

NFL mandates playing surfaces for all stadiums meet new standards by 2028

BY JOSH DUBOW
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

The playing surfaces at every NFL stadium will have to meet new enhanced standards set through lab and field testing by the start of the 2028 season.

NFL field director Nick Pappas detailed the plans for a program on Thursday that will provide each team “a library of approved and accredited NFL fields” before the start of next season. Any new field will immediately have to meet those standards and all teams will have two years to achieve the standards, whether they use a grass or synthetic surface or a hybrid.

Most artificial surfaces are replaced every two or three years, Pappas said. Natural fields can be replaced several times a season.

Pappas said the fields will have undergone extensive testing and been approved by a joint committee with the NFLPA.

“It’s sort of a red, yellow, green effect, where we’re obviously trying to phase out fields that we have determined to be less ideal than newer fields coming into the industry,” he said. “This is a big step for us. This is something that I think has been a great outcome from the Joint Surfaces Committee of the work, the deployment and development of devices determining the appropriate metrics, and ultimately providing us with a way to substantiate the quality of fields more so than we ever have in the past.”

Pappas said fields have been tested in labs and on site using two main tools.



Adam Hunger/AP Photo

The NFL shield is displayed at midfield during the Super Bowl 59 NFL football game on Feb. 9 in New Orleans.

One is called the BEAST, which is a traction testing device that replicates the movements of an NFL player. The other is called the STRIKE Impact Tester, which helps determine the firmness of each field.

The goal of the league is to find fields that are as consistent as possible across all 30 NFL stadiums, as well as at each stadium throughout the season. Pappas said the “key pillars” for a field are optimized playability, reducing injury risk and player feedback.

The NFL has no plans to require natural grass fields across the league. The league’s chief medical officer,

Dr. Allen Sills, said there are no “statistically significant differences” in lower extremity injuries or concussions that can be attributed to the type of playing surface or a specific surface, despite widespread

preferences by players for grass fields and complaints about surfaces such as the one at MetLife Stadium, where the New York Giants and Jets play.


“The surface is only one driver of these lower

extremity injuries,” Sills said. “There are a lot of other factors, including player load

and previous history and fatigue and positional adaptability and cleats that are worn. So surfaces are a component, but it is a complex equation, and so I’m excited about where we are in the work because I think we’ll get away from a very crude measurement of artificial here and the grass here, and now we can say for any individual surface, let’s look at the biophysical properties of that surface. How might those correlate with injury? And then, obviously, how do we optimize them?”

Pappas also shared plans for the Super Bowl to be held on Feb. 8 at the San Francisco 49ers’ home at Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara, California. The field has been growing at a sod farm about two hours east of the Bay Area, with Pappas making several visits over the past 18 months to monitor the field.

The league will plan to install the field around the third week in January — or later if the 49ers could be hosting playoff games.



LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing will be held Monday, December 15 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall, 300 West Main Street, Vine Grove, KY 40175, for a zone map amendment request.

The request is for a zone map amendment initiated by Jason & Samantha Eli, for the property at 504 Highland Ave. in Vine Grove, Hardin County, Kentucky. Being a tract consisting of 1.00 acres, designated as Hardin County PVA MAP ID Number 140-20-01-014. Requesting the zoning map of this property be amended from Commercial- 3 (Highway Commercial) to Residential- 2 (Single Family).

Citizens are encouraged to attend this hearing. This advertisement was paid for by City of Vine Grove, using taxpayer dollars in the amount of \$81.05.

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