

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - MONDAY APRIL 8, 2002

### SOCCER FIELD POLICIES

#### Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services in consultation with the Executive Director of Building Facilities and Parks recommends that Council approve the following policies.

- a) Wet Field (Revised from 1996)
- b) Managing Use On Premium Fields

#### Purpose

To address the overuse of premium fields and to extend the life of the turf and reduce maintenance costs/repair on all fields.

#### Background

On March 19, 2002, a meeting was held with the Soccer Club Representatives, Members of Council and Staff to discuss soccer usage on soccer fields with a view to maximize the life of the turf and reduce costs. The two policies were discussed and the clubs had an opportunity to provide input.

The original Wet Field Policy was revised to reflect the following changes from the original 1996 policy:

- a) Increased communication to club presidents with respect to closures via hot line number, signage on fields, locked gates and night supervision
- b) Clubs not complying will be required to meet with senior management to discuss compensation for damaged field and they may be subject to fines.
- c) Major Tournaments involving out of town teams may be played on senior practice fields as a last resort.

The premium fields are used heavily throughout the week and on the weekends. Although maintenance standards are high on these fields, they cannot withstand the constant play without showing stress. Most clubs are in agreement with staff that regulation of the fields is necessary to reduce excessive wear and soil compaction and maintain a high quality of turf.

The Managing Use on Premium Fields new policy is designed to reduce overuse on the premium fields. A premium field is defined as a senior size regulation field that is fenced, irrigated, lit for nighttime use, and is highly maintained as per the Parks Quality Standards.

The Managing Use on Premium Fields Policy introduces the following:

- a) Two days/week is reserved for **rest and maintenance**
- b) Available time slots have been reduced
- c) Commencing in Spring 2003, large tournaments will not be scheduled during the wet seasons.

## **Conclusion**

Soccer fields require a high quality turf to ensure a safe playing field for the players. The revised "Wet Field Policy" in combination with "The Managing Use Of Soccer Fields Policy" will extend the life of the turf by reducing excessive wear and therefore reduce maintenance and repair costs.

## **Attachments**

1. Wet Field Policy
2. Managing Use on Premium Fields Policy

## **Report Prepared By:**

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Respectfully submitted,

G. Doris Haas  
Commissioner of Community Services

## **City of Vaughan - Wet Field Policy**

Revised March 18, 2002

In the interest of maintaining the high quality of playing fields and in an effort to prevent injury, the City of Vaughan will enforce the following policy and procedures when sports fields become saturated.

### **Policy**

The City of Vaughan recognizes the preservation and maintenance of its sports fields to the highest industry standards benefits user groups and preserves an important City asset. In order to preserve these fields and to promote their use, the City is committed to protecting the fields against non-permitted or unauthorized use.

Therefore, the City will not allow play on fields when a 10-mm rainfall has occurred within an 8-hour period prior to field use when:

- a) the field is saturated\*  
and/or
- b) there is evidence of surface water

\*The definition of a saturated field is one where the soil cannot absorb any additional moisture and water runs off the surface or pools on the field. The easiest method to determine if a field is saturated is to walk on the playing surface. If the water is pushed around the foot then the field is saturated.

### **Procedures**

The Director of Recreation and Culture will ensure that all sports groups have received and signed the most updated Wet Field Policy.

Designated staff shall contact the Manager of Parks and Forestry immediately when conditions warrant the closing of sports fields due to excessive rainfall.

Once a field has been deemed unplayable, the Manager of Parks and Forestry or designate will contact the permit section of the Recreation Department who will inform the Permit holder by either fax, e-mail or telephone (as predetermined when wet policy is signed).

- a) prior to 3:30 p.m.  
The Recreation Department will contact the permit holders to advise of the closure.
  - b) after 3:30 p.m.  
The permit holders will not be contacted. Permit holders are responsible for checking the "soccer hot line number" (step 3) if games are questionable due to rain.
3. The Manager of Parks and Forestry or designate will update the soccer hotline, recording the date and time fields are closed. The recording will reflect closures only with the appropriate date and will be updated with additional closures as shown;
- a) Once fields are closed for evening games they will not be reopened unless rain stops shortly after 3:30 p.m. for the duration of the evening. The reopening of the fields for late games is subject to the Supervisors assessment of the field.
  - b) The hotline number will be updated up to 8:00 p.m. with additional closures for late games.

- c) The hotline will be updated prior to 10:00 a.m. on weekends, and again at 3:30, and 8:00 for evening games.
- d) The hotline is accessible by calling 905-832-8577 option #4.

Parks staff will complete the following at every **premium field**:

- a) "Field Unplayable" signs will be installed at all gates entering the soccer field. Signs shall include a number to call for inquiries and the bylaw reference number.
- b) All gates will be locked with a separate lock, unavailable to the permit users.
- c) Parks Department will contact the Building and Facilities Department who will turn the power supply for lights off for the designated evening.
- d) Fields will be monitored by assigned Parks or Parks Patrol security once the hotline has been updated.

Fields will be inspected prior to reopening with a), b), c) and d) transferred back to reflect normal conditions.

- 5. No play will be permitted on sports fields when the **Wet field policy** is in effect as defined. The city does recognize however, major tournaments involving out of town teams do occur on occasion. Therefore, the City will permit games to be played on practice fields\* if the tournament cannot be re-scheduled. Clubs organizing the tournament are responsible for permitting contingency fields in consultation with the permitting department.

\*Practice field is defined as a non-premium, senior regulation field.

The City of Vaughan will use the following progressive system to enforce the policy:

- a) If users refuse an order to leave a closed field, the Parks or Security staff shall immediately contact the By-Law Enforcement staff who shall note the names of the users and warn them that they are in violation of the Parks Bylaw # 134-95 and will ask them to leave. Permit holders may be charged and fined as per the bylaw.
- b) If the users still refuse to leave, the York Regional Police may be asked to assist under the Trespass to Property laws.
- c) A copy of this report shall be forwarded to the Manager of Parks/Forestry, Executive Director of Building/Facilities and Parks, and to the Commissioner of Community Services.
- d) The Director of Recreation and Culture shall call the person(s) to a meeting with the Executive Director of Building and Facilities and the Manager of Parks and Forestry within one week of the incident and will take whatever action is necessary up to and including the canceling of any further permits, costs for damages to the field, costs for staff time during the incident or any other costs incurred by the city to enforce the policy.

- e) Any further occurrence may result in the cancellation of permits for one year for the organization involved.

City of Vaughan  
Managing Use on Premium Fields Policy  
March 18, 2002

Soccer fields require a high quality of turf to ensure safe playing conditions for players in order to reduce injuries. This policy will reduce excessive wear and soil compaction on soccer fields, and reduce maintenance costs.

Policy

The City of Vaughan shall manage the amount of play on premium\* soccer fields in order to be fair to all clubs, maximize the life of turf on the soccer field and to reduce unnecessary maintenance costs. The revised Wet Field Policy, in combination with managing use is designed to benefit both the user and taxpayer.

\*The definition of a premium field is a senior size regulation field that is fenced, irrigated, lit for nighttime use, and is highly maintained as per the Parks Quality Standards (PQS).

Procedure

1. Premium fields shall receive extensive maintenance and cultural practices (as per revised PQS – March 2002 (see aeration, top dressing, overseeding, fertilization and soil analysis).
2. Premium fields are inspected daily, cut/trimmed and lined weekly or as required, holes and nets repaired immediately as per PQS.
3. In co-operation with the User groups, Recreation and the Parks and Forestry Department, fields are chosen prior to spring as to their availability i.e. early or late field. This schedule is the basis for planning renovations, tournaments, staffing etc. Unless special approval has been granted by the Commissioner of Community Services, the predetermined dates will not be altered.
4. Premium fields shall have a rest period of two consecutive days in a row in a seven-day week with no more than four time slots\* allocated for week days and no more than six time slots allocated for weekends.  
\*two time slots equal one game
5. Premium fields are strictly for scheduled games. Non-premium, senior fields may be used for games or practices. **Premium fields shall not be permitted by User groups for practices or rest periods.**
6. The rest period is designated for maintenance and rest and will be permitted to the Parks Department as **Park Maintenance Days**. These days will be clearly marked prior to booking permits in the spring. This will replace the two-week shutdown previously in place.
7. Large tournaments shall not be permitted prior to **June 15<sup>th</sup>** or after **September 15<sup>th</sup>** unless permission is granted by the Commissioner of Community Services for special circumstances. **(commencing Spring 2003)**
8. Under the direction of the Parks Supervisor, staff will regularly monitor the conditions of the fields and provide monthly reports on the condition, cultural practices and repair strategies applied to each field. The information is available in a central filing system for access by the Manager of Parks and Forestry and will be available for discussion at the fall soccer meetings with Club Presidents. Clubs are still

encouraged to discuss concerns throughout the season with their designated Parks Supervisor.

9. Fields will be monitored by assigned Parks or Parks Patrol security during permit and non-permit periods. Evening supervision by a Parks Supervisor will allow increased communication.