

SCCL Dangerous Pitch Protocol

Purpose

This protocol is intended to establish a **standardised approach** for umpires and league officials in circumstances where a pitch may be deemed dangerous. It covers:

- The criteria for identifying a dangerous pitch
- The on-field procedures and communication process following such a diagnosis
- The administrative actions to be taken within 48 hours
- The potential outcomes for both home and away clubs

1. Definition of a Dangerous Pitch

Not all poor or difficult pitches should be classified as dangerous. For example, pitches exhibiting excessive seam or spin movement, variable but low bounce, or regular instances of deliveries disturbing the surface and “stopping” are not, of themselves, dangerous.

A pitch should only be considered **dangerous** where **variable but high bounce** is present, such that batters and/or the wicket-keeper are placed at risk of injury to the **head or upper body**.

In assessing whether a pitch is dangerous, umpires should jointly consider the following factors:

1. Length of Delivery

The primary consideration is the length from which deliveries are rising sharply.

- Deliveries from a back-of-a-length or shorter, which would normally be played on the back foot but occasionally climb marginally above their expected height, are generally less dangerous.
- Deliveries rearing sharply from a fuller length present a significantly greater risk.

2. Pace of Delivery

The speed at which variable bounce occurs is also critical.

- A delivery from a spinner or medium-pace bowler that takes a piece out of a wet pitch and “stops” usually does so slowly and is therefore less dangerous.
- A similar delivery from a pace bowler on an overly dry or drying surface, particularly from a fuller length, presents a far higher risk.

3. Frequency of Occurrence

The frequency with which uneven, high bounce is observed must be taken into account.

- One or two erratic deliveries over an extended period, while undesirable, will not usually be sufficient to categorise a pitch as dangerous.

These considerations must be based on **what has occurred to that point in the match**, rather than what might happen in the future with different bowlers or conditions.

2. On-Field Umpire Protocol and Communication Process

- The umpires must work together as a pair, applying the criteria above, to reach a **joint decision**.
- If the pitch is deemed dangerous, the umpires shall:
 - Suspend play immediately and inform both captains of the decision
 - Contact the SCCL League Administrator with a summary of events
 - Upon receiving confirmation, inform the captains whether:
 - The match is abandoned, or
 - The match is to be resumed
- Once play has commenced, the pitch may only be:
 - Rolled between innings, and only to the extent permitted by the Laws of Cricket
 - Swept and remarked as required by the umpires

Additional rolling during an innings is not permitted.

- Any player who attempts to influence the umpires' decision prior to the suspension of play must be identified and reported. Such conduct is likely to result in disciplinary action and should be treated as a **Level One offence under the GCR**.
- All playing and non-playing members of both clubs are bound by league rules regarding comments made to umpires or via traditional or social media. Breaches will result in disciplinary sanctions against both the individual(s) concerned and their club.
- Umpires are **not required** to discuss a decision to abandon with anyone other than the two captains and the final decision to abandon rests with the umpires. This includes, for the avoidance of doubt, the home ground manager and any club committee members present.

3. Actions Within 48 Hours of Abandonment

- Umpires must submit a **written, factual report** by email to the SCCL League Administrator immediately following the match. This report must include details of any disciplinary issues.
 - Captains are required to submit their online post-match reports in the normal manner.
 - Within 24 hours of the decision, the SCCL League Administrator will request written comments from both clubs regarding the circumstances of the abandonment.
 - The SCCL League Administrator will liaise with the home club's nominated **SCCL contact** to arrange a visit from one of the league's approved pitch experts.
 - The pitch must not be altered or played on again prior to this inspection.
 - The pitch expert will submit a written report following the visit.
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4. Outcomes for Home and Away Clubs

- Written submissions from both clubs, their captains, and the league pitch expert will be reviewed within **5–7 days** by the SCCL Executive Committee
- Where the abandonment is deemed to be **no fault**, each club will receive:
 - Five abandonment points, plus
 - Any bonus points accrued prior to the abandonment
- Where the home club is found to be responsible for the abandonment:
 - The home club will forfeit any bonus points accrued and will receive an additional penalty of:
 - 20 points (win/lose competitions), or
 - 24 points (win/lose/draw competitions)
 - The away club will receive five abandonment points plus any bonus points accrued
- All such decisions are **final and not subject to appeal**.
- A second instance involving the same club in the same season will result in the standard 20/24-point penalty being increased to **50 points**.

