



**VIA EMAIL**

September 7, 2016

**Attention:** BC Soccer Membership (and affiliated soccer clubs)

**From:** BC Soccer

**RE:** Multi-surface Soccer Fields

As you may or may not be aware the Laws of the Game this year have had more amendments than previous years. These amendments have been made for various reasons and are amended and controlled by IFAB (International Football Association Board). Currently, on the front page of the BC Soccer website is an article regarding this - <https://www.bcsoccer.net/news/post/revised-laws-of-the-game-effective-for-2016-2017-seasons>.

A number of the changes do not impact BC Soccer and the membership directly as they are written for higher levels of competition, however, Law 1.1 which refers to the field of play is of significance as it relates to some of the soccer fields around the province:

**LAW 1.1 FIELD SURFACE**

The updated law reads:

***The field of play must be a wholly natural or, if competition rules permit, a wholly artificial playing surface except where competition rules permit an integrated combination of artificial and natural materials (hybrid system).***

***The colour of artificial surfaces must be green.***

***Where artificial surfaces are used in competition matches between representative teams of national football associations affiliated to FIFA or international club competition matches, the surface must meet the requirements of the FIFA Quality Programme for Football Turf or the International Match Standard, unless special dispensation is given by The IFAB.***

As some fields are made up of natural grass with an artificial turf patch in the penalty area and/or made up of natural grass and gravel (for example, where a baseball field and soccer pitch boundaries overlap); BC Soccer requested clarification from Canada Soccer. The response received from Canada Soccer's Referee Department Manager is:

***The (updated) law is written to specifically disallow fields, where there is a patchwork of synthetic turf or natural grass (i.e. in front of the goal is artificial turf on an all otherwise grass field). The concern is the transition between each surface poses a hazard as the seams will not necessarily be blended and continuous. Hybrid systems blend/integrate some synthetic turf with natural grass. This has a benefit of creating a more durable field. Interestingly, I recently***

*fielded this question from elsewhere and got clarification from IFAB. See this link for a description of the hybrid system:*

<http://www.wakingthered.com/2014/3/10/5482194/hybrid-grass-football-and-soccer-toronto-fc-bmo-field-argos>

*Also see LOTG Glossary of terms, P.163.*

*Response from IFAB:*

*The purpose of the wording is that it is not permitted to have some areas which are artificial and some which are natural grass e.g. we had a request from one country to put artificial /plastic grass in the 2 penalty areas but leave the rest of the field of play as natural grass. This is not allowed.*

*However, in many top level stadiums, the whole surface is mainly grass but with some artificial material which helps hold the grass together - this is permitted as the artificial and natural materials are mixed/combined (integrated) throughout the whole field of play.*

*Unfortunately, the fields (with turf in front of the goal) should not be sanctioned for competition as they do not meet the requirements of law.*

BC Soccer has requested a formal statement from Canada Soccer on this and will provide it to the membership once received.

**BC Soccer understands that the vast majority of, if not all, fields in BC are owned/operated by the municipalities for which Youth Districts/Leagues, Adult Leagues and affiliated clubs/teams are the user groups of; therefore, BC Soccer has reached out to municipalities around the province to inform them of this updated Law.**

**BC Soccer encourages the respective member organization also reach out to their municipalities to see if this impacts their field allotments.**

Lastly, BC Soccer apologies for the timing of this information as it is the start of season for some members; however, the updated Laws of the Game were just amended within the last month and this specific clarification was just confirmed recently with Canada Soccer.

Should you have questions regarding this law amendment, please contact Lori D'Andrea, Director of Community Development via email at [loridandrea@bcsoccer.net](mailto:loridandrea@bcsoccer.net) .

Kind Regards,

BC Soccer