



GREATER MANCHESTER CRICKET LEAGUE

GROUND & FACILITIES

2026 SEASON

Greater Manchester Cricket League
Accreditation Scheme for Grounds and
Facilities



Background

As an ECB Premier League, we are required by the ECB to ensure that standards in the top two divisions are of a high standard, and to report annually on the qualities of pitches and outfields. The required standards which are set out in this document are based on a set of requirements for Premier League cricket developed by the ECB and although these do not formally apply below the Premier Divisions, the League uses it as a basis for its expectations for all our grounds.

All member clubs signed up to this approach within the Memorandum of Understanding.

Purpose of the Scheme

The purpose of this Accreditation Scheme is to promote continuous improvement by setting achievable standards for clubs to attain for the following reasons:

- To recognise those clubs that continue to develop their ground and facilities irrespective of the level at which they are playing.
- To achieve the standards for the tier that they are playing in to retain their place at that level, or
- To achieve the standards for the tier above to gain a place in the higher tier through promotion.

The Current Standards

The Accreditation Standards are set out in Appendix 'A' and are in two parts,

A1. The standards for Pitches and Outfield/Boundary and First Impressions, which are supported by performance criteria and a rating scale.

A2. Ground and Facilities Standards and Requirements at each tier.

This paper provides a guide to the background, purpose, operation, and governance of the Greater Manchester Cricket League (GMCL) Accreditation Scheme for Grounds and Facilities.

The GMCL Board will update the contents of the paper to incorporate future changes to the scheme.

Participation in the Scheme is a condition of membership of the GMCL.

A1 Pitches, Outfield/Boundary and First Impressions

The Umpires will, after each match, complete a standard marking form and these will be used by the GMCL to collate a live record of all the scores and information relevant to each ground for the season to date.

The summary of this information will be provided to all Clubs on an ongoing basis throughout the season via an online document to give an indicative score with the intention of allowing clubs to improve as the season progresses and to set plans for the medium and long term.

A2 Ground and Facilities

Scores and ranking will be determined from the GMCL Grounds and Facilities team assessment visit and the weekly match reports.

- Annual ground inspection by members of the GMCL Grounds and Facilities team prior to or shortly after the commencement of the season. Each club will be graded Gold, Silver or Bronze.
 - This inspection will use the standards set out in Appendix 2.
 - This inspection will record requirements present or not, and will serve as an action list for those clubs who do not meet the desired standard for the level that the club is playing at.
 - The inspection team will consist of appropriate people with appropriate knowledge and with no vested interest in the club inspected.
- Weekly ground markings report, which are completed at the end of each match by the Umpires will cover some of the A2 facilities.

Performance

The GMCL will use the information from the Assessment reports to create an ongoing score, accessible online throughout the season and then, at the end of the season each Club will be accredited Gold, Silver or Bronze (or unaccredited) by using the information measured over the season and in conjunction with the grading awarded at the annual ground inspection.



GOLD
Minimum 70% marks



SILVER
Minimum 60% marks



BRONZE
Minimum 50% marks

Three questions are addressed to finalise accreditation

-  Is the standard met consistently over the season?
-  Is there the capability and capacity within a ground's staff to maintain any improved standard?
-  If gradings are available over time, what is the trend, does it show improvement?

Accreditation is only given when consistency is demonstrated.

Once given, the annual grading is not normally lowered or withdrawn based on a single game or a group of games. It follows that a grading is not normally improved or restored until consistency is proved over time.

However, exceptions may occur based on **significantly** better or worse performances as may arise.

Prior to full accreditation, Clubs can be given interim grading levels for example: Silver with Gold potential or Bronze with Silver potential for Grounds & Facility grading only.

Governance

These standards are set by the GMCL but are heavily influenced by the standards set for Premier League Clubs by the ECB. The Executive of the GMCL manages and monitors the Grounds and Facilities Standards. Any disputes over matters of fact are open to review through the Leagues normal mechanisms but in the first instance contact should be made by email to the Clubs Director via the appropriate CLO.

Gradings at or below the level required will be highlighted in the online reports to enable Clubs to quickly see and remedy deficiencies against the standards; clubs are required to be proactive and review any issues flagged.

External assessors will be appointed from the GMA who will be able to advise the Executive and the Clubs to agree any remedial actions.

Grounds Management Association Framework

The GMCL has adopted the standards for maintenance of playing surfaces (squares and outfields) used by the GMA and contained in their framework. The framework can be viewed here. <https://www.thegma.org.uk/grounds-management-framework/performance-quality-standards/cricket/>

Pitch Power Reports

Pitch Power Reports use the standards in the GMA Framework and are mandatory for Premier League Clubs in GMCL, and desirable for all other clubs in the League. The LCF and GMCL will contribute to the cost of these reports, an amount to be determined by the Board. Pitch Power Reports should be conducted every 4 years by a County Pitch Advisor (CPA). The GMCL expect that clubs will address the recommendations in each report and include them in their development plans. Interim self-assessments will be developed by the GMA for clubs to monitor progress between Pitch Power Reports.

Ground Hire or Ground Share

Any club hiring or sharing a ground will be held to the standards of the ground at which they play.

It is our belief that teams hiring or leasing a ground should demonstrate a shared responsibility for the ground development so we would expect that the players and committee of the hiring club should at the very least support ground improvement events held by the host club, and the GMCL will take into account the contributions made by hiring clubs in any judgements made.

New Entrants

New entrants to the league or new grounds used by existing clubs must be assessed before entry into the GMCL competition. If Bronze standard is not met, then the ground cannot be used in GMCL.

Publication

This accreditation scheme is used to provide clubs with an online view of their relative and overall position and is to be seen as an incentive to improve. It is intended to publish this information widely and to encourage those clubs who have made significant progress in achieving these standards.

Cup Finals

Going forward the decisions around the allocation of Cup Final venues will take into account the ground standards of the clubs applying to host any cup final or representative game.

Meeting the Standard

As previously stated, clubs must achieve the minimum standards relevant for the tier that they are playing in, and this scheme provides the GMCL and its member clubs with a clear process to understand what is required at each level.

The League understands that to achieve these standards will, in some cases, involve a level of expenditure that requires budgeting for and to ensure clubs have time to plan, the scheme includes a process to lay down a timeframe for improvement.

Nonetheless, the GMCL are committed to applying these standards for the betterment of the game and as a result the following standards will apply across the GMCL, relevant to the highest-level team playing at the ground including rentals/ground lease.

- ☒ Premier 1 & Premier 2 – Gold Standard
- ☒ Championship – Silver Standard or above / working toward Gold Standard
- ☒ Division 1 - 2 – Silver Standard or above
- ☒ Divisions 3-6 - Bronze Standard or above

Sanctions for failing to fulfil club responsibilities

The GMCL through the work of the Grounds and Facilities Committee seek to encourage and support clubs in their development. Support and guidance is set out in this Standards Document. The GMCL will always offer guidance and support where appropriate through their ongoing annual assessment and monitoring programme. Advice and assistance will always be our first step but if clubs fail to engage or work in partnership with the League to improve and maintain standards or neglect their responsibilities to ensure cricket can be played, then the sanctions set out in APPENDIX A3 of this document may be applied.

Promotion & Relegation

If a Club's grading falls below the standard set for their current tier or is below the tier into which promotion is sought the club must be able to show they are making progress towards the relevant standard or risk being relegated or not promoted.

It will always be our intention to provide a promotion route for teams who are successful on the field, but we will make sure that those Clubs that are progressing on the field are aware of the standards required for them to climb the league and play at a higher level.

Failing Grounds

Grounds not meeting bronze standard may not be used for GMCL games.

The Grounds and facilities team will meet with the club and enter into an agreement with the club and support them in every way possible to get the ground back on track.

Time to meet the targets

Should there be issues, the Club may submit a letter, by 1st September in that season, signed by the Club's Chairman and Treasurer, including any relevant documentary and/or financial evidence, confirming that the requirements for a grading relevant to the tier will be in place before the start of the following season, the club should be proactive in doing this.

If agreed by the GMCL Executive a period for improvement may be granted, particularly where any possible immediate improvements would be wasteful in the context of longer term improvements already in progress.

The above arrangements will be subject to confirmation by the Board of GMCL, who may confirm or vary the outcome, following the right of the Club to appeal. However, Clubs should not assume that leniency would be shown, where the raising of standards is concerned.

Appendix A1a –Standards for Pitches

GMCL – Umpires Pitch Marking								
Pitch/Grading Criteria	Variable or Unevenness of Bounce	Mark	Carry & Bounce	Mark	Seam Movement	Mark	Turn/Spin	Mark
Very Good	Consistently Good Bounce on all lengths	5	Consistently Good Carry & Good Bounce on all lengths	5	None or very little movement and very occasionally	5	None or very little spin, very few balls turning	5
Good	Occasional Varied Bounce	4	Occasional balls lacking carry or good bounce	4	Little and occasional movement for seam bowlers	4	Little, occasional spin	4
Improvement Needed	Variable Bounce throughout innings	2	More than a few balls lacking carry or good bounce	2	Regular limited movement	2	Regular Spin, frequently during innings	2
Poor	Excessive and frequent variety of bounce	1	Too many balls lacking carry or good bounce	1	Excessive movement throughout innings for seam bowlers	1	Excessive Spin throughout	1
Unfit	A pitch is only rated unfit if it is <u>dangerous</u>							0
Umpires must make allowance for the abilities of the bowlers and wear and tear of the pitch during the afternoon								

Appendix A1c –First Impressions of club and ground

GMCL – Umpires' Outfield/Boundary Marking						
Grading Criteria	Appearance of Outfield & Grass Length	Mark	Unevenness of Outfield	Mark	Boundary markings	Mark
Very Good	Cut & striped Below 3/4" (20mm) No grass cuttings	5	No unevenness on outfield	5	Rope in very good condition. Very clear line with flags at 20 yd intervals	5
Good	Cut or striped Below 3/4" (20mm) No grass cuttings	4	Little unevenness on outfield (25% or less)	4	Rope or boundary marking in place with clear line with flags at 20 yd intervals	4
Below Average	Cut longer than 3/4" (20mm) & Impairs ball movement	2	Unevenness across half of outfield	2	Rope or boundary marking but boundary markings not clear / few or no flags or unclear from wicket.	2
Poor	Long Grass. Impairs free ball movement	1	Unevenness across whole outfield	1	No clear markings / boundary not visible or not clear from wicket	1
Unfit	An outfield is only rated unfit if it is <u>dangerous</u>					

Appendix A1c –First Impressions of club and ground

GMCL – First Impressions							
Outside the Boundary		Wicket Covers / Sheets		Umpires Room / Area		Ready for the game	
All areas of grass, flowers, trees, paths and paving within the ground perimeter	Mark	Covers in use if necessary and available	Mark	Umpires room to be clean and tidy and not used as a storeroom.	Mark	Wickets pitched, screens in place and all other game preparations ready	Mark
Very tidy and excellently maintained	5	In place and effective	5	Completely clear, clean, and secure	5	Completely prepared	5
Generally maintained	3	In place but less than effective	3	Any two of clean, clear, and secure	3	Partially prepared	3
Poorly or not maintained	0	Very poor	0	Only one of clean, clear, or secure or none	0	No preparations made	0

Appendix A2 – Ground and Facilities Standards

Item	Premier, Premier 2, Championship, Gold Standard	Division 1, Division 2, Division 3 Silver Standard or Above	Divisions 4 & 5 Minimum Bronze Standard
Sight Screens	<p>Two at each end must be moveable and non- reflective and be in good condition.</p> <p>Screens must be adequate and appropriate for the size of ground.</p> <p>Screens should stand outside the playing area once appropriate boundary markers are in place.</p>	<p>One at each end must be moveable and non- reflective and be in good condition.</p> <p>Screens must be adequate and appropriate for the size of ground.</p> <p>Screens should stand outside the playing area once appropriate boundary markers are in place.</p>	<p>One at each end must be moveable and non- reflective, be in good condition and adequate.</p> <p>They should stand outside the playing area once appropriate boundary markers are in place.</p>
Boundary	<p>The boundary must be clearly marked by a rope (24mm diameter minimum size), fence or continuous boundary boards.</p> <p>Where feasible, for player safety and spectators, the boundary should be kept 3 yards short of walls or other permanent obstructions or structures.</p>	<p>The boundary must be clearly marked by a rope (24mm diameter minimum size), fence or continuous boundary boards.</p> <p>Where feasible, for player safety and spectators, the boundary should be kept 3 yards short of walls or other permanent obstructions or structures.</p>	<p>The boundary, if not in accordance with the Silver & Gold Standard, must be clearly marked with a white line with markers approximately 20 yards apart AND visible from the match wicket</p>
Scoring Facilities	<p>Separate inside area to accommodate two scorers as an integral part of the score box OR Comfortable place for two scorers as a separate area (or room) away from the main scoreboard (either area must be unhindered by machines or other stored items)</p> <p>Must have the capacity to update the scoreboard either manually or electronically. Adequate space for two seated scorers with a clear view of the whole ground.</p>	<p>Separate area to accommodate two scorers as an integral part of the score box with a clear view of the playing area OR Comfortable place for two scorers or as a separate area (or room) away from the main scoreboard. Must have the capacity to update the scoreboard either manually or electronically. Adequate inside space for two seated scorers and a clear view of the whole ground.</p>	<p>Separate area to accommodate two scorers as an integral part of the score box with a clear view of the playing area. Comfortable place for two scorers or as a separate area (or room) away from the main scoreboard. Must have the capacity to update the scoreboard either manually or electronically. Adequate space for two seated scorers and a clear view of the ground.</p>
Scoreboard/ Scoring Facilities	<p>Electronic or manual. Must be able to display minimum of total runs, target to win, wickets down, overs remaining, current individual batsman's score, last man's score, Duckworth-Lewis-Stern score</p>	<p>Electronic or manual. Must be able to display minimum of total runs, target to win, wickets down, overs remaining, current individual batsman's score, last man's score, Duckworth-Lewis-Stern score</p>	<p>Electronic or manual. Must be able to display minimum of total runs, target to win, wickets down, overs remaining, current individual batsman's score, last man's score, Duckworth-Lewis-Stern score</p>
Internet Connection	Wi-Fi or 4G/5G signal for both scorers must be provided by the home team.	Wi-Fi or 4G/5G signal for both scorers must be provided by the home team.	Wi-Fi or 4G/5G signal for both scorers must be provided by the home team.

Item	Gold Standard Minimum required in Premier, Premier 2, Championship.	Silver Standard Minimum required in Division 1, Division 2, Division 3	Bronze Standard Minimum required in Divisions 4 & 5
Covers	<p>Pitch covers must be available and used to cover an area of approximately 50 yards x 12 yards centred on the required weekend tracks prior to and, if required, owing to inclement weather, during a match.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Full roll on roll off covers are required unless impossible  Covers must be supplemented by adequate sheeting as necessary to protect vulnerable areas such as the bowlers' run ups or adjacent pitches. Damaged sheeting letting water through must be repaired within 1 week of identification.  Pitches should be fully covered for at least 24 hours before the match if necessary. 	<p>Pitch covers must be available and used to cover an area of approximately 27 yards x 4 yards centred on the required track prior to and, if required, owing to inclement weather, during a match.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Full roll on roll off covers are preferred  and supplemented by adequate sheeting as necessary to protect vulnerable areas such as the bowlers' run ups or adjacent pitches. Damaged sheeting letting water through must be repaired within 2 weeks of identification.  Pitches should be fully covered for at least 24 hours before the match if necessary. 	<p>Pitch covers must be available to cover an area of approximately 27 yards x 4 yards centred on the required track prior to and, if required, owing to inclement weather, during a match.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  This must be provided by a minimum of covers of adequate sheeting to protect vulnerable areas such as the bowlers' run ups or adjacent pitches. Damaged sheeting letting water through must be repaired within 2 weeks of identification.  Pitches should be fully covered for at least 24 hours before the match if necessary.
Clock	A clock that can be viewed from the match pitch, mounted externally either on the clubhouse or the score box	A clock that can be viewed from the match pitch, mounted externally either on the clubhouse or the score box (Mandatory from 2025 season)	Recommended but not mandatory
Umpires' Communication	Walkie Talkies for use by Umpires to contact scorers during the game.	Recommended but not mandatory	Recommended but not mandatory
Umpires' Bell	Each Club to have a bell, to indicate the commencement of each innings within earshot of players and spectators	Each Club to have a bell, to indicate the commencement of each innings within earshot of players and spectators	Recommended but not mandatory

Item	All Standard Mandatory requirements in All Divisions.
Umpires Room	Changing for Umpires Separate from the players with access to a WC and hand basin with mirror. Lockable room with seating, coat and towel hooks adequate for two umpires
Match Stumps and Bails	Should be properly matched sets in good condition and with matching bails
Drying Equipment	<p>The club should have the ability to remove areas of surface water after rain, either manually or mechanically.</p> <p>The club must have a supply of sawdust for foot holes/damp ground/pitch areas.</p>
Ladies and gents Toilets	Separate ladies and gent's toilet facilities. WC and hand basin with mirror above. Hot and cold running water. Disabled access facilities to be available.
First Aid Box	A fully stocked First Aid Box must be available at all times when the club is being used. Clubs to consider the availability of a defibrillator and its safe use.
Signage	Entrance to the ground to be clearly signed in the name of the club
Seating	Adequate external seating for players and spectators
Car parking	<p>Adequate car parking for players, officials and spectators – at or reasonably adjacent to the club or other appropriate arrangements for car parking.</p> <p>The appropriate insurance disclaimer should be displayed as appropriate</p>
Disabled Access	<p>Clubs should consider disabled access to key areas of the ground and clubhouse.</p> <p>Where the pavilion/scorebox is on more than one level consideration needs to be given as to how, a wheelchair user would get access to floors either above or below ground level</p>

Appendix A3 – Sanctions for failing to fulfil club responsibilities

The GMCL through the work of the Grounds and Facilities Committee seek to encourage and support clubs in their development. Support and guidance is set out in the Standards Document on the GMCL website. The GMCL will always offer guidance and support where appropriate through their ongoing annual assessment and monitoring programme. Advice and assistance will always be our first step but if clubs fail to engage or work in partnership with the League to improve and maintain standards or neglect their responsibilities to ensure cricket can be played, then the sanctions set out below may be applied.

Category A

A major preventable issue that prevents play; or a repeated failure to address or act upon advisory notices issued by GMCL within the specified timescale. This may include health & safety concerns affecting participants, spectators or local community.

Potential penalty sanctions - 10 points or above; deduction or relegation from current division; or expulsion from GMCL.

Category B

A preventable issue that may prevent or delay play; or repeated failure to address or act upon advisory notices within the specified timescale that relate to the existing gold, silver or bronze status of a club.

Potential penalty sanctions - 6-10 points penalty deduction or a written warning to improve.

Category C

A preventable issue or incident concerning the ability to provide the appropriate standard of cricket for which the club has been designated.

Potential penalty sanctions - yellow / red card system used up to a maximum issue of 3 red cards in the same season which can be applied immediately, or with a suspended term.

Any club who has a sanction imposed in Category A, B, or C and considers the penalty to be unfair or unjust has the right to submit an Appeal, with appropriate evidence, to the GMCL Executive Committee.