitch is playable, but soft underfoot and affects the quality of play for about 24 hours after heavy rainfall Below standard: Standing water - The pitch is still unplayable 24 hours after heavy rainfall			HIGH A pitch/surface that is of a very high quality that meets the needs of professional and semi-professional sport in the UK. It meets the playing needs and expectations of professional and semi-professional athletes nationwide.
	Pitch surface levels/Evenness	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	How flat and level your playing surface is can have a significant impact on the playing experience, and if not kept to a good standard, can lead to ponding (puddles) during wet weather. Above standard: The playing surface is flat without any significant undulations (lumps and bumps) Standard: The playing surface is generally flat with some minimal undulations (lumps and bumps) Below standard: The playing surface has significant undulations (lumps and bumps)			
Surface debris	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	Any material that may be present on your playing surface that could affect the quality of matchplay or the ability to maintain the surface adequately. This may include: grass clippings, leaves, litter and animal faeces etc. Above standard: Surface debris does not impact on playing quality Standard: Surface debris has a slight impact on playing quality Below standard: Surface debris has a big impact on playing quality				

Football - Mid Playing Season - November to March

<div><div><div>GROUND MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION</div></div><div><div>PITCH GRADING FRAMEWORK</div></div></div>	Performance Standard	Unit of measurement		Basic	Good	Advanced	High	What this means	
	Length of grass	mm	Between	60 - 75	45 - 59	35 - 44	22 - 34	The measured min/max cutting heights in mm for the season stated. In dry weather. It is often appropriate to increase grass mowing height.	POOR/UNCLASSIFIED A pitch/surface that fails to meet the minimum standards of the GMA's Pitch Grading Framework and could be deemed to be of poor quality.
	Total grass cover	%	Between	61 - 70	71 - 80	81 - 90	>90	The measured % extent of grass cover, incl. unwanted grass species as well as desirable grass species.	
	Weeds	%	Between	16 - 20	11 - 15	6 - 10	<5	The maximum % of weeds, moss, algae and lichen within each sampled area.	BASIC A pitch/surface that is safe for recreational sport and meets the minimum playing needs and expectations of community players nationwide.
	Thatch	mm	Between	15 - 19	10 - 14	5 - 9	<5	The maximum depth of thatch, integrated thatch, or buried fibre averaged over the samples taken.	
	Root depth	%	Minimum	70	85	100	125	The measured healthy root penetration in the sampled core.	
	Topsoil	mm	Minimum	100	125	150	175	The measured depth of topsoil.	GOOD A pitch/surface that is good quality and safe for recreational sport. It meets the playing needs and expectations of community players nationwide.
	Goal posts	Visual	Compliance	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Uprights are to be at right angles to the surface of the pitch (taking into account the gradient of the pitch). Crossbars are to be at right angles to the uprights. All posts to be in accordance with NGB guidelines and should conform with BSEN 16579 (2018) Safety Standards. Posts will be visually assessed and designated as Compliant or Non-compliant.	
	Line marking	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	Above standard: Line markings are always clear and straight Standard: Line markings are always visible but not straight Below standard: Line markings are not visible or have been applied using a non-standard material e.g. herbicide.	ADVANCED A pitch/surface that is high quality and meets the needs of top-level recreational sport. It meets the playing needs and expectations of both community and semi-professional players nationwide.
	Drainage	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	Above standard: Free draining - no standing water Standard: Slow draining - The pitch is playable, but soft underfoot and affects the quality of play for about 24 hours after heavy rainfall Below standard: Standing water - The pitch is still unplayable 24 hours after heavy rainfall	
Pitch surface levels/Evenness	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	How flat and level your playing surface is can have a significant impact on the playing experience, and if not kept to a good standard, can lead to ponding (puddles) during wet weather. Above standard: The playing surface is flat without any significant undulations (lumps and bumps) Standard: The playing surface is generally flat with some minimal undulations (lumps and bumps) Below standard: The playing surface has significant undulations (lumps and bumps)	HIGH A pitch/surface that is of a very high quality that meets the needs of professional and semi-professional sport in the UK. It meets the playing needs and expectations of professional and semi-professional athletes nationwide.	
Surface debris	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	Any material that may be present on your playing surface that could affect the quality of matchplay or the ability to maintain the surface adequately. This may include: grass clippings, leaves, litter and animal faeces etc. Above standard: Surface debris does not impact on playing quality Standard: Surface debris has a slight impact on playing quality Below standard: Surface debris has a big impact on playing quality		

Football - End/Non Playing Season - April to June

	Performance Standard	Unit of measurement		Basic	Good	Advanced	High	What this means
<div><div>GROUND MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION</div><div><div>PITCH GRADING FRAMEWORK</div><div><div>SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE</div><div>PITCH QUALITY</div><div>ELITE HIGH ADVANCED GOOD BASIC</div></div></div></div>	Length of grass	mm	Between	60 - 75	45 - 59	35 - 44	22 - 34	The measured min/max cutting heights in mm for the season stated. In dry weather. It is often appropriate to increase grass mowing height.
	Total grass cover	%	Between	50 - 64	64 - 74	75 - 84	>85	The measured % extent of grass cover, incl. unwanted grass species as well as desirable grass species.
	Weeds	%	Between	19 - 25	14 - 20	11 - 15	<10	The maximum % of weeds, moss, algae and lichen within each sampled area.
	Thatch	mm	Between	15 - 19	10 - 14	5 - 9	<5	The maximum depth of thatch, integrated thatch, or buried fibre averaged over the samples taken.
	Root depth	%	Minimum	70	85	100	125	The measured healthy root penetration in the sampled core.
	Topsoil	mm	Minimum	100	125	150	175	The measured depth of topsoil.
	Goal posts	Visual	Compliance	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Uprights are to be at right angles to the surface of the pitch (taking into account the gradient of the pitch). Crossbars are to be at right angles to the uprights. All posts to be in accordance with NGB guidelines and should conform with BSEN 16579 (2018) Safety Standards. Posts will be visually assessed and designated as Compliant or Non-compliant.
	Line marking	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	Above standard: Line markings are always clear and straight Standard: Line markings are always visible but not straight Below standard: Line markings are not visible or have been applied using a non-standard material e.g. herbicide.
	Drainage	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	Above standard: Free draining - no standing water Standard: Slow draining - The pitch is playable, but soft underfoot and affects the quality of play for about 24 hours after heavy rainfall Below standard: Standing water - The pitch is still unplayable 24 hours after heavy rainfall
	Pitch surface levels/Evenness	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	How flat and level your playing surface is can have a significant impact on the playing experience, and if not kept to a good standard, can lead to ponding (puddles) during wet weather. Above standard: The playing surface is flat without any significant undulations (lumps and bumps) Standard: The playing surface is generally flat with some minimal undulations (lumps and bumps) Below standard: The playing surface has significant undulations (lumps and bumps)
Surface debris	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	Any material that may be present on your playing surface that could affect the quality of matchplay or the ability to maintain the surface adequately. This may include: grass clippings, leaves, litter and animal faeces etc. Above standard: Surface debris does not impact on playing quality Standard: Surface debris has a slight impact on playing quality Below standard: Surface debris has a big impact on playing quality	

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POOR/UNCLASSIFIED
A pitch/surface that fails to meet the minimum standards of the GMA's Pitch Grading Framework and could be deemed to be of poor quality.

BASIC
A pitch/surface that is safe for recreational sport and meets the minimum playing needs and expectations of community players nationwide.

GOOD
A pitch/surface that is good quality and safe for recreational sport. It meets the playing needs and expectations of community players nationwide.

ADVANCED
A pitch/surface that is high quality and meets the needs of top-level recreational sport. It meets the playing needs and expectations of both community and semi-professional players nationwide.

HIGH
A pitch/surface that is of a very high quality that meets the needs of professional and semi-professional sport in the UK. It meets the playing needs and expectations of professional and semi-professional athletes nationwide.



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