

Hello Carleton Place Soccer Club members,

This letter is to inform you that the matter of using fields at Beckwith has been resolved for 2009 in a way that we believe will be satisfactory to all users.

The requirement that Field #5 at BWP be available to football and rugby on Tuesdays and Thursday nights can be honoured by moving 4 teams practicing within the Park to different fields and 2 teams to Notre Dame for games. These full field teams will continue to use half of a full field for practice.

This scheduling challenge has been resolved by making greater use of some fields and moving teams within the inventory of fields used by the Club. The Club has always tried to act as a wise steward of its fields with an eye to the future as well as today. This year will likely experience greater wear on some fields but the short term and long term future of fields at BWP is very good.

By the end of the summer the new artificial turf field, complete with lights should accommodate 8-10 uses by soccer in a week if we double shift the fields and use some weekend blocks. There can also be day time use on weekends. As well, construction of two natural grass fields will start in summer 2009 and mature in 2010 and may be playable mid-season 2010. The field squeeze this year is not likely to be repeated for years to come. These additional fields at BWP are being made possible by the wise management of the Township of Beckwith which has sought out and earned special government funding and by using a generous bequest from a former Beckwith Township Reeve, Mr. Stanley Brunton. The Township has partnered with the Town of Carleton Place and received financial support from the Carleton Place Soccer Club to help make these fields of dreams into fields of reality.

The Soccer Club, through its field development fee included in each player registration, has been an eager supporter in this new field building project. The Club has agreed to support the construction of turf fields as a share of costs, expected to top out at \$40 000. The artificial turf field will be available for a variety of users, including soccer, at a cost to the Club of up to \$10 000 for the purchase of high quality, wheeled portable goals. A multi-use field requires this type of investment in goals.

The previous outdoor fields project at Beckwith Park happened in 2001. The Soccer Club contributed about 38% of the \$110 000 cost to build fields #6-8. The impetus for building the first playing fields at Beckwith Park came from the Township of Beckwith. The first round of fields, BWP #1-5, did not involve any Club funding. The Township saw a need for quality recreation fields and made the decision to go ahead. The current recreation plan for our area calls for large land use sports to be developed in Beckwith Township where land costs are more economical and also serve the over 40% of our Club members who live there.

In 1996 the Club began to use field space at Notre Dame Catholic High School. This project was a joint project of the Town and Townships, the Catholic District School Board, and the Carleton Place Soccer Club. The Club paid 25% of the price tag and raised that money from a Club sponsored lottery. Prudent management and good financial health allowed the Club to pay its share and build a reserve for the future, such as funding the additional fields at BWP. The Club and its partners have also invested in the development of Field #3 at ND and

the watering systems on all the fields. Field development money from registrations has played another significant role here.

There are challenges to placing fields in school yards, mainly extensive and extended use by gym classes and school sports teams. The primary focus of schools is academic study while health and fitness plays a secondary role as expressed by the condition of school fields. In order to protect the investment of all partners in the ND complex some compromises were made by all parties to keep most fields in top shape.

The changes at Notre Dame were negotiated through the summer and winter of 2008-09 and have resulted in an agreement that all parties can live with. This agreement has not contributed to the fields situation this year. Next year though, the Club will cede the use of ND #2 field to Notre Dame School. Without the artificial grass field under construction at Beckwith Park to take its place, the Club will have to limit registration. The two new natural turf fields that will be started this summer will alleviate crowding and allow the Club and its partners to rest and rehabilitate fields and goal areas which show lots of wear.

The Club must always keep its eye on the future with regard to field development since few projects can move as quickly as the most recent round at Beckwith. There is a lag time of 1+ years from construction to play and in that time anticipated registration numbers can change. It is possible to invest in fields that may not be needed or worse still miss a rise in population growth or increased participation levels and have insufficient fields to meet the needs of player and team numbers.

The Soccer Club, through its partnerships with the municipalities and school boards, has always been slightly ahead of the field need curve. Having said that, it is important to ask what has happened to place the Club in a position to look for additional field space in 2009. This year the Club needs more full fields on certain nights than it has in the past. Leagues and team playing levels dictate the nights when fields must be used. There are mini-fields available on some nights because our demographic has shifted. Converting a full field to 2 minis is a possibility but a mini field here and a mini field there can not be made into a full field.

As soon as we became aware of the recent changes to field uses a series of calls were made to other organizations with full size soccer fields. The high schools politely declined to offer a field, even though the Club was ready to pay the cost of rental. Like the Soccer Club, they have to keep a long term eye on the use of their fields. The Town of Mississippi Mills, where 15% of our membership resides, has already signed an agreement with the Almonte Soccer Club that has been in effect for several years to permit ASC to use Appleton Fields.

Solution

The full field at Beckwith School will cover our shortfall in 2009. It has the advantage of being located close to Beckwith Park so families who have more than one child at practice will be only a short hop away. The plan is to sign a field user agreement on Monday, pending verification by the school principal with the Township of Beckwith and the school board.

Once all arrangements have been made there will be lines on the field and netting on the goal frames. Corner flags, benches and a port-a-potty will not be provided.

The Future

We are aware of the challenges of juggling the field needs of the Soccer Club at an economical cost. I can tell you confidently, that despite any set backs experienced since the Club and its partners embarked on a field building programme in the early 1990's, that this has been the most cost effective way for a small volunteer operation to leverage its financial resources, with the complete commitment of its municipal partners, to make affordable fields.

I thank all of you for your patience as this matter is being worked through. All sports and all volunteers are valuable components of our sporting community. The work that volunteers do, as well as the role taken on by our municipal leaders, make it possible for all of us to enjoy quality recreation at an affordable price.

As field manager, I see this year like all of the previous 20 years when I have been involved with the Club. There is always something to cause your heart to beat faster and your head to spin but with patience and a positive attitude, and with a bit of luck, it almost always works out for the better.

I see a bright future for our Club on and off the field. I know that Beckwith Park will become in 2010 a recreation gem. Any of the excitement or irritation that any season start creates, including this one, will be long forgotten then. I am looking forward to watching the park grow during this summer and beyond. Our members and the Board of Directors who have taken such a long term view to building a successful Club are to be commended for their wise choices over the years.

Sincerely,

Brian Read
Fields CPSC