



County of Santa Cruz

PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

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BARRY C. SAMUEL, DIRECTOR

April 1, 2002

Agenda: April 9, 2002

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

County of Santa Cruz

701 Ocean Street

Santa Cruz, California 95060

SUBJECT: ATHLETIC FIELD-USE POLICY

Dear Members of the Board:

On March 19, 2002, your Board directed the Parks Department to report back on the policies governing the use of County athletic fields due to issues that were raised during oral communications on that date. At that time, representatives from the Pony League had expressed their concerns regarding closure of the Polo Grounds ball field on March 18, the designated opening day of County athletic fields. The Polo Grounds ball field had been closed that morning by the Parks Department due to wet weather conditions, as provided for in the County's Athletic Field-Use Policy described below.

Athletic Field-Use Policy

The Parks Department maintains ten baseball fields and eight soccer fields throughout the County (Pinto Lake County Park, Polo Grounds County Park, Anna Jean Cummings County Park, Brommer Street Park, Michael Gray Field, and Highlands County Park). The field-use policy states, "The field closes in mid-November for the winter. Use beyond that time is to be approved by the POSCS department. The fields open, weather and field conditions permitting, by mid-March".

The fields are closed for the winter months for several reasons. The primary reason for the four-month closure is to provide time for the fields to be renovated, re-seeded, and have sufficient grow-in time in order to provide for safe, high-quality fields which will be available for rigorous play the remaining eight months of the year. The time period (mid-November – mid-March) when the fields are closed is typically the County's rainy season. Play on wet fields can kill or significantly damage the turf and create ruts and depressions in the ground which can lead to sports injuries.

At the Polo Grounds, starting on November 15, 2001, the fields were given a comprehensive renovation.. A total of 100 hours was devoted to top dressing the fields with 40 tons of soil, silt

seeding using 700 pounds of seed, spreading 1500 pounds of fertilizer, aerating 15 acres of turf, and spreading and grading 10 tons of new infield mix on the ball fields. The winter closure and occasional warm winter weather are needed to complete the growing process.

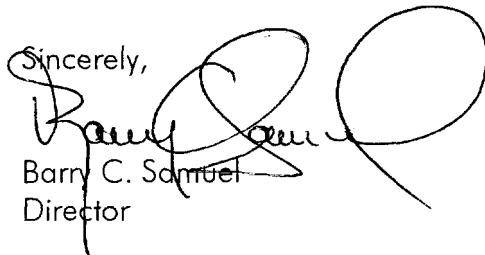
In addition to winter field closure, the athletic fields are closed occasionally due to adverse weather conditions, maintenance emergencies – such as broken irrigation lines, or due to unsafe playing conditions. This policy protects field users and allows the Parks Department to provide safe and high-quality athletic fields for public use. Maintenance staff evaluates field conditions on a daily basis and determines their playability. If it is determined that the athletic fields need to be temporarily closed due to unsafe conditions or inclement weather, the information is made available on the Sports Field Hotline (454-7906). This hotline allows sports teams to know in advance of game time the current field conditions. In order to provide teams with sufficient time to plan for the day, the closures are determined and posted by 8:00 A.M.

For example, in 2001, the Polo Grounds County Park athletic fields were closed only three days during the entire baseball season (mid-March – mid-November). This year, due to inclement weather, the fields have been closed three times – March 18/22, and 23. It is important to note that each field in the County Park System is independently evaluated and, at times, some fields are closed while others might be open. The differences can be attributed to a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, microclimates, drainage, and soil types.

Opening day for all of the County's athletic fields was March 18, 2002, as per the Unified Fee Schedule (see Attachment 1). On March 18, 2002, the baseball fields at the Polo Grounds County Park were closed due to wet conditions. The Park Maintenance Supervisor visited the ball fields at 7:30 A.M. and determined, due to the half inch of rain which fell the previous day, that the fields were too wet and would probably not dry sufficiently by the afternoon. It is at the request of the various leagues that the decision about whether a field is open or closed is made in the early morning so that the coaches and players can call the field hotline in order to ascertain if the fields will be playable prior to their arrival.

The goal of the Parks Department is to provide, over the long term, safe, well-maintained sports fields for community use. This requires that, on occasion, use of the fields needs to be restricted for safety and maintenance reasons.

IT IS THEREFORE RECOMMENDED that your Board accept and file this report on the Athletic Field-Use Policy.

Sincerely,

Barry C. Samuel
Director

RECOMMENDED

SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

BCS/GI/cms

SECTION V - ATHLETIC FIELD RULES, REGULATIONS AND USE POLICY

All provisions of the Santa Cruz County Parks Department Rules, Regulations and Fee Schedule Guide shall apply to athletic facilities at County Parks. The following additional competitive league policies are to provide for safe, efficient field use as well as protection of those facilities.

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A. RENTALS AND RESERVATIONS

Athletic facilities or portions thereof may be reserved by leagues or groups for their exclusive use between the hours of 8:00 AM and dusk, subject to the following conditions:

B. RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Reservations are not accepted during designated maintenance hours.
2. Reservations may be accepted for games and practice sessions from leagues and designated organizations and individuals.
3. Other park uses may preclude athletic facilities from being available for reservations. Once a reservation is approved, other park uses or reservations shall not pre-empt that use.
4. Approved reservations may be canceled by POSCS due to inclement weather or special maintenance projects. If facility use is canceled, a full refund of fees and deposits will be made if the event cannot be rescheduled.

C. CONTROL OF THE PREMISES

The Department may regulate or prohibit activities which are deemed to be a hazardous nature to groups or individuals or which endanger property.

1. Golf
Golf equipment is not permitted.
2. Model Airplanes, Fireworks and Rockets
Use of motorized toys, including model airplanes and use of fireworks or rockets is not permitted without a Facility Permit.
3. Pets and Animals
Dogs, horses or other domestic animals are not permitted.
4. Glass
Glass containers are not permitted.
5. Bicycles and Motor Vehicles
Use of bicycles, wheeled toys and motor vehicles, including motorcycles, automobiles or go-carts, are not permitted.

SECTION V - ATHLETIC FIELD RULES, REGULATIONS AND USE POLICY

0698

C. CONTROL OF THE PREMISES (continued)**6. Field Preparation and Equipment**

Field markings, lining and preparation of athletic facilities are subject to approval by permit. This includes use of signs, portable goals and recreation equipment, driving of stakes, creating holes or removing soil or turf in preparation for field use, or any other activity that will alter existing field condition.

7. Special Events and Unique Use

Use of athletic facilities for sports such as archery, volleyball or other atypical uses are subject to special conditions as specified by individual Facility Permit. Use of athletic facilities for fairs, **caminals** or activities with booth set-ups will not be allowed if field conditions **will** be damaged or altered by such use, or if the safety of participants and the general public is compromised.

8. Permittee shall inspect athletic fields daily and report any unsafe conditions to POSCS at **454-7900**.

D. ATHLETIC FACILITIES - DESCRIPTION AND SERVICES**1. Softball Diamond**

Softball diamonds are equipped with a lay-back arch backstop, permanent home plate and pitching rubber. All line markings and field preparations are to be provided by the reserving group. The Department maintains the fields by mowing, watering and fertilizing as well as reconditioning as needed. Special diamond grooming beyond weekly grading must be provided by the reserving group. Use of portable fencing or special equipment and preparation must be approved in advance by the Department Permit. The fields are suitable for youth or adult softball and youth baseball (**12** years and under).

2. Soccer Field

Soccer fields are maintained by mowing, watering, fertilizing and reconditioning as needed. All field preparation, including line marking, must be provided by the reserving group. Equipment use and field preparation must be approved in advance by Department Facility Permit. Portable soccer goals may be checked out from the Department when available. All other equipment must be provided by the reserving group. Practice sessions are subject to conditions shown below. This is suitable for soccer and football for all ages.

SECTION V - ATHLETIC FIELD RULES, REGULATIONS AND USE POLICY

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E. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

The **use** of alcoholic beverages in and immediately around the athletic fields is not permitted. This includes sidelines, dugouts, bleachers and field areas.

F. ATHLETIC FIELD EQUIPMENT AND STORAGE

There are **no** storage facilities for athletic equipment, field preparation equipment, or maintenance supplies by community groups. (The Department will maintain and check out soccer goals to reserving groups.) All athletic equipment remaining at a County Park must be available to the general public and will not be secured for private groups or individuals. Organizations may contribute equipment to the Department for public use.

G. USE FEES AND DEPOSITS

Provisions of the County POSCS Department Fees and Charges Facility Use Policy shall apply to athletic facilities. A one-quarter reduction in fees may be made for groups with Season Facility Use Agreements. A fee for athletic facilities shall defray department **costs**, thus providing exclusive use of the reserved facility and **shall**:

1. Provide for reservation service and administrative overhead.
2. Provide personnel to verify reservations and oversee field use.
3. Offset **costs** for mowing, fertilizing, watering, conditioning and other maintenance tasks.

SECTION V - ATHLETIC FIELD RULES, REGULATIONS AND USE POLICYH. DEPOSITS AND ADDITIONAL CHARGES

0700

The user shall not injure, mar, or in any way deface the facility or equipment therein and shall not cause or permit anything to be done whereby the same shall be in any manner ~~marred~~ or defaced, nor shall make or allow to be made any alterations of any kind therein. If the facility ~~is~~ marred or defaced by the act of negligence of the user, ~~employee~~ or employees, patron, guest, or any other person using the facility while the facility is under control of the user, the user will pay to County, on demand, such sums ~~as~~ the Director shall determine to be necessary to restore the facility or such equipment ~~to its~~ condition prior to such damage. Any deposit made by the user may be retained by ~~the~~ County to ~~cover~~ part or all of the cost of repairing damaged facilities.

Deposits and Additional Charges

The Department may collect damage and clean-up deposits from users to assure that ~~costs~~ are associated with services. Deposits are refundable after inspection by Department personnel.

Per Field

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| (a) Clean-up and damage deposits | \$50 |
| (b) Repair and clean-up services
required of maintenance staff
are \$20 per hour | |

I. SEASON AGREEMENTS

Certain groups and organizations are eligible to enter into Season Facility Use Agreements with the Department for continuing field use provided the following criteria are met:

1. Groups must be non-profit athletic leagues or teams with a home base in Santa Cruz County.
2. Groups must agree to perform their own field preparation except for mowing, dragging and watering, and clean up using their own supplies, participants and equipment.
3. Groups are not guaranteed adequate parking on weekend or holiday dates.
4. Groups must provide a \$100 damage and cleaning deposit, to be retained by the County Treasury during the term of their agreement. This deposit may be repeated as needed.
5. Groups may be charged \$100 per day for unauthorized field use.
6. Field reservation dates shall be consistent with league schedule submitted to the Department.
7. Groups must provide their own insurance. They must furnish the Department a certificate of general liability and property damage in an amount of not less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) per incident. Such insurance shall name the County as additional insured, be primary coverage, and indemnify the County for any and all losses including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees and legal costs which the County may suffer ~~by~~ reason of ~~this~~ use of the premises.

SECTION V - ATHLETIC FIELD RULES, REGULATIONS AND USE POLICYI. SEASON AGREEMENTS (continued)

0701

8. Groups with Season Agreements must contribute to the athletic facilities in one of the following ways:

- a. Fees must be paid prior to requested use.
- b. Partial payments may be accepted if a payment schedule is approved by the facilities supervisor.

Groups wishing to contribute services, in lieu of fees, must submit a written proposal to the Department fully explaining the nature and commitment of their contribution, 90 days in advance of their use. Proposals will be approved or denied by the Director of POSCS. Approved proposals will be incorporated into the Season Agreement.

- 9. Parking fees: A parking fee may be collected on weekends, Memorial Day through Labor Day at Highlands and Pinto Lake Parks.
- 10. Tournaments: If tournaments are held outside the season agreement, an additional reservation is required. Tournaments with teams outside your own league will be subject to a special event fee.
- 11. Relinquishment of time slot: If a season agreement holder relinquishes his time slot, POSCS may schedule another user. Facilities must be notified at least one week prior in order to receive credit.
- 12. Group clean-up: Groups are responsible for seeing that their participants and spectators observe all park rules and regulations. Groups not abiding may lose their season agreement privileges.
- 13. Fields: Fields will be scheduled by POSCS during holidays or as deemed necessary.
- 14. Keys: If keys are required for the storage room, they must be checked out in advance through the POSCS office.
- 15. Fines: There is a \$25.00 fine (where applicable) for leaving nets up or not breaking down the goals and moving them off the fields.
- 16. Closure: The field closes in mid-November for the winter. Use beyond that time is to be approved by the POSCS department. The fields open, weather and field conditions permitting, by mid-March.