

ENGLAND AND WALES CRICKET BOARD

PITCH REGULATIONS

2021

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Introduction

These regulations intend to pull together all relevant information that is appropriate to the marking and monitoring of pitches in both international and domestic cricket for the 2021 season.

In respect of domestic cricket, these Regulations shall apply in the following ECB competitions/matches:-

- (i) LV= Insurance County Championship
- (ii) Royal London Cup
- (iii) Vitality Blast
- (iv) The Men's Hundred and The Women's Hundred

In addition, where appropriate (for example, the criteria for the rating of pitches):-

- (v) Second XI Championship
- (vi) Second XI T20
- (vii) Second XI Friendlies
- (viii) Matches between First Class Counties, Touring Teams, England Teams
- (ix) Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy
- (x) Women's Regional T20

For the avoidance of doubt, liability for pitch preparation is with the relevant Hundred team in that competition and with the County in the First-Class County competition/s.

Any warnings or penalties in respect of pitches in The Hundred shall apply to that Men's or Women's competition only.

No First-Class County warnings or penalties in respect of pitches shall impact on The Hundred or vice versa.

Please note that wherever penalties may be applied in domestic cricket, for the avoidance of doubt, if a match is played at an outground or a neutral venue (with particular reference to another County HQ), any resulting pitch penalty is applied to the "home" team and not the County hosting the match.

INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

Test Match, One-Day International and International T20 pitches are included within the protocol below:

Objective

The England Cricket Department will liaise with the home authority regarding the nature of the pitch and the practice facilities required for the international matches at that venue. Any communication from the home authority during the preparation of the pitch will be with the England Cricket Department or the Cricket Operations Department, who will pass on any relevant information as appropriate.

Monitoring Process and Maintenance of Standards

Quality of international pitches and outfields are monitored via an ICC Pitch and Outfield Report completed by the ICC Match Referee. A report on the preparation of the pitch is also submitted by the Head Groundsperson.

ICC's Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process is available <u>here</u> Additionally, ECB staging agreements lay down requirements for the venue in respect of pitch, outfield and other matters which should be referenced as appropriate.

Cores

Should a core need to be taken for analysis, it should be taken 2ft 6in in from each edge of the pitch, half-way between the two ends of the pitch.

Covering

Covering regulations as laid down by ICC will apply.

Domestic Matches

Rating of Pitches

FIRST CLASS MATCHES (3 DAYS OR MORE)

Objective

Pitches should be prepared to provide an even contest between bat and ball and should allow all disciplines in the game to flourish. In all cases, pitches will be judged on <u>how they play</u>, and not whether they are dry or what colour they are etc.

In matches where a Match Referee is appointed, the Match Referee shall be ultimately responsible for the rating of pitches. In other cases, it shall be the Match Umpires.

Prior to the start of the match, the appointed Match Referee shall obtain pitch preparation information relevant to the match, including moisture and hardness readings.

Pitch Categories and Criteria

In accordance with the objective for the preparation of 3-day/4-day/5-day pitches, the following are the agreed categories and criteria for the rating of first-class cricket pitches.

Fulfilment of the lowest criteria will determine the overall rating for the pitch. For example, if the pitch demonstrates:

No unevenness of bounce at any stage throughout the match, and

At most, occasional seam movement at all stages of the match, and

Moderate turn from the protected area throughout the match BUT

Lacks carry and/or bounce on the first or second playing days of the match,

then it <u>must</u> be rated "Below Average" due to the failure to meet a higher carry and/or bounce criterion.

	Unevenness	Seam Movement	Carry and/or Bounce	Turn
Very Good	At most, occasional unevenness of bounce at any stage of the match	At most, occasional seam movement at all stages of the match	Good carry and/or bounce throughout the match.	A little or moderate turn from the protected area on the first two days, AND wearing to considerable turn from the protected area on the third and fourth days of play OR moderate turn from the protected area turn from the protected area throughout the match.
Good			Average carry and/or bounce throughout the match.	Moderate turn from the protected area on the third or fourth playing days of the match.
Above Average	At most, more than occasional unevenness of bounce on the third or fourth playing days of the match.	At most, regular seam movement (at any stage) on only the first playing day of the match	Lacking carry and/or bounce on the third or fourth playing days of the match.	Little or no turn from the protected area throughout the match OR Considerable turn from the protected area on the first or second playing days of the match OR Excessive turn from the protected area on the third or fourth playing days of the match
Below Average	At most, more than occasional unevenness of bounce on the first or second playing days of the match.	At most, regular seam movement (at any stage) on the first AND second OR further playing days of the match	Lacking carry and/or bounce on the first or second playing days of the match.	Excessive turn from the protected area on the first or second playing days of the match.
Poor	Excessive unevenness of bounce for any bowler at any stage of the match	Excessive seam movement at any stage of the match		
Unfit	A	pitch is rated unfit or	nly if it is dangerous	

Clarifications

- Excessive means "(<u>far</u>) too much". It is recognised that even on the best pitches a delivery can demonstrate "excessive" behaviour. In assessing a pitch rating therefore, "how often" must be considered along with "how much".
- It is recognised that a limited amount of seam movement may occur early in the match and that a pitch may develop some unevenness of bounce for seam bowlers as the match progresses. This is acceptable but should not develop to a point where they would be described as "excessive" (or where ball is completely dominating the bat)
- When assessing the pitch, Match Referees shall:-
 - consider the balance between bat and ball
 - take into account the type, nature and identity of the bowlers
 - climatic conditions
- There is nothing wrong with a pitch that affords some degree of turn on the first day of a
 match though anything more than occasional unevenness of bounce at this stage of the
 match is not expected. It is to be expected that a pitch will turn steadily more as a match
 progresses, and it is recognised that a greater degree of unevenness of bounce may
 develop.
- Assessment of turn is from the protected area. It is impossible to quantify the amount
 that a ball is "allowed" to turn as bowlers will impart spin on the ball in differing
 amounts. Match Referees/Umpires shall take into account the type, nature and identity
 of spin bowlers when assessing the amount of turn that the pitch has demonstrated.
- A 3-day/4-day/5-day pitch must show a minimum of moderate turn at some point in the match to be able to be considered Very Good.

If it is not possible to make a reasonable assessment of turn because insufficient overs of spin have been bowled, then the 'Turn' column of the table should be ignored when providing the overall pitch rating.

In no circumstances should the pitch 'explode' / 'go through the top' though again, "how often" must be considered.

LIMITED OVERS MATCHES

Objective

For the duration of the match, the whole surface of the pitch should be completely dry, firm and true, providing good carry and even bounce throughout. There should be little or no turn and little or no seam movement.

In matches where a Match Referee is appointed, the Match Referee shall be ultimately responsible for the rating of pitches. In other cases, it shall be the Match Umpires.

(Note: The above statement is an *objective* - there is no stipulation that one-day pitches *must* be dry, though it is of course expected that this and the rest of the stated objective should be aspired to in the preparation of all one-day pitches. In all cases, pitches will be judged on <u>how they play</u>, and not whether they are dry or what colour they are etc).

Pitch Categories and Criteria

Fulfilment of the lowest criteria will determine the overall rating for the pitch. For example, if the pitch:

Demonstrates no unevenness, a little seam movement, lacks carry and/or bounce, BUT demonstrates considerable turn,

then it <u>must</u> be rated "Below Average" due to the failure to meet a higher turn criterion.

	Unevenness	Seam Movement	Carry and/or Bounce	Turn
Very Good	Little or no	Little or no	Good	Little or no turn
-	unevenness	seam		
		movement		
Good			Average	Occasional
Above Average	Occasional	Occasional	Lacking	Regular
Below Average	More than occasional	Regular	Minimal	Considerable
Poor	Excessive	Excessive	Very Minimal	Excessive
Unfit	A pitch is rated unfit only if it is dangerous			

Further Guidance for Umpires

As a matter of routine, the Umpires should immediately contact the Match Referee, or if not present, ECB Cricket Operations if at any time they are in any way unhappy with a pitch, regardless of the number of wickets that-have fallen, or, when a Match Referee is not appointed, if they are going to or have rated the pitch "Poor" or "Unfit".

Whilst Umpires are encouraged to discuss the overall quality of a pitch, they should provide an overall rating for the pitch independently.

Below Average, Poor or Unfit Pitches

ECB Directive 11 states:

"Each First Class County Club or Women's Elite Domestic Senior Competition Team, Men's Hundred Team or Women's Hundred Team must comply with the provisions of the ECB Pitch Regulations as applicable to that Team".

For the purpose of maintaining the highest standard of pitches in all matches, the relevant provision is the following:

Each County or Hundred Team shall actively seek to prepare the best quality cricket pitch that it can for the match that it is staging.

For matches in the First XI competitions (LV= Insurance County Championship / Bob Willis Trophy, The Vitality Blast and Royal London Cup) or The Men's Hundred or The Women's Hundred, a pitch that has caused concern at any stage of the match shall be subject to a full investigation by the Match Referee appointed to the match. If a Match Referee is not present for the match, then a Match Referee shall be appointed to conduct the investigation.

For the avoidance of doubt, a pitch that this rated below average due only to carry and bounce, shall not be subject to an investigation by the Match Referee.

The Match Referee shall seek evidence from (not exhaustive):

- Home team Captain and Coach
- The Head Groundsperson of the Home County and/or Groundsperson of the Outground (interviewed together), or Hundred host venue
- The Umpires
- The Away team Captain and Coach (interviewed together)
- Television coverage

If, subsequent to the investigation, the Match Referee marks the pitch Below Average (as a result of seam movement, unevenness or turn), Poor or Unfit, the Match Referee shall consider:

 Whether were any circumstances relating to the preparation of the pitch that were beyond the control of the County or Hundred Team, and Whether the County or Hundred Team actively sought to prepare the best quality pitch it could for the match that it was staging.

in order to assess whether there has been a potential breach of the above provision and therefore Directive 11.

The County or Hundred Team may assert that the condition of the pitch was a result of an attempt or attempts to improve the quality of their pitches, in which case the investigation shall consider –

- Whether the County or Hundred Team was genuinely attempting to improve the quality of their pitches, and
- Whether the County or Hundred Team acted reasonably in all the circumstances in staging the match on the pitch in question.

If the Match Referee concludes that there has not been a breach of the provision and Directive 11, he shall report accordingly to ECB Cricket Operations.

If the Match Referee is unable, at this stage, to come to a conclusion, then the Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee shall be called to provide the necessary technical input. This shall commence as soon as practicable, but in all cases completed within 5 days of the conclusion of the match. Unless circumstances require otherwise, and only after being approved by the Match Referee or Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee, the pitch being investigated shall not be cut, nor watered and shall be preserved, as far as practicable, with the intention of keeping it in the same state in which it finished the match until the Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee has inspected the pitch.

The Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee shall provide a report to the Match Referee who will then conclude whether there has been a breach of the provision and Directive 11. The Match Referee shall then make a final report to ECB Cricket Operations.

- The question is whether the County or Hundred Team had done everything possible to prepare the best quality pitch. Regard should be had, among other things, to staffing, covering, match scheduling and pitch preparation, and any factors beyond the control of the County or Hundred Team which may have been responsible for the production of the Below Average, Poor or Unfit pitch. This may include a County citing Hundred impact on the quality of pitch produced, and vice versa.

In all cases of a Poor or Unfit pitch, or of a Below Average pitch (rated such as a result of seam movement, unevenness or turn), the outcome of the investigation(s) shall be discussed with the ECB Integrity Team who shall determine the course of action in accordance with Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) Regulations.

CDC Regulations in force from time to time shall apply in respect of procedures, penalties and costs, and appeals.

For the avoidance of doubt:

First Class Competitions – LV= Insurance County Championship / Bob Willis Trophy, Royal London Cup, Vitality Blast

- Penalties can only be applied if a pitch has been marked Poor or Unfit, or is a second case, in the same competition, of a Below Average pitch for that County in a 12-month period (both Below Average pitches rated such as a result of seam movement, unevenness or turn), AND ECB Directive 11 has been breached. It is unlikely that a County will be penalised if a Poor or Unfit pitch, or either of the Below Average pitches results from a genuine and reasonable attempt to improve the quality of its pitches.
- The criterion (or criteria) resulting in a Below Average pitch do(es) not need to be the same for both of the Below Average pitches.
- If a County has been penalised as a result of two Below Average pitches in a 12-month period, then a further two Below Average pitches in that competition shall be required before a discipline charge is brought, at which, and at its discretion, a CDC Panel may take into account previous incidents of Below Average, Poor, or Unfit pitches.

The Men's Hundred and The Women's Hundred

- Penalties can only be applied if a pitch has been marked Poor, Unfit or Below Average (rated such as a result of seam movement, unevenness or turn), AND ECB Directive 11 has been breached. It is unlikely that a Hundred Team will be penalised if a Poor, Unfit or Below Average pitch results from a genuine and reasonable attempt to improve the quality of its pitches.
- If a Hundred Team has been penalised as a result of a Poor, Unfit or Below Average
 pitch in the 12-month period prior to a further case of a Poor, Unfit or Below Average
 pitch in that competition, the CDC Panel may take into account the previous incident(s)
 of Below Average, Poor, or Unfit pitches.

Any warnings or penalties in respect of pitches in The Hundred shall apply to that competition only. No First-Class County warnings or penalties in respect of pitches shall impact on The Hundred Teams or vice versa.

Cores

Cores shall not be routinely taken. However, should a Match Referee request to see cores, they should be taken 2ft 6in in from the edge of the pitch on a spinner's length at each end. They should be taken on the off-side to a right-handed batsman.

If a Match Referee is appointed to attend after the commencement of a LV= Insurance County Championship / Bob Willis Trophy match, he may request that two additional cores are taken. This will be done at the Umpires' discretion (the Match Referee should liaise with the Groundsperson to arrange a mutually convenient time). The Umpires shall also be present, and the cores shall be replaced.

Pitch Protocol

The re-use of pitches – 3-day/4-day/5-day pitches

The following guidelines with regard to pitch preparation and the use/re-use of pitches in LV= Insurance Championship / Bob Willis Trophy matches will apply for the 2021 season:-

(i) One-Day Matches prior to LV= Insurance County Championship / Bob Willis Trophy Matches

In the 7-day period leading up to a LV= Insurance County Championship / Bob Willis Trophy match, it is expected that a maximum of **one** one-day match will be played on the same pitch that is to be used for the LV= Insurance Championship / Bob Willis Trophy match. Ultimately, the choice of pitch remains with the County and it is emphasised that re-using a pitch will not exonerate a County from a possible sanction as detailed in these regulations.

Counties are strongly advised to prepare an alternative pitch for the LV= Insurance Championship / Bob Willis Trophy match in case the original pitch is damaged.

(ii) Consecutive LV= Insurance County Championship Matches

It is expected that a second consecutive first-class match will not be played on the same pitch as the first within 7 days from the *scheduled* finish of the first. Ultimately, the choice of pitch remains with the County and it is emphasised that re-using a pitch will not exonerate a County from a possible sanction as detailed in these regulations.

Re-use of pitches – limited overs pitches

If possible, a fresh pitch should be used for one-day matches though it is understood that this is not always possible. Ultimately the choice of pitch remains with the County or Hundred Team but it is recommended that only in exceptional circumstances should a one-day match be played on the pitch on which a multi-day match had just been completed (for example where the amount of play in the LV= Insurance Championship match has been severely limited and the pitch used is the best available for the limited-overs match). If this is the case, then the home County or Hundred Team must notify the visiting team for the one-day match.

Surface Stabilisation Agents (SSAs)

ECB Directive 11 states:

"Each First Class County Club or Women's Elite Domestic Senior Competition Team, Men's Hundred Team or Women's Hundred Team must comply with the provisions of the ECB Pitch Regulations as applicable to that Team".

In respect of Surface Stabilisation agents, the provisions that refer are as follows:

Subject to the remainder of this paragraph, the application of Surface Stabilisation Agents (enzymes, PVA glue or similar) during the preparation of a LV= Insurance County Championship / Bob Willis Trophy pitch is not permitted. Further, any pitch that has had the agent applied at any stage during the season in question (e.g. for use in other matches) may not be used for a LV= Insurance County Championship / Bob Willis Trophy match until 42 days after the conclusion of the match in which the SSA was used.

The application of Surface Stabilisation Agents (enzymes, PVA glue or similar) during the preparation of a 1-day pitch is permitted. However, the SSA must be applied uniformly across the length and breadth of the pitch. ECB Cricket Operations must be informed if a SSA is to be used.

Any pitch that is alleged to have been in breach of the above provision shall be subject to an investigation by the Match Referee appointed to the match. If a Match Referee is not present for the match, then a Match Referee shall be appointed to conduct the investigation.

The Match Referee shall seek evidence from (not exhaustive):

- Home team Captain and Coach
- The Head Groundsperson of the Home County and/or the Groundsperson of the Outground (interviewed together)
- If necessary and at the discretion of the Match Referee/Head of Operations (First-Class Cricket) or his nominee, the Umpires
- If necessary and at the discretion of the Match Referee/Head of Operations (First-Class Cricket) or his nominee, the Away team Captain and Coach (interviewed together)
- Television coverage

The Match Referee investigation shall consider:

- Whether an SSA had been applied to the pitch at any stage of the season in question and if so what was the date of the conclusion of the match for which such SSA application was made, and
- If an SSA had been applied to the pitch in respect of a match that had concluded within the 42-day period prior to the commencement of the LV= Insurance County Championship / Bob Willis Trophy match, whether the County had established on the balance of probabilities that there were sufficient extenuating circumstances relating to the use of the SSA.

in order to assess whether there has been a potential breach of the above provision and therefore Directive 11.

If the Match Referee concludes that there has not been a breach of the provision and Directive 11, he shall report accordingly to ECB Cricket Operations.

If the Match Referee is unable, at this stage, to come to a conclusion, then the Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee shall be called to provide the necessary technical input. This shall commence as soon as practicable, but in all cases completed within 5 days of the conclusion of the match. Unless circumstances require otherwise, and only after being approved by the Match Referee or Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee, the pitch being investigated shall not be cut, nor watered and shall be preserved, as far as practicable, with the intention of keeping it in the same state in which it finished the match until the Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee has inspected the pitch.

The Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee shall provide a report to the Match Referee who will then conclude whether there has been a breach of the provision and Directive 11. The Match Referee shall then make a final report to ECB Cricket Operations.

The outcome of the investigation(s) shall be discussed with the ECB Integrity Team who shall determine the course of action in accordance with Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) Regulations.

CDC Regulations in force from time to time shall apply in respect of procedures, penalties and costs, and appeals.

If the pitch in question is subsequently marked Below Average (as a result of seam movement, unevenness or turn), Poor or Unfit, it shall be subject to an investigation by the Match Referee appointed to the match, as per the investigation process set out in the <u>Below Average</u>, Poor or Unfit Pitches section above.

Covering the pitch and surrounding areas

Playing Condition 10 in each of the respective competitions refers.

Whales / Blotters

All Counties must have available at least one fully operational sit-on whale machine or Blotter. If this level of cover is not available, then both the opposition and ECB must be informed with reasons given.

Changing Venues

LV= Insurance County Championship Playing Condition 2.6 refers.

Condition of playing area (includes pitch, square, outfield)

(Refer also LV= Insurance County Championship Playing Condition 2.6)

ECB Directive 11 states:

"Each First Class County Club or Women's Elite Domestic Senior Competition Team, Men's Hundred Team or Women's Hundred Team must comply with the provisions of the ECB Pitch Regulations as applicable to that Team".

In respect of the condition of the playing area, the relevant provisions are as follows:

It is the onus of the Home County or Hundred Team to ensure that no actions either prior to or during the scheduled period of the match shall materially adversely impact upon the condition of the playing area including pitch, square and outfield such that the possibility of play is substantially reduced.

- Actions that would be outside the Home County's or Hundred Team venue's control
 would include the weather and other Acts of God. This is not intended to be an
 exhaustive list.
- Actions that would be within the Home County's or Hundred Team venue's control
 would include the staging of events other than the International, First XI, Second XI,
 The Hundred fixture programme and covering that does not meet the minimum
 requirement (Refer LV= Insurance County Championship Playing Condition 10). This is
 not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Subsequent to a verbal or written report from the Match Umpires immediately that any part of the playing area is unfit for play and which the Umpires and/or Match Referee believe may be a consequence of actions within the Home County's or Hundred Team's control and materially reduced the possibility of play, a full investigation shall be conducted by the Match Referee appointed to the match. If a Match Referee is not present for the match, then a Match Referee shall be appointed to conduct the investigation.

The Match Referee shall seek evidence from (not exhaustive):

- Home team Captain and Coach
- The Head Groundsperson of the Home County and/or the Groundsperson of the Outground or Hundred host venue
- The Umpires (who shall provide a written statement regarding the condition of the playing area and the circumstances surrounding it)
- If necessary and at the discretion of the Match Referee /Head of Operations (First-Class Cricket) or his nominee, the Away team Captain and Coach

The Match Referee investigation shall consider:

- To decide whether the condition of any part of the playing area was legitimately judged as being unfit for play. In doing so, Law 2.7 should be strictly adhered to.
- If the answer to the above question is yes, it must be determined whether, on the balance of probabilities, any action taken by the County or Hundred Team relating to the condition of the playing area had a material adverse effect on the possibility of play.

in order to assess whether there has been a potential breach of the above provision and therefore Directive 11.

If the Match Referee concludes that there has not been a breach of the provision and Directive 11, he shall report accordingly to ECB Cricket Operations.

If the Match Referee is unable, at this stage, to come to a conclusion, then the Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee shall be called to provide the necessary technical input. This shall commence as soon as practicable, but in all cases completed within 5 days of the conclusion of the match. Unless circumstances require otherwise, and only after being approved by the Match Referee or Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee, the pitch being investigated shall not be cut, nor watered and shall be preserved, as far as practicable, with the intention of keeping it in the same state in which it finished the match until the Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee has inspected the pitch.

The Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee shall provide a report to the Match Referee who will then conclude whether there has been a breach of the provision and Directive 11. The Match Referee shall then make a final report to ECB Cricket Operations.

The outcome of the investigation(s) shall be discussed with the ECB Integrity Team who shall determine the course of action in accordance with Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) Regulations.

CDC Regulations in force from time to time shall apply in respect of procedures, penalties and costs, and appeals.

If the pitch in question is subsequently marked Below Average (as a result of seam movement, unevenness or turn), Poor or Unfit, it shall be subject to a full investigation by the Match Referee appointed to the match, as per the investigation process set out in Below Average, Poor or Unfit Pitches section above.

Report Forms

Match Referees will complete a pitch report in respect of every match that they visit. The report will be forwarded to ECB Cricket Operations as soon as possible after the end of the match. This report will include information provided by the Head Groundsmen relating to the pitch and its preparation.

Should a Match Referee not be present at a match, Umpires will complete report forms for each match. Umpires should agree how the pitch has performed in each of the four categories (unevenness, seam movement, carry and/or bounce, turn) but they should provide an overall rating for the pitch independently.

Match Referees

Personnel

The following individuals will be acting as Match Referees in 2021:

1. Tim Boon 5. Wayne Noon 2. Dean Cosker 6. Peter Such 3. **Stuart Cummings** 7. James Whitaker 4. **Steve Davis** 8. Phil Whitticase

In addition, a Supplementary Panel of Match Referees shall be appointed.

Should any technical advice be required by a Match Referee, this shall be provided by the ECB Pitch and Grounds Advisor or his nominee.

Appointments

All Match Referee appointments will be made by ECB Cricket Operations.