

PITCH GRADING FRAMEWORK



By Jason Booth
GaNTIP director

The Grounds and Natural Turf Improvement Programme is piloting a new approach to the 'measurement' of the standard of football pitches at grassroots level

The Football Foundation and Football Association have agreed to pilot the IOG's Pitch Grading Framework within their Pitch Improvement Programme (PIP). Previously, in Phase 1 of GaNTIP, the GaNTIP regional pitch advisors (RPAs) utilised the IOG's Performance Quality Standards (PQS) as part of PIP to assess pitches.

PQS have been in use since the early 1980s. Over the past two years, however, the IOG with assistance from the IOG's 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award winner Martin Ford and the IOG's Turfcare Advisory consultant Alex Vickers, has been working to update PQS and include all levels applicable to today's sports surfaces. This has resulted in the creation of the PGF Pyramid.

The pyramid highlights levels of education and quality of playing surface and, utilising the system, GaNTIP will now be able to identify any potential improvements and expansion so that at the end of the pilot the relevant changes can be made before full implementation – which is intended for November 2018 when it is envisaged that each sport will have its own specific pyramid.

A range of highly-experienced people have been consulted during the process, including Sport England's framework

agronomists as well as leading professionals, volunteers and organisations attached to the groundsmanship industry.

HOW IT WORKS

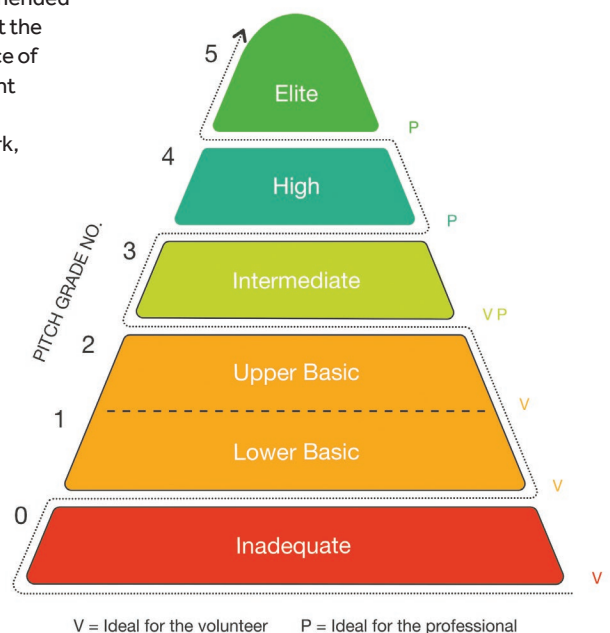
When it comes to pitch measurements, each level of the pyramid has parameters and, dependent on the results of each measurement, the overall result/level will be calculated (each individual measurement is scaled on importance). This system has been used successfully within cricket by the IOG and the England and Wales Cricket Board for over 10 years.

The appropriate training and education will match each level – for instance, for pitch maintenance at the Basic level (volunteer), an IOG Level 1 course (or equivalent) would be the minimum training recommended. The training/education would increase through the levels of the pyramid with IOG Level 5 (or equivalent) being recommended for individuals maintaining pitches at the Elite level. At all levels, the experience of those in situ will be taken into account and catered for individually.

Using the Pitch Grading Framework, each club/league can be separated into levels along with the experience and qualifications of the individuals maintaining that surface.

"The system is not designed to identify what is missing; it is to identify where support and development is required and the initial feedback has been positive"

[i] Visit www.iog.org for more information about GaNTIP



PITCH GRADING FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROFESSIONAL AND VOLUNTEER

This learning pathway identifies the surface needs and its skill set – to educate and train, and help you with your career, or volunteer, aspirations. Increase the knowledge, understanding and awareness you need in order to sustain a vital sports resource, improve capacity and reduce cancellations.