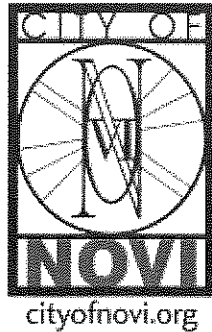


# MEMORANDUM



**TO:** RANDY AULER, DIRECTOR OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES  
**FROM:** NANCY COWAN, SUPERINTENDENT OF RECREATION  
**SUBJECT:** ITC CSP FIELD USE  
**DATE:** DECEMBER 7, 2009

As requested at the November Commission Meeting, this memorandum addresses the topic of field use at ITC Community Sports Park (ITC CSP) in relation to soccer and the last time this issue was brought forward in 2007.

ITC CSP is the main sports field complex within the City. The fields are utilized throughout the year by various sports leagues (mainly soccer, baseball, flag football) and user groups. In the spring and fall each year the Novi Parks House and Travel Teams utilize the 10 fields at the complex for games, while the Michigan Jaguars use 8 fields for games and practices. In fall 2006 the turf was damaged and the complex was closed partway through the season. In fall of 2009 the turf was once again slightly damaged and the last week of games was relocated to practice field sites in order to complete the season. In the 2009 instance the weather conditions and the decision to play on a wet day were the main reasons for the turf damage.

Below is the comparison of the average number of soccer events at ITC CSP in 2009. This number is figured by adding the number of House and Travel games at ITC CSP to the practices and games of Jaguars at ITC CSP, then dividing this sum by the total number of fields at ITC CSP. This is an average on all fields, as the actual number of events that takes place on each field varies.

<b>Spring Events</b>	<b>2009</b>
Average number of events per field at ITC CSP	115.20
<b>Fall Events</b>	<b>2009</b>
Average number of events per field at ITC CSP	95.10
<b>Annual Total Number of Events</b>	210.30

As you can see the number of fall and spring events in 2009 is at 210. In discussions with DPS, their recommendation is to stay at or near 175 events annually for the soccer fields, which we are slightly above at this point. However, an important item to note is that this number / target is not an exact science. As referenced in the attached July 2004 article from Sportsturf and the 2006 presentation provided by DPS there is no magic formula or number. In the article it states that in many cases 64 to 79 events would be tolerable at many fields, which would translate to 640 to 790 events annually which we are currently well below. Yet, field conditions vary depending on several factors which include; weather conditions, type and frequency of use, soil, turf drainage and maintenance practices to name a few. Some seasons the complex will be able to withstand more use than others. As an example the amount of use of 2007-2009 has been consistent, yet in fall 2009 the turf showed visible signs of wear and damage that was not seen in 2007 and 2008. A critical factor in the fall 2009 damage was the particularly wet fall in the area. It is important to remember that while there is a target number in place, the fields must be consistently monitored due to the factors mentioned.

In reviewing the use of ITC CSP in regards to soccer, a few items must be considered moving forward.

- Currently the Jaguars utilize ITC CSP for approximately 400 hours of practice per season, while the Novi Parks teams do not but they utilize Wildlife Woods, Brookfarm, Orchard Hills, Village Oaks, Novi Woods and Meadows 5 and 6. The current number of practice hours at ITC CSP is not an issue. However, the way in which the hours are allocated should be reviewed as ITC CSP is a premier complex and all user groups, including Novi Parks, should have use of it. This current allocation is one that I would like to discuss with you in the coming months.
- There are no formal guidelines that exist to assist staff in determining when to run or cancel games and practices at fields, including ITC CSP. DPS and I will develop an Athletic Field Use Policy and Cancellation Procedures by February 2010. This document will include basic guidelines for Operations and Recreation Staff to utilize in determining if fields are appropriate to play on or not and procedures for checking them throughout the day on game days.

At the November meeting a question was asked about the cost of artificial turf. The pricing I have obtained from DPS varies from \$5 to \$15 per square foot depending on scope, land balance,

drainage and quality of surface. This ultimately puts the cost of an 11 v 11 full size soccer field in the range of \$700,000.

**Novi Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
2009 Soccer Field Use Statistics**

<b>Spring Soccer Fields</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Notes Apply to 2009 Statistics</b>
Game Fields at ITC Only	10	
Practice Fields at various locations	32	H-24 / J-8 (House does not use ITC for practice, Jags do)
Total Teams	883	House H - 46 / Travel T -155 / J - 682
Total Players	1304	H-467 / T-155 / J-682
Total Practice Hrs at all fields	1270	H-570 / T-220 / J-480
Total Games at all fields	597	H-368 / T-44 / J-185
<b>Fall Soccer Fields</b>	<b>2009</b>	
Game Fields	10	
Practice Fields at various locations	32	H-24 / J-8 (House does not use ITC for practice, Jags do)
Total Teams	114	H-53 / T-14 / J-47
Total Players	1241	H-388 / T-173 / J-680
Total Practice Hrs at all fields	1270	H-530 / T-280 / J-460
Total Games at all fields	597	H-424 / T-112 / J-61
<b>Spring House Soccer Numbers</b>	<b>2009</b>	
Total Teams	57	H-46 / T-11
Total Players	622	H-467 / T-155
Total Practice Hrs	790	H-570 / T-220 (House does not use ITC for practice)
Total Games at ITC	412	H-368 / T-44
Fields Utilized at all locations	34	10 Game / 24 Practice
<b>Fall House Soccer Numbers</b>	<b>2009</b>	
Total Teams	67	H-53 / T-14
Total Players	561	H-388 / T-173
Total Practice Hrs	810	H-530 / T-280 (House does not use ITC for practice)
Total Games at ITC CSP	480	56 games re-scheduled to practice fields
Total Fields Utilized at all locations	34	10 Game / 24 Practice
<b>Spring Jaguar Soccer Numbers</b>	<b>2009</b>	
Total Teams	46	24 teams practice and play at ITC CSP and LS
Total Players	682	242 practice and play at ITC CSP and LS / 440 not on Novi fields
Total Practice Hrs at ITC CSP	390	390 ITC CSP and 90 LS
Total Games at ITC CSP	350	185 regular season games / 165 tournament games
Fields Utilized at ITC CSP	8	
<b>Fall 2009 Jaguar Soccer Numbers</b>	<b>2009</b>	
Total Teams	47	24 teams practice and play at ITC and LS
Total Players	680	252 practice and play at ITC CSP and LS / 428 not on Novi fields
Total Practice Hrs at ITC CSP	410	410 ITC CSP and 50 at LS
Total Games at ITC CSP	61	Less games in 09 due to game format change of the Jags
Fields Utilized at ITC CSP	8	
<b>Spring Events</b>	<b>2009</b>	
Average number of events per field at ITC CSP	115.20	
<b>Fall Events</b>	<b>2009</b>	
Average number of events per field at ITC CSP	95.10	
<b>Annual Total Number of Events</b>	<b>210.30</b>	

**Additional Notes:**

Novi Parks practice fields include Wildlife Woods, Brookfarm, Orchard Hills, Village Oaks, Novi Woods, Meadows 5 and 6)



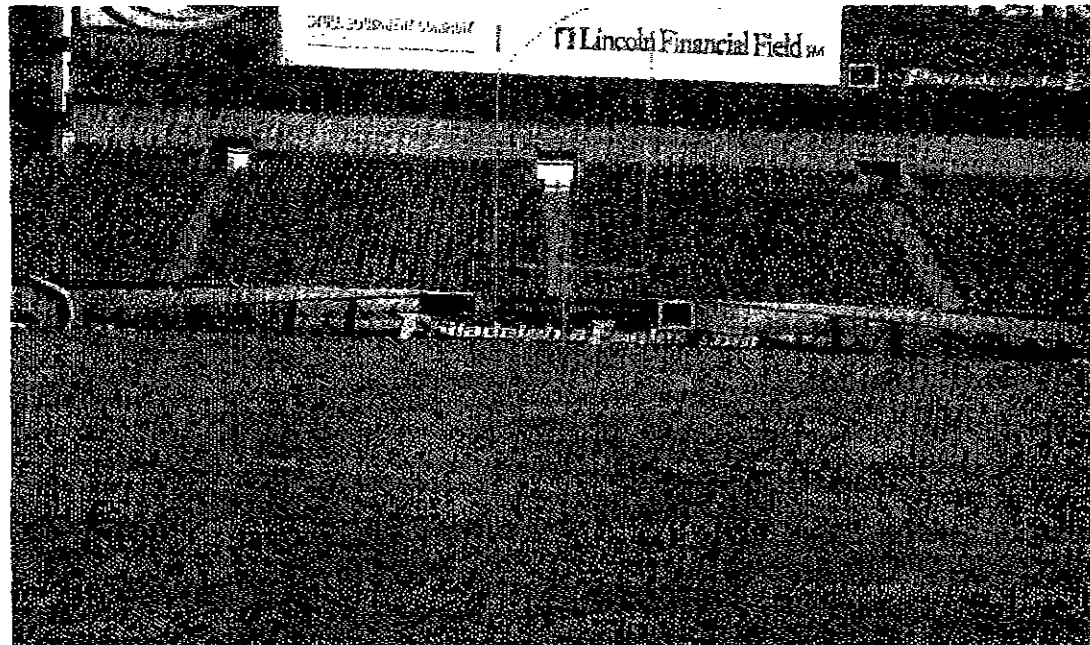
By Dr. Dave Minner, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Iowa State University



# Traffic survey update

The most frequently asked question I receive still involves how much traffic is too much traffic. You seem to seek the same information but from different angles. As managers of the field you seek data or recommendations that you can throw back at the boss or user group that basically says that the fields are being used too much and that is why it is impossible to keep any reasonable amount of turf cover on the field. The boss or those involved with scheduling events are usually faced with too many scheduled events and too few fields. Their motivation is often revenue driven since more tournaments and user groups mean more dollars to keep the facility operational. The most forward thinking city planners seek the magic number of fields that will be needed to support current and projected growth by their community.

Over the past 4 years we have been collecting survey information relating field use to field performance. The survey form and field evaluation form can be found at <http://turfgrass.hort.iastate.edu/extension/traffic.pdf>. Nearly 300 surveys were completed by sport field managers of soccer and football fields across the entire US. Field use ranged from eight events for professional football to 656 events for youth groups. Because of field use diversity we are now developing a person hour model that is sport and age group specific.



these broad national averages presented here.

To regulate field use and improve playing performance it is more important to

PLEASE CONTACT ME IF YOU HAVE BEEN COLLECTING FIELD USE DATA BY HOURS AND USER GROUP. I would like to have your input in developing the new person hour survey.

Annual number of events per field	Avg	Range
Data collected from 300 soccer and football fields across the entire US ranging in age from youthgroups to professional sports.		

The survey provides general guidelines and is the best information I have to offer until the sport specific person hour survey is completed. On average an individual field is receiving 125 events per year. A field receiving over 79 events should not be able to recover to an acceptable level. Most sports turf managers feel they could maintain an acceptable field if the annual event schedule were less than 64 events.

These are not magic numbers for all situations. For example, at the college or professional level a stadium field will not tolerate 64 events and still be acceptable for that type of competition. On the other hand a city planner looking for the number of fields to build for youth soccer can use the 64 to 79 event schedule as a planning tool for developing the appropriate number of fields for their community. Some facilities even had successful turf at the end of 150 events.

There are many variables in the traffic management game that may cause you to tolerate more or fewer events on your specific field. Variables include; warm/cool season climate, soil type, grass selection, irrigation, cultivation, seeding/sodding renovation, etc. If you are going to make a case to regulate activity on specific a specific field you would be better off using your own internal measurements that reflect field activity and performance instead of blindly accepting

evaluate your specific fields relative to your specific type of traffic load and level of management. Most sports turf managers intuitively do this, but I bet you don't have a per field record of activity and playing quality throughout the year that documents when the field has had too much traffic. Without this type of data it will be difficult to limit field use or to plan the appropriate number of fields when building for future growth. Use the field evaluation form at the website address above to rate your fields, each month and combine this with accurate field use records on a person/hour or field/hour basis to develop a picture relating field performance to user group activity.

Put another way, quit crying about all the activity on your fields and give your administrators some information to make sound decisions. Get off the mower, take off your hat, shine your boots, and take a season's worth of information to your boss. This is a great exercise to build communication with your administration and user groups, even if you don't have high traffic issues at your facility. With this type of information you will be viewed as part of the solution, not part of the problem.

An appropriate amount of funding must be channeled to grounds management to off set field damages from high use. In cases of extreme field activity there may be no level of funding that will keep the fields from wearing out and your only recourse is to close the fields for re-vegetation. Develop written strategic guidelines that include; anticipated field performance, measured level of activity and turf quality rating system per field, and a field maintenance budget that includes closing a field for re-vegetation if needed?

In my next column I'll share the individual success stories and strategies that you have relayed dealing with specific traffic problems such as, coaches who don't spread the traffic, playing games when it is too wet, field rotation, and the band. Drop me a line so I can reference your solution to the difficult problem of traffic troubles. **ST**

**QUESTIONS?** Send them to Dave Minner at Iowa State University, 106 Horticulture Hall, Ames, IA 50011, or email [dminner@iastate.edu](mailto:dminner@iastate.edu). Or, send them to Grady Miller at the University of Florida, PO Box 110676, Gainesville, FL 32611, or email [gmiller@mail.ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:gmiller@mail.ifas.ufl.edu).

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