

West Surrey Tennis Club

Court Surface Presentation: Artificial Clay Considerations

April 2022



Background

- Current courts resurfaced ~10 years ago nearing end of life
- Repainted ~2018 but contractor error led to further remedial work required – causing loss of grip to surface
- Currently many members note issue of slips/fall when only slightly damp to wet conditions - reducing playing time for members and match disruption
- Frost at back of court in winter months (hedge side) takes time to clear - reducing playing time for members and match disruption
- Local trees and hedging creates foliage on court and conditions for moss growth
- Against this background, an assessment of what is suitable/potential surface type for members should a resurface be required soon – if so, what surface best?
- Soundings and process initiated with Committee and golf club in order to obtain assessment and quotes from late 2021



Process

- 3 contractors approached:
 - Trevor May: www.trevormay.co.uk/
 - Chiltern Sports: www.thechilterngroup.co.uk
 - 1st Surface: www.1st-surface.co.uk/
- Soundings on alternative types of surface taken:
- Artificial grass: Graded fast, faster in wet conditions , skiddy low ball – deemed too much variance and unsuitable
- Poraflex porous cushioned acrylic: materially more expensive, doesn't deal with issue of frost at back of court, medium bounce
- Artificial clay: most popular new court surface in UK, playable in wet conditions, not so impacted by frost, more expensive than hard court resurface
- In this light - it made sense to assess practicalities and costs of Artificial clay resurfacing versus hard court



Process

- Discussions with Golf Club board members on status of courts and feasibility of exploration of alternates
- Site visits from contractors Nov 21 – Feb 22 and quotes obtained
- Presentation to the Golf Club Board for initiation of plans
- Following quotes received - Requested formal approval which has been conditionally granted – March 22
- Soundings taken from members' experiences and other club contacts including Camberley and Bagshot tennis clubs including those performing maintenance for other clubs
- Playing sessions at Camberley and Bagshot from interested members and feedback obtained
- Application made to Surrey Tennis LTA for loan scheme. Agreement received in principle for financial support for works – formal council approval 1 June 22 (£20k interest free loan)



Court Change – all 3 or 2 and leave 1?

- Present hard court surface and drainage on 3 courts good enough to fit mat for artificial clay for all 3 surfaces – further deterioration may limit options
- Infill movement between courts an issue on shoes and wind/rainfall
- Coaching on court 1 – then play regularly on a different court?
- Some ADLTA matches over 3 courts
- Different surface options tend to be at courts with more courts (not 3)
- Knock-on impact on court booking – if players like new surface may cause more congestion on courts 2&3
- Complications of members picking different court to suit their game rather than homogenous playing conditions for all
- Costs and economies of scale of changing 3 not 2 courts
- Court 1 will need resurfacing – so investment for another 10years + required shortly
- Suggestion therefore to change all 3 courts at once



Player Experience

What	Tarmac	Artificial Clay
Play in dry conditions	Good	Good – feet tend to slide at pace but player can adapt
Play in wet conditions	Slippery when wet	Good - feet tend to slide at pace by players can adapt slide Generally accepted that clay is easier to play on when wet/raining
Play in icy conditions	No	Light surface frost- drag the surface to break up any frost and check to ensure the surface is not too slippery for play to commence But if it is frozen, wait for it to thaw before using the court Snow - the bulk of the snow can be removed to reduce the thaw time, provided care is taken to avoid damaging the stability mat and dragging off the infill material – therefore this is best done by hand Avoid walking on the snow and compacting it, as this will be likely to turn the snow to ice and slow the thawing process. Ice - avoid playing on a frozen surface in the interests of safety. Do not attempt to play or take maintenance equipment onto the court if it is frozen or in the process of thawing
Ball bounce	Medium to high	Low to medium – medium in higher temperatures
Ball speed	Medium to fast	Medium to slow
Line calls	Depends on who is calling them	Easier to establish in/out if enough synthetic clay covering
Ease on joints	Not brilliant	More forgiving and less fatiguing on the body and less strain on the joints (especially knees)
Sureness of footing	Good	Feet tend to slide when changing direction, but player can adapt
Can ball machine be used on artificial clay	Yes	Yes
Type of tennis shoe required	Normal hardcourt tennis shoes	Trevor May recommend flat soled shoes for optimal performance



Maintenance – IMPORTANT – Member responsibility

What	Tarmac	Artificial Clay
Players need to sweep (using drag NETS) before or after play	N/A	<u>STRICTLY YES</u> – very important to use the drag NETS to keep the clay evenly spread and the surface groomed
Collection of leaf & foliage debris before play	Leaves should be cleared before play but in practice they never are although it is easier to treat Tarmac surface with chemicals if moss builds up because of leaf/foliage/debris	Yes - leaf debris should not be trodden into the surface Extremely important for players to make sure all leaf fall/foliage debris is cleared before play as moss will cause irreparable damage to stability mat/carpet
Soles of shoes need to be cleared/brushed after play	N/A	Yes – important to clear clay particles trapped in soles otherwise they spread all over the place
Checking surface	N/A	Yes – to ensure quality of surface, members should report any damage to the surface, seams or stability mat to the without delay



Maintenance – IMPORTANT – Club responsibility

What	Tarmac	Artificial Clay
Significant increase in club costs to be required to maintain court surface	Presently, court surface received no/sparse attention from members. Falls to voluntary basis by Malcolm and moss spray intermittently by GC	<p>Proposal to engage a clay court Maintenance Contractor (Trevor May) to conduct bi-annual maintenance on the courts</p> <p>Engage a local maintenance contractor to undertake activities require to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality surface for tennis • Preserve the lift of the courts • Ensure keep within the warranty terms provided by contractors
Regular activities of local maintenance contractor required	Minimal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for moss or weed growth and treat if necessary, with approved chemicals • Remove any leaves and branches, litter etc. to prevent accumulation and before it starts to break down or decompose. • Sieve infill regularly to collect debris and dispose • Whole court area to be brushed for even distribution of infill (correct level 2mm above top of stability mat • Clean mats / matwells at entrance gates • Report any damage to the surface, seams or stability mat to the installer without delay • The surface will be difficult or even impossible to work on when the surface is very wet, so picking a suitable time to carry out the maintenance each week will be important. If the whole week is too wet, then resume maintenance as soon as conditions improve.



Maintenance – IMPORTANT – Club responsibility

What	Tarmac	Artificial Clay
Regular activities of the Clay Specialist required	<p>Intermittent moss treatment (undertaken by Golf Club groundsman)</p> <p>Jet washing irregularly</p>	<p>Trevor May Ltd advise that WSTC carry two maintenance visits per year which involves the use of professional maintenance equipment that provides a deeper penetration of the infill, lifting it from the surface, removing finer debris, before replacing the infill into the stability mat.</p> <p>This operation prevents over compaction and contamination of the infill that leads to reduced drainage and surface performance. This work needs to be done during dry weather conditions. This annual service will also allow an inspection of the surface and the opportunity to provide any guidance that may be required regarding court usage and routine maintenance procedures.</p> <p>Moss</p> <p>Once per year by clay maintenance contractor or as necessary to apply moss killer on surfaces that are susceptible or have evidence of moss growth</p>
Repainting	Courts need repainting every 5 years	N/A
Purchase and maintenance of specialist equipment required	Minimal 3x brushes	<p>Required to purchase specialised equipment to maintain the courts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 x Drag Mats, 6 x Line brush, 1 x Drag Brush, 3 x Shoe brush by gates, 1 x Leaf removal net, 1 x sieve, buckets for debris • In addition, potentially require storage facility/shed to store infill material (must be bone dry so not to damage paper bags which contain clay infill)



Summary – Hardcourt v Artificial Clay

- Positive feedback on surface for tennis from many members who have played on Artificial Clay regularly and also feedback from members' site visits
- Nature of surface as set out means likely:
 - more play in damp/wet conditions
 - More play in frosty conditions – although no play in severe cold possible
 - Less slips and falls likely versus current surface
- **BUT** – members and the club will need to take responsibility for significantly more ongoing maintenance. This will ensure:
 - Preservation of the investment – 12/15 years if maintained properly
 - Preservation of fitter and material warranty
 - Ensuring there is a better tennis experience for members



Annual Maintenance Costs v Hard Court

(subject to confirmation with Committee and Golf Club)

What	Estimated for Tarmac	Estimated for Clay
Trevor May bi-annual maintenance*	N/A	£1,640
Local contractor maintenance**	N/A	£2,080
Infill material - based on 1 tonne per annum est	N/A	£700
Moss clearance	£100	£100
Court painting***	£880	N/A
Equipment amortisation ****	£17	£1,070
Jet wash	£200	N/A
	£1,197	£5,590
VAT at 15%	£180	£838
TOTAL BUDGET COST FOR MAINTENANCE	£1,376	£6,428

* 3 courts 2x per year recommended per TM quote as best practice

** Tarmac courts not currently cleaned/maintained with active outsourced management - volunteers cost cannot be determined

** Clay local maintenance TBC - est 2 hours 1x per week at £20 per hour

*** repainting cost £4,400 every 5 years = *£880 per annum

**** see analysis below

Equipment	Number*	Unit Cost	Total £ no VAT
Drag mats	6	£155	£930
Line brush	6	£225	£1,350
Drag brush	1	£250	£250
Shoe brush	3	£93	£279
Leaf net	1	£365	£365
Sieve	1	£35	£35
			£3,209
Amortisation cost	3 years		£1,070

* Recommended by TM/from discussions with other clubs



Financial Plans

- Welcome support of Golf Club in principle – input and comments gratefully received
- Surrey LTA loan application approved in principle – final confirmation on 1 June 22 - interest free loan for up to £20k repayable over 10 years
- Strong current financial management on voluntary basis – ongoing hard work and thanks to Glenn and Malcolm. 5 year contribution analysis as follows:

YEAR	INCOME	EXPENSES	CONTRIBUTION
2017	£32,900	£18,303	£14,597
2018	£32,495	£13,053	£19,442
2019	£34,304	£10,628	£23,676
2020	£31,015	£6,866	£24,149
2021	£43,800	£10,282	£33,518

- Costs of maintenance dependent on members' daily responsibilities to support the upkeep and help maintain the playing surface
- Financial costs to be spent are a balance – with costs of maintenance, day to day members' actions and quality of resultant surface quality being key inputs

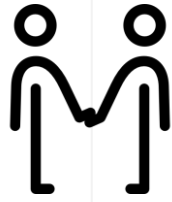
Next steps

- Information shortly available to members for their review and consideration. Including contractor details and quotes, technical backup documents and members' feedback from visits
- Information pack to be available online and in clubhouse
- Vote yes or no open once information available to members
- 1 vote per adult member: Yes or No
- e.g. “Do you want to change the surface from hard court to artificial clay?”
- Approval on simple majority
- Further information at Club AGM (19th May 2022)
- Vote to close 23rd May
- Surrey Tennis LTA funding decision on 1st Jun 2022
- If members vote in favour, intention to proceed with works this Sept 2022



Thank you for you consideration

Our values



Welcoming,
friendly and
relaxed



Competitive,
encouraging and
inclusive



Trustworthy,
progressive and
sustainable