

Sports Club Update – April 2024

Monash Council is introducing a new testing regime (Clegg Hammer testing) for all its outdoor playing fields.

What is Clegg Hammer testing?

Clegg Hammer testing is used to assess the hardness or shock absorption properties of a playing field. Results from this testing will guide decisions around player safety and will inform short-term or long-term interventions to improve playing field quality.

How will Council use this?

Routine Clegg Hammer testing will be done at the start of each traditional football and cricket season in autumn and spring. Periodic or in-season testing may also occur if grounds become noticeably harder or softer. Clubs may also request testing if they believe an issue with excessive hardness or softness exists.

How will Council undertake the testing and what standards will be applied?

Testing will be undertaken in accordance with recommended best practice using a Clegg Impact Soil tester, 2.25kg, 455mm drop height & first drop recorded.

Grounds that are **excessively hard** (>120) or with hard patches have a higher injury potential for sports involving running and tackling such as Australian rules football, football/soccer, both rugby codes and gridiron. Hard surfaces can cause jarring of limbs, muscle soreness and increase the risk of injury from falls – these are of lesser importance for sports such as cricket and baseball/softball.

Grounds that are **excessively soft** (<40) or have soft patches can cause stability and footing problems and player fatigue across all sports.

In some circumstances, entire grounds or parts of grounds may be deemed unsuitable for competition, match stimulation and training. This is possible during the coming winter season when grounds that are excessively soft due to rain or waterlogging will need to dry out before they can be used.

What happens if a ground is either too soft or too hard?

Playing fields that record an average reading either below 40 or above 120 will be deemed unsuitable for use and closed immediately. Grounds may also be partially closed where unsatisfactory readings occur in isolated patches.

If this happens, Council will immediately notify relevant clubs and sporting associations to advise them of the closure and what, if any short-term, interventions are planned. Where possible, clubs will be offered alternate venues subject to availability. If this occurs, Council will not be liable for any costs associated with the ground closure or compensation to clubs or associations for lost revenue.

Grounds will only be re-opened upon achieving a satisfactory Clegg Hammer reading and results will also be used to guide decisions around future investment in drainage and irrigation projects.

Clubs should be aware that several grounds in Monash, particularly class C facilities have limited or no irrigation or drainage and therefore, the potential for ground closures is possible.

All clubs are still required to complete pre-game/training checks of their facilities including the playing surface, and where appropriate, notify Council of any identified risks or concerns.

How can your club assist in ensuring our surfaces remain in better condition throughout the season?

At times, Council officers may request modifications to areas of use of the sporting field e.g. turf wicket areas and goal squares, restricted use of footwear outside of the season proper e.g. football boots during cricket season on AFL grounds. These measures will assist in ensuring we continue to present surfaces that are fit for use for longer periods of time.

Further information

Please contact Recreation Services via email recreation@monash.vic.gov.au if you have any questions.