



PITCH QUALITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME UEFA EUROPA CONFERENCE LEAGUE FINAL, ARENA KOMBETARE, TIRANA 2021/22

In the first time I visited the Arena Kombetare in Tirana, the pitch was undergoing a complete reconstruction. A new drainage system was installed along with a new growing medium and eventually a hybrid carpet finish was applied. In Europe, this is one of the most frequently used stadium venues. With at least three uses a week, dealing with very challenging climatic conditions became even more difficult. As Tirana has extremely cold winters and extremely humid summers, grass coverage has naturally diminished in the winter. The pitch received a "mini renovation" in late spring, including overseeding, top dressing vertical aeration and a calculated nutritional application program, in preparation for presenting it for the final. A new grounds team was introduced to the venue in mid-April after we lost the previous team for personal reasons. We faced a few challenges in the week leading up to the final due to poor cutting quality on the pitch, but we overcame it by reversing every cut and back-lapping the mowing equipment. All things considered, we were pleased with the pitch at kick-off and the surface played well throughout the game.

Dean Tingley – Pitch quality expert, UEFA Europa conference League Final, Arena Kombetare, Tirana, 2022

