



## Department Policy & Procedure

Subject: <b>SPORTS PARTICIPATION POLICY</b>		Number 060-7.1.5
		Effective : July 1, 2002
		Supersedes: 05/26/95
Approved:	Department: Parks & Recreation	Page 1 of 10

### 1.0 PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

- 1.1 To establish standards for appropriate player conduct during games and events conducted on Department facilities; to assure equal opportunity for full enjoyment and use of Department facilities to all sports participants; and to have a policy which establishes the Department's standard expectation of behavior with regards to noise, clean-up, litter, parking, and respect for neighbors who live in close proximity to the sports fields. .
- 1.2 This policy and these rules are adopted pursuant to Seattle Municipal Code Sec. 18. 12.040 and the Seattle Administrative Code. (SMC 3.02).

### 2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

- 2.1 Department of Parks and Recreation.
- 2.2 Seattle Board of Park Commissioners.
- 2.3 Seattle Sports Advisory Council
- 2.4 Youth Sports Organizations
- 2.5 Adult Sports Organizations.
- 2.6 Individual Youth Sports Groups/Clubs/Teams
- 2.7 Individual Adult Sports Groups/Clubs/Teams
- 2.8 Public and Private Schools

### 3.0 REFERENCES

- 3.1 Seattle Municipal Code Sections 18.12.280, 18.12.040, and 18.04.050.
- 3.2 Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Fields Policy (Department Policy and Procedure 060-P 7.1.1)
- 3.3 Joint Use Operating Agreement between Seattle School District #4 and the City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (November, 2000).
- 3.4 Sports Code of Conduct (Appendix 10.1).
- 3.5 Sports Participation Request Standard. (Appendix 10.2).
- 3.6 Certification Form (Appendix 10.3)

### 4.0 POLICY

- 4.1 The policy of the City and the Department of Parks and Recreation will permit the use of Department facilities by individuals and organizations, in a manner designed to assure equal

opportunity for full enjoyment and use of department facilities by all persons, free from restrictions because of race, creed, color, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology, age, religion, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical handicap (SMC 18.12.280.A). The Department requires sports organizations, as a condition of their use of publicly-owned facilities, to make all decisions affecting an individual's participation in sports events conducted on Department facilities without regard to the participant's race, creed, color, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology, age, religion, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical handicap or disability.

4.3 The Department will manage use of athletic facilities with consideration of impacts on field neighbors and expectations of field users to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the activity and the field location.

## **5.0 DEFINITIONS**

5.1 Department: Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation.

5.2 Superintendent: Superintendent of the Department.

5.3 City or Department Facilities: Athletic fields or other facilities owned or operated by the Department.

5.4 Sports Organization: Any association, league, team, or other sports organization that requests to schedule for its use any Department facility to conduct a sports event.

5.5 Sports Event: Any game, contest, or practice conducted by a sports organization on Department facilities.

5.6 Sports Code of Conduct: The definition of acceptable behavior before, during, and after athletic events, and an administrative process to handle complaints of unacceptable behavior.

5.7 Sports Participation Request: A participant may file a sports participation request with any sports organization if the participant believes that the sports organization:

1. has a rule, practice, or policy that affects his or her participation in a sports event based upon race, color, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology, age, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of a handicap or disability; or
2. has made a decision affecting his or her participation in a sports event on any such basis.

5.8 Sports Participation Request Standard: The standard that a sports organization must apply in reaching a decision regarding a participant's sports participation request (Appendix 10.2).

## **6.0 REQUIREMENTS**

6.1 Sports Participation Request Standard:

6.1.1 To have reasonably applied the Sports Participation Request Standard, a sports organization must demonstrate that its decision was not made on any basis prohibited by Rules 4.1 and 4.2 and is supported by substantial evidence relevant to the Participation Request Standard factors applicable in the case.

6.1.2 To have reasonably applied the Sports Code of Conduct, a sports organization must demonstrate that its decision is supported by substantial evidence relevant to the Code of Conduct rules applicable in the case.

6.1.3 To have applied the Sports Participation Request Standard in good faith, the sports organization must demonstrate that it in fact made its decision based on the Sports Participation Request Standard factors applicable in the case.

6.1.4 To have applied the Sports Code of Conduct in good faith, the sports organization must demonstrate that it in fact made its decision based on the procedures outlined in their organization's Code of Conduct, the standard Code of Conduct contained in Appendix 10.1.

## 6.2 Certification Requirements

6.2.1 A sports organization applying to use Department facilities for sports events is required to certify, as a precondition of scheduling Department facilities, the following

6.2.1.1 The organization's bylaws or rules include a code of conduct governing the behavior of participants, officials, administrative staff, coaches, and spectators during the organization's events scheduled to occur on Department facilities.

The code of conduct must, at a minimum, include a statement requiring good sports behavior, an explanation of derogatory or unsporting conduct, and outline a procedure for disciplinary action. A copy must be filed with the organization's application

Organizations may choose to certify their adoption of the Sports Code of Conduct contained in Appendix 10.1.

6.2.1.2 The organization agrees to abide by the Code of Conduct and to adopt in good faith apply the Sports Participation Request Standard (Appendix 10.2). Note: Inter-scholastic high school athletic programs and inter-collegiate athletic programs subject to Title IX of the Civil Rights Act are exempt from Section 6. 1.2.

6.2.1.3 The Department shall provide each organization with a form on which to make the certifications (Appendix 10.3). The certification form shall be signed by the organization president, executive board chairperson, or other comparable official or agent authorized to represent the organization.

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president, executive board chairperson, or other comparable official or agent authorized to represent the organization.

- 6.3 Sports Organizations must file a valid certification form annually and prior to the start of their first season of the year. (Appendix 10.3).

## **7.0 SPORTS PARTICIPATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

- 7.1 The Superintendent shall appoint an advisory committee (the Sports Participation Policy Committee) to review complaints filed by an aggrieved person regarding a sports organization's application of either the Sports Code of Conduct or the Sports participation Request Standard.
- 7.2 The three-member Sports Participation Policy Committee shall be comprised of two members-(and two alternates) recommended by the Board of Park Commissioners, one member (and one alternate) recommended by the Sports Advisory Council. The Committee shall select its chairperson.
- 7.3 Each committee member shall be appointed for a three year term and may be re-appointed for additional consecutive terms.
- 7.4 The committee shall be staffed by the Sr. Recreation Program Coordinator, Citywide Athletics or a staff member appointed by the Superintendent. .
- 7.5 An aggrieved person may initiate an appeal of a sports organization's decision governed by this Sports Participation Policy by submitting, within seven (7) calendar days of the sports organization's decision, a complaint to the Sr. Recreation Program Coordinator, Citywide Athletics. The complaint shall be in writing and include a statement of the alleged facts and the reasons the complainant believes the organization has not reasonably and in good faith applied the Sports Code of conduct, applied the Sports Participation Request Standard or i following the rules of behavior outlined in 8.0
- 7.6 The Committee shall meet within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving a complaint, with notice to the participant and the sports organization of the meeting date, time and place.
- 7.7 The Committee shall provide both the complainant(s) and the sports organization(s) the opportunity to present relevant information, including at the Committee's discretion, witness testimony and documents.
- 7.8 The committee shall determine, within twenty-one (21) calendar days after receiving a complaint, whether the sports organization has reasonably and in good faith applied the Sports Code of Conduct or the Sports Participation Request Standard, expectations of behavior, and has otherwise complied with these rules.
- 7.9 Having made such a determination, the committee may recommend:
- (1). that no further action be taken;
  - (2). that the Superintendent remand the question to the organization to review; within seven (7) calendar days, its procedures and reconsider its decision; or
  - (3). what, if any other action it recommends the Superintendent take.

- 7.10 If the Committee determines that an organization has not reasonably and in good faith applied the Sports Code of Conduct, the Sports Participation Request Standard, Expectations for Field Use, or has otherwise violated these rules, the Committee may recommend that the Department:
- (1). deny an organization's pending request to use Department facilities;
  - (2). revoke an organization's conditional permission to use Department facilities or
  - (3). take other appropriate action.
- 7.11 The Superintendent may accept, reject, or modify the Committee's recommendations and shall notify the sports organization and the participant of his/her decision, which shall be final.

## **8.0 EXPECTATIONS FOR FIELD USE**

- 8.1 Expectations of High Standards of Behavior: The Department expects that field users will behave in such a manner as to respect the public place in which they play, the area neighbors, other field users, and other park users. Fighting, public urination, drinking alcohol, littering, or any violation of the law are not accepted behavior in Seattle Parks.
- 8.2 The Department will work with field user groups and communities to provide information at the beginning of each season regarding preferred parking areas at each field where there is a significant parking deficit compared to the anticipated demand. As appropriate, carpooling and mass transit use by field users as appropriate will also be encouraged.
- 8.4 Use of air horns and other such devices are prohibited. Noise levels and sound generated by players and spectators should be kept at a reasonable level that respects the surrounding neighborhood.
- 8.5 Each organization using Department facilities for an athletic event is required to clean up the area at the completion of its use and restore, at a minimum, the facility to its prior condition.
- 8.3 Any organization, or neighbor finding a facility in unacceptable condition should promptly notify Citywide Athletics with the date, time, and nature of the problem.
- 8.6 It is the responsibility of each organization to comply with these expectations. The Department may deny, revoke, or restrict the organization's permission to use Department facilities per the procedure herein.

## **9.0 MISCELLANEOUS**

- 9.1 These rules and regulations are adopted to clarify, interpret, and apply the policy contained in SMC 18.12.280.A, to regulate the use of parks, to regulate conduct in parks, and to regulate recreation programs conducted in parks, all pursuant to SMC 18.12.040.
- 9.2 In clarifying, interpreting, and applying the policy contained in SMC 18.12.280.A, these rules are not intended and should not be construed to permit any conduct which is unlawful

pursuant to SMC 18.12.280.B. A sports organization's conduct need not be unlawful pursuant to SMC 18.12.280.B in order to be inconsistent with the policy contained in SMC 18.12.280.A and reflected in these rules.

## **10.0 APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Sports Code of Conduct.
- 10.2 Sports Participation Request Standard.
- 10.3 Certification Form.

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## **SPORTS CODE OF CONDUCT**

The following is a code of conduct for all youth and adult sports. This code of conduct is to be followed by all participants, coaches, officials and staff persons participating in sports programs using the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (hereafter referred to as the Department) outdoor sports fields or indoor sports facilities.

## **SPORTS CODE OF CONDUCT**

All players, coaches, officials and staff participating in sports programs using Department facilities are bound by the following code of conduct:

1. Good sporting behavior will be observed in all sports programs. Respect for players, coaches, officials, and spectators is essential for amateur competition and fair play.
2. Derogatory or unsporting conduct shall be defined as follows:  
  
Any action involving players, coaches, managers, teams, spectators, or officials which results in personal abuse by verbal or physical means, as determined by the official(s), league director or the sports organization in charge of the program.
3. Sporting conduct by players towards the opposition, officials, spectators and staff is mandatory. The league director or sports organization shall have the authority to administer disciplinary action to individual players, coaches, managers, spectators, and officials for abuses and derogatory conduct as follows:
  - A. Ejection or suspension of players, teams, coaches, managers, officials, or spectators.
  - B. Expulsion of teams, coaches, or managers.
  - C. Forfeiture of game(s).  
The severity of the unsporting action and/or the frequency of occurrence will determine the appropriate course of disciplinary action.
4. Game officials may eject a player, coach, or other participant from a game for unsporting conduct or for consuming alcoholic beverages in violation of SMC 12A. 24. 0 1 0 or other applicable law or for the illegal use of a controlled substance either on Department property or in sufficient quantity prior to the event to impair significantly his/her participation and/or behavior.
5. The decision to eject a player, coach or spectator will be made by the game official, sports organization or league director. This decision will be a judgment decision and will not be considered grounds for protest. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the team members to cooperate with game officials in controlling spectators or team followers. Game officials may declare a game forfeited if a team fails to reasonably cooperate with officials in controlling spectators.

6. Any ejection or other action resulting in suspension prior to, during, or after a league game or tournament game for unsporting conduct will result in an automatic suspension from further participation in that league or sports program until a disciplinary hearing is held. The length of suspension shall vary based upon the severity of the unsporting action as determined by a hearing board. An ejection/suspension shall result in an automatic probationary period commencing upon completion of the suspension period. The length of the probationary period shall be determined by the hearing board.

Any ejection/suspension shall be handled in the following manner:

- A. The league director or the sports organization in charge of the site/program where the incident occurred, shall secure written statements from officials, players, or spectators present, and will make a written recommendation on action to be taken within a reasonable time period established by the individual sports organization. The organization for which the ejected/suspended player participates will be responsible for appointing the hearing board. It is the responsibility of the league director or sports organization designee to notify the player of the hearing date, time and location in a timely manner as designated by the organization.
- B. Upon receiving all relevant information, the hearing board will convene and make a decision on action to be taken within five (5) working days, regarding what action shall be taken. The suspended person may provide witnesses to speak in his/her behalf. In addition to the written statements, the hearing board may request testimony or technical assistance from any person or persons with information relevant to the incident. Results of the hearing shall be forwarded to the suspended person by mail within a reasonable time period established by the individual sports organization.
- C. The suspended person may appeal the decision made by the hearing board. The request shall be made in writing to the league director or the sports organization designee within a reasonable time period established by each individual sports organization after receiving the decision.
- D. The appeal board shall meet within a reasonable time period established by each individual sports organization. The decision of the appeal board shall be forwarded to the suspended person by mail within a reasonable time period established by each individual sports organization. The decision of the appeal board shall be final.
- E. A Sports Participation Policy Committee, appointed by the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, the Board of Park Commissioners, and the Sports Advisory Council created pursuant to the Sports Participation Policy, (Section 7.0) shall review and determine whether the sports organization has applied their stated code of conduct reasonably and in good faith. The Superintendent may adopt, reject or modify the recommendation of the Sports Participation Policy Committee. If the Committee finds that proper policy procedures are not followed, they can recommend that the Superintendent require the sports organization to conduct a new hearing.



## **SPORTS PARTICIPATION REQUEST STANDARD**

An organization which requests to use Department fields/facilities to conduct athletic events must, as a condition of its permitted use, agree to adopt and to reasonably and in good faith apply this Sports Participation Request Standard.

1. A participant may file a sports participation request with any sports organization if the participant believes that the sports organization:
  - A. Has a rule, practice, or policy that affects his or her participation in a sports event based upon race, color, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology, age, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of a handicap or disability; or
  - B. Has made a decision affecting his or her participation in a sports event on such basis.
2. A participant must make any such request in writing to the sports organization, addressing each of the factors specified in 5 A-F below which he or she believes justifies granting the request.
3. Inter scholastic high school athletic programs and inter collegiate athletic programs subject to Title IX of the Civil Rights Act are exempted from the Sports Participation Request Standards.
4. The sports organization shall meet to consider the participant's request; at such meetings the organization shall accommodate the presence of a member of, or a person appointed by, the Seattle Sports Advisory Council, and who has no vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings.
5. The sports organization shall consider the participant's request, without regard to the participant's race, color, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology, age, creed religion, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of a handicap or disability, and reach a decision based upon the following factors.
  - A. Does the request equally or better meet the social needs of the participant?
  - B. Are there legitimate safety concerns? Will the participant be able to compete with no more than the normal risks of competition?
  - C. Would granting the request result in an unfair competitive advantage?
  - D. How would granting the request displace someone else from the team? e.g. Will the team be able to handle an additional player?
  - E. Will the coach be able to provide any additional support needed by the requesting athlete?

6. The sports organization shall, within fourteen (14) days after its receipt of the request, issue its decision. In order to ensure a timely start for sports organizations' seasons, sports organizations and participants shall make all reasonable efforts to reach decisions no later than thirty (30) calendar days prior to the starting date of the season, defined as the date of the first scheduled game. If the sports organization denies the participant's request, it shall explain in writing the basis for its decision, addressing each of the factors delineated in 5A - 5F above which are applicable to the request.
7. The participant may, within seven (7) calendar days, appeal the organization's decision to the Sports Participation Policy committee which may, pursuant to the rules and regulations, make recommendations for further action to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may adopt, reject or modify the recommendation of the Sports Participation Policy Committee.

**Appendix 10.3**

**CERTIFICATION FORM**

The undersigned organization, as part of its application to use Department facilities for athletic events, certifies as follows:

1. The organization shall not, in any manner pertaining to its use of Department scheduled facilities; deny to any person the full use and enjoyment of the park or recreation facility because of race, creed, color, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology, age, religion, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical handicap (SMC 18.12.280.A).

2. The organization has as part of its bylaws or other rules a Code of Conduct which complies with the provisions of Department Sports Field/Facility User Policy Rule 6.1.1.

I understand that the organization's permission to use Department facilities as requested in this application is conditioned upon the organizations reasonable and good faith application of the Code of Sports Conduct and failure to do so may result in denial or revocation of any conditional permission granted by the Department.

3. The organization shall, in response to a sports participation request, reasonable and in good faith apply the Sports Participation Request Standard.

I understand that the organization's permission to use Department facilities as requested in this application is conditioned upon the organizations reasonable and good faith application of the Sports Participation Request Standard and failure to do so may result in denial or revocation of any conditional permission granted by the Department.

4. The organization shall comply with the Department Expectations for Field Use (8.0).

I understand that the organization's permission to use Department facilities as requested in this application is conditioned upon the organizations reasonable and good faith application of the Expectations for Field Use and failure to do so may result in denial or revocation of any conditional permission granted by the Department.

5. I, the undersigned official of the organization, certify that I possess the authority to represent the organization in making these certifications.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title