

# Rugby – Brand new pitch to be installed at Murrayfield!



Scottish Rugby is making the biggest single investment in its Murrayfield home since the stadium was reconstructed in 1994.

A new hybrid grass pitch will be installed later this year to be ready for the start of the 2014-15 season, it was announced today.

“We are doing this primarily because this hybrid pitch is widely recognised as the best grass surface in the sporting world and we all want to see the Murrayfield playing surface restored to the pristine condition for which it is renowned,” said Scottish Rugby’s Director of Management Services, Mark Laidlaw.

The Desso Grassmaster hybrid grass pitch is a natural sports grass pitch, which is reinforced by millions of artificial turf fibres.

“This results in a high-specification pitch providing the feel and performance of natural grass with the stability of an artificial pitch,” Laidlaw explained.

One of the key advantages of the Desso Grassmaster pitch is that it has a faster recovery than natural grass alone and that it can be used intensively, hosting more than 40 fixtures in a season.

“This is an investment that will safeguard international rugby on Murrayfield’s hallowed pitch but will also enable us to be in the market seeking out major sporting events to bring to our stadium,” said Scottish Rugby’s Director of Commercial Operations, Communications and Public Affairs, Dominic McKay.

The new pitch will be based on the system already installed at such celebrated sporting citadels as the San Siro Stadium in Milan; Anfield at Liverpool FC; Manchester City’s Etihad Stadium; Manchester United’s Old Trafford; Arsenal’s Emirates’ Stadium; and Wembley.

In the rugby world, Twickenham, the Aviva Stadium in Dublin,

Newlands in Cape Town, the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium in Port Elizabeth and the Forsyth Barr Stadium in Dunedin all have the pitch installed.

Scotland's cap and points' record-holder Chris Paterson said: "One of the best surfaces I played on was the pitch at the Liberty Stadium, which sees heavy usage as both the Ospreys and Swansea City FC play there.

"It's a Desso Grassmaster pitch – a great surface that lends itself to a fast-paced game."

Laidlaw added: "We are making this significant investment because, as we've said previously, we are concerned at the problems our pitch and others within the UK and beyond have experienced of late and feel that a reinforced surface is now required to meet the demands of professional rugby. We have been affected by a parasitic infection this season and the challenges of keeping Murrayfield accessible in probably the most challenging rugby climate in the northern hemisphere."

While having a wee, sympathetic chat with one or two of the ground staff earlier on this season The Edinburgh Reporter was told that the guys are out, in all weathers, up to six days a week to keep the current pitch in playable shape! Work on the project will begin later this spring with a view to the new surface being ready for the start of next season.