

From: Darren Allman
To: Haley Gaddis; John Kangas
CC: Al Bennett; Laura Santos-Farry; Lisa Schlimgen
Date: 4/18/2010 8:31 PM
Subject: Re: Softball Field

John,

We need to find out who is in charge of the pee-wee league and tell them that the next time we see kids climbing on the nets, they will have to find another place to play. Be sure no groups are scheduled on field 3 during softball games. We will take a look at the field and at the weather forecast and make a decision on outside groups this week and this weekend.

Haley,

If you feel strongly about not letting them be on the field, we will head that way. However, we are not going to make that decision without having a plan in place for their future use or lack thereof.

Ceasing the use of the little league" until they know how to properly maintain the field" is a little to vague. We won't know whether or not they've learned how to maintain it, unless we let them use it. We need to come up with a plan, and here are some things to consider:

1. Is the leadership of this group going to change each year? If so, there is going to be a constant struggle to teach someone how to take care of the field.
2. Are these young players going to be coming up into our program? Are the majority of these kids going to be our kids? If so, do they have another place to play?
3. We have district employees who work on the grounds crew that may be better served to learn how to do certain things on the field. I realize it's hard to let someone else work on the field, but at times, there may be a need. We may have someone on staff that would take pride in it and do a good job. Again, we won't know until we see it happen. If we are going to let others use the field, this is something that needs to be considered. There's a lot of work that could be getting done during the school day to save yourself and the other coaches a lot of time.

Darren Allman
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Head Football Coach
Austin Westlake High School

>>> Haley Gaddis 4/17/2010 3:03 PM >>>

John,

On Weds when we spoke, I addressed the following concerns about the field condition that was left over by the little league after their usage. The un-raked chalk lines, the holes made by players that were not maintained in the batter's box, pitcher's mound and catcher's area, and the amount of dirt (a three to five inch blanket of fine powder that was left covering the batters box and mound).

Per agreement, these things **MUST** be maintained and maintained **properly**. Since I did not want to delay my practice to fix the field and since we had to put the tarp on the field Weds after practice and were unable to use it Thursday, Friday before my district game my staff and student-athletes had to 'fix' these areas before my staff and I could even get the field ready for the game. It took us 45-50 minutes to do this, and I also missed the majority of my team's warm-up because of having to do this. A huge part of the problem was the 'mysterious' blanket of dirt. I am going to assume that whomever has said they know how to maintain the field was not completely accurate. The bag of clay that I left for them to use was untouched, and the mounds of dirt they left was quick-dry. Someone from that group dumped a bag or two of quick-dry all over the areas thinking that was clay. So my softball kids had to bring out three buckets, which we scooped up as much of that material possible with our hands, and filled up all three. As you can tell, it was quite a mess we had to deal with, all prior to a very important district game. My staff and I do not have the time, or want, to continue to have to maintain the field for other organizations to use. We are using our resources for the field, purchased by us, to keep the field playable after their use. Obviously, this is becoming an issue.

It is my recommendation that, at least for this week and next weekend, we cancel all outside organization usage of the field. With the weather and rain becoming unpredictable, we will more than likely be keeping the tarp on the field for most days of next week. Also, the field itself is showing extreme signs of wear and tear from the high volume of foot traffic, and with the rain and the usage amount, it is not being able to recover. The outfield and the grass that borders between the dugouts is getting torn up from traffic during this rainy time, and we really need to let it recover, and the wear is really starting to show. I also not only suggest this because we need to give the field a breather, but I suggest that the little league cease usage until they can in fact properly take care of the facility. My staff and my efforts are being taken away from our practices, and it is and has become a distraction. Another concern that I have is for the flexibility in the outside groups that use Field 3, while I am holding a game. If today would

have been a sunny day, there would not have been a problem. Becoming rainy and wet, and with the field showing signs of wear, I needed to use practice field three to have as a warm up field. I do not let teams hit on this field because they tear up the grass. I would prefer that it not be in my realm of duties for me to have to be the person to tell outside groups that rent the facilities, that they need to delay their games so we can use the field. I do not want to have any unnecessary confrontations with parents whom have the opinion that the pee-wee football game is more important than our game, or have to explain that the priority lays with us. Faced with having to spend time trying to find the people in charge, and then trying to clear that field of people, I chose to just let the other team hit balls on the field, which unfortunately tore up the grass in certain areas. I did not have time today to try to find the contact person to accomplish clearing the field.

Along with the talk about groups that use Practice Field 3. Today during that pee-wee football game, I observed at least 10 kids in our batting cages (while we were on rain delay). They were climbing on the batting cage tunnels that are hung up, climbing on the sock nets, and lifting up/throwing up the sides of the cages that are held down by chains and zip ties and going under. I had to walk over to the cage and instruct them to get out of the cages. There were many adults around standing underneath just watching. I also have had many kids and parents that use the cage on the weekends tell me that this scene is the normal for the weekends when groups are using Practice Field Three. I have laid chain down, that is folded in the bottom of the nets and the fold is held by zip ties. Three times this year I have had to replace zipties because they had been ripped off. Watching what these kids were doing to the nets, I believe I can attribute that damage to the playing and hanging and pulling on the nets.

Please keep in mind that with the rain, the field is getting more torn up than normal, and I believe that we need to make some adjustments to let it recover from the damage. We have a great facility that people want to use, but it won't take much longer for it to start to look really bad.

Haley

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