

Quality/Condition of Sporting Facilities Guidelines

Last Review: N/A	Constructed / Reviewed by: Clayton Utz
Next Review: March 2026	Approval Required: Yes
	Board Sign Off Date: Monday 26 th October 2024

1. Statement of Context

- 1.1 GISSA oversees competition in a range of sports at a range of venues. At GISSA schools, the quality / condition of the venue is primarily the responsibility of the host school. At 'external venues' (in most cases secured by commercial arrangement), the quality / condition of the venue is primarily the responsibility of the provider of that venue.
- 1.2 As part of their governance responsibilities, GISSA has identified the need to provide guidelines regarding the quality / condition of sporting facilities / surfaces provided by host schools for sporting competition. For a variety of reasons which are understandable, the quality / condition of surfaces / venues will vary.

2. Reference Points

- 2.1 In considering this matter, GISSA have relied in large part on what represents community standard across a range of sports. Should the venue be managed externally (i.e. council or commercial venue), communication should also be made regularly with this body.

3. Aim

- 3.1 In formulating these guidelines, GISSA aims to reflect their duty of care for participants of sporting events.
- 3.2 These guidelines are designed to draw attention to the general risks only of injury within sporting competitions and set down guidance to be followed by schools in respect of assessing and monitoring the condition of sporting facilities.

4. Guideline details

- 4.1 For all venues:
- 4.1.1 Sports Coordinators (or school representative), in many cases informed by grounds managers and acting on behalf of competing schools, are responsible to their Principal for ensuring that the quality of facilities and surfaces offered at their school for competitions, represents a safe sporting environment so far as is reasonably practicable. They are also responsible for liaising with commercial and other providers to ensure that the quality of facilities and surfaces offered for competition at off campus venues also represents a safe sporting environment so far as is reasonably practicable.

- 4.1.2 Sports Coordinators (informed by grounds managers or commercial providers) will advise the Principal of the host school prior to the time of competition if there is a significant doubt regarding the quality / condition of a particular venue.
- 4.1.3 Appropriate tests will be overseen by Sports Coordinators (or school representative) with subsequent advice to the Principal. **Prior to the start of the season** and subject to re-checking during the season, the Sports Coordinators should oversee the assessment of playing surfaces to be used in GISSA competition.

This initial check may include visual check for grass cover, hardness, evenness and padding being applied on any goal posts. Records should be kept of checks and testing undertaken.

As an example for Australian Rules Football, the following tests could be conducted:

- (a) Clegg Hammer assessments – to determine surface hardness as experienced by players running or falling on to the surface
- (b) Penetrometer assessments – to assess the impact of the surface hardness on turf root development
- (c) Ball Bounce assessments – to determine the impact of the fields playing characteristics
- (d) Slip Factor

5. Communication

- 5.1 These guidelines and the implications of the guidelines will be communicated by the Executive Officer of GISSA to the Principals, who will advise the Sports Coordinators of competing schools prior to the commencement of each year of competition.

6. Implications for Practice

- 6.1 Position descriptions for relevant staff, including Delegates, within competing schools should reflect the responsibilities indicated in these guidelines including the communication to coaches and team managers.
- 6.2 The guidelines have implications for the means of communicating between team coaches/managers and sports staff.

7. Disclaimer

These guidelines do not create any binding obligations on GISSA. GISSA has no control over the implementation of these guidelines and cannot be held liable where schools or individuals fail to follow any aspect of these guidelines, during participation in school sport, personal sport, or club sport.