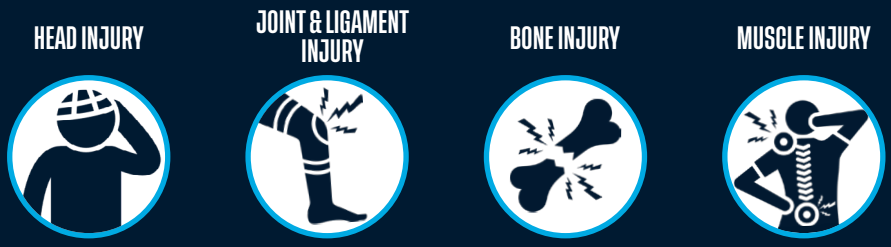
IS YOUR RUGBY PITCH SAFE TO PLAY ON?

England Rugby

WHY IT MATTERS
RISKS OF PLAYING ON A PITCH THAT IS TOO HARD



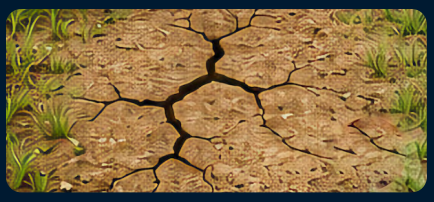
COMMON SENSE IS KEY

EVERY PITCH IS DIFFERENT AND CONDITIONS CAN CHANGE – EVEN ACROSS THE SAME PITCH. THIS GUIDE PROVIDES SIMPLE INDICATORS TO HELP YOU MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION. IT DOES NOT PROVIDE DEFINITIVE MEASURES.

1 CHECK GRASS COVER

Good grass cover helps protect the surface and players. Bare or thin areas are more likely to be hard and unforgiving.

2 LOOK FOR HARD, BARE OR CRACKED AREAS



Avoid playing on areas that are hard, compacted, or cracked. These carry a higher risk of injury.

3 USE THE BOOT TEST

Press your boot into the ground. If it doesn't sink in at least 10-15mm, the pitch may be too hard.

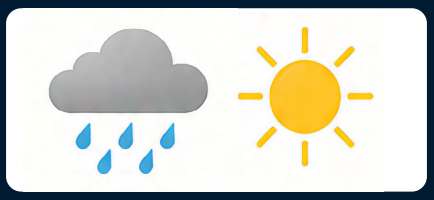
4 CHECK THE BOUNCE

Drop a rugby ball from waist height. If it bounces very high or shoots away, the surface may be too hard.

5 LOOK AT THE PATTERNS

High wear areas (e.g. in-goal, centre, around set piece areas) may be harder. Pay extra attention here.

6 CONSIDER RECENT RAIN (AND FORECAST)



Pitches need moisture to stay safe. If there has been little or no rain for an extended period, be cautious.

7 USE A CLEGG HAMMER IF AVAILABLE

A Clegg hammer can give an objective reading of surface hardness. Anything below **150** Gmax is **good**, **150-200** Gmax needs monitoring, and **200** Gmax is too **hard.**

8 MAKE A DECISION AND MONITOR

Consider all the factors and make a balanced decision. Conditions can change quickly, making it important to review the situation regularly.

YOU MUST CARRY OUT & RECORD A RISK ASSESSMENT

Adapt your session e.g. Switch to T1 Rugby.

Consider if you can secure access to an artificial grass pitch as an alternative.

USEFUL LINKS

- BOOK AN RFU AGP
- NATURAL TURF PITCHES SURFACE RISK ASSESSMENT
- MANAGING RUGBY PITCHES IN DROUGHT CONDITIONS GUIDE