

OSU Turf Report Card Grading Guidelines - Each of the guidelines listed below carries a maximum score of 15. Work through each one at a time and record the grade on the report card. For future convenience, the report card could be laminated.

1. Soil Compaction & Drainage Capabilities

- a. **Knife test for compaction** - Push a small pocket-knife into the top 4" of the soil with your thumb. Rate the difficulty of pushing the knife into the soil, with 0 representing very difficult and 5 representing very easy.
- b. **Aeration frequency** - How often do you aerate the field? (0) Never (3) 1x/year (5) >2x/year
- c. **Surface drainage rates** - After a rain period, does the surface of the field drain? Assess the drainage rate, with 0 representing very slow (standing puddles) and 5 representing very quick (0 – 15 minutes)

2. Grass Cover/Density

- a. **% Grass cover** - In the main areas of wear (between hash marks, goal areas, sidelines etc.), give a quantitative assessment of percentage grass cover: (0) 0-20% (2) 20-50% (3) 50-70% (4) 80-90% (5) >90%.
- b. **Level of seed-bed preparation** (check all that apply, for a maximum score of 5)
When preparing the soil prior to seeding or sodding, do you:
 - (1) Reestablish surface levels
 - (1) Slit-seed or hollow core to maximize seed:soil or sod:soil contact
 - (1) Apply a starter fertilizer
 - (1) Closely monitor irrigation practices until seed/sod has established
 - (1) Keep people off the newly seeded/sodded area until it has had time to establish
- c. **Frequency of over-seeding/sodding** - When would worn areas get over-seeded &/or sodded? (check all that apply, for a maximum score of 5) (0) Never (2) Spring (2) Fall (1) During the playing season.

3. Fertility

- a. **Soil/tissue test frequency** - How often do you have a soil &/or tissue test taken to assess field fertility levels? (0) Never (5) at least every 3-5 years.
- b. **Soil pH** - What is the soil pH? (0) below 5.5 or above 8.2 (3) 5.5-6.2 or 7.5-8.2 (5) 6.2-7.5.
- c. **Color quality** - Make a qualitative assessment of the grass color quality, with (0) representing yellowish-green and (5) representing dark green

4. Water Management

- a. **Irrigation method** (choose one) - How is water applied to the field? (0) No supplemental irrigation, (2) Soaker hose, small rotating or oscillating sprinkler, (3) Large rotating or oscillating sprinkler, (4) Commercial traveling sprinkler (raintrain or water cannon), (5) Automated irrigation system.
- b. **Irrigation frequency** - Which best describes irrigation frequency: (0) Sporadic, (1) Never, (5) Deep and infrequent, based on field monitoring. Sporadic watering results in new plant tissue, which dies after watering ceases. Repeated sporadic watering also depletes plant carbohydrate levels.
- c. **Irrigation Timing** (choose one) - Which best describes irrigation timing: (1) When time permits (1) midday or afternoon, (1) night, (3) early evening (5) early morning

5. Mowing Practices

- a. **Mowing frequency** - How would you describe your mowing frequency? (0) When time permits, (3) 1x/week, (5) 2-3 x/week, or as necessary to maintain mowing "one third rule"
- b. **Quality of cut** - Make a qualitative assessment of the mowed grass. Look out for ripped leaf blades (not clean-cut), scalping, excess clippings on the surface, sharp turns causing grass damage, and grass mown too high or too low. Rate the mowing, with (0) representing very poor and (5) representing very good.
- c. **Mowing practices** (check all that apply, for a maximum score of 5) - To maximize mowing practices, do you: (1) change direction of mowing each time, (1) make large turning circles to reduce wear patterns (1) disperse excess clippings (2) avoid mowing when field is wet

6. Field Presentation

- a. Make a qualitative assessment of the overall **aesthetic/visual quality** of the field (from the bleachers if possible), with (0) representing unsightly and (5) representing very attractive.
- b. To maximize **field presentation** before an event, do you: (5) Mow stripes or patterns onto the field and/or (5) Paint field lines and logos before an event

7. Weeds, Pests & Diseases

- a. **% Weed cover** - Rate percentage crabgrass, other grassy weeds, and broadleaf weeds on the field: (0) >40%, (1) 30-40%, (2) 20-30%, (3) 10-20%, (4) 5-10%, (5) 0-5%
- b. Are you attempting to **minimize pest problems** through the following cultural practices, often referred to as Integrated Pest Management? (check all that apply, for a maximum score of 10):
 - (1) Monitor the field & keep historical records of pest problems
 - (1) Select treatment timing for the best advantage
 - (1) Spot-treat for the pest whenever possible
 - (1) Evaluate the effectiveness of treatments to fine-tune future actions
 - (1) Educate all people involved with the pest problem
 - (1) Time control for crabgrass pre-emergence or early post-emergence in spring
 - (1) Time control for broadleaf weeds (dandelions, clover, plantain etc.) ideally in the fall, but otherwise in spring.
 - (1) Scout for white grubs in August or September
 - (1) Scout for bluegrass billbugs in May or June
 - (1) Regularly assess the field for principle diseases (dollar spot, brown patch, red thread etc.)

8. Traffic & Wear

Although field use is often beyond the control of the field manager, it is important to quantify usage to establish a baseline for management. There are no agronomic mysteries here – the less you use the field, the healthier it will be.

- a. Make a quantitative assessment of the **amount of wear damage** on the field, with (0) representing many bare areas and an uneven playing surface and (5) representing no bare areas and an even surface.
- b. Techniques to **reduce traffic injury** (check all that apply, for a maximum score of 10). Do you:
 - (2) Rotate location of goals, field dummies etc.
 - (2) Alternate between fields (if you have more than one)
 - (2) Avoid field use in inclement weather conditions
 - (2) Prevent use on traditional problem spots in inclement weather conditions
 - (2) Use grass varieties that are wear tolerant & recuperate quickly

9. Renovation

- a. **Surface levels & divots** (small holes where grass has been kicked out) - Walk those parts of the field that receive the most wear. Make a quantitative assessment of the amount of divots/small depressions on the field, with (0) representing very heavy divoting and (5) representing no divots present.
- b. **Topdressing practices** (check all that apply, for a maximum score of 5) - Do you follow these guidelines for topdressing the field: (2) use a recommended topdressing material (such as sandy-loam) that will aid surface drainage, (2) topdress at least once per year with the same material to avoid layering, (1) avoid heavy topdressing applications during the playing season. (Note – if you do not have a topdressing program in place, take the 5 points and go onto the next item)
- c. **Thatch depths.** “Thatch” is a layer of living and dead grass stems, roots, rhizomes, and other organic matter, found between the soil surface and the base of the grass plants. It can affect the stability of the playing surface and reduce turf health - Measure depth (inches) of thatch, averaged across the playing surface: (0) >2” (1) 1-2” (3) 0.5-1” (5) ≤ 0.5”

10. Personal Development

- a. Communication - How often do you meet with administration to discuss field matters: (0) Never, (3) Sometimes, (5) Regularly.
- b. Professionalism (check all that apply, for a maximum score of 10). Do you:
 - (2) Keep records of field events & maintenance procedures
 - (2) Attend sports turf seminars, workshops, or short courses
 - (2) Obtain an Ohio Pesticide License
 - (2) Be an active member of the Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association or the national Sports Turf Managers Association
 - (2) Receive weekly SportsNotes postings from Ohio State