Plymouth Argyle Football Club

Job Description: Groundsman – Foulston Park Academy

Job Title: Groundsman
Location: Foulston Park, Plymouth Argyle Academy
Department: Grounds and Facilities
Reports to: Head Groundsman
Contracted Hours: 35 hours per week
Working Pattern: Flexible working hours, including weekends and academy matchdays, with time off in lieu (TOIL) for agreed weekend work.

1. Job Purpose

To assist in the maintenance, preparation and presentation of all playing surfaces and external grounds at Plymouth Argyle Football Club's Academy site at Foulston Park.

The Groundsman will work under the direction of the Head Groundsman to ensure that all pitches and associated facilities are maintained to a high standard, providing safe, consistent and suitable playing surfaces for academy training sessions, fixtures and other football-related activities.

The postholder will contribute to the effective day-to-day operation of the grounds department and uphold the professional standards and values of Plymouth Argyle Football Club.

2. Key Responsibilities

A. Pitch Maintenance and Preparation

- Assist with the routine maintenance of natural grass football pitches and other playing surfaces at Foulston Park.
- Prepare pitches for academy training sessions, fixtures and other scheduled activities.
- Carry out mowing, line marking, divoting, brushing, aeration, fertiliser applications and other routine maintenance tasks as directed.
- Assist with pitch renovations, including overseeding, topdressing, scarification, verti-draining and other seasonal maintenance work.
- Monitor pitch condition, grass coverage, surface levels and general playability, reporting any concerns to the Head Groundsman.
- Assist with irrigation, watering and moisture management in accordance with the requirements of the playing surfaces.
- Help maintain consistent pitch presentation, including goalmouths, penalty spots, touchlines and other high-wear areas.
- Support the implementation of pitch maintenance programmes and seasonal renovation plans.

B. Academy Matchday Duties

- Prepare pitches to the required standard ahead of academy fixtures.
- Carry out pre-match inspections and report any safety or surface concerns to the Head Groundsman.
- Complete matchday line marking, goal positioning, net checks and general pitch set-up.
- Provide pitchside maintenance and repairs before, during and after matches where required.
- Ensure playing areas are left clean, tidy and ready for subsequent use.
- Work flexibly to accommodate academy fixture schedules, including weekends and occasional changes to kick-off times.

C. Machinery, Equipment and Materials

- Operate grounds maintenance machinery and equipment safely and competently, following appropriate training and authorisation.
- Carry out routine cleaning, checks and basic maintenance of machinery and tools.
- Report defects, damage or servicing requirements promptly to the Head Groundsman.
- Ensure equipment is stored securely and maintained in good working order.
- Use fertilisers, grass seed, topdressing materials and other grounds products in accordance with instructions, risk assessments and relevant safety procedures.
- Assist with stock control and the responsible use of materials, water and other resources.

D. Site Maintenance and Presentation

- Maintain the general appearance of the grounds and surrounding external areas at Foulston Park.
- Assist with litter collection, leaf clearance, weed control and the upkeep of paths, hardstanding and perimeter areas.
- Help maintain goals, nets, corner flags, pitch furniture and other grounds-related equipment.
- Identify and report hazards, damage or maintenance issues affecting the site.
- Support the upkeep of a clean, organised and professional working environment.

E. Health, Safety and Safeguarding

- Comply with all club health and safety policies, procedures, risk assessments and safe systems of work.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure machinery is operated safely.
- Follow relevant procedures for the storage, handling and application of grounds maintenance products.
- Report accidents, near misses, hazards and unsafe working conditions promptly.
- Understand and comply with the club's safeguarding policies and procedures when working within an academy environment.
- Maintain professional boundaries and conduct when working around academy players, coaches, staff and visitors.
- Complete all required training and comply with relevant site security and access procedures.

F. Teamwork and Communication

- Report directly to the Head Groundsman and carry out duties in accordance with their instructions and the agreed maintenance programme.
- Work cooperatively with other members of the grounds team, academy staff and relevant contractors.
- Communicate pitch conditions, completed tasks, machinery issues and maintenance concerns clearly and promptly.
- Assist with the planning and delivery of daily and seasonal workloads.
- Maintain a flexible and professional approach to changing priorities, weather conditions and fixture requirements.

3. Working Hours and Time Off in Lieu

- The contracted working week will be 35 hours, with working days and start and finish times arranged according to operational requirements.
- The role will include academy matchdays, which may fall on Saturdays, Sundays or other days outside normal weekday working hours.
- The postholder must be flexible to support training, fixtures, pitch preparations and essential maintenance activities.
- Weekend work and any additional hours must be agreed with the Head Groundsman and recorded in accordance with club procedures.
- Time off in lieu (TOIL) will be taken for agreed weekend work, at a time arranged with the Head Groundsman to ensure adequate staffing and continuity of service.

- Working hours and TOIL arrangements must comply with the club's policies and applicable employment requirements.

4. Person Specification

Essential requirements

- A genuine interest in sports turf management and football pitch maintenance.
- A reliable, hardworking and practical approach to work.
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team and follow instructions.
- Willingness to work outdoors in all weather conditions.
- Flexibility to work academy matchdays and weekends.
- Good attention to detail and pride in the presentation of playing surfaces.
- Understanding of safe working practices and willingness to complete relevant training.
- Good communication skills and a professional attitude.

Desirable requirements

- Previous experience in grounds maintenance or sports turf management.
- Experience maintaining football pitches or other sports surfaces.
- Relevant grounds maintenance or sports turf qualifications.
- PA1/PA6 or other relevant pesticide application qualifications, where required for the duties undertaken.
- Experience operating professional grounds maintenance machinery.
- Knowledge of irrigation systems, fertiliser programmes, grass seed selection and seasonal renovation techniques.
- A full, valid UK driving licence, where required for site duties.

5. Personal Attributes

- Punctual, dependable and self-motivated.
- Willing to learn and develop technical groundskeeping skills.
- Positive, adaptable and able to respond to changing priorities.
- Committed to high standards of pitch quality, safety and presentation.
- Respectful of the club's professional environment and academy development programme.

6. Performance Expectations

- Maintain pitches and external areas to the standards set by the Head Groundsman.
- Complete assigned work accurately and within agreed timescales.
- Support the safe and timely preparation of academy pitches for training and fixtures.
- Demonstrate safe and responsible use of machinery, materials and equipment.
- Communicate problems and changing pitch conditions promptly.
- Contribute positively to the reputation and professional standards of Plymouth Argyle Football Club.

7. General

This job description outlines the principal responsibilities of the role and is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Duties may be reasonably amended in consultation with the postholder to meet the operational needs of Plymouth Argyle Football Club.

The postholder must comply with all relevant club policies, procedures, safeguarding requirements and standards of professional conduct.