

# How Do You Do...?

## How Do You Present "Field Use" Issues to Coaches & A.D.s to Avoid Conflicts/Confrontations?

Answered by Mike Schiller, CSFM, Rolling Meadows (IL) Park District

Our Recreation Department issues the permits for the fields, then gets schedules to us when the fields have been scheduled for games. Because we lack staff, we may not drag every field every day, but we do the scheduled fields, so it is important for all the different affiliates to let the Rec Staff know when they plan to have a game.

My Foreman Scott Dell stays in contact with our Recreation staff to let them know when weather may prevent a scheduled event from taking place. Our biggest problem is when we have an all night or a heavy morning rain, and our fields won't dry out. The Cubs or the Sox may get to play that night, but we can't because we don't have their fancy drainage systems, tarps or the number of staff they do for their one field.

People get upset with us if there is a rain out, but we do the best we can with the resources available to us. We try to communicate with our rec staff to let them know the reasons why they can't play on any given night.

Our staff works hard to provide the fields in all types of weather but sometimes mother nature wins. And keeping the lines of communication open is the key to avoiding upset parents and participants.

Answered by Dick Buelter, Lakewood (CO) Memorial Field

We at Jefferson County Public Schools have a unique situation where all the scheduling goes through the District Athletic Office for all three stadiums. The stadiums are game fields only. The Athletic Office gives the A.D.s what dates the stadiums can be used and the time slots available for all games except for football. The time slots are filled on a first come-first served basis. The District Athletic Office makes the league schedule. Coaches and A.D.s are aware of the schedule several months prior to the start of the spring season and by the end of the school year for the fall season.

Once in a while, we have a school who has a game scheduled at their school site and they show up at the stadium thinking they have a game there. We take the coaches aside and try to remain calm and make some phone calls to the District Athletic Office to find out what the problem is and get it corrected. Most of the time, when these problems occur, the Athletic Director has made the mistake of thinking the game is at one of the stadiums.

Answered by Casey Gifford, Miami (FL) Dolphins

The first and most important thing to remember is to always keep a good working relationship with those around you. That's the starting point for being able to approach anyone with anything. Never TELL them what you're going to do - ASK them what they think about your plan - tell them WHY you feel

the need to do this and then give them your alternative.

A perfect example of this happened to me today. We are in the process of growing-in the grass between the hash marks on the field, but with all the practices lately, we have had to paint the hash marks. So, I took the coach aside (this also is a new coach and it's the first time I've had to approach him with an issue like this), and told him that I'd like to avoid painting hash marks for at least a month, because we're trying to get the grass grown in and painting slows the growth. I then explained to him that what I would do instead is to paint the inbound line every 5 yards so that the players can still line up on the field and my grass will have a chance to grow. Having already built a good working relationship with the coach, he was more than happy to comply.

If you can build trust through good, hard work and justifying the things that you do, it will be much easier to approach people and to get your point across without conflicts.



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