



Jolly's Drinks Cornwall Cricket League

Cornwall Association of Cricket Officials

Grounds Marking

A Guide for Umpires/Captains

Spring 2010

GROUNDS MARKING

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1. Introduction

Each year, the Cornwall League Management Committee issues tables of average ground markings drawn from the markings for the quality of pitch, square and outfield recorded for each game during the season. In the Premier Division and County 1, these markings are based on the assessments undertaken by the appointed panel umpires. Grounds assessments in matches in the Intermediate and Standard Tiers rely mainly on captains' assessments.

However, from season 2010, the grounds assessment system used in the Higher Tier will be extended to matches in Divisions 2 East and 2 West whether those assessments are undertaken by appointed panel umpires, club umpires or by the away captains.

Naturally, every club takes pride in its ground in all its aspects and wishes to be well placed in the tables issued by the League. Of more importance, however, is the quality of the ground in relation to everyone's duty of care to the players, whether young or old; no one wants avoidable injuries caused by poor playing conditions or inadequate ground preparation. The grounds assessment therefore for matches in the Premier, County and Divisions 2 are more detailed than those for the other divisions and also consider whether the markings on the pitch and boundary are in accordance with the Laws and local regulations.

The Cornwall Association of Cricket Officials (CACO) and the LMC are therefore issuing this Guidance to assist panel and club umpires and away captains in the role of grounds assessment. Umpires and away captains are not necessarily experienced groundsmen and the information below is for **guidance** in making these assessments. The Guidance describes what standards should be sought in the umpires/away captains' assessment on each match day and the ground markings must be sent to the League on a special marking card; the LMC will issue these marking cards before the beginning of each season. The guidance criteria below are repeated on the marking cards; if there are any detailed queries on the marking system, please contact Del Codd, Grounds Committee Chairman or any of the CACO Committee for assistance.

Please take time in making these assessments – time before the match to view the ground and time - after the match to consider how the ground played. Some of the marks suggested may appear tough at first sight but it pays to remember your duty of care to the players. If you permit play to begin or continue and an avoidable accident occurs, you may find yourself the subject of litigation especially from parents of young players.

The LMC and the Cornwall Association of Cricket Officials gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance of Mr J Shepley, County Grounds Advisor, in the preparation of this Guidance.

2. The Outfield

Before the match begins:

Walk the outfield and observe:

- possible hazards to safe play such as bare patches, damage by pests, e.g. rabbit scrapes, debris (from mowing or other sources), ridges or sudden slopes, evidence of repair.
- the boundary markings – whether rope or paint, are they visible to the umpire in the middle? If it is a painted line, what is the width of the boundary marking - are flags used to improve visibility? Please note that the use of creosote to mark boundaries is illegal.
- any marked changes in slope especially close to the square

- the quality of cut – grass length, cuttings left on surface
- the presence of weeds/moss
- the presence of a worn or slippery artificial pitch (with pronounced edges)
- the overall appearance and evenness of sward colour

After the match, also consider whether the ball ran smoothly e.g. no bobbling, over the majority of the outfield.

3. The Square

Before the match begins, observe:

- the grass length and condition e.g. not matted
- any debris
- any bare areas – especially if they are damaged (without repair) and close to the playing strip
- any evidence of good repair
- damage by pests (evidence of repair)
- overall appearance and evenness of colour
- presence of weeds/moss etc
- changes in gradient of areas close to the pitch
- clear differentiation of the square from the outfield

4. The Pitch

Before the match begins, observe:

- grass length – should be about 5mm but make allowances for cutting difficulties in poor weather
- wet areas – a consistent moisture level is the target
- damage by pests that should show evidence of smooth and consolidated repair
- overall appearance and uniformity
- width and direction of cut – pitch should not be striped, cut 10ft wide and clearly differentiated from the rest of the square
- weeds or moss
- correctness, completeness, width and visibility of pitch markings
- are the stumps placed correctly (in line and on the bowling crease)

5. In the interval

- are the pitch markings restored where needed?
- is the pitch swept and rolled in that order?

6. After the match

Consider:

- the evenness of bounce and carry at both ends – note any variation and ball pitch markings
- was the bounce reasonably consistent throughout the game given the pace of the bowlers and the condition of the ball?
- was there any excessive movement off the pitch?
- did the top disintegrate?

Remember that you are being asked to assess the ground as presented and as it played.

**John Shepley, ECB Grounds Advisor
Vic Hassell, LMC Chairman**