



Use of the Monastery Road Main Pitch

A natural grass pitch can sustain many hours of use providing it is properly managed and maintained. The playability and reliability of a pitch depends on many factors, but the key ones are listed below:

- The management of the pitch
- Maintenance of the pitch
- The type of pitch construction
- The physical characteristics and soil profile of the pitch
- The type of use e.g., competition or training
- Adult or junior use. As a rule of thumb, the usage will increase by approximately 50% for players 15 years of age and under
- The prevailing weather conditions.

Management of the pitch

To obtain the maximum use from any pitch it is essential that its use is properly managed by the grounds person, facilities team and other officials and mentors. This means careful planning and an understanding by everyone that good management will make a big difference. The list below provides some ideas of good management principles for everyone to adopt:

- Ensure that pitches are not overplayed.
- Warm up should be completed off the pitch.
- Don't always use the pitch or area of pitch that is easiest to get to
- If tactical sessions were to be permitted (by exception only), those sessions should move around different areas and try to avoid high wear areas.
- Never, ever, conduct repetitive drills on the pitch
- Don't use a pitch if the conditions mean that it will damage the playing surface to such an extent that it cannot recover during the season (e.g. waterlogged, covered in frost, ice or snow, etc.) This approach can make a big difference.

Training is not permitted on Monastery Road Main Pitch. There is however a long-standing arrangement for Towers Óg and Le Chéile to use the pitch every Saturday morning, if the pitch conditions allow. The provision of the New Astro area will help facilitate a reduction of the main pitch for these sessions.

There is also an arrangement whereby the **4 Senior Teams (across the 4 codes)** are permitted to hold a short (30-minute max.) Tactical session on the pitch in advance of **home fixtures only** (these sessions are strictly for match preparation and must never include repetitive drills).

Maintenance of the pitch

Without proper maintenance the playing surfaces will quickly deteriorate. It is the maintenance throughout the year i.e., in the closed season as well as during the playing season that makes a difference. We have engaged a specialist pitch contractor to assist delivering a multi annual pitch maintenance programme.

Typical hours of use

Based upon the combination of the above factors and the data collected by consultants and by grounds and pitch management associations, it is known that a very good standard, properly managed and maintained sand-based pitch can sustain up to 4 hours per week of adult use on average providing it is not used in saturated conditions.

South Dublin County Council (SDCC) engaged “*4 Global Consulting*”, a London based international sports pitch consultancy to assess and assign ratings to all of the SDCC pitches. They divided the pitch into categories and recommended the maximum number of (match equivalent) hours per week that a pitch should be used, as follows.

- Very Good 4 Hours
- Good 3 Hours
- Standard 2 Hours
- Poor 1 Hour

The wide variation in pitch capacity reflects the impact of different levels of pitch condition, pitch construction, maintenance and specific site conditions. For example, the newer specially constructed sand-based pitches with in-built irrigation systems could be assessed as “Very Good”.

4 Global Consulting rated the Round Tower Monastery Road main pitch as “Good”. The facilities team also got two other opinions from independent individuals who agreed that the pitch is in the good to very good band and who recommend that Round Tower GAA club aim for a 3-hour average figure with an absolute maximum of 3.5 hours per week on average as well as a 2-month winter closed period to allow for recovery time and for the annual maintenance to be carried out.

By observing how the pitch performs and understanding how the pitch is used over time the Pitch Committee, with the help of other advisors, will form an opinion of the specific pitch capacity.

Round Tower Pitch Booking App by Sportskey

The Facilities team engaged with Sportskey to develop a pitch and facilities booking application to enable booking requests to be made and for the use of the facilities to be managed. This has successfully bedded in, and the data gathered from the system has been invaluable to the club in helping to track usage and plan maintenance.

Agreement for the limited use by U15 & U16 teams on a trial basis

It has been agreed to continue the trial for the use of the main pitch for one match in for each code in 2025, this will be a total of a maximum of 8 games (4 U15s and U16s).

Monastery Road Main Pitch Usage 2024

The pitch was used for 188 (match equivalent) hours in 2024, approx. 50% of these hours were used by the Adult and Minor teams and the remaining 50% was used by Juvenile Teams, incl. Towers Óg and Le Chéile. The 188-hour figure is above the target 3 hours per week (144 hours) and also the higher 3.5 hours average per week (168 hours). It is planned to tightly manage the pitch allocations to ensure that the average weekly usage figure is close to 3 hours per week.

****Final approval for the use of Monastery Road Main Pitch will be at the discretion of the Pitch Committee and will be dependent on the pitch condition and weather conditions.***