

PITCH INSPECTIONS

Youth football coaches have to be careful not to allow matches to go ahead on unsuitable pitches.

There can often be pressure to allow the game to go ahead from your own team (who are usually keen to play no matter what the conditions) and the opposition (who may have travelled a considerable distance). However, this must be resisted. The health and safety of the players has to come first.

When the weather has been bad prior to a match, the coach should aim to arrive at the ground as early as they can to make an inspection. This will allow time for away teams to be warned of a cancellation prior to travelling.

The whole of the field of play surface **MUST** be safe. Anything less than this and the game should not be played.

WATERLOGGED PITCHES

If you suspect a waterlogged pitch then you need to check the ball runs feely and/or bounces true ie: does it get stuck in puddles/not bounce back up having hit the ground. If this is the case then you need to postpone the game.

If a pitch is close to being waterlogged and heavy rain is still falling and will continue to do so, will you be able to finish the game if you were to start it. If not then you need to postpone the game.

Games should **NEVER** take place on a pitch which is not fit for play. One game on a waterlogged pitch has the potential to ruin it which could lead to it not being used for many weeks until it recovers.

FROZEN PITCHES

Wearing a set of studded boots make a pitch inspection and check the goalmouth and centre circle areas first. If these are playable then the whole of the field of play surface **MUST** be inspected to eliminate any hidden areas of danger. Bear in mind that some areas of a pitch may stay in shadow and may not thaw at all.

If any part of the pitch is frozen then the game should not be played.

A surface which does not yield any purchase to studded boots, no matter how small, is dangerous, and the game should not be played.

Young players are more likely to get injured on hard surfaces. Therefore, even greater care must be taken when making a decision to allow the game to be played or not.

When you have made your decision you should contact the away team to save them travelling.

The inspection of a field of play covered in frost, and whether to play a game or not, is not a difficult decision to make for a coach. It is fairly obvious to identify dangerous area that could potentially cause an injury. Common sense should be used.

If there is any doubt (no matter how small), then the game should not be played.

POSTPONEMENTS

If for any reason a match gets postponed, then please follow league protocol to avoid getting the club fined.