

**Grounds Association**

**Pitch Advisors February Blog**

**February Frustrations**

Well we didn’t get the *Beast from the East* as mentioned in last month’s blog. Instead we were treated to Storm Christoph and boy did it put down some rain.

With us still not knowing whether the season is going to start on time, we do still need to tend to our grounds. However, operations on the square and outfield still need to be tackled but you will need to flexible and only carry out operations when conditions allow, which as we speak are horrendous.

We have probably come to the end of solid tine operations unless your square is constructed with Mendip loam, as this has slightly lower clay content. Look to top off your square at 12-15mm and outfields at 18-20mm. Drag brush the square if dampness is evident before cutting. Consider sarrel rolling to pin prick and lightly roll the surface.

I have recently used a soil conditioner from Battersby’s on the square with good effect. While strengthening the grass it also inadvertently acts as a worm suppressant, but unfortunately it isn’t cheap. The instructions say *‘Rain needs to be due for best results.’* I don’t think we should have any problems in Lancashire!!!!!

Satisfy yourself that equipment/machinery is up to scratch or at least booked in for a service. There is nothing more frustrating than a machine that is not cutting properly or keeps breaking down. Diesel engines require cranking up on a weekly basis. Check that your mobile covers and sightscreens are up to the required standard.

**Checklist:-**

* Stumps & Bails
* Fielding discs (48), bowling markers
* Boundary rope/Line marker/flags
* White/Blue marking paint, Sawdust
* Fuel (Diesel & petrol), Oil, WD40
* Popping crease frame/straight edge
* Stiff brush, wheelbarrow (tyre pressure)
* Loam and seed for repairs

**LANCASHIRE PITCH ADVISOR SERVICES**

Whilst the Pitch Advisors are mentioned on the main page here is a summary of what services are provided by our County Pitch Advisors: -

1. Verbal consultancies on ground and machinery issues. These will cost from £50 to £100 plus travelling, depending on the time taken.
2. Mini written reports on ground and machinery issues. These will cost from £75 to £150 plus travelling, depending on the complexity of the issue.
3. Full Performance Quality Standard Report on a square or outfield. These are usually necessary as the first step if Grant Aid or loan funding is to be sought from the ECB for such projects as pitch construction or outfield drainage. These cost £250 plus any soil sampling required (currently £95) and travelling.

Also, we have done site visits to assess and advise clubs to help new or struggling groundsmen to improve the facilities and advise committees on the best way forward with the resources they have.

We also hold a stock of hire machinery on trailers to help with pitch renovation and winter maintenance. This includes top quality scarifiers, spikers and top dressers.