



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: Parks, Recreation and
Cultural Services Committee

DATE: March 2, 2001

FROM: Dave Semple
Director, Parks

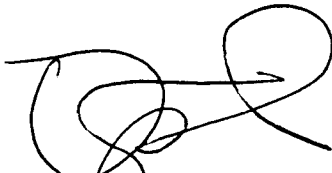
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Mike Redpath
Manager Parks Administration and Programs

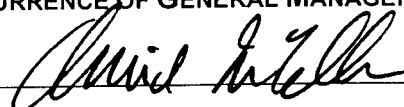
**RE: Sports Council Sub-Committee- "Sports Field Allocation, Policies and
Procedures"**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Report "Sports Council Sub-Committee-*Sports Field Allocation, Policies and Procedures,*" prepared by the City of Richmond Sports Council be referred to staff for review to develop necessary policy and procedure changes affecting the use and allocation of sports playing fields in Richmond.


Dave Semple
Director Parks
Mike Redpath
Manager Parks Administration and Programs

Att. 1

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STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

On June 27, 2000, Richmond Girls Soccer made a presentation to the Community Services Committee regarding the allocation of field sport playing fields in Richmond for Richmond Girls Soccer. The City of Richmond Community Services Committee referred this item back to Sports Council through the following referral:

“That the matter of inadequate soccer facilities available for girls be referred to the Sports Council for a report to Community Services Committee.”

In August 2000, Richmond Sports Council established a sub committee with representation from sport user groups to discuss the June 27 referral. Through their discussions, it became clear that the issue of allocation and use of playing field facilities affects *all* field user groups, and is not limited to Girls Soccer. The Sub-Committee was facilitated by staff from the Parks Department and expanded its focus from this single referral item to include a variety of issues and recommendations that are presented and discussed in their final report (Attachment 1).

To conduct its review, the Sub-Committee held a series of meetings, which began on August 1st, 2000, and ended on November 7th, 2000. Discussion and recommendations were based on a Terms of Reference, developed to prioritise the work of the Sub-Committee.

ANALYSIS

There are a myriad of issues affecting the allocation and use of the current field sport playing surfaces in Richmond. Given the limited number of playing field surfaces available for use, the process of scheduling field sport team usage of the current inventory requires the consideration of many factors including: sport specific needs, time of day, field conditions due to inclement weather, field maintenance, and the sport playing season. Currently there are over 7000 participants in a variety of affiliated sport groups who use Richmond’s field system. This figure does not include usage by the School District #38 athletic and Physical Education programs, the school game usage figures are attached for information in Appendix D of Attachment 1. There are also two distinct seasons of field sport usage:

Fall Winter Season: The field sport playing season that runs from September to May annually. This season includes the following sports: Soccer, Football, Rugby, Field-Lacrosse, Field-Hockey.

Spring Summer Season: The fields sport playing season that runs between April to September annually. This season includes the following sports: Baseball, Softball, Field-Hockey, Summer Soccer, Cricket and Track and Field.

Overview of Current Sport Playing Field Situation

While many factors must be considered in the allocation of fields, the priority of the City of Richmond has been to place an emphasis on allocations of field time for youth sports groups. This is not to discount the presence and demand for usage by the growing adult sport user groups in the community. The allocation of field sport playing fields in the Fall Winter Season requires that practises occur primarily in the evening hours (6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.) and there are a limited number of daylight hours in this season. Games are played during daylight hours on the weekends. The result has seen an emphasis in the Fall/Winter season for the majority of demand for allocation to be on fields with lights.

Richmond's traditional "High quality fields"- have upgraded drainage and field lighting, Richmond has 18 of these upgraded fields known as "sand-turf fields," (10 fields in Richmond are lit- 3 mini and 7 full sized). There are also approximately 80 "Clay field surfaces" in the City that are not usable for much of the Fall/Winter Playing Season due to poor field conditions, a lack of lighting and poor drainage. The "Clay" fields however are used extensively in the Spring/Summer Season for baseball and softball.

Sports Council Sub Committee Review

The presentation from the Richmond Girl's Soccer Association to the Community Services Committee in June 2000 refers to the allocation of sport playing fields for the Richmond Girls Soccer Association and was referred to the volunteer Sports Council. The Sports Council Sub-Committee developed a purpose statement to orient its review:

The Sports Council Sub-Committee will recommend future action by examining guidelines and procedures for allocating sport playing fields within the City of Richmond, given the current inventory and quality of fields, and present and future needs of all sport user groups.

Given the broad range of issues associated with the allocation, use of sport playing fields, and the necessary smart sequencing of special events, tournaments, practise times, and games the sports council sub committee recommends the following key areas for staff to review:

- Implementation of a ***City of Richmond Playbook for Sport User Groups*** is recommended for establishing equitable allocation of fields based on user group needs. The purpose of this annual "Playbook" is to increase communication between the City and field sport user groups.
- Suggested policy amendments to the Field Users Agreement, Revision of the City of Richmond policy 8500 – Park Playing field allocation – adopted March 28, 1978, and other changes to track the actual usage and allocation of Richmond's Sport Playing fields.

The main thrust of the recommendations in the Sports Council Sub-Committee Report (Attachment 1) suggest policy and procedure amendments related to the allocation and usage of Richmond's current inventory of field sport playing field surfaces. The report also recommends the consideration of the upgrading of current fields to artificial turf and/or increase the amount of field lighting for the Fall/Winter sport season. These options for future consideration, based on the demand for use and on actual team and usage statistics will be presented to committee in the future as possible capital projects funded by the Sports Statutory Reserve Fund.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact at this time.

CONCLUSION

The volunteer members of the Sports Council Sub-Committee have dedicated a significant amount of their time and effort to ensure that there is improved communication between the City and the field sport user groups who use the current inventory of sport playing fields in the City. The Sub-Committee report (Attachment 1) recommends many policy and procedure changes that will: enhance the current relationship between user groups, establish a process for the equitable allocation of the sports field playing surfaces, strive to protect the condition of playing fields, and track annual team enrolment statistics and field allocations. If approved staff will prepare the necessary policy and procedure changes for implementation in the 2001 – 2002 field sports playing season.



Mike Redpath
Manager, Parks Administration and Programs

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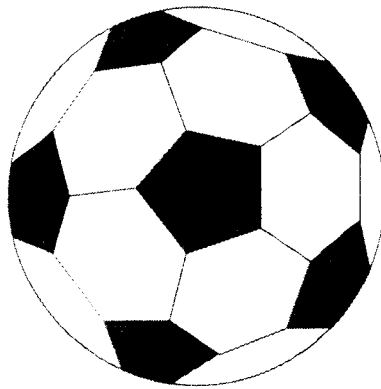
City of Richmond

SPORTS COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE

“Sports Field Allocation, Policies and Procedures”

August 1, 2000- February 27, 2001

Prepared for the City of Richmond Community Services Committee



Sports Council Representatives:

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Jim Lamond, Past Chair Sports Council
Debbie Judd, President Richmond Youth (Boys) Soccer
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Special Thanks:

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APPENDICES

Appendix A	City of Richmond Corporate Policy No. 8500 – Park Playing Fields – Allocation
Appendix B	City of Richmond Corporate Policy No. 8300 – City Facilities – Provision to Groups
Appendix C	Fall/Winter Field Usage Agreement
Appendix D	School District No. 38 (Richmond) Use Of Sand Fields

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sports Council Sub-Committee focused on gaining a greater understanding of existing playing fields, their allocation to field sport user groups, and their limitations in meeting the current and future needs of the sport community within the City of Richmond. Initiation of the Sub-Committee was prompted by a presentation made by Richmond Girls Soccer to Community Services Committee on June 27, 2000. The City of Richmond Community Services Committee referred this item back to Sports Council through the following referral:

“That the matter of inadequate soccer facilities available for girls be referred to the Sports Council for a report to Community Services Committee.”

The issue of allocation and use of playing field facilities affects all field user groups, and is not limited to Girls Soccer, the Sub-Committee expanded its focus from this single item to include a variety of issues that are presented and discussed in this report.

The Sports Council Sub-Committee developed a purpose statement to orient its review:

The Sports Council Sub-Committee will recommend future action by examining guidelines and procedures for allocating sport playing fields within the City of Richmond, given the current inventory and quality of fields, and present and future needs of all sport user groups.

To conduct its review, the Sub-Committee held a series of meetings, which began on August 1st, 2000, and ended on November 7th, 2000. Discussion and recommendations were based on the Terms of Reference, developed to prioritise the work of the Sub-Committee.

Terms of Reference

1. Review the history of past Sports Council Sub-Committee work to-date.
2. Examine the numbers of male and female fall/winter players in relation to field allocations.
3. Examine the allocation of fields with regard to accessibility, exclusivity, and scheduling.
4. Examine how field allocation is tracked.
5. Examine field usage for practices vs. games.
6. Examine the quality of fields allocated with regard to surface and lighting. Define what is quality? What do we have? What do we want? What do we need?
7. From the findings of the above terms, the Sports Council Sub-Committee will make recommendations for future action.

Each issue examined by the Sub-Committee contains a preamble, discussion of the issue, and a series of recommendations for action. The following summary of major endations provides an overview of the sub-committee findings:

Summary of Findings

1. Implementation of a ***City of Richmond Playbook for Sport User Groups*** is recommended for establishing equitable allocation of fields based on user group needs. The purpose of this annual “Playbook” is to increase communication between the City and field sport user groups. This *Playbook* should include:

- *A Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer Users Field Allocation Request System*
- *A Field Usage Policy*
- *A Field Allocation Policy*
- *An Affiliation Policy*
- *Civic and Sports User*

Suggested Policy Amendments:

2. Revision of the ***City of Richmond Field Allocation Policy*** is necessary, and should include the following priorities for field allocation:
 - Youth have first priority on field allocation;
 - Affiliated groups have priority on facility allocation;
 - Whenever possible, group “like” users together (e.g. allocate youth practices/games to the same fields, while allocating adult practices/games to different fields).
 - That projections for future enrolment be provided by user groups through the *Field Allocation Request System*;
 - That field allocation be based on actual need derived from the *Field Allocation Request System*, and not on historical allocation.
 - Equitable allocation should be established in the *Field Allocation Policy*.
 - User group-specific needs should be considered during allocation (e.g. rugby, field hockey etc.).
3. Revision of the ***City of Richmond Affiliation Policy*** may be necessary, and should be reviewed to consider inclusion of an increase in the residency statement to 80% from the current 60%.
4. Revision of the ***City of Richmond Field Usage Policy*** is necessary, and should include:
 - Penalties for violations, and mechanisms for enforcing these penalties;
 - Information on closures and alternatives to closures on allocated fields;
 - Information on maintenance of fields, including method for communicating field closures/repairs to leagues.

Other Recommendations:

5. Expansion of the current field inventory is recommended based on the increase in sport user group participation rates.
6. Investigation of the idea of “home fields” for youth is recommended, as is a “home fields” policy.
7. Designated alternate sites for practice are recommended in response to discussion on the issue of overuse of fields and inclement weather causing poor field conditions.
8. The development of an interactive tracking system available to user groups is recommended in response to previously allocated fields being unused due to changes in scheduling.
9. User groups will work in a spirit of co-operation to optimize field usage.

10. User groups should be allocated clay fields for games until the clay fields can not be used anymore (late fall when lit field facilities and well drained fields are required), rather than ceasing use altogether at the beginning of the October. This would stretch the capacity of the current high quality field inventory to support participation.
11. Designate "home fields" for similar user groups.
12. Allocate adult and youth groups on different fields.
13. Consider allocation of gyms, lacrosse boxes, and tennis courts for practice space, and prioritize use of these field facilities based on the sport season's needs, i.e. during the winter season prioritize use of gyms by winter users rather than summer users.
14. Upgrade existing fields to artificial turf.
15. Building more high quality artificial turf, sand turf and or practise fields would minimize overuse on existing lit, sand turf fields.
16. Maintain an accurate inventory of field ratings and upgrades, update this inventory as required, and make this information accessible to sport user groups. Field ratings should be based, at a minimum, on the following criteria: quality, lighting, drainage, and whether it is sand turf or clay.
17. Provide a greater understanding of the structure of fields, how this relates to field quality, and how the current inventory and field ratings substantiate the limited resources available for allocation and use.

SPORTS COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE

The following *Glossary of Terms* is included to assist with interpretation:

- Affiliation Policy:** Refers to City of Richmond Policy 8701- Parks and Leisure Services – Community Involvement Adopted March 28, 1978.
- “This policy allows for the assistance to community groups which include leisure services as a major part of their objectives and;*
- Any public Richmond organization with a membership of at least 60% Richmond residents, or as approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission (Community Services Committee) in developing and implementing its leisure services programs.*
- The organizations upon receiving assistance, will provide the Parks & Leisure Services Department with up-to-date records of the organization and its activities (Policy 8701).”*
- Allocation Policy:** Refers to City of Richmond Policy 8500- Park Playing Fields Allocation- Adopted March 28, 1978.
- “It is Council Policy that:*
- The allocation of all outdoor sports playing surfaces including soccer fields, ball diamonds, tracks, tennis courts, and lacrosse boxes, will be coordinated through the Community Services Division in order to:*
- 1. Avoid conflicts of use, double bookings, and overuse;*
 - 2. Establish equitable allocation of playing surfaces and facilities to maximize benefits to all concerned (Policy 8500).”*
- Sand Turf Fields:** Refers to a combination sand-turf system utilizing irrigation & standard drainage. There are 18 of these sand-turf systems in Richmond- these are Richmond’s high quality fields.
- “Sand Cell” - Refers to a high quality field system that utilizes irrigated turf on a sand based, water and fertilizer injected foundation. Richmond does not have any true “sand-cell field” systems in the current field inventory.*
- Clay Field:** Refers to a standard grass playing field with a heavy silt and clay base, these fields has adequate to poor drainage and are found in the majority of school park sites. Richmond currently has 80+ of these fields in the current field inventory. A modified clay field refers to a grass playing field constructed of 50% sand and clay, Richmond currently has 5 of these fields.

- High Quality Fields:** In Richmond this refers to "Sand Turf Fields" with lighting.
- Lit Fields:** Fields with lighting, these fields are used during the Fall/Winter seasons after Thanksgiving due to the shift to day light savings.
- Fall Winter Season:** The field sport playing season that runs from September to May annually. This season includes the following sports: Soccer, Football, Rugby, Field-Lacrosse, Field-Hockey.
- Spring Summer Season:** The fields sport playing season that runs between April to September annually. This season includes the following sports: Baseball, Softball, Field-Hockey, Summer Soccer, Cricket and Track and Field.

ALLOCATION OF FIELDS

Preamble

In previous years, the process by which fields were allocated to fall/winter sport user groups involved holding a meeting at the end of the summer season and determining the needs of the user groups for the upcoming season. Fields were then allocated based on the results of the meeting. Allocation was regulated in that Saturday and Sunday field usage was subject to cross-referencing with special events and tournaments (it should be noted that there has been good co-operation in the past between groups) , and that allocation of fields for games takes priority. The Sub-Committee undertook a strategic exercise to identify how the process of field allocation could be improved.

Issue Discussion

The Sub-Committee identified several strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to facilitate discussion of this issue.

- The **strengths** associated with the current process of field allocation are that it allows for flexibility and encourages co-operation between sport user groups.
- The **weaknesses** are that there is a limited number of available fields for practice time, that this time is insufficient, and that there is a perception of inequality in allocations. Furthermore, although users do have access to quality fields, the majority of fields are of lesser quality.
- Many proactive and reactive **opportunities** were identified in this exercise. Ideally, the Sub-Committee suggested upgrading existing fields and increasing the number of quality fields available for both practices and games. However, proactive approaches also included: improving the process by which fields are allocated, mandating that user groups submit their requirements systematically; developing a system for tracking field allocation and usage; maintaining existing quality fields for games only; adjusting the playing season; and lastly, re-writing the City's allocation policy.
- Should this issue remain unresolved, the Sub-Committee identified several **threats**, including: user groups feeling unsatisfied, leading to the possibility of a referendum and continued conflict; the issue of gender equity going to Human Rights Council; the idea of "pay for play"; and finally, placing further restrictions on the use of fields would mean that some user groups are not accommodated, and continued growth in the sport community can not be supported.

Recommendations

In response to the discussion on the issue of field allocation the Sub-Committee developed specific items for action:

1. Develop the *City of Richmond Playbook for Sport User Groups*

The *Playbook for Sport User Groups* would include:

- *A Fall/Winter/Spring Summer Users Field Allocation Request System*
- *A Field Usage Policy*
- *A Field Allocation Policy*
- *An Affiliation Policy*

This recommendation enables sport user groups to communicate their allocation needs systematically through the *Field Allocation Request System*. This allows the City to assess need and determine appropriate field allocation, it also allows for tracking the needs of users over time. The ability to track

user need, and therefore growth in the sport community over time is invaluable to the City in terms of research, planning, and development of future sporting infrastructure in Richmond.

The recommendation for inclusion of a *Field Usage Policy* (see Section 2), a *Field Allocation Policy*, and an *Affiliation Policy* ensures that all sport user groups are aware of policies that are in place to govern the provision of City facilities to the community.

The Sub-Committee envisions the *Request System* taking the shape, initially, of an electronic diskette/compact disk which would be distributed as an insert in the *Playbook*, and which could later evolve into an interactive website. The *Request System* would be divided into sections according to games, practices, and tournaments, and would require input of needs in each of these areas for submission by user groups. The process of field allocation would then be based on need and availability as determined by the system.

The Sub-Committee also finds it necessary that transparency exist in the process by which fields are allocated. In other words, user groups should have access to information regarding field allocations. The development of the *Request System* would eventually allow this type of information to be accessible to the public, thereby meeting this need.

2. Revise the City of Richmond Allocation Policy

The existing policy regarding the allocation of fields, entitled "Policy 8500 Park Playing Fields – Allocation", was adopted by Council on March 28th, 1978 (see Appendix A). The Sub-Committee recommends that this policy be revised to reflect and address current trends and growth in the sport community in Richmond – and reviewed on an annual basis. The policy should recognize the following principles:

- Youth have first priority on facility allocation.
- Affiliated groups have priority on facility allocation.
- Whenever possible, group "like" users together. For example, allocate youth practices/games to the same fields, while allocating adult practices/games to different fields. Allocating "like" users together minimizes impacts on fields.
- That projections for future enrolment be provided by user groups through the *Field Allocation Request System*; **Note:** Projections should be based on common indicators for growth developed by Staff and Sports Council.
- That field allocation be based on actual need derived from the *Field Allocation Request System*, and not on historical allocation.
- Equitable allocation should be established in the *Field Allocation Policy*.
- User group-specific needs should be considered during allocation (e.g. rugby, field hockey etc.).

3. Revise the City of Richmond Affiliation Policy

Existing policies related to the idea of affiliation, entitled "Policy 8300 City Facilities – Provision to Groups" and "Policy 8701 Parks and Leisure Services – Community Involvement", were adopted by Council on March 28th, 1978 (see Appendix B). In addition to these policies, a manual entitled "City of Richmond Services Available to Affiliated Groups", last updated in 1996, this policy identifies criteria for community facility allocation provided to the public. In other words, affiliation relates to field allocation.

The Sub-Committee recommends that the current policy and manual be revised to reflect current trends and should include, specifically, an increase in the residency statement to 80% from the current 60%. Options for groups with less than 80% residency could participate in the notion of "pay for play".

USER GROUP NEEDS & FIELD USAGE

Preamble

The Sub-Committee established priorities regarding the needs of the sport community. In order to make recommendations to increase the current sport facility inventory; an assessment of user group needs is required, as is a field usage policy to ameliorate negative impacts to the current and future inventory. This would involve answering the following questions:

- Exactly how many quality practice fields do user groups need?
- Exactly how many quality, lit, game fields do user groups need in the immediate short term? In the long term?

The recommendation for the development of the *Field Allocation Request System* is a response to assessing what is user group need. Prior to development of this system, however, an assessment of user group need must still be devised and should be based on current available data and trends.

Issue Discussion

The current data available is provided in a summary of user group participation rates in Table 1, which illustrates an increase of 23.95% over the last five years (**note:** this increase is based on fall/winter participation rates only). It should be noted that the significant increase in Fall Winter players between 1995 to 2000 is primarily based on a large increase in Senior Women's, Girls Soccer, Senior Men's and Masters Men Soccer. Spring/Summer (Baseball & Field Hockey have been included for information).

Table 1. Sport User Group Participation (1995-2000)

FALL/WINTER OUTDOOR GROUPS	1995	1999	2000	Change 99-00	% change 99-00	Change 95-00	% change 95-00
Girls Soccer	715	803	863	60	7.47%	148	20.70%
Youth Soccer	1625	1682	1684	2	0.12%	59	3.63%
Senior Soccer	500	640	866	226	35.31%	366	73.20%
Senior Women's Soccer	120	132	203	71	53.79%	83	69.17%
Master's Soccer	80	120	152	32	26.67%	72	90.00%
Field Lacrosse	40	65	55	-10	-15.38%	15	37.50%
Field Hockey	214	272	274	2	0.74%	60	28.04%
Football	135	144	141	-3	-2.08%	6	4.44%
Subtotal	3040	3377	3768	391	11.58%	728	23.95%
SPRING/SUMMER OUTDOOR GROUPS	1995	1999	2000	Change 99-00	% change 99-00	Change 95-00	% change 95-00
Arms League Softball	0	494	494	494	0.00%	494	100.00%
Bantam Midget Baseball	300	190	180	-10	-5.26%	-120	-40.00%
South Richmond Minor Baseball	700	370	340	-30	-8.11%	-360	-51.43%
West Richmond Minor Baseball	650	370	303	-67	-18.11%	-347	-53.38%
Girl's Softball	1450	1406	1375	-31	-2.20%	-75	-5.17%
Boy's Fastball	600	472	330	-142	-30.08%	-270	-45.00%
Senior/Junior Autobody Baseball	75	90	95	5	5.56%	20	26.67%
Master's Baseball	75	75	75	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Steveston Men's Slowpitch	100	100	100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Steveston Women's Softball	45	0	0	0	0.00%	-45	-100.00%
Subtotal	3995	3567	3292	-275	-7.71%	-703	-17.60%
Total (Outdoor Groups)	7035	6944	7060	116	1.67%	25	0.36%

With an increase in participation rates comes an interest in examining how the fields are currently being used, and in what kind of shape they are. During the 24 week fall/winter playing season there are 40.125 hours of scheduled activity on each lit field per week. This equates to 17, 334 hours of use on our existing 18 fields (15 full sized, 3 mini fields), (10 fields in Richmond are lit- 3 mini and 7 full sized) over the season.

These figures support the argument for the upgrading and building of new fields as a definite need of the sport user groups. In the interim, the Sub-Committee explored alternatives for those user groups whose scheduled fields are unplayable due to overuse or as a result of inclement weather. The Sub-Committee suggested exploring a designated alternate practice field/facility for users in the event that a field is unplayable (i.e. tennis courts, lacrosse boxes etc.).

It was recognized that user groups may not be using fields that are allocated to them because of changes in scheduling. The Sub-Committee suggested developing a mechanism whereby schedulers can notify when previously allocated fields will not be used.

The Sub-Committee also discussed concerns regarding the amount of time that users need for practices and games vs. the amount of *useable* time, i.e. there are 24 hours in a day but not all of that is available for allocation and use. This issue of useable time available in a day should be taken into consideration as a priority when scheduling appropriate hours for practice and games for youth. Similarly, it was recognized that groups do not need to be allocated an entire field for practice time, and this is true particularly for very young participants. More than one group can practice on a field at one time.

Included for information is the following Table:

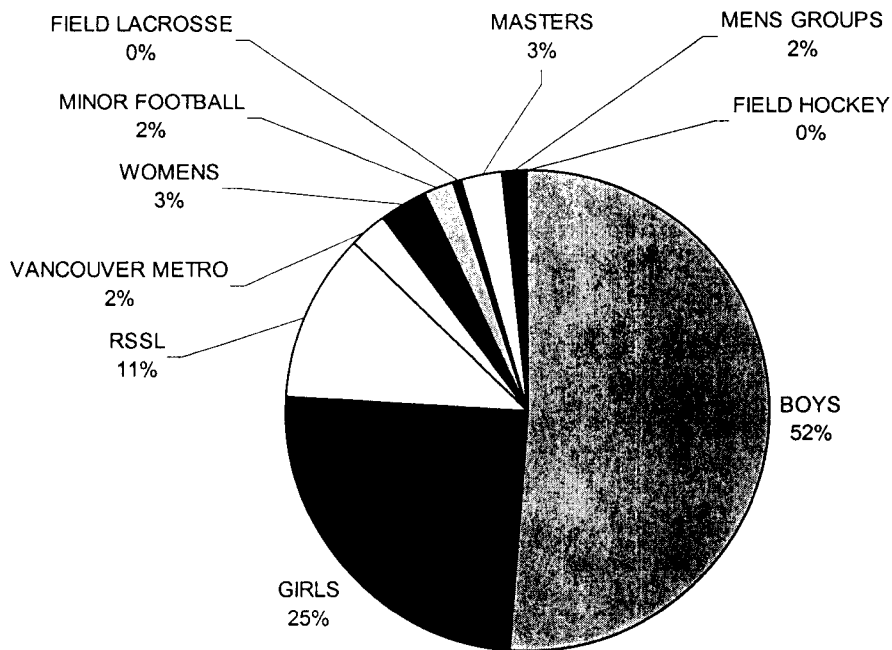
Table 2. Total Weekly Sand-Turf Allocations and Percentage of Use (1999 – 2000)

League	1999/2000 Total Hours	1999/2000 Percentage of Use	2000/2001 Total Hours	2000/2001 Percentage of Use	Total Hours Increase/Decrease	Increase/Decrease of Overall User Group Usage
BOYS	188	51.9%	150	39.7%	-38	-12.3%
GIRLS	86	23.8%	115	30.4%	29	6.7%
RSSL	27	7.5%	39.5	10.4%	12.5	3.0%
VANCOUVER METRO	20	5.5%	25.5	6.7%	5.5	1.2%
WOMENS	14	3.9%	18	4.8%	4	0.9%
MINOR FOOTBALL	23	6.4%	22	5.8%	-1	-0.5%
FIELD LACROSSE	0	0.0%	2	0.5%	2	0.5%
MASTERS	4	1.1%	6	1.6%	2	0.5%
MENS GROUPS	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
FIELD HOCKEY	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
TOTALS	362		378		16	

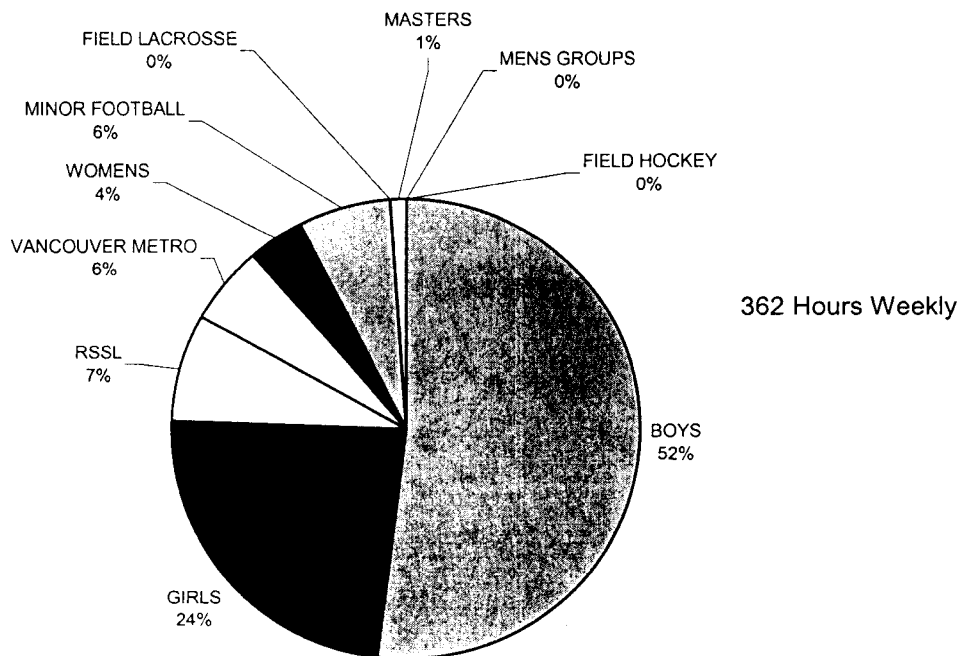
The following Charts reflect the information in Table 2.

Fall/Winter Sport Playing Field Teams and Allocations

Number of Teams 1999 - 2000

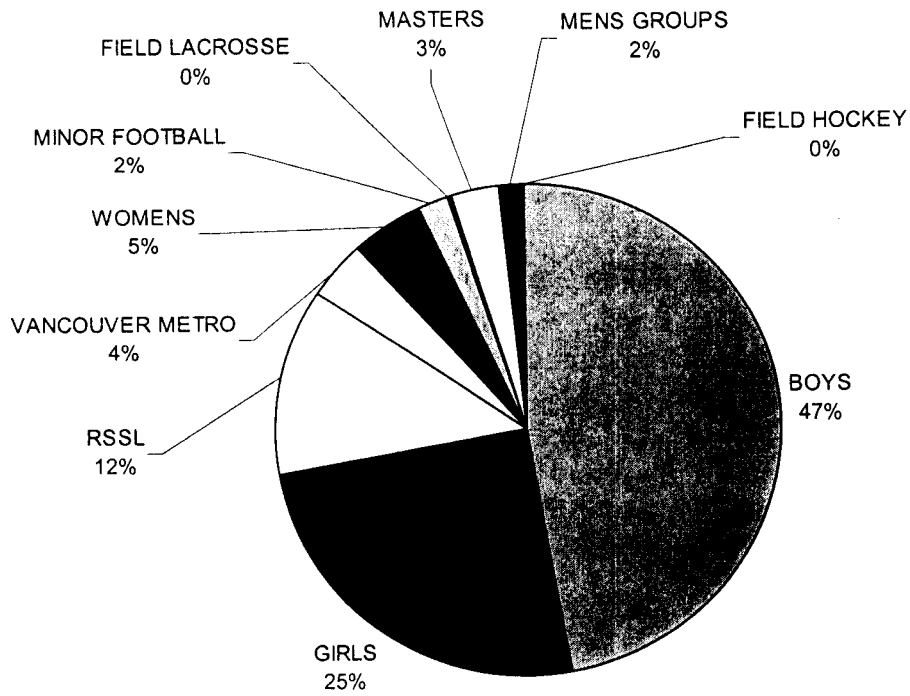


Total Hours Allocated on Sand-Turf Fields 1999 - 2000

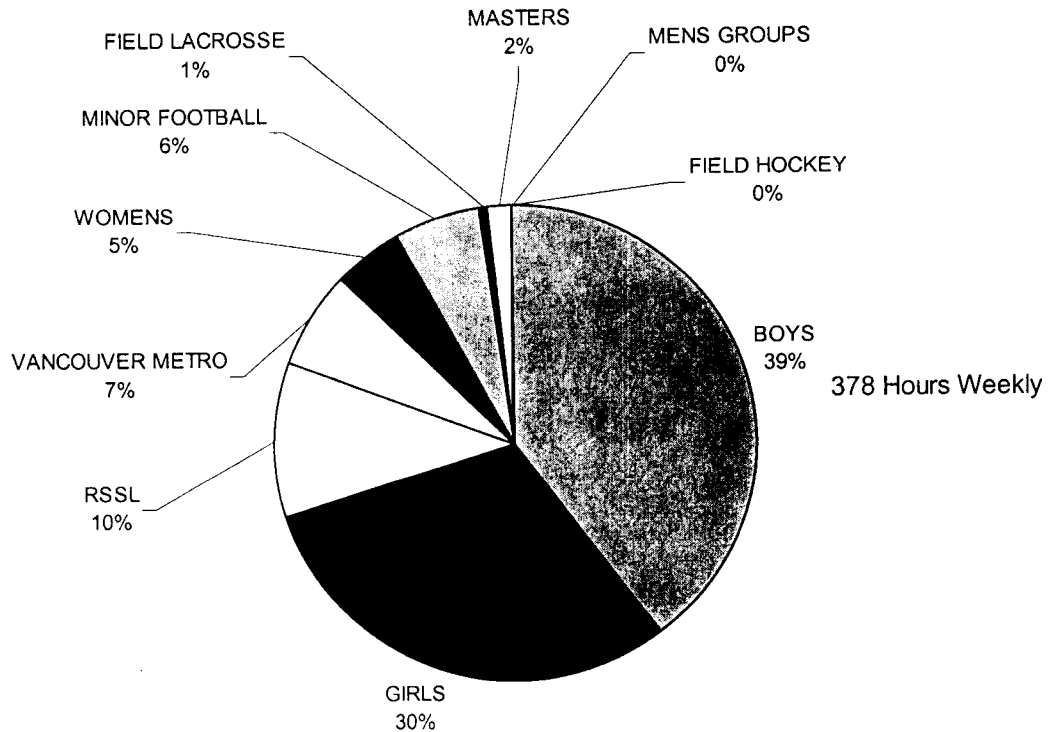


Fall/Winter Sport Playing Field Teams and Allocations

Number of Teams 2000 - 2001



Total Hours Allocated on Sand-turf Fields 2000 - 2001



Recommendations

The discussion of these varied issues led to the development of recommendations regarding field usage, based on user group need.

1. Revise the City of Richmond Field Usage Policy

Currently, the City of Richmond has an unofficial *Field Users Agreement* containing guidelines for the fall/winter usage of fields (see Appendix C). The Sub-Committee would like to see this agreement revised and transformed into an official *Field Usage Policy*, which would ideally minimize impacts to the quality of fields in the current inventory, and which should include:

- Penalties for violations, and mechanisms for enforcing these penalties.
- Information on closures and alternatives to closures on allocated fields.
- Information on maintenance of fields.

The Sub-Committee is interested in learning more about field maintenance. In this regard, it was suggested that Parks Operations staff attend a Sports Council meeting to provide information on the structure of fields and the practices by which fields are maintained. Parks Operations staff could be helpful in providing insight when developing the *Field Usage Policy*.

2. Expansion of the Current Field Inventory

As illustrated in Table 1, over the last five years figures indicate an increase in fall/winter user participation rates. These rates warrant an expansion of the current field inventory. There is an immediate need for a quality, lit, practice facility with multiple fields to reduce the impact on A+ fields which are overused to the point of being unplayable for games by early January. Upgrading a field in the current inventory to artificial turf will provide some relief in this regard, as well as allocating clay fields for practice during nice weather (the allocation of clay fields that are weather-dependant would be difficult for leagues to schedule practice time, e.g. not knowing whether or not a field is useable). An important note is that the bulk of practise time and adult game play is in the evenings in the fall/winter season after Thanksgiving, and it is dark early in the day- lit field facilities are required during this time.)

3. Investigation of Home Fields for Youth and the Development of a Home Fields Policy

The Sub-Committee recommends that the City of Richmond and Sports Council investigate the concept of quality, lit, "home fields" for youth, and subsequently develop a *Home Fields Policy*. Home fields instil a sense of ownership for users and would discourage misuse/overuse of fields.

4. Designating Alternate Sites for Practice

The Sub-Committee recommends exploring options for matching user groups with designated alternate sites for practice when an allocated site is not available due to overuse or inclement weather. These alternate sites include field facilities which are lit, for example, tennis courts, lacrosse boxes. (**note:** these field facilities have been used by Youth Soccer in the past for practice space.)

5. Develop an Interactive System for Tracking Usage

Separate from the idea of the *Field Allocation Request System*, which would allow for tracking use over time, an interactive system is recommended as a mechanism whereby schedulers can notify other user groups when previously allocated fields will not be used. This notification system would make the most of the current inventory of fields.

VARIOUS ISSUES: OVERUSE, FIELD RATINGS AND UPGRADES, AND AN EXAMINATION OF FIELD FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO GIRLS VS. BOYS.

Preamble

A variety of issues were identified by the Sub-Committee, which do not fall into any one specific category. These issues are related to those previously discussed, but require elaboration. Specifically, the issues presented in this section include: the issue of overuse of fields; field ratings and upgrades within the current inventory; and lastly, an examination of field facilities available to girls vs. boys.

A) Issue Discussion: Overuse

The Sub-Committee indicated that the issue of overuse is stated in "Policy 8500 Park Playing Fields – Allocation" as a factor to avoid when allocating fields, however this is one of the user groups' main problems currently. The user groups are allocated sand turf fields in October and use them exclusively until the end of the season in March. Intensive use of these fields render them unplayable by mid-season. Grass fields are not allocated despite good weather in the early part of the season. The Sub-Committee discussed ways to prevent overuse of lit sand turf fields in the existing inventory and developed recommendations in this regard.

Recommendations

1. User groups should be allocated grass fields for practice until they can not be used anymore, rather than ceasing use altogether at the beginning of the October. This would stretch the capacity of the current field inventory to support participation.
2. Designate "home fields" for similar user groups.
3. Allocate adult and youth groups on different fields.
4. Consider allocation of gyms, lacrosse boxes, and tennis courts for practice space, and prioritise use of these field facilities based on the sport season's needs, i.e. during the winter season prioritise use of gyms by winter users rather than summer users.
5. Upgrade existing fields to artificial turf.
6. Building more high quality or artificial turf fields would minimize overuse on existing lit, sand turf fields.

B) Issue Discussion: Field Ratings and Upgrades

The Sub-Committee indicated that there is insufficient understanding of the current sport facility inventory in the City of Richmond and of the way in which the fields are rated.

Recommendations

1. Maintain an accurate inventory of field ratings and upgrades, and make this information accessible to sport user groups. Field ratings should be based, at a minimum, on the following criteria: quality, lighting, drainage, and whether it is sand turf or clay.
2. Provide a greater understanding of the structure of fields, how this relates to field quality, and how the current inventory and field ratings substantiate the limited resources available for allocation and use.

C) Issue Discussion: An Examination of Field Facilities Available to Girls vs. Boys

The matter of inadequate soccer field facilities available to girls in Richmond was the initiating factor which led to the creation of this sub-committee of Sports Council. There is a concern on the part of girls' soccer that fields are allocated on a historical basis rather than on the present needs of each user group. This has been addressed in the recommendations for allocation of sports playing fields.

With equity seen as equal opportunity to participate, girls' soccer is endeavouring to encourage more girls to play soccer and aspires to reach at least an equal number with the boys. The reality of this, considering the present supply of fields, is both boys and girls would have less time and space for practise and games on a per team basis. In other words, growth cannot occur when there are no field facilities to accommodate new players and teams. This then could be viewed as a restriction on the opportunity for girls to participate in soccer.

A further consequence of the growth of the youth programs is the detrimental impact on adult users. The City of Richmond field allocation policy (Allocation Policy No. 8500 – Park Playing Fields Allocation – Adopted march 28, 1978 – Appendix A) favours youth and we are in agreement with this. However, if our community promotes a healthy lifestyle and regular exercise is part of a healthy lifestyle then we must support the adult user groups and be able to offer field facilities for them as well as for the youth.

Increasing numbers of teams appears to be a requirement for assessing the needs for new playing fields. Today we can see a potential for growth in youth and adult field sports being restricted by the present supply of quality lit fields for practise and games.

Sub-Committee Comments:

- Historical practices of allocation in the past and limited field facilities for the near future combine to create inequity. Girls should have equal accessibility to allocation of fields as boys.
- In the context of fixed resources, the increase in total soccer participation over the last five years, this has meant that increasing the allocation of fields to girls (toward their goal of having 50% of total youth allocations) has led to a serious decrease in the time available for boys.
- The sub-committee regards equity in several ways as accessibility for use and opportunities should be equal for all users; as well as the ability for all sports to grow to their potential- girls, boys, men or women.

CONCLUSION

Creating the opportunity for Richmond residents to participate in organized sport activities can only be accomplished with the co-operation of all sport user groups and the City of Richmond. This report recommends many procedural and policy changes that have been developed by reflecting on the past and thinking ahead towards the future. It is the opinion of the Sports Council Sub Committee that these changes will increase communication between sport user groups, and the City of Richmond. Only by working together in the provision of organized sports can we continue to provide opportunities for Richmond's youth and adults to participate.



City of Richmond

Policy Manual

Page 19 of 1	Adopted by Council: Mar. 28/78	POLICY 8500
File Ref: 7125-01	PARK PLAYING FIELDS - ALLOCATION	

POLICY 8500:

It is Council policy that:

The allocation of all outdoor sports playing surfaces including soccer fields, ball diamonds, tracks, tennis courts, and lacrosse boxes, will be coordinated through the Community Services Division in order to:

1. Avoid conflicts of use, double bookings, and overuse;
2. Establish equitable allocation of playing surfaces and facilities to maximize benefits to all concerned.



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Policy Manual

Page 20 of 1	Adopted by Council: Mar. 28/78	POLICY 8701
File Ref: 7000-01	PARKS AND LEISURE SERVICES – COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	

POLICY 8701:

It is Council policy that:

Council encourages and supports community initiative, involvement, and decision making in programs of planning, acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of parks and leisure services in Richmond.

It is the intent of Council to:

1. Encourage other groups, organizations and individuals to provide leisure programs, facilities and services in line with community need.
2. Encourage and incorporate the involvement of volunteers in the delivery of leisure services.
3. Support the formation, nurturing, and growth of parks and leisure services groups in the development and maintenance of the parks and leisure services delivery system.

Assistance may be given to:

1. Community and neighbourhood associations and societies which include Leisure Services programs as a major part of their objectives.
2. Any public Richmond organization with membership of at least 60% Richmond residents, or as approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission in developing and implementing its leisure services programs.

The organizations, upon receiving assistance, will provide the Parks & Leisure Services Department with up-to-date records of the organization and its activities.

Encouragement and assistance may be given to the establishment of the community and neighbourhood associations and societies which include leisure services programs as a major part of their objectives.

Wherever possible, neighbourhood organizations are encouraged to become affiliated with, or an integral part of, the larger community association serving the geographical area in which the neighbourhood is located. New community associations would be formed when population densities, through infilling of residential areas, create a need for a logical sub-municipal identity and the development of major community recreational facilities in a new location. Council is committed to providing facilitating and coordinating services to community groups and individuals involved in the provision of public leisure services. The Parks & Leisure Services Department accepts a leadership role in the coordination of leisure service programming and will endeavour to avoid undesirable duplication of services, or unreasonable variances in fees and charges to participants.



CITY OF RICHMOND

 COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION
 PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

FALL/WINTER FIELD USAGE AGREEMENT

The intent of this Agreement is to establish guidelines for the winter usage of the fields in Richmond. In recent years the demand for outdoor playing space during the winter months has increased considerably. This demand will only increase with an increasing population and we cannot assume an increase in facilities. Therefore, we must make maximum use of the facilities that we have. As new facilities are developed they will be incorporated into the system.

Considering that most of the sand pitches are also the ones that are lit, they are used extensively during the weeknights for practices, as well as weekends for game play. Given that there are a limited number of sand fields and they are used during the poor weather months of October through March, they are going to deteriorate during the season.

Furthermore, six of the sand fields (Brighthouse Park, King George I, Boyd III, London I, South Arm III, and Minoru II) are used for two sports with back-to-back seasons i.e. soccer and baseball. These fields will require maintenance and rest to recover prior to the start of baseball season in April. This would lead to a recommendation that in future fields not have different season sports programmed onto them. In short, that they be used from October to March or April to August.

The seasons for the sports are:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 1. Soccer | September to the end of March, with youth games continuing until the end of July for teams involved in Provincials. |
| 2. Baseball/Softball | Beginning April (weather permitting) until September. |
| 3. Football | August to the end of November. |
| 4. Field Hockey | September to November/April to June. |
| 5. Field Lacrosse | September to December/February to March. |
| 6. Rugby | September to March. |

Priority of Allocation

1. Youth (Girls and Boys).
2. Richmond Seniors (RSSL, Metro Womens, Vancouver Metro, Masters, Women and Men's Field Hockey, Field Lacrosse, Rugby).
3. Summer League

4. Recreational League (Airport, Christian).

5. Individual Teams.

A committee made up of representatives from the user groups will meet in mid-September of each year to ratify this policy. Suggested changes should be made in writing to the Coordinator of Sports and Special Events by August 8th of each year so they can be distributed to all groups prior to the September meeting. The suggested changes will be discussed at the meeting. the committee will meet again in early December.

Sand Field Opening

The sand fields will not be used until the Thanksgiving weekend in October except limited use for football in August and September for league games only or by special permission from the Coordinator of Sports and Special Events. Sand fields will be closed in the spring for annual maintenance. You will be notified of the exact dates. Brighthouse Park, Minoru III, Boyd III, London I, King George I and South Arm III will be closed no later than the second week in March. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services will close the fields in the event of inclement weather (see rainy season agreement). Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, in conjunction with the representatives from the user groups reserves the right to limit use to games only in the event of deteriorating field conditions. Richmond Minor Football will be allowed to use one field, and one lit sand field for practice starting in the middle of September (exception due to season finishing early).

Rainy Season Agreement

The league schedulers should call the Coordinator of Sports and Special Events at 233-3305 on Thursdays to obtain information on field closures. If the weather is inclement during the week please call for mid-week field closures. Schedulers, coaches, referees, or league executives are expected to cancel games and practices if changed weather conditions are contributing to field deterioration.

Special Events

Occasionally, special events will take precedence over regular play. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services reserves the right to move teams to accommodate needs.

In the event of deteriorated weather conditions and special events involving travelling teams, a last minute field closure may be overruled. This decision must be made in conjunction with the Coordinator of Sports and Special Events.

Additional Usage Rules

1. Brighthouse Park will only be used by soccer players 11 years of age and younger, and for practices or games.
2. No practising is allowed in the goal areas for youth teams (six yard box). It is up to the league to enforce this. In addition, there is no practising in the penalty area for senior men or women's soccer [see Discipline 2 (a) and (b)].
3. Practices are to be conducted width-wise across the field.
4. The lit practice areas will be incrementally upgraded to become playable through inclement weather. These areas – Blundell and Minoru (north of the baseball diamond) kickwall will be scheduled to the leagues by the Coordinator of Sports and Special Events. The Boyd kickwall is administered by the West Richmond Soccer Club. These will be used to the maximum to decrease usage on the all-weather fields.
5. League games take precedence over exhibition games. Exhibition games with non-Richmond teams should be kept to a minimum.
6. No teams may practice on Minoru's Pee Wee pitch without authorization from the Coordinator of Sports and Special Events.
7. The scheduled start time is start time on the pitch, not game start time. Adjust game start times accordingly. Warm-up takes place after scheduled start time on an allocated pitch.

Discipline

It is the responsibility of the league to ensure that all teams know and follow the rules. The league is also responsible for disciplining any team or person caught breaking the rules. Discipline is as follows:

1. (a) **First offence for actions such as leaving the park changing rooms in a mess or drinking alcoholic beverages** will be a written warning from the league.
 - (b) **Second offence for the above actions** is a four-week suspension as well as a bill for cleanup, sent to the league, club, district (No facilities are to be allocated for games or practices).
2. (a) **First offence for practising in the goal areas** is a written warning.
 - (b) **Second offence** is loss of practice time on the all-weather grass pitches.
3. (a) **First offence for actions such as playing or practising on closed fields, unauthorized play or practice (permits are issued by Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services), verbal abuse of residents, caretakers or other park users,** will be an immediate one to four-week suspension.

4. If the league or parent organization discipline a team, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services should be informed in writing. If the league or parent organization will not discipline for the above offences, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services will, and the league or parent organization will be informed in writing. An appeal process is in place with Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services. **A Notice of Appeal must be received within one week of receiving notification of discipline.**
5. If a complaint is received by Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, it will be passed on the league.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended to the City that at least one grass field per year be upgraded to include cross drainage so as to increase the number of fields playable in inclement weather.

**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 38 (RICHMOND)
USE OF SAND FIELDS**

Field	Boys Soccer No. of Hours	Field Hockey No. of Hours	Girls Soccer No. of Hours	Ultimate No. of Hours	Football No. of Hours	Total Field Hours
Boyd 1					24	24
Boyd 3		24				24
Boyd Oval			20	12		32
London 1	10					10
McMath 1	10		20	2		32
McNair 1			22	8		30
Minoru 2	8		2			10
Minoru Oval			8		12	20
South Arm 4			24			24
Playoff Games	16		10	10		36
Tournament			66			66
Total Hours	44	24	172	32	36	308

These figures do not account for unofficial practices, or physical education classes.

Source: School District No. 38 (Richmond), District Athletic Facilitator