



Advice on inspecting the playing surface of a pitch that is close to being waterlogged

January 2014

We have to get some knowledge of the weather prior to arrival at the ground. A good way to do this is to have some proof. Print out the weather chart from the Internet before setting off on your journey and have this ready to aid communication if required.

Due to the inclement weather we have arranged to arrive at the ground earlier than normal.

How do we sell the decision to either play the game or postpone it?

The first thing we do when arriving at the ground is to walk onto the playing surface.

We immediately suspect that the game is definitely in doubt due to the standing water in various places.

My advice is to follow the procedure outlined

1. Firstly communicate with the groundsman or if that is not possible communicate with someone who knows the pitch well. These people are generally trustworthy. But always keep focussed on your thoughts.
2. Be visual at all times and be seen to talk to individual personnel. Don't sit in a room having a cup of tea and expect things to come good. Always be ready to check the weather, the pitch, the work the groundsmen are doing or are not doing.
3. Be prepared to get your kit on and go onto the field of play with a ball and pass the ball to each other on the ground just too see how the ball rolls. If there is a player / secretary / credible person to witness you and your colleagues kicking the ball about this can only help 'sell' your decision. One piece of advice is make sure you and your colleagues are professional when kicking the ball about. Keep it on the ground and don't show off.
4. If the decision at this stage is to play the game, advise all that the pitch is playable at this moment. However if the rain comes down heavier then we might have a problem. Advise that your team will carry on monitoring conditions regularly.
5. If the decision to postpone the game is made communicate with both managers / secretaries and be firm once your decision has been made. With the weather forecast firmly in your knowledge, the ball not rolling and the groundsmen doing everything they can and not succeeding the selling of the decision has been done.

6. Always remember the stock answer is the players' safety is at risk.
7. After all the communication has been done my advice is not to hang about waiting for people to tell you what a good decision you have made. There will always be someone to advise you that they have played on worse etc.
8. Finally never forget to advise the league secretary the decision that you have made which was to postpone the game.

There are many different procedures that you can adopt as the match referee and above I have highlighted a 'waterlogged' pitch and some ideas you might try. There are many other reasons we may have to postpone the game but my strong advice is always be visual, always listen but always be firm.

Good luck because it is added pressure but always be credible with communication.