

RUGBY GROUNDSMEN CONNECTED KEITH KENT PITCH REPORT

CLUB	Chesterfield Panthers RFC	NO. OF PITCHES	3 + Training Area
DATE OF VISIT	29/3/18	CB	NLD
CONTACT	Mike Curley	EMAIL	curleymichael@btinternet.com
TEL		AFM	Pete Shaw

WHO HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PITCHES?							
VOLUNTEER(S)	<input type="checkbox"/>	PAID GROUNDSMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTRACTOR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	RFU PIP CONTRACTOR	<input type="checkbox"/>

KEITH KENT'S REPORT
<p>On a bright sunny morning we were met at the club by enthusiastic club members. Phil Arnold, Chairman, Graham Fell, President and Mike Curley Honorary Secretary & Colts.</p> <p>I visited Chesterfield in 2006 when you were at the old ground and I have to say how much I was impressed with the new whole set up. What a magnificent transformation you have achieved.</p> <p>The club use outside contractors to do all of their maintenance work on all the pitches. The only thing that the club do in house is the cutting of the grass banks, other than that Mr Peter Bowden and his team look after the club.</p> <p>1st Team / Training Pitch with Lights</p> <p>This pitch is the nearest to the dressing rooms and is really well used, if not overused as it is a dual purpose pitch with white rugby lines and green football lines all very well marked out and very visible.</p> <p>Despite all of the use of both games and training the pitch was in remarkably good condition. There is still a fair amount of grass on the pitch and the surface was very good. The pitch had been verti-drained and was draining very well in such a long wet winter. As I walked and talked with Peter Bowden he explained about the drainage and the way that the club have agreed to an aeration programme throughout the year.</p> <p>Aeration is the key to good winter sports pitches and allied with the sand top dressings that take place every year the pitch is in excellent condition.</p> <p>This pitch gets looked after very well and the results are there to be seen. Aeration, sand, fertiliser, and over seeding are all being carried out on a regular basis which is just brilliant. The club need to be congratulated on seeing that this is the way to maintain their pitches here at Chesterfield.</p> <p>One thing has to be said though? The coaches need to share the wear over the entire pitch when training? I am sure that the lighting is just as good on the far side of the pitch as it is on the side nearest the dressing rooms?</p> <p>Top Training Area with Lights</p> <p>This area is really the workhorse of the club. The floodlit area is well used by both the club itself and a number of local football clubs. Surprisingly it did have some grass left on it! That in itself is remarkable and says such a lot about the standard of care and workmanship that the club and Peter's crew apply here on site.</p> <p>This area had been aerated as well. The holes were 4 inches apart that is proof that the job is being done to a very high professional level. So often I see aeration holes 7 inches apart, that tell me that the contractor was in too much of a hurry to do a good job.</p> <p>I congratulate the club committee for this commitment to all of the areas. The training area is just as vital to the club as its 1st team pitch! Sometimes even more so?</p>

The club will soon be over seeding and fertilising this area at the same time as the pitches.

Pitch 3

Once again this pitch is of dual use. One half used for football pre-Christmas and then swopped over to the other half in the New Year. Great lines that are very visible to both codes. 5m drainage installed on this pitch and the sand and aeration are keeping this well used pitch in good condition.

There was a good wind blowing across the pitch that morning which is of a great help in the drying of the surfaces after wet weather.

1st Team Pitch, Pitch 2

This is the show piece pitch of the site. This is a good high spec pitch with 3m drains with secondary drainage in the shape of sand slits which make the pitch drain so well. The aeration and the sand are the key to keeping the top surface dry and playable. It felt really good upon walking on it and is in such good condition.

Not as well used as Pitch 1 being as it is further away from the clubhouse. But this is likely to change when the club install floodlighting onto this pitch later this summer. The pitch will be used that much more and will need just as much maintenance if not more, as it becomes a second training pitch of an evening.

The soccer clubs will soon be pressurising you to hire it out for night fixtures, which is good and a money maker but the club must never stop the investment into the pitches.

I suggest that the club speak with Peter Bowden about the wear and tear this pitch is now likely to get and speak about how you move forward with its care? It will need monitoring and careful note taking of what effect the lights are surely going to make?

In Conclusion

I want to congratulate the club on its commitment to running and operating of their club and its pitches. They have done an amazing job in setting this place up and then sorting out a maintenance programme to keep it in tip top condition.

I also want to say what a brilliant job Peter Bowden and his team are doing on the pitches.

Together the club and contractor have achieved such a high standard of pitches and their upkeep. It does cost money to maintain pitches to the standard that you have your pitches? But it is money well spent when they are being maintained to such a high standard and with such pride as shown by your contractor.

Everything that I would have recommended you are already doing. Sand top dressing is vital. It must be done every year. 160 tons may not be enough going forward with the floodlight improvements?

The aeration program is just fantastic. And speaking with Peter he understands as I do just how good that one job does when done properly and on a very regular basis.

The over seeding and the fertiliser program are all top class and the club must never cut back on these items.

The pitches are kept level and playable to a very high standard. The use of the Quadraplay and other items of equipment that I would use are all in use at Chesterfield Panthers.

I have re-read my report all the way back from 2006 and there is one line that is as relevant today as it was when it was wrote 12 years ago

We do really need to educate the coaches as well.

Can I ask that the coaches read my report and go out of their way to help the club committee and the maintenance team to achieve an even better playing surface on all of the areas by spreading the wear across the whole site? If we use the pitch in equal parts the wear will also be equally shared. A message to all coaches at all age groups, young or old and both codes of sport: Please share the wear!

I have visited around 500 clubs all around England in my time as Head groundsman at Twickenham. In all of that time I have seen a number of sites both good and bad. I came away from Chesterfield that Thursday morning thinking that this is among the best set ups I have ever seen. I was chuffed and enthused myself!

Do not ever scrimp on the money that your pitches need spending on them. Do not stop anything that you are doing at present. It is a false economy that will come back to haunt you if you do ever stop being so good at providing for your pitches. A really well and used club. The pitches make the club what it is today. That is one reason the club is as good as it is today. If the pitches go downhill the players will stop coming and the teams will disappear

I wish everyone well at Chesterfield panthers RFC and thank them for our warm welcome that morning.



ATTACHMENTS (TICK IF REQUIRED)

Goalpost offer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand topdressing spec	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rigby Taylor offer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	End of season renovation	<input type="checkbox"/>
KK package offer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nutrient chart	<input type="checkbox"/>
Duralock offer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grass species	<input type="checkbox"/>