

## Weekly Programme for Your Cricket Square

### Monday

Clean up wicket from weekend  
Put water on this wicket  
Rake and cut grass off new wicket for next weekend  
Flood this wicket as long as possible

### Tuesday

Brush and cut new wicket  
Roll wicket for about 1 hour  
Repair wicket from last weekend

### Wednesday

Brush and cut new wicket  
Roll wicket for about 1 hour  
Water repaired wickets

### Thursday

Brush and cut new wicket  
Roll for about 1 hour

### Friday

Brush and cut wicket  
Roll wicket for about 1 hour  
Mark wicket out with emulsion paint for weekend  
Cut cricket square

### Saturday

Brush and cut wicket  
Roll wicket for about 20 min  
Touch up lines on wicket  
Put out boundary  
Put sightscreens in place

### Sunday

Clean up footholes  
Cut and roll for 20 min  
Remark wicket

## Hire of Machinery / Equipment

WAG has the following top quality professional machinery for hire:

Groundsman 345D Turf Aerator

Graden GS04 Verticutter / Scarifier

SISIS Auto Brush

Sarel Roller

Harvester Top Dresser with Drag Mat



All the above items can be delivered to you, or collected by clubs providing certain conditions can be satisfied.

Arrangements for the hire of any machinery / equipment **must** be made through the WCB office on 01905-337923

Details of the Delivery/Collection Service, Costing schedule and conditions of hire can all be found on the groundsman link on the WCB website .



## Worcestershire Association Of Groundsmen Handbook



## How to look after your cricket pitch

## Introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce this handbook of the Worcestershire Association of Groundsmen (WAG). The Association was formed at the behest of the English and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), and has the responsibility of improving the playing surfaces of cricket grounds and safe areas for children to be coached.

The Association discharges its responsibility to schools and cricket clubs who are affiliated to the Worcester Cricket Board (WCB) and members of WAG by means of:

Educational meetings / demonstrations; hands on WAG seminars; provision of a limited number of discounted places on Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) courses; access to an ECB Pitch advisor; financial savings on fertilisers, grass seed and top dressing through the WAG bulk buy scheme and the hire of professional machinery/equipment.

Whilst this handbook is not intended to be exhaustive, a visit to our website will provide you with the latest information [www.thewcb.org.uk](http://www.thewcb.org.uk) provides a link to the groundsmen's site.

As we are all aware, change is always with us. We, therefore request clubs to help keep our records up to date by informing our secretary of any changes in their ground staff.

If you are keen to find out how WAG can help you and your club improve your playing surfaces, we are only a phone call away. Please contact our secretary Steve Daniels on 01527 522323 or our pitch advisor Roy McLaren on 01905-423446.

**Godfrey Tromans**  
Chairman

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## ECB County Pitch Advisor Scheme

### Adviser Selection Criteria

Those individuals selected by counties to the appointment of County Pitch Adviser should meet the following criteria:

1. A minimum of 10 years as a full time head groundsman and have attained at least Level 3 standard or industry equivalent.
2. Be confident and with good communication skills (especially report writing).
3. Be available to the county for a minimum of the next 5 years, with employers agreement.
4. Happy to take up the appointment in the pursuance of cricket excellence.

### Courses:

To become a Pitch Adviser the candidate must be nominated to the ECB by the CCB. Once nominated, the candidate must attend a residential course.

### Aims and Objectives of the Pitch Advisor Scheme

The purpose of the scheme is to address issues regarding:

- Minimum Quality Performance Standards
- Consistent advice across England and Wales
- Active response to clubs
- Higher profile for groundsmanship
- Accurate assessment of cricket priority sites
- Identified costs
- Proactive move between professional and voluntary sector

### Roles of a Pitch Adviser

1. To advise on the quality performance of specific pitches / squares and produce recommendations (where necessary) for any improvements.
2. To monitor the developments of any facilities (including non-turf pitches) on which recommendations are being implemented.
3. To be available, if required, to assess pitches / squares /NTPs
4. To help build an effective Groundsmanship Association.

## Training

Sporting bodies are recognising that, through proper training, the performance of their playing surfaces can be enhanced.

If you: are new to Groundsmanship; need to refresh your current experience; keep fully up-to-date with the latest grounds care techniques; wish to learn more about improving your playing surfaces, WAG offers you two routes to achieve this.

### WAG Seminars

The Association currently run their own twice yearly seminars covering Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter work. These seminars also offer you the opportunity to gain some hands-on experience in using our manual and motorised professional equipment.

### Institute of Groundsmanship Courses (IOG)

Should you wish to pursue one of the IOG Courses, we are able to offer a limited number of discounted places on the Foundation Part A, Foundation Part B and the Intermediate Course. For more information please contact our secretary.

## Bulk Buy Scheme

Each year, given sufficient support from clubs, the Association operates its Bulk Buy Scheme for Autumn / Winter fertiliser and grass seed. Top dressing can be obtained by special arrangement. This scheme enables clubs to make financial savings, and at the same time, benefit from our knowledge and experience with these products.

Product selection is not made on price alone. The products specification and their individual characteristics are reviewed to ensure suitability for its intended use, something we have found not always to be the case, and to provide performance against 'Best Value'. Grass seed cultivators in each seed mix offered to us are reviewed against ratings produced by the Sports Turf Research Institute, a body who have been involved (since its inception in 1929) in the testing and evaluation of grass cultivators for all sports and amenity users, and producing reports for end users of the results of these trials.

It is known that cultivators at the top of the STRI ratings are not necessarily the best for our intended use. Selection of the seed mix is, therefore, very important. For example, the Association looks closely at: disease resistance, wear tolerance, sward density and tolerance to close mowing etc.

**Why not make use of our knowledge and experience and save your club money at the same time. For more information contact our secretary or visit our website.**

## Month by Month

### JANUARY

If weather conditions allow brush square and spike. Do not work on the square if too wet or frosty. Outfield should be checked and cleared of leaves and debris.

### FEBRUARY

Brush or drag the square to clear worm casts. Top-off square at about 25 mm. Check for any weeds or disease. Pre-season rolling can commence at the end of the month. Start with a light roller, 5 cwt. hand roller is ideal. Roll in four directions to help consolidation. Do not work on the square if too wet or frosty.

Check that machines have been returned after servicing, and if not start enquiries.

### MARCH

Brushing or dragging of the square should be done each morning. Rolling with light roller up to heavier roller as consolidation takes place. Roll in four directions as this helps to consolidate evenly. Square can now be cut down to approximately 15 mm.

This is the time of year to square up the square and to plan wicket usage for the coming season.

### APRIL

A light scarifying of the grass can be done at this time. **Do not damage the surface by scarifying too deeply.**

Start to prepare wickets for use early season.

Square-up the square and mark with 'T's' to show where the wickets are positioned on the square.

Brush and cut out wickets, roll with a heavy roller. Cut outfield twice a week until down to the height of play (about 20mm.)

Mark out boundary.

A light fertiliser can be applied now. **Do not use too much Nitrogen** as this can give a heavy flush of growth. An autumn and winter fertiliser is good for this feed.

Mark out wickets ready for play.

### MAY

Light scarifying of the wickets and square will remove a lot of the thatch which has built up since the autumn. This will help with pace and bounce.

The wickets will be a little slow at this time of the season as there will be a good quantity of water below the surface and will be difficult to dry out at any depth.

It is essential to start wicket preparation seven to ten days in advance. This will give you a chance to dry the wicket out before play.

A spring fertiliser with low nitrogen content can be applied to help with grass growth, but beware of leaching out due to heavy rain or showers. In this event it may be necessary to reduce the time between each fertiliser application.

The outfield can now be harrowed and cut shorter ready for the start of the season. An outfield roller could be of benefit to get a true flat surface. A fertiliser with a low nitrogen base

## JUNE

Use a verticutter or scarify lightly to remove thatch. This will help to eliminate the build up of thatch. There may be evidence of some weed growth and this should be either sprayed with select weed killer or the use of spot weed. A light Nitrogen fertiliser would give the square a grass boost.

The preparation of wickets and repair of used wickets are the main tasks for this month.

## JULY

Besides the continuing preparation of wickets to meet user demands, the square is typically mown twice a week and the outfield once a week.

Wickets that have been used and renovated earlier in the season might be able to be re-used again if they have recovered adequately.

Correct watering to a suitable depth, combined with planned rolling will produce a well-consolidated playing surface with good pace and bounce. If watering is not carried out to a sufficient depth, the shallow layer that was watered can crack and crumble when rolled.

If not carried out at the end of June, then July is a good time for a light Nitrogen only Fertiliser application to the whole square as this will help maintain sward strength without encouraging unwanted excessive growth.

Towards the end of the month, some wickets will be coming out of use for the few remaining weeks of the season. A head start on some end of season renovation tasks may be considered.

## AUGUST

Ensure that you have all your materials in stock, or ordered, for the end of the season renovation in early September, or whenever the last match is played.

Wickets will be coming out of use for the season during August, so aeration and scarification can be carried out on these wickets to get a head start on the major renovation work later on.

Sarel rolling into the used surfaces will help with the grass growth and breaking up of compaction ready for the end of season. A light fertilising will assist with grass growth and colour.

Worcestershire Association of Groundsmen run a 'bulk buy' scheme for seed and fertiliser, details of which can be found on the website.

## SEPTEMBER

With the season now closing, or closed, a thorough renovation of the square will be required. This is the most important time of the year for the cricket square.

As soon as the cricket season has finished the square should be cut as short as possible to help when scarification starts.

Scarification should be done in as many directions as possible. Brush or mow off as much debris as possible leaving a clean surface ready for seeding and top dressing.

## SEPTEMBER cont

Aeration of the square with a solid tine spiker to a depth of 100 – 150mm should be carried out. A sarel roller pulled across the surface will help with the overseeding. A good mixture of dwarf rye grasses should be applied. An autumn and winter fertiliser applied now will help with germination.

A clay loam top dressing should be applied and worked into the surface using a trulute and straight edge to ensure the square is even throughout.

A chain drag mat pulled over the surface in as many directions as possible when the loam is dry will help again to work the top dressing into the spike holes.

## OCTOBER

All renovation work should be finished and hopefully grass should be germinating. The square should be brushed on a daily basis (weather permitting) to get rid of any worm casts or debris. Spiking of the square can also be carried out at this time. The grass on the square should not be allowed to grow too long and should be topped-off at a height of 25 mm. Fence-off the square with posts and rope to keep people off the new surface.

Harrowing and spiking of the outfield should be started now. This will help the future drainage and assist grass root development.

## NOVEMBER

Regular brushing or dragging with a chain mat will help keep the square free from leaves and worm casts. Spiking of the square can be done again this month.

The outfield can be topped-off, if weather permits, with regular harrowing and spiking.

All machinery, mowers and rollers should be overhauled, and checking of engine oil levels and greasing of rollers should be carried out at this time. Any machine that cannot be serviced in the shed should be sent away to be repaired ready for use next season.

Now is an ideal time to ensure that the shed is in a neat and tidy condition.

## DECEMBER

Brushing of the square on a regular basis will help to keep disease at bay. Top-off the square, if weather permits, at 25 mm. and spike, if spiker is available. Do not work on the square if too wet or frosty.

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!! Make sure you take some time off before it all begins again!!**

