



Date: January 23, 2025
To: Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners
From: Lisa Nielsen, Athletic & Event Scheduling Manager
Subject: **Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities Policy Update**

Requested Board Action: This briefing provides proposed updates to the outdated (2002) Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities policy. These updates will require a recommendation and vote from the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners (BPRC) prior to Superintendent approval.

Project or Policy Description and Background: In 2023, as part of the Strategic Plan Action to “expand community access to athletic fields while reevaluating athletic field scheduling practices through an equity lens,” SPR began an analysis of field use hours between 2012-2022 (minus 2020-2021 COVID years). The proposed policy updates are informed by that effort which included a survey of our top 100 historical user groups to gather more information, including participant demographic data (80% response rate). Through this data analysis process, we found that over 85% (on average) of field use hours are permitted to historical user groups, and 90% of those historical user groups list “availability of local fields” as their main obstacle to gaining access to fields.¹

Equity Analysis: Both the field use hours data and the survey data were brought to two different groups for an equity review. During this review it became apparent that creating an intentional approach to allocate new field time resulting from capital improvement projects in an equitable manner (grass to synthetic turf conversions and lighting installation) would be an important and meaningful change to increase field access to new and emerging groups (ideally minority and underrepresented communities). This is a key change in the policy update.

Result: In addition to the change referenced above, the policy was updated to provide more clarity and transparency to our athletic field users by aligning the policy with our current practices as well as to separate out associated procedures for inclusion in a separate document. NOTE: Due to the multi-year process and significant changes in wording, a red-lined version of changes to the policy is not available, yet changes will be described in the presentation.

Board of Parks and Recreation Commission Board Action

- Presentation and BPRC Questions (1/23).
- Public Hearing (2/20) and possible vote.

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Attachments:

- Staff Proposed Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities Policy
- Current Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities Policy - 2002

¹ Information about this survey and field data analysis was included in the 7/11/2024 BPRC briefing on athletic fields.



Department Policy & Procedure

Subject: Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities		Number 060-P 7.1.1
		Effective July 1, 2002
		Supersedes August 20, 1982
Approved:	Department: Parks & Recreation	Page 1 of 7

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To establish guidelines for the use and scheduling of outdoor athletic fields which are scheduled by the Department of Parks and Recreation, excluding West Seattle Stadium, which is covered under separate policies.

2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

- 2.1 Department of Parks and Recreation
- 2.2 Seattle School District
- 2.3 Private schools, community and sports organizations, teams, groups and individuals using outdoor athletic fields scheduled by the Department

3.0 REFERENCES

- 3.1 Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Fees and Charges (revised yearly).
- 3.2 Joint Use Operating Agreement between Seattle School District and the City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation . Should we include the new date? MH Yes...August, 2015
- 3.3 Conditions of Closure of Athletic Fields - Department Policy and Procedures 060-P 7.1.5.
- 3.4 Sports Participation Policy and Procedures - Department Policy and Procedures 060-P 7.3.2.
- 3.5 Sports Code of Conduct for Youth, Community Center Adult Leagues, and Citywide Athletics Adult Leagues.
- 3.6 Revised Code of Conduct Where can this be found? MH...Eric can you answer this?

4.0 POLICY

- 4.1 The Department will schedule fields in a manner that provides priority access for youth and, to the extent possible, protects the fields from overuse. Historical use will be considered in

establishing priorities amongst groups or organizations seeking the same locations and/or field times. However, within the different age groups (youth and adults) and within different sport seasons, it is the Department's policy to provide a reasonable amount of equity for gender and some allowance for new field sports and/or field sports organizations. Also, local sports needs will be met before fields are scheduled for needs that are more citywide. The latter are to be fairly and equitably scheduled throughout the City. Therefore, while the Department will generally adhere to the scheduling priorities established in Section 4.2, the Citywide Athletics Office can grant exceptions if necessary to achieve reasonable equity and access. The Department may also establish scheduling priorities specific to a particular site in return for major facility improvements or other considerations of benefit to the public. Finally, leagues are not guaranteed the same field(s) every year.

The Department will provide field use opportunities to new communities through outreach by Parks and Recreation Staff. A percentage of hours in each geographical district will be made available for new community field users. Field requests must be submitted to the Citywide Athletics Office by November 1st.

- 4.2 Practices and games are to be scheduled on appropriately sized fields in accordance with the following priorities:
 - 4.2.1 All Seattle School District physical education programs during normal school hours.
 - 4.2.2 All Seattle School District programs other than physical education programs including Metro league games and practices involving other than Seattle School District teams up to 5:00 p.m. except fast pitch softball games which are scheduled up to 5:30 p.m. and baseball games which are scheduled up to 6:00 p.m.
 - 4.2.3 Department-sponsored youth programs.
 - 4.2.4 Non-Department youth programs.
 - 4.2.5 Department-sponsored adult programs.
 - 4.2.6 Non-Department adult programs.
- 4.3 Fields (natural turf) will be scheduled to serve a reasonable level of demand while at the same time recognizing impacts on neighbors.
 - 4.3.1 It is the Department policy to schedule fields on a year-round basis, field conditions Permitting. However, no grass fields will be scheduled from Thanksgiving Day to March 1.
 - 4.3.2 Non-lighted field will be scheduled until dusk.
 - 4.3.3 The Department's practice is to turn off lights on lit fields at the completion of each evening's final scheduled games. Play will be scheduled until 10:45 PM except on fields where there are residences adjoining the length of the field on two or more sides unless arterials, significant topography, and/or other buffers are found between the field and adjacent residences on one of both sides. Fields that meets this criteria will

be scheduled until 10:00 PM. The currently lighted fields that meet the criteria are Ballard Playfield, Bitter Lake Playfield, Loyal Heights Playfield, and Miller Playfield. Unless security lighting is available, lights at all fields will be turned off 15 minutes after the end of scheduled play to allow players to leave the site safely.

- 4.4 Given the Department priority for youth sports, Citywide Athletics may require adult leagues to modify their seasons. The following sports will normally be given priority during the respective seasons as follows:
 - 4.4.1 Baseball: First full week of March through the second weekend in August.
 - 4.4.2 Softball: The second Monday in March through the second weekend in August, except Lower Woodland, Cloverleaf, Meadowbrook #2 & 3, Rainier Beach #1 & 2, High Point #2 and Montlake may be scheduled up through Labor Day.
 - 4.4.3 Football: The third Monday in August through the third weekend in November.
 - 4.4.4 Rugby: May be scheduled year-round on all-weather or synthetic fields. Grass multipurpose field may be scheduled from March 1 through Thanksgiving as available.
 - 4.4.5 Soccer: May be scheduled year-round on all weather soccer fields. Grass multipurpose fields may be scheduled from the second week in August through the third week in November.
 - 4.4.6 Ultimate Frisbee: May be scheduled year-round on all-weather or synthetic fields. Grass multipurpose fields may be scheduled from March - Thanksgiving as available.
 - 4.4.7 Track and Field: May be scheduled the first week of March through the last week of July. West Seattle Stadium is the premier track and field facility in parks inventory. The throwing event area is located west of the track. Additional text as in all the above? Copy format above?
 - 4.4.8 Cross Country: May be scheduled the first week of August through the last week of February. The official cross country courses are located at Upper Woodland and Lincoln Park. Additional text as in all the above? Copy format above?
 - 4.4.9 Lacrosse: May be scheduled the first week of March through July. Fields without permanent Lacrosse lines cannot be marked with, chalk, paint or any other marking without the permission of Parks Superintendent. Additional text as in all the above? Copy format above?
- 4.5 All other sports will be scheduled as field availability allows.
- 4.6 It is the Department will regulate practices, games and tournaments as follows:
 - 4.6.1 Practices

- 4.6.1.2 The number of practices scheduled will be on an equitable basis, contingent on the availability of fields.
- 4.6.1.3 Youth practices will be scheduled in advance prior to the start of the season.
- 4.6.1.4 Adult practices will be scheduled at the Citywide Athletic Office on a first-come first-served basis. Fees will be assessed according to reference 3.1.
- 4.6.1.5 Adult weeknight practices will be limited to one and one-half hours and weekend practices to four hours. All practices will end by 10 p.m.
- 4.6.1.6 No organized league or team practices will be scheduled during the off season.
- 4.6.2 Games:
 - 4.6.2.1 The number of games scheduled for each league will be on an equitable basis, contingent upon field availability.
 - 4.6.2.2 The amount of time scheduled and allowed for games shall be as follows:
 - Youth Baseball (90 Feet) - 2 1/2 Hour
 - Youth Baseball (60 Feet) - 2 Hours
 - Slowpitch Softball and T-Ball - 1 1/2 Hours
 - Fastpitch Softball - 2 Hours
 - Adult Baseball - 3 Hours
 - Youth Soccer - 1 1/2 Hours
 - Adult Soccer - 1 1/2 - 2 Hours
 - Rugby - 1 1/2 Hours
 - Ultimate Frisbee - 1 1/2 Hour
 - Adult Football - 1 1/2 Hour
 - Youth Football - 2 Hours
 - Track and Field – 3 Hours
 - Cross Country – 2-3 Hours
 - Lacrosse – 1 1/2 Hours
 - All Other Sports - 1 1/2 - 2 Hours
 - 4.6.2.3 Game time limits will be strictly enforced by Department staff and game officials when another game is scheduled following.

4.6.3 Tournaments:

- 4.6.3.1 Requests to schedule tournaments will be accepted on November 1 for the following year and will be accommodated on the basis of field availability.
 - 4.6.3.2 Final tournament brackets are due to Citywide Athletics no later than one week prior to the start of the tournament.
 - 4.6.3.3 Reference the current Parks Fees and Charges Manual.
- 4.7 It shall be the responsibility of organizations, leagues, teams, groups or individuals scheduling athletic fields to utilize the scheduled times or notify the Department reasonably in advance when times are not used. Repeated non-use of scheduled time with no advance notice can lead to loss of scheduling privileges.
- 4.8 The Department's policies governing league participation and participant behavior are set forth in Department's Sports Participation Policy (Policy # 060-7.1.5)

5.0 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Superintendent: Superintendent of Parks and Recreation.
- 5.2 Citywide Athletics Manager Citywide Athletics Manager of the Citywide Athletics Office.
- 5.3 Department: Department of Parks and Recreation.
- 5.4 Historical Users: Organizers who have scheduled fields through Citywide Athletics during the two most recent prior seasons for a particular sport.
- 5.5 Parks Duty Officer: Parks Department staff person assigned to respond to emergent issues after 4:00 PM on weekdays and on the weekends.
- 5.6 Double Booking: The scheduling of more than one practice or game on an athletic field at the same time.
- 5.7 Community Needs: Field demand whose program originates from within a local geographic area.
- 5.8 Citywide Needs: Field demand that due to the nature of league and participants is not oriented to a specific geographic area but reflects a more citywide or regional user group.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 6.1 With the concurrence of the Superintendent, the Citywide Athletics Manager shall be responsible for administering these policies and procedures.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of the Citywide Athletics Manager to ensure that the priorities established in Section 4 are administered on a reasonable, fair and equitable basis.

- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the Citywide Athletics Manager to ensure all organizations (new or old) are scheduled fairly and equitably.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of the Citywide Athletics Manager to ensure a reasonable level of community sports organizations' needs are met before fields are scheduled for citywide needs.
- 6.5 It is the responsibility of the Citywide Athletics Manager to ensure that citywide play is fairly and equitably scheduled throughout the community fields.
- 6.6 It is the responsibility of the Citywide Athletics Manager to maintain an accurate schedule of games and practices and to coordinate these schedules with appropriate staff within the Department.
- 6.7 It is the responsibility of organizations, teams, or individuals using Department fields on a scheduled basis to notify Citywide Athletics 10 working days in advance of any scheduled field time they do not need.
- 6.8 It is the responsibility of organizations, teams, or individuals using Department fields on a scheduled basis to fully comply with the provisions of References 3.1 and 3.4
- 6.9 It is the responsibility of any and all programs organized, administered or sponsored by the Department of Parks and Recreation to fully comply with the provisions of Reference 3.5.

7.0 PROCEDURES

7.1 Submission of Schedules:

- 7.1.1 Field scheduling associated with the Seattle School District shall be conducted in accordance with Reference 3.2
- 7.1.3 Citywide Athletics staff should submit to historical users, at least six weeks prior to the start of the season, a reprogramming of game schedules based on previous year's usage.
- 7.1.2 Historical users desiring expansion of game (and if youth) practice schedules shall submit a written request to the Scheduler no later than 12 weeks prior to the first scheduled usage stating all necessary changes.
- 7.1.4 Historical users shall submit final game schedules to Citywide Athletics no later than two weeks prior the first scheduled game
- 7.1.5 New user organizations should submit a written request for game times (and if youth, practice times) to the Scheduler no later than 12 weeks prior to the first requested usage.
- 7.1.6 Citywide Athletics shall consider all scheduling requests and make decisions based upon the policies and guidelines contained herein.

7.2 Double Bookings:

- 7.2.1 If a double booking occurs at a field, the following guidelines should be used to determine who has priority:
- A. Youth League Game - 1st Priority
 - B. Adult League Game - 2nd Priority
 - C. Youth Practice or Practice Game - 3rd Priority
 - D. Adult Practice or Practice Game - 4th Priority
- 7.2.2 If two activities of equal priority are scheduled simultaneously, a flip of the coin will determine priority usage.
- 7.2.3 If two adult practices scheduled on a reservation permit have been double booked, the lower permit number should be given priority. The priority is void if the permit is not on site. The permit number is located in the middle of the permit on the right side.
- 7.2.4 If the Parks Duty Officer is unable to resolve a conflict using the above guidelines, additional assistance can be obtained by calling a member of the Citywide Athletics scheduling staff. In any event, all field conflicts should be reported to Citywide Athletics staff by the end of the next working day.

8.0 WARNINGS/PENALTIES FOR SCHEDULING INFRACTIONS, AND DISREGARD FOR PARK POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 8.0.1 The Citywide Athletics Scheduler shall give a copy of the Policy and Procedures to each organization's scheduler at the beginning of each season.
- 8.0.2 It is the responsibility of each organization to ensure that each member team (through their managers or coaches) understands the policy and procedures regarding scheduling and scheduling conflict resolution. Organizations should work to ensure that scheduled time is utilized: that use does not extend beyond the scheduled time; and that member teams practice only during scheduled times in the appropriate seasons.
- 8.0.3 It is the responsibility of each organization to ensure that their referee/umpires use understand the policy and procedures regarding scheduling conflict resolution.

8.1 INFRACTIONS

- 8.1.1 Failure to follow these policies and/or conflict resolution procedures:
- A. First Occurrence- Will cause a letter specifically listing the Department's concerns to be mailed to the organization president.
 - B. Additional Occurrence - May result in the loss of scheduling privileges in increasing dimension based on the number and type of occurrences, including the refund of the unused portion of the participation (field use) fees and the cancellation of remaining season games.

9.0 APPENDIX

9.1 Facility Use Permit Form

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Seattle Parks and Recreation Policy

Subject: Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Fields	Number: 060-P 7.1.1
	Effective: [insert date]
	Supersedes: July 1, 2002
Superintendent Approval: [signature]	Page 1 of 4

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

To ensure the efficient use of outdoor athletic fields scheduled by Seattle Parks and Recreation. This policy sets guidelines for how athletic field use is allocated and scheduled amongst various user groups and stakeholders in support of our mission to create healthy people and vibrant communities.

2. ORGANIZATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED

- 2.1 Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR)
- 2.2 Seattle Public Schools (SPS)
- 2.3 The public, private schools, community and sports organizations, teams, groups and individuals using outdoor athletic fields scheduled by SPR

3. REFERENCES / SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- 3.1 Joint Use Operating Agreement between Seattle Public Schools and Seattle Parks and Recreation
- 3.2 SPR Standard Operating Procedure for Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Fields
- 3.3 SPR Schedule of Fees and Charges
- 3.4 SPR Playfield Use Guidelines
- 3.5 SPR Policy 7.1.5-Sports Participation
- 3.6 SPR Policy 7.21- Code of Conduct
- 3.7 SPR Policy 7.16- Refunds
- 3.8 City of Seattle Municipal Code

4. POLICY

4.1. General Guidelines

- 4.1.1. Outdoor athletic fields are available for use by community-based organizations and for-profit organizations offering athletic activities, community members for permitted casual use, and public and private schools for school-related activities.
- 4.1.2. Fields are primarily for organized athletic events, including soccer, football, baseball, softball, ultimate frisbee, rugby, track events, and similar recreational activities. Special events may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

- 4.1.3. All individuals and groups are required to comply with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, local, state, and federal laws, as well as any specific guidelines set forth by the facility or governing authorities.
- 4.1.4. SPR may enter into agreements or contracts whose terms and conditions may supersede or modify the guidelines outlined in this policy. These include, but are not limited to, the Joint Use Agreement, Non-Government Agreements, and any other relevant agreements that may apply.
- 4.1.5. The department reserves the right to limit, modify, or deny field reservations.
- 4.1.6. Outside of designated drop-in play and open field hours, all field users are required to hold a department-issued permit to access or use the facilities for organized play. Permit holders are expected to ensure their activities are conducted in a manner that promotes safety, fairness and respect for others.

4.2. Use Prioritization and Scheduling

- 4.2.1. To ensure the efficient allocation of field space, the following priority system will be used for determining field reservations:

School District Use

- Seattle Public Schools shall have priority for the use of outdoor athletic fields for school-related activities, events, and programs within the timeframes established within the Joint Use Agreement.
- Details regarding field usage, including dates, times, and specific arrangements, are determined through the Joint Use Agreement between SPS and SPR.

Community Historical Use

- Priority for outdoor athletic fields follows next and shall be granted to permit holders with a documented history of regular or long-standing field use. Historical use will be determined based on the frequency and duration of previous bookings.

Remaining Field Capacity

- Priority will be given to requests based on the order in which they are received. If there are competing applications for same times at the same field, priority will be given in the following order: SPR youth programs, community youth programs, SPR adult programs, and community adult programs.

- 4.2.2. New field time may result from capital improvements (generally lights and turf conversions) to outdoor athletic fields. Should a significant amount of recurring field time become available, SPR may issue a call for interest to allow new and emerging user groups, especially those representing historically underrepresented communities to express their interest in receiving an allocation of new field time.

4.3. Fees, Cancellations and Refunds

- 4.3.1. Athletic field fees are adopted by ordinance aligned with the City of Seattle budget process.
- 4.3.2. SPR reserves the right to cancel any permits for field use due to the following:
 - Maintenance or capital improvement needs/issues
 - Field conditions that may threaten the health and safety of participants
 - Non-adherence to any City of Seattle policies and procedures.
- 4.3.3. It shall be the responsibility of the permit holder to use the scheduled fields at the time(s) reserved or notify SPR in advance of permitted field use time. The Standard Operating Procedures for Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Fields provides further guidance for the cancellation of reservations.

- 4.3.4. Per the Seattle Parks and Recreation Refund Policy, permit holders who do not relinquish unused field time in advance may not receive a refund.

4.4. Accountability

- 4.4.1. The Athletics Scheduling Office or its successor shall lead the implementation of this policy and serve as SPR's proxy in the resulting process.
- 4.4.2. Repeated non-use of scheduled time with no advance notice can lead to loss of scheduling privileges.
- 4.4.3. Violations of any field use policies or procedures may result in penalties, including but not limited to immediate loss of existing field allocations, the revocation of existing permits, the denial of future field allocations requests and/or other disciplinary actions, as deemed appropriate.

4.5. Amendments and Review

- 4.5.1. This policy is subject to periodic review and may be amended at any time by SPR.
- 4.5.2. To ensure the policy and procedures remain responsive to the needs of the community, SPR is committed to conducting community engagement, gathering input, and incorporating feedback to inform future updates and revisions.

5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Superintendent - Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation.
- 5.2 Outdoor Athletic Facilities – athletic fields owned by SPR and SPS and scheduled by SPR Athletic Scheduling staff.
- 5.3 Joint Use Agreement (JUA) - a governing document describing the scheduling arrangement between Seattle Public Schools and Seattle Parks and Recreation.
- 5.4 Historical Use - reservation patterns by field permit holders who have scheduled the same fields and times through SPR's Athletic Scheduling Office during the same season, two consecutive years in a row (i.e. Fall 2023, Fall 2024).
- 5.5 Capital Improvements – construction projects at an athletic field that may include but are not limited to minor infrastructure improvements, conversion of a natural turf field to synthetic turf, and/or the addition of field lighting.
- 5.6 Permit Holder- an individual or organization granted official authorization to use a designated outdoor athletic field or facility for specific purposes, such as sports practices, games, or events. This permit allows the holder to reserve and access the field or facility for a designated time period, often subject to regulations and terms set by the managing authority.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of SPR to administer the relevant policies and procedures and engage stakeholders for input in future updates.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of SPR to ensure that the priorities established in Section 4 and associated Standard Operating Procedure are administered on a reasonable, fair and equitable basis.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of SPR to maintain an accurate schedule of reservations and to coordinate these schedules with appropriate staff within SPR and SPS.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of all users of outdoor athletic fields scheduled by SPR to fully comply with the provisions of this policy and referenced in Section 3 of this policy.

ADDENDUMS (Will not be filed with the City Clerk's Office)

- [Standard Operating Procedures for Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities](#)
- [Sports Participation Policy and Procedures - Department Policy and Procedures 060-P 7.1.5.](#)
- [Playfield Use Guidelines](#)

Forms /Templates (Will not be filed with the City Clerk's Office)

NA