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**SOUTHERN COUNTIES EAST**

**FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

**SEASON 2019-20**

**Recommended Guidance of Clubs and Referees**

**in determining the suitability of grounds in adverse weather conditions**

Each Club must take every precaution to ensure that its ground is in a fit playing condition.

When the regional weather conditions are known to be extreme (e.g. prolonged severe frost, clear water logging or heavy snow) then the game can be postponed at the discretion of the League following consultation with the Fixtures Secretary’s; this is not an issue for the match day Referee. If agreement is given to an early postponement under such circumstances, there will be no requirement for a pitch inspection.

In all other circumstances and subject to the time and travelling distance, the match Referee should be called in to make a decision. In the event of the match Referee being unable to carry out the inspection, the Home Club ***must*** select an alternative Referee listed within list of SCEFL Match Officials as follows:-

Premier Division – One of the Level 4 referee’s on the panel.

Division One – One of the level 5’s on the panel

Should it not be possible to identify an appropriate Match Official, the SCEFL MOP will determine a suitable person to carry out the inspection.

**It is mandatory that either the SCEFL appointed referee or another SCEFL referee from the panel (at the appropriate level) is present at the ground to carry out any inspection.**

Prior to reaching a decision the Referee who is making the inspection must:

* Consult with the match Referee prior to the inspection
* Consult with the match Referee during/after the inspection to mutually agree on a decision prior to notifying the Home Club Secretary or Club Chairman and the appropriate League Secretary (or Chairman if the Secretary is not available).

Prior to reaching a decision the Referee who is making the inspection should consider the following:

* Whether or not the ground (playing area) is dangerous (e.g. ice / frost)
* Whether or not that the spectator standing areas are dangerous (e.g. ice / frost)
* Whether or not conditions are or could turn farcical.
* The views of the Home Club Groundsman in terms of local knowledge and draining capabilities in the event of standing water.
* The existing condition of the playing surface in conjunction with the prevailing weather conditions as previously confirmed with the local weather authority
* **Be seen to be active!** Adhere to deadlines, keep all informed; especially the away Team Manager if he is on route and can be contactable (home club will have the Secretary’s mobile number). If they are within a reasonable time/distance from the ground it is only courtesy that you await their arrival
* **Inspect thoroughly!** A professional approach **must be adopted** when carrying out an inspection. It is not acceptable just to take a cursory look at the field of play in normal dress (i.e. Suit / Blazer etc.). Sports kit should be worn, along with appropriate footwear (i.e. football boots). All areas of the pitch should be inspected. A ball should be used to determine whether the surface is playable (for movement and bounce), if appropriate, playing staff may be able to assist you in this practical session.
* **Fog creates its’ own problems.** Use perspectives from ground level and the back of a stand – check forecast (remember that there is a responsibility to paying spectators)
* When dealing with such elements as frost or ice – remember that the highest temperature of the day is usually around mid-day. Get a forecast if necessary of the projected temperature for the time when the match is due to conclude
* The manpower available to the Home Club to carry out any necessary work to make the ground playable
* The time the visiting Club are due to commence their journey
* Liaise with Managers **BUT** the decision as to whether the match is played is **yours**

If after consultation with the match Referee, the ground is declared fit and the away Clubs instructed to travel, then only in exceptional circumstances should the match Referee reverse the decision.

If an early inspection has not been carried out and the match Referee arrives at the ground to find the playing conditions in doubt due to unexpected deterioration in the weather, he should first consider as many of the above points before committing himself to a decision.

In the event of a pitch inspection being carried out by a Referee other than the match Referee, a fee of half the Referee’s fee may be offered, plus travel expenses, paid by the Home Club. If the appointed Match Officials have reported to the ground they are entitled to half their match fee if the match is not played.

If the game is postponed following the inspection, either by the match Referee or another Referee, the following procedure should be followed:-

* The home club should advise their opponents and the following League officials; Fixture Secretary, League Secretary, Referees Officer & Website and Social Media Officer via text or e-mail.
* A fully completed, signed match postponement form must be e-mailed to matthewpanting@btinternet.com within 2 days (this can be found on the SCEFL website & copies should be available at the ground for when pitch inspections are carried out). The only exception is if the match is postponed by the appointed match referee 90 minutes or less before the scheduled kick off when a match postponement form is not required.
* The home club should advise all the appointed match officials.
* The appointed match referee should advise any appointed match observer.
* The appointed match referee should send a text confirming the match details and that its postponed as follows:-

For Premier Division to Ian Bentley the referee officer

For Division One to Steve Down and Don Macleod

An e-mail should then follow to referees@scefl.com confirming that above.

**Failure to comply with this Policy Guidance may result in the Club being charged under League Rule 14.2**