

The Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire & Derbyshire RFU Society of Referees



Fixture Cancellations - Ground Conditions

If a late decision on the fitness of the ground is needed once teams have turned up on the day of the match, it is the responsibility of the team captains, together with the match day Referee, to decide on whether the pitch is fit for play. If there is any disagreement whatsoever, then the match does not go ahead.

(Fitness of the Ground is not restricted to frozen pitches, it can include, amongst other things, areas of standing water, dangerous cracks (drought), expanses of mud, glass/Stones on the pitch, dangerous posts/crossbar, etc – the safety of players and the Referee are paramount)

The scenarios available are :-

All agree – “Pitch is fit” – Game goes ahead

All Agree – “Pitch is not fit” – Game does not go ahead

2 Captains disagree – Game does not go ahead

2 Captains agree BUT Referee disagrees – game does not go ahead

The Referee should make it clear to the two captains as to what his decision is. He has 2 options :-

At the time of inspection – in his opinion the Pitch is **SAFE** to play

At the time of inspection - in his opinion the Pitch is **NOT SAFE** to play

If the Referee has decided the pitch is not fit – then he/she **MUST NOT** referee the match – if you did – then you’re leaving yourself wide open to litigation, in the case of serious injury.

The Referee must, before giving a decision, thoroughly inspect the playing enclosure and give his/her decision solely on the basis of his opinion as to its fitness for the match.

Once he has clearly communicated the decision he should not engage in any debate on it or why he has made the decision he has.

Once a match has started the Referee is the sole judge of fact and law as to whether the pitch is fit for it to continue and of course, regardless of the number of minutes played, he should abandon a match if he believes it is appropriate so to do.

Please note if the match Referee abandons the game because of weather conditions when sixty or more minutes have been played, then the score at the moment of abandonment shall stand and be deemed the final score. The time and match Referee's decision for the necessity to abandon the game shall be final.

In all instances, the Referee should note his inspection findings and decision. He should also make a note of the time and score if a game is abandoned.

N.B. A late decision is defined as anything within three hours of the scheduled kick off time.