

North Berwick Tennis Club

EGM: Tuesday 27 November 2018 – 7.00 pm

Vote on the proposal by the committee to resurface courts 1-3 with sand-dressed carpet.

MINUTES

Present: Mark Coke (Chair), Karen Price(Attendees), Stuart Rye (Minutes)

Attendees List: KP to provide

1. Introduction

Base mat polymer needs protection or it is liable to breaking up, currently within a 7 year period in areas of courts 1-3. Therefore for financial reasons alternatives were considered.

In light of this, the Committee reviewed the pros and cons of all surfaces in relation to the resurfacing of courts 1-3.

After this consideration, the negative change to playing characteristics of “polymer with structure spray” (as used on 4-6) and the additional complications of artificial clay in terms of wind effect, maintenance and planning permission, meant that sand-dressed carpet (SDC) was proposed as this could in principle save the club up to £5k per year.

Consequently the committee have proposed that artificial sand dressed carpet (SDC) should be laid, and believe they have done the due-diligence in relation to this.

The purpose of the vote is therefore, in effect, to choose whether artificial sand dressed carpet should be laid as the preference over the current polymer surface.

2. Discussions from the floor

There was an extensive Q&A session, with discussions of the proposal and other surfaces such as artificial clay. The main points are captured below:

Qu: Will the salt in the sea air affect SDC?

Ans: The contractors have said that they do not expect any adverse effects.

Qu: How will the SDC play in the wet, as carpet can be slippery when wet and it is not conducive to rally's, are they playable all year?

Ans: SDC has been highly adopted in the Lothians and is not reported as being overly slippery and should be all year playable, as now, in principle.

Qu: Is player maintenance required with SDC?

Ans: Not specifically as it will be contractor maintained 3 times a year, but a weekly drag may be advisable (eg. after club or team practice).

Qu: If there are sufficient revenues of £20k, then what is the problem with retaining Polymeric?

Ans: The concern is that this is 100% of the funds and leaves no contingency, nor funds for any other purpose. Also, historically the club has required external funds to support the surface.

Qu: What is the urgency, couldn't it wait until after the ELO 2019?

Ans: Whilst carpet is less restrictive in terms of laying conditions and time of year, there is a risk of the court breaking up if we delay and that may cause problems with a carpet solution afterwards, as there would be more preparation work required by the contractors / more risk of bad bounces afterwards.

Qu: How many votes have there been so far?

Ans: 44 votes prior to the meeting. Roughly 25% of the membership, with 75% not expressing a preference.

Qu: As Coach what was Roddy's opinion on SDC?

Ans: Roddy felt that it played ok and had no pressing concerns.

Qu: Had Artificial Clay (AC) been considered? It's used at Thistle and Craiglockhart which are wind exposed. It plays nicely and is not as bad as the original NB blaze for maintenance.

Ans: Yes AC was considered, but was originally rejected due to wind concerns, planning requirements and maintenance. However, a new artificial clay had just been brought to the committee's attention which has been used in windy locations such as Norway. Financially, there is probably little difference between the grass and clay carpets. It was pointed out that Clay needs to be swept to keep a top layer sheen of even consistency, otherwise it can cause falls. It's also more liable to moss issues (albeit not a huge problem at NB) and Musselburgh had seemed to cancel several matches / coaching sessions this year over the summer presumably for playability issues? Neither Scottish contractor (Doe and Eccose) recommended laying AC at north Berwick due to the exposed nature of the site. No English contractor had responded to enquires. However, AC is carpet based and so would fit many of the parameters of the vote, so it might warrant further committee discussion. It was noted that the original NB planning permission was to match blaze, so that might mean AC is suitable, although later permission was to match the current two tone green and red.

Qu: What is the purpose of the vote if Artificial Clay is now a consideration?

Ans: The EGM vote is as stated, to vote on the adoption of SDC given the financial considerations of retaining Polymer. So the vote is effectively for SDC or Polymer. If the vote were to choose SDC, then it is possible that the committee could consider AC further, as it is financially similar and is also physically similar (being carpet based over layer). However, if it was then considered the primary option at that stage, then it would need to be ratified at the AGM in 2019. Such a delay may cause problems with giving a contractor sufficient notice to lay the surface next spring.

Qu: Could £15-£20 be added to the membership fees to support Polymer?

Ans: Yes, but there is a danger that we might lose members, with other local clubs such as Gullane only charging circa £50 pa. Also, in addition to the £5k per year consideration, there is the 6 week loss of court time to relay it periodically and the re-paint time every 3 years - so there are a loss of amenity, and hassle of overhead, considerations as well.

Qu: Why wasn't the vote last time for SDC implemented on courts 4-6?

Ans: Afterwards, contractor's suggested the new structure spray alternative, saying that we could keep the playability of the court surface we like, without the financial and logistically headaches. Unfortunately, the former has not proved to be correct and there has been negative feedback in terms of playability for competitive tennis, which make it unsuitable for the primary courts 1-3.

Qu: Couldn't a softer version of the structure spray be implemented on 1-3?

Ans: The committee and especially Duncan Rae have discussed this with the contractors (including looking at the size of the particulates) and the new samples received seemed to be the same. Therefore, as no guarantees could be given, the risk was deemed too high.

Qu: What are the plans for courts 4-6?

Ans: No further plans at present - the Polymeric with structure spray has been newly laid and this will be retained for the foreseeable future / lifetime of the surface. A carpet option could possibly be considered in the future if the club membership had a strong preference.

Qu: Would two significantly different court speeds be an issue for the ELO?

Ans: It's agreed that the court speeds between 1-3 and 4-6 will be more varied, but the ELO is played over varying surfaces (albeit non-carpet based to date) and the participants are also used to their own individual home courts, with the majority in the Lothians area being carpet based. Therefore, it is hoped it won't be an issue. It should also be noted, that the primary concern is the wishes of the membership over the ELO. Also, the LTA reportedly also recommend different speed ratings if clubs have many courts, although those differentials haven't been qualified.

3. Vote

The vote in the room was 9 against SDC and 4 for SDC

This was added to the email votes and the final result was:

The overall vote of the EGM was 24 against SDC and 33 for SDC

Therefore the vote was to adopt the Sand Dressed Carpet on courts 1-3