

# Athletic Field Use Policy

**HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS** of Cranberry Township's policy manual for field users:

The purpose of this document is to establish policies and procedures that govern the use of Cranberry Township athletic fields with the overall goal of safe and playable conditions for all eligible users. The policy will outline the responsibilities of users from the initiation of an athletic field reservation with the Parks & Recreation Department through post event activities. Under all circumstances, Cranberry Township's Partner Associations (Seneca Valley Soccer Association-SVSA, Cranberry Township Athletic Association-CTAA, and Seneca Valley Junior Football Association-SVJFAC) assume full responsibility for the actions of any groups subletting fields in accordance with their lease contract. This document supersedes all previous athletic field use policies.

Bi-annual meetings will be held to discuss field specific issues such as maintenance schedules, facility issues, camps, tournaments, clinics, and overall timelines for use. The Athletic Field Use Policy will be reviewed at the bi-annual meetings and suggestions for changes or additions will be considered. The policy will be updated once annually each January. The meetings will be seasonal in nature with spring/summer sports slated for February/March and fall sports planned for June/July. Meetings will be initiated by Cranberry Township and will include representatives from Parks & Recreation, Public Works, and administrative personnel as deemed necessary. Each Partner Association requesting athletic field reservations is required to assign a representative to attend the meetings.

## **PARK RULES & REGULATIONS**

All park visitors are required to abide by the rules of this policy as well as all Township ordinances. Park rules include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Athletic fields and shelters require reservations for use and can be scheduled through the Parks & Recreation Department.
- Pets are only allowed in the Rotary Dog Park located in Community Park.
- Alcoholic beverages, gambling, and fireworks are strictly prohibited.
- No glass containers are permitted in the park.
- Permitted field users are responsible for the sportsmanship of their players, coaches, officials, and spectators.
- Parking is in designated lots only. No parking is permitted on grass or landscaped areas for any reason. User groups must inform their participants and spectators to park in designated lots. It is the permitted user's responsibility to alleviate traffic and parking issues.
- At the conclusion of a practice or game, users must collect all litter and garbage from the field and adjacent areas and deposit in provided trash receptacles.
- The last field user of each day is responsible for moving nets, goals, benches, tackling sleds, bases, etc., completely OFF

the playing surface for maintenance and mowing purposes.

- Fencing and buildings are strictly off limits for use as warm-up targets, batting soft toss, or throwing against in any fashion.

## **FIELD RESERVATIONS & SCHEDULING**

Athletic field use permits are issued through the Parks & Recreation Department. Requests must be submitted and approved prior to play. As well, cancellations and changes must be communicated with the Parks & Recreation Department so that scheduling software can be maintained completely and accurately. Correct contact information is required with each reservation so unexpected problems or closures can be communicated quickly.

## **PREVENTION & MAINTENANCE**

Cranberry Township requests that Partner Associations refrain from or limit their use of heavy traffic wear areas during practices, regardless of weather, to assist in providing the best field conditions possible for scheduled games. This includes: goal areas, pitching mounds, foul lines, and any other portion of the field showing wear due to traffic. Preventing additional wear during non-game activities will greatly lengthen the playability of fields as the season progresses.

## **SCHEDULES**

Partner Associations are responsible for maintaining an accurate schedule with the Parks & Recreation Department. The Public Works Grounds Maintenance Division will arrange operations around the daily schedule provided by the Parks & Recreation Department to minimize interference whenever possible. Therefore, unscheduled activities interfering with planned grounds maintenance operations are obliged to move at the request of Cranberry Township personnel.

## **MAINTENANCE CLOSURES**

Fields may be closed at the discretion of the Grounds Maintenance Manager or designated Cranberry Township representative during times when the fields remain playable for certain operations such as aerification, emergency irrigation repairs, or pesticide applications. Partner Associations will be notified in advance whenever possible.



### FIELD STATUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Cranberry Township will maintain a web page ([www.cranberrytownship.org/fields](http://www.cranberrytownship.org/fields)) that provides daily field status recommendations of "open" or "closed" for Graham Park based on the playability, safety, and saturation of the athletic fields. The page will be updated Monday through Friday at 11 am and at 9pm Friday and Saturday evening for the following day's play. If fields are listed as "closed" on the Township's website, Partner Association leaders have the opportunity to overwrite the decision since field playability may improve between the time of the web posting and scheduled play. Similarly, if a field is listed as "open" and precipitation deteriorates conditions so that field damage or unsafe conditions ensue, Partner Associations are responsible for cancelling or suspending play. Field damage will be addressed by the steps outlined in the following "Progressive Action Plan."

### DETERMINING FIELD SATURATION

In order to make the determination of field saturation an objective measure, the grounds staff will use a Lincoln Soil Moisture Meter to read the level of water present in the soil. The meter reads 0-10 with 10 being complete saturation of the soil. When the meter reads 10, the field will be deemed too wet for use and designated as "closed." The grounds staff will use the meter on a minimum of 3 locations on each field: center field, goal mouths, and in the case of baseball/softball fields, the location of position players in the outfield. Readings will be taken as close to the webpage posting time as possible.

### PROGRESSIVE ACTION PLAN FOR ATHLETIC FIELDS

- 1) The Grounds Maintenance Manager or designated Cranberry Township representative will inspect fields daily to determine if damage has been sustained that reduces the safety and playability of the surface.
- 2) Dated photos will document field conditions when damage occurs. Photos are stored on the Township's (W:) drive and are available upon request.
- 3) Fields will be closed as necessary for rest and renovation following events which cause damage and reduce safety. Users will be notified of rest periods on the Township's website and signs will be posted signifying the field as "closed." Cranberry Township may employ measures such as temporary fencing to isolate playing surfaces while renovation and grow-in is undertaken to restore safe playing conditions.
- 4) Continued or un-repairable damage by Partner Associations or other permitted users will result in the discontinuation of the agronomic maintenance program except for mowing. Primary field users will be notified in advance of Cranberry Township's intentions to change, discontinue, or temporarily suspend field maintenance programs.
- 5) Cranberry Township reserves the right to choose a third party regarded as an "athletic field expert" to settle disputes regarding the playability, safety, or un-repairable status of a field and its resultant rest and renovation period. An expert will be chosen through affiliation with a university and work in the field of agronomy or hold the minimum title of Director in a company specializing in athletic field maintenance. ■

For the full policy manual, see <http://www.cranberrytownship.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/16788>

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