

Grassroots News

Grassroots clubs investing in modern sports turf machinery from Campey Turf Care Systems

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Campey Machines helping to drive Sport England pilot scheme forward

Campey Turf Care Systems has supplied three machines to Mel Pooley, who is spearheading a pilot scheme for Sport England to improve natural turf surfaces at grassroots level. First were the Imants ShockWave and a Dakota Spreader, with a Vredo Overseeder DZ the latest machine to be purchased to expand the works offered.

The venture encompasses sports pitches in Cambridge and Huntingdon and almost 70 clubs from varying sports were included last year.

Mel has been involved since the project started two years ago and has seen a massive uptake from football, rugby and cricket, and hopes that the addition of the Vredo can help the scheme drive forward and continue to improve local pitches.

“We want to give the areas of Cambridge and Huntingdon the benefit of professional machinery used by professionals to help improve grassroots surfaces,” he explained.

“We operate by providing them with a priority list starting with that they need to do, what they should do if they have enough money, and then what the ultimate works would be if they can afford to have it done.

“But we are very careful to take into consideration that a lot of these small clubs have limited financial resources and in some cases no money at all. We’ve also started seeing a lot of parish councils come on board, and we are able to take on three-year contracts, which are great for us going forward.”

The program run by Sport England carries the same goals as Campey’s own Pitch Renovation Tour, which also highlights the need for improvements on grassroots pitches, and Mel is adamant that the Campey machines have helped make the project a success.

As a pilot scheme Mel was aware that ensuring work was carried out to a high standard at the first time of asking was imperative, both for the reputation of the project and to ensure maximum value for money.

“We started off with the Imants ShockWave and Dakota Topdresser and with those machines at our disposal we were in the position to do a lot of the work, but now we have the Vredo we can carry out a better overall job in the spring.

“We know it will put the seed in good contact with the soil, and it has a fantastic germination rate because of it, and that’s why we wanted it. Teams will want to start playing in a couple of months, and you only get one chance, so that’s why we chose the Vredo, it stands out as a class machine and we know it will deliver great results.”

The achievements so far show have illustrated that using the right machinery can make a massive difference to the playing surfaces, improving playing conditions and so increasing the desire to play on them. This is vital for keeping sport alive at grassroots level.



Campey puts pitch operation into the hands of Sandgate Youth Football Club

Campey has supplied Hayes based football club, Sandgate Youth FC, with four vital pieces of equipment to help the club take control of their own pitch operations after continual let downs from their local council.

The New Holland Boomer 35 tractor, Trimax Striker, Sisis Quadraplay and Sisis Maxislit were purchased by the club through a Football Foundation grant, after securing the deal for £3000 less than the nearest competitor. The club has been given a new lease of life when it comes to maintaining its pitches.

Problems were encountered by the club who have over 200 boys and girls from under-7 to under-16 age groups when the local authority maintenance schedule only allowed for 16 cuts from March to October, with two dates in April and May being missed on the six pitches.

However, club secretary Steve Kennedy has explained that with the help of the new equipment the entire club has had a lift, and after seeing the first cut with their new Trimax Striker, he himself couldn't be happier with the machines.

"We've had our issues with the local authority maintenance schedule because it in no way met the requirements for good playing conditions," Steve began.

"When they missed some cuts our own old equipment was nowhere near powerful enough to cut the long grass, and that's what makes these new machines so invaluable to us.

"The initial reaction we had when we showed everyone the tractor was jaw dropping.

"And then when they saw how it and the mower performed together it was like a weight was lifted off our shoulders, and when we used it through some long grass it was even better.

"We have volunteers cutting the grass, and they are the football coaches as well, so the less time they have to spend cutting means they have more time to focus on training the kids, and they might even get some time at home!"

Being able to produce and maintain high quality pitches is a top priority for the club, as it helps to reflect their commitment to their own development whilst proving a useful recruitment tool in a competitive football area.

As well as being able to dictate their own cutting schedule the club are looking at aerating some damp on-pitch areas with the Maxislit and some off pitch areas, which will be used to train on.

The volunteer grounds team will soon receive their training from Campey to ensure they can get the best out of the machines, and Steve is keen to point out the invaluable help and support he has received from the company the whole way through the process.

"The people I've spoken to at Campey have been fantastic, everyone from Max the delivery driver to Richard Campey couldn't have been more helpful," he said.

"Richard obviously has years and years of experience in the industry and you can tell that straight away.

"He considered what was needed to meet all of our current needs as well as providing equipment for future improvement. The aftercare and training has been excellent."



Daten FC invest in new Campey equipment for Culcheth Sports Club with Football Foundation grant

After 20-years of using the same tractor, originally purchased from Campey Turf Care Systems, a £10,000 grant from the Premier League and FA Facilities Fund has provided the means for Daten Football Club to upgrade their maintenance equipment for use at Culcheth Sports Club, Warrington, where the amateur team play their home games.

In the place of their ailing tractor and select few attachments the club were able to get state of the art machinery in the form of a New Holland Boomer 25 Tractor with a Trimax Striker 150 and a Sisis Quadraplay.

Culcheth Sports Club is maintained by groundsman, Ian Trantum. Ian has been working on the site for 30-years, and made the original tractor purchase some 21 years ago.

Having got more use than could possibly have been envisaged from the equipment in the intervening years, Ian was aware it was way past time for an upgrade from the metal seated machine that had served him so well. And with such proven reliability he was happy to work with Campey again.

"I bought the old tractor from Campey twenty years ago," he explained.

"And even then it was second hand, but it was state of the art for a compact tractor at the time. However, they've moved on a lot since then – it's like going from a Vauxhall Viva to a Ferrari!

Given the limitations of the funding Ian Campbell, UK & Ireland Sales Manager for Campeys, was able to advise on the most cost effective tractor and implements to ensure maximum improvement and maintenance benefits to the club.

"This new equipment is going to make my job a lot easier and it's also going to improve the pitches a lot and that's the most important thing for us.

"Up until now all we had for working on football pitches was a set of old spikers and a drag chain, so the tractor and attachments will make a massive difference."

Adverse weather has meant Ian hasn't been able to fully utilise the Trimax Striker 150 and Sisis Quadraplay, barring one outing of the Trimax mower. Now he is looking forward to starting work with the new grant funded equipment as soon as he can.

Along with the new equipment Campeys have also continued their support of grass roots football by sponsoring the kit for the Daten FC Vets team until the end of the 2016-17 seasons, with the team currently top of the Cheshire Vets league.

The Premier League, The FA and the Government – via Sport England – fund the Premier League and FA Facilities Fund, which is delivered by the Football Foundation, who are the country's largest sport charity.

Working with the Lancashire FA, Daten FC was able to secure a grant of £10,000 towards the equipment while the remaining balance was raised by the football club.

The money was secured through the work of Stuart Nightingale, chairman of Daten FC and club member Donald Borland. Speaking about the impact of the new machinery Stuart said: "These modern, purpose built machines and accessories will enable us to maintain the pitches and help us to attract new players and to secure the club for a good number of years."



Campey provide speed and precision at Stone Dominoes Football Club with Vredo Compact Seeder



Quick and precise seeding is essential at Stone Dominoes Football Club with the vast Staffordshire site in constant use, and Campey Turf Care Systems has provided a Vredo DZ 214 Compact Seeder to help them meet their aims.

34 teams have played on the ten pitch site this season meaning in excess of 1000 matches, with the number of teams set to go up to 40 for the 2016/17 season. Games include those from the Stone Dominoes F.C teams, tournaments, local cup finals and fixtures for Stoke City Football Club youth teams.

Having such a congested fixture list means site manager, Dave Rhodes, is only afforded four weeks between the last ball being kicked and activity returning, all with the added challenge of having no on-site irrigation.

With this in mind, Dave needed a seeder that could cater to his working conditions whilst providing precision passes and a high germination rate to give excellent return value for the investment, and after seeing the Vredo in action he looked no further.

"I first came across the Vredo Compact Seeder during a demonstration that Campey were doing," he began.

"The accuracy really impressed me, and its ability to plant the seed directly into the soil is also something that really stood out for me. Those qualities combined with the high germination rate made it an ideal fit for the club.

"There is quite a bit of pressure to get our renovations completed quickly because we only get a four-week gap

between finishing and starting up again, so we needed a quick and accurate machine.

Dave operates the Vredo using a New Holland Boomer 50 ground care tractor, which he also acquired from Campey, with the seeder adding to the high-quality equipment the club at their disposal to deal with a congested fixture list.

The precision nature of the machine comes from the V-shaped disks that place the seed directly in the ground at a pre-set depth, which can be adjusted between 5mm and 25mm deep.

Once the seed is in direct contact with the soil the slit is closed by the compaction roller, re-establishing a level surface and providing the conditions for maximum germination, as Dave has found on the various contracting jobs he's used the seeder on.

"I've used the machine at a number of small grassroots clubs in the Potteries, like Eccleshall F.C, Stafford Rangers F.C, Abbey Hulton F.C, Stanton F.C, and also on a golf course, and it's worked really well on all of them," he said.

"The first lot of pitches we did just over two weeks ago have started to come up really well with a great germination rate, so it's doing exactly what we wanted from it.

"I've been really pleased with the machine since we've started using it, and have no doubt that we'll get the same great results on our own site in time for the start of a really busy season."



Sandbach Rugby Club have self-sustainability plan for Imants ShockWave

As well as using the Imants ShockWave – provided by Campey Turf Care Systems – on their own site, Sandbach Rugby Club plan to hire the machine out with an operator to generate extra-income, allowing the machine to pay for itself.

This approach is being adopted by an increasing number of grassroots clubs who have seen machines, such as the ShockWave, as an investment that can be self-sufficient, allowing them to purchase higher-quality machines.

For groundsman, Richard Vaughan, the money spent is not only an investment in the pitches, but also on himself, and he looks forward to the end of the 2016/17 season when he's confident the ShockWave will have shown everyone what it can do.

"The club are investing in the club, the pitches, and me," he began.

"That puts a certain amount of pressure on me to make sure I make the correct decisions, and I'm confident that I'll be able to tell them at the end of the season that we got all of the fixtures on due to the ShockWave.

"The club are also looking to rent the machine out to local golf courses and other sports teams, and we hope that the machine will pay for itself in the long-run, rather than sitting in the shed whilst it's not in use.

"I think this method of doing things will be very beneficial for the club, because it has allowed us to invest in a high-quality machine that by improving the pitches will bring wider benefits to the club."

As a consequence of the club's reputation to produce good playing surfaces, the number of games has risen steadily over the five-years that Richard has worked there. However,

the higher level of use led to some maintenance issues, with compaction the main concern on the five full sized pitches and the junior pitches.

In response to this problem Richard and the Grounds Secretary, Rob Perkins, began extensive research into the best machine available decided that an Imants ShockWave was exactly what they needed to relieve compaction, and keep the surfaces at the high-standard they wanted throughout the season.

"We have a compaction problem on the pitches that's mainly down to increased use through extra games and competitions," Richard explained.

"During the five years I've worked here we've seen an increase of teams coming to us during the winter to play their games because they can't get on their own fields.

"But, the more play we had the more compaction we had, to the point where we had to do something about it, which then lead us to the ShockWave.

"The machine is good us for us because it does exactly what we need it to do. It gives me the ability to carry out constant decompaction throughout the year, so there won't be a point during the season where it becomes a problem.

"We are able to play the same day that the work is carried out, which is a big benefit for us due to the game schedule we've got."

The fantastic results the club has already seen from the machine allows visiting teams to see the difference it has made in maintaining the pitches, whilst furthering the prospects of local clubs wanting to use it to tackle compaction on their pitches.



Imants ShockWave plays its part for award winning groundsman at Cheshire County Sports Club

Campey Turf Care Systems has supplied an Imants Shockwave to Freddie Brickland, head groundsman at Cheshire County Sports Club, who was recently named as the Cheshire FA Groundsman of the Year for 2016.

The accolade is even more impressive when taking into consideration the fact that the site of six football pitches, one rugby pitch, two mini football pitches, one 9 v 9 pitch and two artificial hockey pitches is all maintained by Freddie and his assistant, Kyle Witley.

With only two members of staff and a packed fixture list, the importance of using the correct machinery is paramount in order to keep games on, and keep money flowing through the club.

“We’ve had a really bad winter, combined with a lot of games, and it’s not unusual for one pitch to have four games during a weekend, with morning and afternoon kick-offs,” Freddie began.

“With that much use on a pitch you’re always going to get compaction, so the aim was managing that.

“I spoke to various people before we purchased the machine and they all recommended going for the ShockWave, so we had a couple of demos just to show everyone at the club how well it could work for us, so after seeing it they were happy for us to get it, and we haven’t looked back since.

“It’s perfect for us, surface disruption is minimal and that keeps all the users happy, because there’s nothing worse when the ball bobbles over the pitch after work has been done to it, so that’s a massive advantage of the ShockWave.”

Like most groundsman up and down the country Freddie has had to endure a difficult winter, which has made compaction a more prevalent issue than usual. The ShockWave is designed to revitalise heavy wear areas by relieving this compaction, whilst improving aeration and removing surface water.

The revenue brought in from teams using the bar after games is vital for the club, with some teams opting to rearrange games at a local artificial pitch, putting more pressure on the award winning team of two to ensure fixtures are played.

“Back in the day if a game was called off it would be rearranged for later in the season so we wouldn’t lose any revenue from the match fee and the bar revenue, which is the most important thing for us,” Freddie said.

“These days, if a game is called off due to rain, teams will go to the 3G option at the local University or wherever it may be, so keeping games on is really important, it’s probably more important now than it ever has been.

“The ShockWave has really helped us keep the pitches at a high standard, and the support we’ve received from Jason Lord at Campey has also been exceptional, be it bringing the machine for demos or giving us any information we might need.”



Campey provide the machines for Trubshaw Cross Ladsandads to self-manage marked improvements to their pitches

Campey Turf Care Systems has provided Trubshaw Cross Ladsandads with a number of turf care machines after they took over maintenance of their pitches from the local council.

Despite their being a timeframe of two-years in place for the football hub to take over the maintenance from Stoke-On-Trent City council, chairman Andy Salt was only given two weeks' notice that they would be handing over control.

Andy and his team of volunteers didn't allow that to hold them back, and 12-months on he speaks with pride at the quality surfaces they are now able to produce, and the benefits regular games brings to the teams and the club financially.

After attending a Campey pitch improvement event at Stafford Rangers, Andy became aware that a budget of £500 for 11 pitches wouldn't be enough. He and the club set about raising money for the new equipment whilst involving FA pitch mentor Andy Jackson – head groundsman at Stoke City FC

At this point Campey had been recommended on a number of occasions to Andy, who in order to get a new tractor, Imants ShockWave 155, Sisis Twin Play, Dragmat, Raycam Sportsfield and later a TriMax roller Trubshaw Cross took a different approach.

“Andy Jackson suggested we spoke with Richard Campey of Campey Turf Care Systems, and we'd had other clubs recommend them to us as well, so we decided to approach them. Richard came out and had a good look around the site and at the pitch, and from there we went on to buy the machinery.

“Even having the equipment for half of the last season made such a difference. We didn't have games called off due to weather as many times as the other centres in our area, and we've been able to reduce that even more.

“We've seen an absolutely massive difference in the pitches.”

The 11 pitch site, based in Burslem, is one of nine Ladsandads branches that provide a place for youngsters to play football. Six different clubs in North Staffordshire consisting of 39 teams regard Trubshaw Cross as home, as well as the pitches being hired out to other teams, and such extensive use means high-quality pitches were needed to accommodate the matches.

Rather than going down the popular Sport England grant route – instead wanting to save such funding for building improvements – the club opted to host a tournament, with the proceeds used to invest in the café, which has now generated the income to purchase all of the machines.

In the 12-months since they took over Trubshaw Cross have gone from having a “cheap second-hand ride-on lawn mower” to a full range of purpose bought machinery, with their needs specifically in mind.

A team of five volunteers – including Andy – operate the machines and were given full training to help them utilise what they had bought, culminating in the pitches the teams now play on.

UK & Ireland Grassroots Pitch Renovation Tour 2016

The UK & Ireland Grassroots Pitch Renovation tour came to a close in Dublin at the end of May, as 875 groundsmen, club and council officials attended 13 events in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The tour, which was supported by sponsors Pitchcare, New Holland, Limagrain, ICL, SISIS, Dennis and ALS aimed to educate grassroots groundsmen using the latest machinery and most innovative industry techniques, in order to improve the standard of local pitches.

Throughout each event participants were shown how implementing small, as well as large changes to maintenance practices, regardless of budget restraints, could radically improve the quality of pitches in a short space of time.

One such participant, who was present at the Leyland open day in May, was Angus Lindsay, group head of assets and fleet at The Landscape Group, who was especially impressed by the enthusiasm of all the sponsors, and spoke about the importance of such events if local facilities are to improve.



"I'd like to start by saying how excellent the day was, and I'm sure that my colleagues from around the country would have benefited greatly had they been able to attend," he began.

"Richard Campey, and indeed the whole of the Campey team's enthusiasm for the products they sell, services they provide and the industry in general is admirable, and something a lot of people could learn from.



"Unfortunately the people who don't attend these events handicap not only themselves, but also the landscape and facilities they are responsible for, and as such they will never develop the sports facilities available to the general public.

"I cannot say how much I admire what Campey do and the passion they have, please don't stop."

The views of Angus were echoed by attendees from other events around the country, all of whom were able to apply the expert advice they received from all of the speakers and technical staff.



Having the opportunity to gain an insight into how our industry operates, as explained by Daten Football Club groundsmen, Ian Trantum,

"It's very important for grassroots groundsmen like me to have the opportunity to see high-quality machines in action as we don't often get the chance to go to bigger clubs to see machinery working.

"It's imperative to keep in the loop and be aware what's changing in the industry, and by coming to this day and talking to fellow industry professionals and other groundsmen I've been able to do that, and it's been an invaluable experience."



As well as the attendees benefitting from the experience, the hosts of each day –without whom the tour would not have been possible – have had the added bonus of a full pitch renovation as part of the demonstrations, guaranteeing them and their players an excellent playing surface for the coming season and many more seasons to come.

David Curtis Estates Officer (Grounds) Department of Physical Resources at Ulster University expressed interest in the machinery.

"I was impressed with the vast array of equipment on offer and was particularly taken with the RotoKnife, that unlike some of the larger kit, I could incorporate into my in-house maintenance programmes."

Richard Campey extends a massive thank you to everyone involved and in particular to those who took the time to attend, despite the changeable weather ranging from 28 degrees sunshine to the hailstones and floods to we affectionately describe as summer!



Keep up to date

Visit our websites to find some fantastic pitch renovation videos and the latest news from Campey Turf Care Systems and the Sports Turf Care Industry. Also information and specifications about the latest new and used turf care machinery.

www.campeyturfcare.com

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