

Stadium Improvement Project : Impact on club training.

As most, if not all, members should be aware; Rotherham MBC have agreed funding to refurbish and upgrade the building, track, floodlights and throws cage. We are grateful to them for their support of our club, and the facilities that we need to continue and grow as a club.

The pandemic, and the working from home necessitated by the pandemic, have however significantly delayed both the project approval and the contract start; with the result that the extensive works approved are now starting at possibly the worst time of year for the impact on our club training.

We were advised at the Pre-start meeting, held on Thursday the 18th Nov, that we can only be guaranteed one, but possibly two weeks use of the track starting on Monday 22nd November.

From that same date we will not be able to access the building, or any rooms in that, since work is starting inside the building and it is a construction site.

All people attending club training cannot use the normal entry gate, but will be asked to enter & exit via a lower gate near to the test centre. One portable toilet will be provided for our use and positioned just behind the staff office. Construction fencing will prevent any access to the area around the buildings.

This means that we have one (possibly two - depending on a site meeting with the floodlighting contractor to be held at the end of next week) before we lose the track and floodlighting completely, and that will be the case until the 24th January 2022 (That is the current programme end date, but is dependent upon progress keeping to plan and no long periods of bad weather which delay external works.

We appreciate that this will disrupt and significantly affect the club training operation. However we have some experience of overcoming the pandemic lockdowns and maintaining the club operation thanks to our coaches, athletes and parents showing flexibility and commitment to keep things going.

The loss of the track is serious enough, but the loss of the floodlights means that hill training may not be possible on evenings either.

A sub group of the club committee, met yesterday evening and agreed the following actions to keep club training going as far as we possibly can.

The car park can still be accessed so the out of stadium groups can still meet and run from there, as normal, however no access into the building or track will be possible beyond the 26th Nov - or the 3rd Dec if we get a further week.

The coaches for the groups will work with the athletes and parents to try and formulate what may be possible and practicable to keep training going for the current groups.

We will see what other tracks are available for us to use (Woodbourn Road, Doncaster, Mount St Mary's school, Cudworth and the track at Wombwell) and try and set up sessions there.

We will also look at what indoor facilities are available for sessions for the young athletes or conditioning sessions for others.

We will check out whether other grass areas are available close to Herringthorpe and sufficiently lit to make their use safe for any groups that may use them.

If any athletes or parents have any suggestions, please let the coaches have them asap as we only have a limited time to check availability and price of venues and confirm bookings. It may be that some sessions take place at different times eg Tuesday, Thursday or Friday evenings or during the day at weekends so training can happen in daylight.

I accept this news will not be popular, but we would appreciate your flexibility and support in working with your coaches to keep the club operation going as well as we can. Hopefully the disruption will be worth it for the improved facilities that we will have at the end of the disruption.

Steve Gaines
Secretary