

February 24, 2011

Dear ASA Community--

I wanted to pass on several pieces of largely good news concerning fees and fields for the coming year.

As you may recall, about this time last year we were engaged in a heated battle with the County over cuts to the Parks & Recreation budget and the proposal to institute a new player fee, while also facing considerable financial and economic uncertainty with respect to ASA's own finances.

I am happy to report that things will be a little different this year. There are a number of items I wanted to pass on.

1. Based on discussions with Parks Dept. officials and a review of the County Manager's proposed budget, it appears that there will not be any significant items this coming year that would negatively affect youth sports or ASA. Of course, the budget is not final, so something could change, but that would be surprising.
2. The County imposed player fee for the coming year will remain the same: \$8 per player for Arlington residents and \$20 for nonresidents. There is discussion about modifying the non-resident portion, but that would not likely take place this coming fiscal year.
3. The player fees collected so far have been accumulating in a fund to be used primarily for field improvements. We have learned that as of July 1, 2011, there will be \$260,000 in the fund to begin allocating for improvements. This represents \$130,000 expected to be collected in the current fiscal year (2010-11) and the projection for the next fiscal year 2011-12). Roughly 80% of this money (\$210,000) will be available for rectangular (soccer) fields, the rest for diamond (baseball) fields.
4. Recently, a task force of representatives of various youth sports groups signed off on a plan for an advisory committee to govern how the field fund monies will be used. We anticipate that funding for projects can begin as early as this fall.
5. By the next fiscal year (2012-13) it is likely that adult sports groups will also be contributing to the field fund, thereby making more money available for projects.

We hope that the advisory committee can also attract private sector and other funds (e.g., schools) to augment various projects. We are also working with the Arlington Sports Commission and the Arlington Sports Foundation to involve the community in improving our fields.

6. There is also some good news on fields:

- The synthetic surface on the field at Gunston has just recently been replaced and will be ready for play this Spring.
- The synthetic surface at the Virginia Highlands field is slated to be replaced in the coming fiscal year, and design work for replacement of the Barcroft surface will take place as well.
- Construction on three new synthetic fields at Long Bridge Park (the old "North Tract") is also proceeding, with a projected Fall 2011 opening date (although the fields may not be available at the beginning of our fall 2011 season).
- The “composite” (i.e., dirt) field at Rocky Run Park in Clarendon will be replaced with a synthetic surface this Spring or summer.
- Work is slated during the coming fiscal year to replace the bermuda grass on the rectangular fields at Westover and Thomas Jefferson Middle School with new grass and other upgrades to both fields.
- We have been in discussions with Arlington Public Schools about two other fields--Kenmore #3, in front of the new school, and Washington-Lee's side field (adjacent to the new pool). There is no movement yet on Kenmore, but we will continue to press to turn this into a good, usable soccer field. As for Washington-Lee, while the field is an abomination, the school is going to begin using it for school team practices, freeing up some space on other fields for our use this Spring.
- There have also been ongoing discussions about fixing the field at H-B Woodlawn, ranging from repairing the irrigation system and putting in new grass to installing a synthetic field; we believe that improvements are coming, but in an uncertain timetable.
- Bishop O’Connell High School intends to convert its rectangular playing field into a regulation size soccer field with synthetic turf; the school has also applied to the County to add lighting; we believe that ASA would be able to obtain some use of this field when not in use by the school.

As ASA continues to grow, we will focus on getting the most out of the various fields in the County and look for opportunities for new field space as well.

7. Finally, after making some painful decisions last year on ASA's own budget, including substantial increases in some fees, we can report that ASA's finances have improved significantly. We are no longer operating at a deficit; enrollment in most of our programs has increased, in some instances significantly; and we have absorbed the player fee and the costs shifted to ASA by the County, all without sacrificing the quality of our programs or forsaking the neediest members of our soccer community.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to share them with me at [kenbass@arlingtonsoccer.com](mailto:kenbass@arlingtonsoccer.com), and/or with ASA's Executive Director, Justin Wilt, at [justinwilt@arlingtonsoccer.com](mailto:justinwilt@arlingtonsoccer.com) . We hope to see you out at the fields this Spring!

Ken Bass  
President, Arlington Soccer Association