

# FIFA studies the effectiveness of football turf pitch maintenance

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In the various inspections carried out by FIFA in recent years, it has been noted that many football turf installations no longer display the same playing characteristics after a short period of time that they did in the beginning. This phenomenon can generally be attributed to a lack of maintenance, and flies in the face of the prevailing view in the football world that a football turf pitch does not need to be looked after. The result is pitches whose fibres already lie flat on the ground after a few months and whose filling material is unevenly distributed. This impairs not only the surface's playing characteristics but also its appearance, which is also crucial for the pitch to perform at its best.

To demonstrate how important and sustainable the appropriate maintenance can be, a team led by Prof. Dr. Eric Harrison conducted a study on seven football turf pitches in northern France in conjunction with three providers of maintenance machines (SMG of Germany, Sisis/Dennis from the UK and Redexim of the Netherlands). The pitches were all three or six years old, as the biggest change in quality can be seen after such periods and the effect of regular maintenance was therefore most in evidence.

To identify the effectiveness of the maintenance, performance criteria such as the roll and bounce of the ball and the energy recovery of the pitch were tested before and after application by FIFA-accredited test

institute Sports Labs. The resulting data is currently being evaluated and will be presented by Prof. Harrison and the FIFA Quality Programme team at the IAKS Congress in Cologne on Tuesday, 22 October from 14.00 to 16.00. However, it is already apparent that the results will be a clear pointer for all clubs, local communities and municipal authorities.

The FIFA Quality Programme team will also be presenting the findings of a study on heat generation on the surfaces of football turf pitches, which will likewise deliver new insights that will be key to the further development of such pitches.

In addition to the IAKS Congress, the FIFA Quality Programme will have its own stand at the FSB in Cologne, where members of the team will be available for discussion.

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