

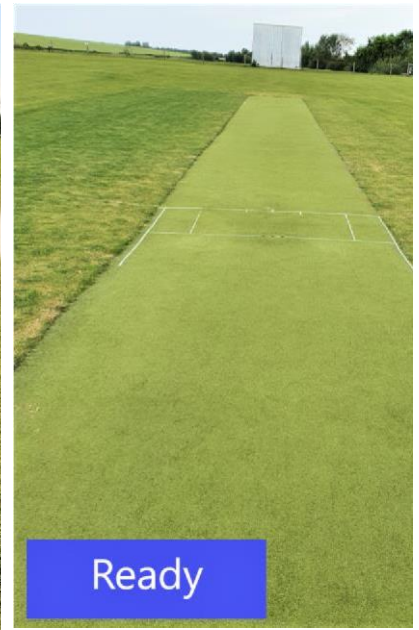
Useful guide for Artificial Pitch (Mat)



Edging



Cleaning



Ready

Every year the artificial must be edged, best to do this minimum one month prior to the start of the season when the ground is soft. Equipment required, 30-yard string line with two thin steel bars, spade with straight edge, bucket or wheelbarrow and a strong brush.

Set up the line tight to the edge of the artificial a distance from the return-crease, cut with the spade along the line, run it under the cut sod (do not damage the artificial) dispose of material with bucket/wheelbarrow, brush any debris away. Walk along the cut edge giving a nice safe finish with a gentle gradient between artificial and surrounding surface (the reason to do when ground is damp).

During the season perhaps 3 times it will be necessary to cut back the wispy grass encroaching on to the artificial (known as the haircut) this can be done with a sharp clipper or a strimmer on half power.

Next job washes the artificial, needs someone with the correct equipment, this will bring the artificial back to its original state removing the winters moss and grime, after washing it is a good idea to roll with a reasonably heavy roller. (If the artificial is set on stone and quarry dust it will develop indentations, this the ideal time to flatten)

Remarking, usually last season's marking is still visible. Equipment required, 30-yard string line as above, decent paint plus 2-inch quality brush (essential) straight edge about 10 ft long plus a cloth. The cloth is to keep the excess paint off the straight edge avoiding a mess.

If no markings set line up along return crease 4ft 4inches from centre of middle stump, marking both ends right and left, now everything is in line, popping crease and bowling crease can be filled in.

A 4ft straight edge can be useful to mark guidelines for wides. Danger area and middle stump should also be marked. If properly done it will only require freshening, the bit that will need doing every week is extending the popping crease as it will be worn from grass cutting.

Of course if you have a marking frame it helps, more relevant for turf pitches which will be marked from scratch.

We are now ready to play cricket, on the day of the game. Some means of cleaning the artificial prior to the start of play, preferably a leaf blower or a push sweeper, a clean surface essential as it gives the correct impression. The stumps put in solid, a mix of wet clay in the stump holes, compounded with the heel, when the stumps are in, they must be rigid so no bails falling off for the wrong reason. Spring loaded stumps should be avoided. A good quantity fine sawdust (in case of rain) no grease or oil so a soft wood, the blower again can be used after the game to remove excess.

Fielding circles: where the artificial is the only pitch the 30-yard fielding circle should be permanently marked by paint dots refreshed every week and if available covered by discs.