

## **Securing Fields for Ultimate: Its all about Relationships**

Assumptions concerning field use:

- Ultimate players want more playing time
  - League players – more games
  - Club players – more practice fields & tournament sites
  - Pickup players – weekend & evening casual time
- High demand for open space / field space
  - Between different Ultimate groups
  - Between other sports – Kickball, Soccer, Football
  - Non-sports events – Folk Life Festival, Fundraising Special Events
  - Open space / Green space devotees

Competition for fields comes from a variety of stakeholders

- Private enterprises (for profit groups)
  - Washington Area Kickball Association
  - Kickball splinter group of WAKA
  - City Sports (sponsors many different sports)
- Non-Profit Groups
  - Washington Area Frisbee Club
  - Congressional Softball League
  - Capital Rugby League
- City / County Sponsored Leagues
  - Arlington Flag Football
  - County Soccer Leagues
  - County Football Leagues

Field Stakeholders Resources

- For Profit Sports Groups – Salaried staff searching for fields
- City / County – They OWN the fields
- Non-profit groups – WAFC/others – its all about the RELATIONSHIPS

### **Cultivating Relationships with Field Sources**

- Marketing
  - National Level - Ultimate requires more promotion to Parks and Recreation Staffs (see the article about Disc Golf in the Parks & Recreation Magazine – which every county recreation department receives)
  - Local Level – each club should maintain some type of collateral or marketing material about their club & Ultimate for distribution to all field stakeholders
- Park Officials & Field Owners
  - Solicit introductions for field sources
    - Employers
    - Family connections – parents sitting on commissions / boards
    - Friends outside Ultimate
  - Know the permit writers personally – Market your Ultimate club or team
    - How can Ultimate make the park officials life easier with local citizen groups, sports users & other municipal staff?
      - By being good users – not playing in bad weather
      - Not destroying the fields
      - Good behavior & sportsman like conduct with other park users
    - What do park officials require to be successful?
      - Save their departmental budgets \$\$ - we supply the cones
      - Treat permits like contracts; make payments when required

- Volunteer clean up days
- Let their supervisors know of successes
- Purchase capital equipment for the parks
  - Trash can for a strategic location
  - Soccer net for kid
- Club Responsibilities
  - Keep communication consistent – messenger and message
  - Show appreciation – holiday baskets or popcorn, etc
  - Be pro-active when issues arise
  - Use the fields that are permitted
  - Use community or club “weather lines”

## SHARING FIELD PERMITS WITH OTHER ULTIMATE USERS

When fields are shared [college teams, pickup, club team practice, special event] -

- Local clubs must give support
  - Maintain a unique relationship with the permit source
  - Help the new user present a quality event to maintain the permit holders relationship with the park officials
- Make sure the new users don't make any bonehead decisions
  - Keg party on the fields
  - Nudity
  - Trash
- Ensure the new users are aware of consequences of inclement weather
  - Alternative sites
  - Reserves for damaged field
  - Qualified decision-maker determining playability of fields

#### WAFC Municipal Relationships

- National Park Service: Mall & Polo Fields (Tim)
  - Meeting with park officials to volunteer
  - Paint the bench day
  - Clean up day
  - WAFC to treat the volunteers to beer/party afterwards
- National Park Service: Anacostia
  - River clean up
  - Constant communication with park officials about weather & field conditions
- Montgomery County
  - Donated to the After-school Program
  - Volunteered to purchase trash cans
  - “Served as Crime Busters” as Sligo Park
  - Proactive on Soccer goal damage
  - Filled holes & ruts at WAFC expense
  - Pay for maintenance
  - Adopt-a-field Program
- Arlington County
  - Club member on the Parks and Recreation Commission – Plain politics
  - Being beyond “reproach” when applying for permits based on percentage of community residents
  - High school parents assist
- Lake Fairfax
  - Paying for parking attendants at all games
  - Paying for extra Port-a-johns
  - Always volunteering to help financially
  - Repair damage fields – purchased fill dirt & spread
  - Offer to purchase capital improvements
- Pratt Park
  - Responsive to the community also using the park
  - Setup of beer garden to “soothe” community ire
  - Volunteer to pay for any field or soccer net damage – before they approach us
- Fort Belvoir
  - Restricted use since 9/11
  - Attempting to secure site for the future

#### WAFC – Private Ownership Relationships

- Chesapeake Open / Sectionals Site – Polo Fields [NEW]
  - Potential to improve site for limited use
  - Working with owner to secure more events
  - Ability to secure insurance and field financing quickly