



SOUTHERN COUNTIES EAST FOOTBALL LEAGUE Recommended Guidance for 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 following can be applied, the match day referee should be advised accordingly.

Remote Pitch Inspection Procedure

Unless there has been drastically bad overnight weather, concerned clubs should be booking in their remote pitch inspection appointment the day before a game either via email matthewpanting@btinternet.com (League Fixture Secretary) or text 07368 433929 and request a remote pitch inspection appointment. A time will be booked and sent in reply (between 9am-11am for Saturdays and 2pm-4pm for midweek). Where there is drastically bad overnight weather, then concerned clubs can request a booking for a remote pitch inspection appointment on the day of a game.

Clubs are then requested to video call on WhatsApp at their scheduled appointment time, It is important that clubs stick to the allotted time. During the call they can show 'live' to the Fixture Secretary the condition of the pitch and their reasons for postponement.

Pitch inspection forms do not need to be completed in this instance.

This system is not being put in place to replace referee inspections. Clubs should still make every effort to have a referee inspect their pitch where possible.

All clubs should inform the League Fixture Secretary matthewpanting@btinternet.com, the Referees Officer referees@scefl.com and the Website Officer website@scefl.com of any scheduled pitch inspections, and subsequently whether the pitch passes or fails such inspection.

Games can still be postponed at the discretion of the league following consultation and agreement with the Fixtures Secretary where regional weather conditions are known to be extreme and in such circumstances, there will be no requirement for any inspection.

Referee Pitch Inspection Procedure

In all other circumstances then rules 8.15 and 14.2 will apply and subject to the time and travelling distance, the match Referee should be called in to decide. In the event of the match Referee being unable to carry out the inspection, the Home Club must select an alternative Referee from a list of suitably qualified SCEFL Match Officials supplied by the league as follows:-

Premier Division & Division one – A Level 4 referee from the panel.

Development League – The club are entitled to allow their groundsman to call the game off.

Should it not be possible to identify an appropriate Match Official, the SCEFL Referees team 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) and spectator area is dangerous (e.g. ice / frost).
- Whether or not conditions are or could get worse.
- The likelihood of completing the game.
- The views of the Home Club Groundsman in terms of local knowledge and draining capabilities in the event of standing water.
- 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.
- 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. 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.
- 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 the match Referee, a fee of half the Referee's fee should be offered and 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 via text or e-mail:
Fixture Secretary – Matthew Panting matthewpanting@btinternet.com 07368433929
Referees Director – Ricky Adams referees@scefl.com 07411094354.
Website and Social Media Officer – Dean Sawyer website@scefl.com 07732299230
- 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 an email confirming the match details and that its postponed 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**