

Pre-Season Rolling of a Cricket Table

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When to Start

Once the grass is actively growing, if the grass plant is growing it will pull out moisture to depth. This moisture can only be removed by a actively growing plant/roots system .

PSR usually starts in and around early/mid-March, as rolling becomes less effective once soils have dried out in part or full. Soil temperatures are around 10 c or more. It's the drying of the soil that gets it hard, the rolling just assists.

The aim is to squeeze the soil particles closer together, but these spaces must not be filled with water only air so, the soil needs to be in a moist but not wet state.



The Aim

The aim is to compact (build up bulk density of the soil) in the top 100mm.

Rolling will compact the profile evenly, if done correctly it should make for harder and more consistent pitches.



How

Rolling is recommended to be done in a union jack pattern. To ensure the cricket table is evenly compacted. A maximum of 4-5 passes in any one day, with 1-3 more passes more preferable, to allow for the soil to dry for a few days.

Rolling speed does not effect the results, but within reason! It should take between one and two minutes to get up and down a pitch on the roller during pitch prep. You can go a bit quicker during pre-season rolling though, at least to start with.



Push a pin/peg into the soil to check for soil consolidation

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How Much Rolling

Start with your cylinder mower, then progress onto your square mower which is often a 36-inch wide mower. Then you progress to a unballasted motorised roller and finally onto a fully ballasted roller over a period of weeks

Pre-season rolling should be done over a number of weeks to, allow for soil drying between weights. It should be a gradual process of rolling, then allowing the soil to dry for a few days, then looking at increasing your weight.

Cranfield University rolling trials, recommend limiting rolling per weight to 4-5 passes, so around a total of fifteen passes in total over three weights of roller, mower used.

Every ground is site specific as is the range of equipment so rolling recommendation is a just a guide.



When Not to roll

Don't roll if the soil caps, soil smears, seals or ridges. Avoid if water comes up out of the soil profile and or the grass plant gets buried into the soil surface.



Test

Using the end of your thumb lightly pushed into the soil can be used to test soil moisture levels. Is there any water present on your thumb, if so it could be too wet to roll.



Three Key Points

The right soil conditions are key.
Build rolling weights up gradually.
Know what you're looking to achieve.