

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

Facilities Management

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Standard Operating Procedure: SUS001-150421

Title: Determining Playability of Natural Turf Fields

The following procedure will be utilized by Facilities Management in determining when campus natural turf fields are to be closed for use and/or re-opened for use by the campus. A field may be closed due to affecting weather conditions, maintenance, or other activity precluding general use of the facility.

Weather Conditions Affecting Natural Turf Field Use

- Use will be restricted (field closure) when the soil moisture content is so great as to allow physical disruption of the turf from activity on the field. Excessive turf disruption is to be avoided due to steeply increasing repair costs and it can preclude continued use of the facility by multiple user groups.
- Generally, only excessive soil moisture will trigger a field closure in this category, presumably caused by intense or long-duration rain events.
- After measurable rainfall has occurred Facilities Management will inspect the field area to for obvious soil saturation, involving walking the field across either the length, width, or both directions of the turf. Obvious soil saturation is considered present if there is standing water on any portion of the field or should inspection of the turf cause water to appear around the inspector's feet or in the footprints.
- Absent the preceding condition adequately saturated soil will be determined by using a soil moisture probe to take no fewer than five readings across each of the walked transects. Readings will be averaged from each transect. If any average is higher than 65% or a single reading higher than 70%, the soil will be considered too wet for field activity. Readings with lower % saturation will trigger notification of the field being open for use or not closed to such.
- Inspections will be conducted in the mornings or after rain events occurring during regular business hours (Monday- Friday, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.). In the case of a field condition designation occurring on a Friday, such designation will remain in place until the next business day unless field users with a valid facility reservation make prior arrangements for an inspection during the weekend.

Maintenance of Natural Turf Fields

- A field closure notification will be issued by Facilities Management should turf maintenance preclude activity on the field due to causing interference with the maintenance or creating an unsafe situation.
- Inspections will be conducted in the same manner as under weather conditions.
- The field will be re-opened after an inspection discovers the closure condition no longer exists.

Other Activities Affecting Use of Natural Turf Fields

- Field closure notifications by Facilities Management may be warranted for other reasons than specified herein, generally, for safety reasons.

- Inspections will be conducted in the same manner as noted above.
- Field opening will be conducted in the same manner as noted above.

Notification of Field Usage Status

- Field closures will be noticed on site by posting one or more signs at access points. In addition and upon rendering such a decision, Facilities Management will send written notification via email to the designated Field Scheduling Coordinator (Kinesiology & Recreation Administration Department), Athletics, Recreational Sports, Contracts Procurement & Risk Management Office, and the University Police Department.
- Re-opening of a field opening will also be noticed on site by removing signs at access points. In addition and upon rendering such a decision, Facilities Management will send written notification, via email, to those same parties established above.

If conflicts in use arise from either a closing or opening designation, Facilities Management will collaborate with the designated Fields Scheduling Coordinator to determine possible mitigations or remedies with the affected user group. Athletics and Recreational Sports will also be consulted should their teams or participants be affected. Final decisions regarding conflicts in use for such situations rest with Facilities Management unless consultation and review can be conducted with the Fields Scheduling Committee via a scheduled meeting.

REFERENCES

- N/A