

PITCH SHARING

We are providing this guide to explain an often misunderstood concept. For many clubs, one of the biggest challenges is availability of pitches on matchdays. Where several teams have to share the same pitch, the more the Fixtures Secretaries of the various leagues know, the easier it is to avoid too many pitch clashes and the obvious need to rearrange kick-off times and even venues at a later date.

However, the fact that several teams play on the same pitch does not automatically mean there is a pitch share arrangement (as understood by League Fixtures Secretaries).

A pitch share arrangement is where 2 teams share the same pitch and the same kick-off time. By disclosing this, the Fixtures Secretaries with the aid of a 12 team grid system (which is just slightly less complicated than an enigma encoding machine) are able to ensure that the two teams are never scheduled to play at home on the same date.

There are a couple of simple rules to remember when deciding on pitch share:

- Decide which 2 teams (a team can't pitch share with more than one other team) are going to enter into the arrangement and what will be their default kick-off time.
- Where possible, try to pitch share with another team in the same league. This does not necessarily have to be the same age group. It is much easier for a League Fixtures Secretary to manage things when they have control of both teams fixtures. A pitch share between different leagues does work but is far more complicated to administer than within the same league.

Example:

A club has 1 11 V 11 pitch and there are six teams that need to play there. Kick-off times are 10:30, 12:30, and 2:00 PM. The pitch will therefore be at full capacity every week. The teams are as follows....

- U13 LDSJL
- U14 LDSJL
- U15 Girls – LW&GFL - The manager of that team is also connected to an U18 girls and where possible would like home games for both on the same day.
- U16 girls – LW&GFL
- U16 boys – LYL
- U18 girls – LW&GFL - The manager is also connected to the U15 girls and where possible would like home games for both on the same day.

Clearly the 2 LDSJL teams can pitch share (e.g. with a 10:30am kick-off). Likewise 2 of the 3 girls teams (e.g. U15 girls and U16 girls at 12:30pm kick off). The remaining girls team – U18s, can pitch share with the U16 LYL team at 2:00pm.

When completing your on-line league application, it is essential that you are totally clear on the pitch share arrangements for each of your teams, because if the information is incorrect when the league fixture secretaries compare notes and assign pitch share numbers, then the system will simply not work and it can be impossible to change once fixtures have been released and pitch shares are already embedded into the season.