

ATHLETICS AUSTRALIA FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR OPERATING AND MAINTAINING ATHLETIC FACILITIES

MAINTENANCE

Introduction

A synthetic surfaced athletic facility is a major investment and the owner with a carefully planned and implemented preventive should protect this investment maintenance programme. The maintenance plan should be broken down into daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal and annual tasks.

This also pays dividends as it places an obligation on the users to use the facilities and equipment responsibly.

A failure to maintain can result in a much higher cost to replace or repair damage.

There must be an annual maintenance budget to enable routine and unforeseen maintenance to be undertaken. Maintenance plans should be reviewed yearly. before the preparation of budgets.

There must be well qualified and trained grounds staff with the back up of qualified tradesmen with the correct tools to undertake any specialised repairs

Equipment

The available equipment should include:

- Ride-on and hand mower(s);
- Ride-on sweeper with rotary nylon brushes;
- Drum sponge roller(s) (Super-Sopper) for sopping up excess water from runways during wet weather;
- Industrial vacuum cleaner - ride-on or hand pushed;
- High pressure water hoses;
- Hand brushes;
- Fertiliser and grass seed spreading machines;
- Hand Tools including sand pit rakes and screeds
- Two stroke cultivator
- Two-stroke grass edger

Materials

The following materials should be stored at the arena or be readily available at a central depot:

- Fertiliser
- Grass Seed
- Sand to specific specifications for grassed area repair and landing area top up;
- Turf replacement area;
- Colour paint to match the markings colours;
- Synthetic material and glue for small repairs by track specialist;
- Safety net repair cord.

Weekly

Inspect the track and runways for any damage such as loose, bubbling or lifting spots particularly in areas of high wear such as at take-off boards. (Bubbling can be more evident after rain and a spell of high temperatures causing moisture under the synthetic to vaporise and lift the synthetic.)

Check all diesel and petrol powered machinery for diesel, petrol, battery acid or oil leaks which would damage the synthetic surface and repair if necessary.

Check the hammer cage for damage.

Before each Competition

Loosen sand in the horizontal jump landing areas using a motorised cultivator, moisten the sand and relevel using rakes and screeds.

Install the long and triple jump boards.

Clean steeplechase water jump before filling with water.

After each Competition

Fill any holes made by throwing implements with a sand and seed mix after replacing divots;

Inspect the sprinkler heads for damage from hammer;

Sweep any sand which has been spilt from the jump landing areas back into the landing area;

Replace the covers over the landing areas and jumping pits;

Drain the steeplechase water jump;

Check protective cages for damage;

Remove long and triple jump boards to storage and replace with blank boards with take-off boards painted on their top surfaces.

Remove equipment and hurdles to storage.

Monthly

Vacuum all synthetic surfaces to remove sand, grass clippings etc; any resistant soiling to be removed by brushing and medium to high pressure hosing. Generally loose crumb to be left on the track to assist in reducing wear

Blow sand grass, grass clippings, and loose crumb from under the running rail and collect by vacuuming;

Clean out drainage holes from throwing circles, pole vault pole boxes, and jumps take-off board pits and the drain at the junction of the high jump 'D' with the track;

Add rock salt to the horizontal jump landing areas and dig over the sand with cultivator.

Inspect the take-off boards for damage and stability, and if necessary repair or replace;

Check the vertical jump landing mats for any damage;

Clean out the steeplechase water jump pit;

Check the rigidity of the steeplechase water jump hurdle.

Check all hurdles for damage.

Check the hammer cage for damage.

After Mowing

Remove grass cuttings from the throwing circles and drainage holes, and the track and runways.

September and April

Check that all electrical power points, telephone and starting equipment outlets in in-ground pits are working correctly. Repair as necessary.

Check the running rail kerbing for any damage particularly kerbing clips, which can be loose or bent out of shape.

Check all markings and repaint carefully if faded to match existing.

Check all equipment and implements for correct function, dimension and repair/repaint/lubricate as necessary.

Check all take-off boards for damage or wear before repainting.

Check that the starting blocks are not bowed and replace any bent or blunted spikes

Check the pole vault boxes for wear or damage.

Check the surface and rims of all throwing circles for damage or wear; the shot put stop board must be securely fixed and positioned, and repainted.

Damage and wear to the throwing cages nets, posts, and gates must be repaired, in ground sockets cleaned out.

Wash through all drains and pits removing any accumulated washed in material.

Check all hydraulic lines for leaks.

Spray the track surface with a non-foaming detergent before washing down making certain all detergent is removed in the process.

OPERATION

Where possible all movable equipment such as landing mats, hurdles, starting blocks and steeplechase hurdles should be permanently stored on purpose built trailers in a generously proportioned storage shed. This will save double handling of the equipment, minimise damage and protect it from weather damage.

An electric powered rubber tyred prime mover is preferred for pulling the trailers. If the prime mover has a tray back, this will be convenient for carrying small items of equipment.

Oil leaks or drips from vehicles should be washed away immediately with water and detergent.

The inside lanes of the track will suffer the most wear. Therefore no training should be allowed on the inside two lanes. To ensure this there should be at least six gates which can be swung across the track's inside three lanes and locked in position. Users should be instructed not to use the inside lane(s) when there are less than eight (ten) competitors in the 200 m, 400 m and 800 m events.

To minimise wear sprinters should practice their starts from the assembly line behind the 110 m start line not from the 100 m or 110 m start lines or use the back straight for training.

Provide only 25 to 30 hurdles for training and regularly repair any damage to these hurdles.

Where high jump and pole vault mats are left out for training then the mats should be installed on open duckboards to allow drainage and drying out. Provide an additional layer of Polythene under the top mats to protect the mats from spike damage and water ingress.

The length of shoe spikes used by athletes must be rigidly controlled; sprinters using spikes must use starting blocks for events up to and including 400 m and only the stadium supplied starting blocks may be used.

Access to the arena by any vehicles must be effectively controlled. If there is possibility of damage to the track then protective sheeting must be laid over the track before the vehicle is allowed to cross the track. Avoid heavy traffic loads on the track when the ambient temperature is higher than 30⁰C.

Any bookings proposed for one off events must be risk assessed before and passed as appropriate before the booking is confirmed. Hirers may be required to provide a performance bond and be required to take out insurance against unforeseen damage.

HELPFUL HINT

To prevent vertical jump cross bars from fraying or splitting by gluing the end pieces in place and/or plugging the bar ends with cork.

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