

# **PROVEN PERFORMANCE**

*Plymouth Argyle: Harper's Park Training Ground*



# ***THE CHALLENGE***



## ***Sports Surface Specialists Inscapes turn to Topsport to supply materials for state of the art drainage solution***

***Plymouth Argyle is one of the South West's most famous football teams. In order to kick off their 2016 promotion challenge after coming so close last season, the club identified its training facilities as a key area that could be improved. Poor drainage had limited the use of Plymouth's Harper's Park training ground in the past, especially during the winter months, so the club was in need of a swift solution to provide year-round playability.***

### **THE CHALLENGE**

Having worked on the installation of Argyle's new pitch at the club's Home Park ground in 2010, commercial landscapers and sports surface specialist, Inscapes, were asked to address the drainage issues affecting two training pitches at Plymouth's Harper's Park training facility, located next to the ground.

After assessing the site, the decision was taken to lay additional drainage channels across the pitch to remove standing water from the playing surface as quickly as possible and limit the potential for soil saturation,

ensuring maximum playing time during periods of wet weather. However, sourcing the volume of specialist sport sand and gravel required by Inscapes to deliver the desired levels of drainage was a key logistical hurdle that needed to be overcome, given the club's far-southern location and the region's limited geological assets.

Having previously worked together on a number of successful projects, Inscapes turned to Tarmac's Topsport team to help inject a new lease of life into Plymouth Argyle's training facility.







**THE  
SOLUTION**



## THE SOLUTION

“Time was of the essence for the Plymouth Argyle project as the work had to be undertaken in the off-season, and any completed installation would need to be left for a minimum of four weeks to bed in and allow for adequate grass growth. It was therefore crucial that the material could be sourced in the South West to keep timescales as short as possible,” commented Joe Evans of Tarmac’s Topsport team.

“The geological make-up of Plymouth and the surrounding area meant that the raw materials Inscapes required to create the drainage channels were not readily available locally. With Topsport having supplied specialist materials to a number of training pitches for Premier and Football League clubs previously, we knew how important it was to get the right aggregates in place from the beginning.

“Fortunately we were able to source 750 tonnes of specialist medium-fine sand from Tarmac’s Avonmouth Wharf, after initially supplying various samples to Inscapes to determine the right product for the installation. We also worked with the contractor to find a further 750 tonnes of suitable gravel to complete the drainage system.”

Once the material supply had been confirmed, the Topsport team were then able to work closely with Inscapes to facilitate the creation of the new drainage systems across the two training pitches.

Joe continued: “A two-fold drainage system was commissioned and implemented at Harper Park. First, a series of 600mm-deep lateral drainage channels were dug across the two training pitches, at 5 metre intervals. These act as the main conduits for taking water away quickly from both the playing surface and within the soil itself. The channels were then back filled with 450mm of Topsport 6mm gravel and 150mm of Topsport medium-fine sand to offer a fast-draining solution.

“Sand banding was then used to create a secondary drainage system, comprising of 300mm-deep sand slits which were dug at 2 metre intervals diagonal to the primary lateral channels. The sand slits were back filled with 150mm gravel and 150mm sand and will provide further avenues for excess water to be distributed away from the surface, helping to minimise saturation and keep the training pitches playable for as long as possible throughout the season.

“Once the sand banding was complete, the pitches were then top-dressed with a further layer of Topsport medium-fine sand and then over-seeded with the grass seed to kick start immediate growth and help get the pitches to a playable condition in time for the bulk of the season.”

Ross Keeble, Inscape’s Foreman at Plymouth Argyle commented: “Tarmac’s Topsport team have been brilliant, I can’t fault them. We gave them a call to get the sand and stone ordered, they gave us a delivery date and they got it spot on.”

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