

Ku-ring-gai Council

Sportsground Wet Weather Policy

Adopted 3 December 2003



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Adopted 5 August 1997

Redrafted November 2002

Adopted December 2003

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Policy Principles	4
3. Policy Application Guidelines	5
4. Breach of Policy Process	6

1. Introduction

This policy is intended to apply in situations where Council's sportsgrounds are affected by wet weather, and the decision to play or train on sportsgrounds adversely affected will cause damage to the playing surface. For the purpose of this policy, damage is defined as impact on the field that are beyond normal wear and tear.

This policy allows for the implementation of a standardised process for assessing the suitability of grounds for playing when impacted by rain with direct involvement of Council, to increase the transparency of the process for all users and stakeholders thus assisting to manage the impacts for other organised and passive usage, address risk management and safety for all users.

2. Policy Principles

- 2.1 To ensure Council is formally involved with user groups in the decision making process for a trial period of six months that includes:
- Councils' grounds maintenance staff forward information on ground conditions to the Manager Sport & Recreation (or nominee).
 - The Manager Sport & Recreation (or nominee) will contact nominated Sport representatives to discuss availability of grounds.
 - Joint decision / responsibility for determining ground closures including what areas and for what period is then undertaken. Should a consensus decision not be able to be reached the final decision in this instance remains the responsibility of the user. The Manager, Sport & Recreation will advise the Director, Open Space in this instance and a post use inspection of the site will be undertaken by staff.
- Implementation of a Sportsground Availability line either as a Council initiative or as a joint process with user groups. This will enable users to phone a designated line, and clearly know if a sportsground is open or closed. A Sportsground Availability line will enable either the ability to indicate all grounds are closed, or have the opportunity to indicate particular grounds that are worse affected by wet weather than others are closed. It could be updated daily, Monday to Friday.
- 2.2 That Clubs/Associations be held financially responsible for any damage caused to sportsgrounds due to play or train use during or after wet weather conditions. The cost of damage will be determined based on professional advice from Council Officers, and will incorporate two key components: the initial cost to repair the damage to enable use of the Playing Field to resume, and the long term cost of repairing the damage at the end of the season, to enable the following scheduled season use to occur.
- 2.3 That Council gives no guarantee that damaged Sportsgrounds will be repaired by the next game or within the current season of the respective sport.
- 2.4 That Council reserves the right to withdraw the use of its Sportsgrounds to a Club/Association who causes excessive and/or repeated damage to sportsgrounds due to training or play during or after wet weather conditions.
- 2.5 That Council continue to determine the availability of Sportsgrounds following wet weather for casual hirers (not Sporting Associations) and schools and that such a decision be conveyed to the Booking Liaison Officer by 12 noon each week day. Schools will be entitled to a refund if Council determines that Sportsgrounds are unavailable due to wet weather.

<p>Note: Council reserves the right, under extreme circumstances to close sportsgrounds. In such cases, Council will advise user groups accordingly. Extreme circumstances can include reasons of public safety or asset protection.</p>

3. Policy Application Guidelines

- 3.1 Sportsgrounds include all areas within the field of play. Turf wickets are to be considered as an integrated part of the playing surface. If the turf wicket surface is likely to sustain damage from a decision to train or play following wet weather, Clubs/Associations will be held financially responsible for any damage.
- 3.2 Council will provide guidelines to assist users determine the suitability of sportsground conditions for play after unpredictable rain events eg after hours, weekends, following vandalism of irrigation lines etc.
- 3.3 The following points are intended as a guide only, as conditions vary from location to location due to variations in weather conditions, drainage, usage levels or individual sports, etc. As a guide, training or play is likely to cause damage to the playing surface of sportsgrounds if they exhibit any of the following characteristics:
 - Surface water present
 - Water rises to the surface when walking across the surface (indicates soil is at saturation point).
 - Surface is slippery to walk on, or grass dislodged easily
 - Heavy and/or consistent rains occurs immediately prior to or during training or play.

4. Breach of Policy Process

- 4.1 All Sportsgrounds with turf wickets are to be inspected on Monday mornings by Council staff. A report detailing the state of the turf wickets is to be submitted to the Manager Sport & Recreation immediately if there is any damage to the playing surface.
- 4.2 Reports of damage to the playing surface of any other Playing Field are to be inspected, and a report submitted to the Manager Sport & Recreation immediately if there is any damage to the playing surface.
- 4.3 In the event of suspected breach of the Wet Weather Policy, a site meeting is to be convened between club representatives and representatives from Council Staff. The KSAC Code Delegate is to be advised and given opportunity to attend.
- 4.4 Following discussion at the site meeting, if it is determined by the Manager Sport & Recreation that a breach of policy has occurred, a letter is to be sent to the said club, detailing the nature of the breach of policy, and the costs of works required to repair the damage. The General Manager, Mayor and Ward Councillors will be notified.
- 4.5 *Appeals.* If the Club/Association wishes to appeal the decision of the Manager Sport & Recreation, a written request to the General Manager for a review of the original decision must be made, within 14 days of being first notified. A review will be undertaken by the Director of Open Space, which will take into account the position of the Manager Sport & Recreation and the Club/Association as already documented. If there is still substantial disagreement to the decision, the matter may be referred, by either the Director of Open Space, Ward Councillors or the Mayor, to the General Manager for final decision.