



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Parks & Recreation Department

I. TITLE

Athletic Facility Use Policies and Procedures

II. EFFECTIVE DATE

July 19, 2016

Revised – March 27, 2018

III. REFERENCE

St. Johns County Parks [Ordinance 2005-114](#)

St. Johns County Annual Fee Schedule as adopted by the Board of County Commissioners

IV. INTRODUCTION

St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department is committed to providing life enhancing experiences to inspire, educate and promote a healthy community for our citizens. We strive to provide meaningful recreational and leisure opportunities through program offerings and the provision of parks, special use areas and facilities. We strive to create a positive relationship between staff, volunteers, partnerships and the public through mutual respect.

The St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department supports local athletic associations and leagues that provide recreational opportunities for the youth and adults in the community by providing adequate field space to meet their needs.

V. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Athletic Facility Use Policies & Procedures Manual is to define the users of St. Johns County parks and to provide guidelines on the appropriate use of County property by athletic associations, recreational leagues, travel/development teams, groups, and individuals. The St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to modify this policy as needed.

VI. ORGANIZATION CLASSIFICATIONS

A. Partner associations - These associations provide athletics programs to the residents of the St. Johns County that support the recreational goals of the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department. These partner associations are promoted by the Parks and Recreation Department and serve as stewards of the County.

1. Each association must meet sanctioning requirements and all of the following criteria:

- a) Have a proven track record of successfully providing recreational youth sports programming within St. Johns County for five (5) or more years.
- b) Must be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.
- c) All sports within the partner organization will follow the customary two season criteria:
 - Spring season - January through May
 - Fall season - August through November

Scheduling of facilities outside these months must be submitted in writing to the area supervisor and approved by the Facility Manager, or designee. Field rental fees apply.

d) Must enter into a user agreement with St. Johns County.

2. Partner Association customarily offer two types of programs:

a) Partner Association Recreational Leagues –

- All participants are St. Johns County residents.
- All programs offered are considered affordable to participants and families.
- Participation is not skill based.

b) Partner Association Development/Travel Teams –

- The majority of participants are St. Johns County residents.
- Participation is skill based.
- The schedule is comprised of league and tournament play.
- Fees may include coaching fees, tournament registrations, etc.

B. The “Group” classification collectively refers to individuals, vendors, businesses, tournament hosts, etc. All users not classified as a partner association league or team will fall into this category.

VII. PERMISSIVE USE

Recreational games, tournaments, festivals and instructional programs are permissible activities within St. Johns County park facilities. Activities not included in, or inconsistent with these uses, including commercial businesses/vendors/individual dba’s. Refer to St. Johns County Parks Ordinance 2004-115.

Requests to reserve a facility by any group, other than a partner association, must be submitted using the Facility Use Permit Application.

VIII. ATHLETIC FACILITY SCHEDULE MANAGEMENT

Anyone requesting use of athletic facilities must submit a completed Facility Use Permit Application, a signed hold harmless agreement and provide proof of insurance per the application. The only exception to this policy is for Partner Associations that have a user agreement on file.

The area supervisor is authorized to grant approval for facility usage and to schedule athletic facilities in accordance with the policies established within this document. The area supervisor maintains a schedule for use of assigned facilities. Every effort will be made to provide fair distribution of the field space which will be determined by availability and field conditions.

- A. County athletics facilities will be made available outside of regularly scheduled activities and/or commitments. Priority will be given in this order:
1. St. Johns County Sponsored/Hosted Activities - These activities are promoted, planned and staffed by St. Johns County. Programs may be offered by the Department or in collaboration with an established outside provider.
 2. St. Johns County partner association recreational leagues and teams
 3. St. Johns County School District sanctioned organizations.
 4. Requests from any other type/organization/entity group will be granted by the area supervisor based on availability.
- B. Newly established associations/leagues/teams that intend to use St. Johns County facilities must notify the Recreation and Parks Department Director, or designee, in writing, no less than (3)

months prior to the start of the new season. A Facility Use Permit Application must be submitted and include the proposed practice schedule, name of the complex, requested field name(s)/number(s), season start and end dates. The request will be considered on a first come first serve basis based on availability.

IX. FACILITY USE REQUESTS AND FEES

A. All associations, leagues, teams, and groups must meet all requirements listed below:

1. Meet the requirements of the sport's sanctioning body/organization, and be in good standing
2. A Facility Use Permit Application must be submitted and include a signed Hold Harmless Agreement and a certificate of liability insurance for the term of the activity, naming St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners as additional insured. The application must include the proposed practice schedule, name of the complex, requested field name(s)/number(s), and season start and end dates. Blanket athletic facility field requests will not be accepted.
3. Provide a copy of the Tax Exempt Certification form.
4. Provide representation at all Association/League meetings hosted by St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department.

B. Fees

Fees shall be applied as defined in the St. Johns County Annual Fee Schedule (attachment A), and collected within thirty (30) days of final registration for the sports season. Such registration deadlines will be provided in advance by the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department.

X. ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. At the close of registration the users must provide team rosters that includes the players first and last names, address, zip code, parent email address and coaching information to the area supervisor. A permit will be issued once the schedule has been approved. The organization must submit a finalized practice and game schedule that includes the name of the team, coaches contact information and practice location, field designation, days and times.
- B. Notification to the area supervisor is required for any changes to the practice and/or game schedule. Weekly updates can be e-mailed directly to the area supervisor. Reserved field space found to be unused will be released for use by another organization using the guidelines detailed above. Monthly submission of team game schedules to area supervisor by 5th of each previous month.
- C. The organization may not sublet field space or other facility to another organization or entity. The organization may not sponsor any other group or organization for the purpose of altering the organization's classification or fee schedule. The organization shall not collect funds for use of any County-owned recreational facility or athletic field.
- D. Must identify and share with all coaches who is responsible for the activation and deactivation of facility lights. Must communicate the importance of lights being turned off when not in use to ensure all users are good stewards of tax dollars.
- E. All accidents/injuries must be documented using the sanctioning body form or the County's incident report. The reports must be maintained for a minimum of four (4) years from the date of the event. All incidents involving significant injury (more than first aid), property damage, or disruptive behavior involving a participant, volunteer, or patron to the facility must be documented and reported to the area supervisor.
- F. Parents, coaches, officials, fans, players and administrators must be free of drug, tobacco, alcohol and performance enhancers while participating in youth sports activities and while on county property.

- G. Must develop and communicate to coaches, parents, players, board members and spectators through all available means (including organization websites) the following documents:
1. Must adopt and communicate a Sportsmanship code of conduct emphasizing positive expectations clearly identifying unacceptable behaviors such as bullying, berating players, coaches, officials; use of vulgar language; and inappropriate behavior. The code of conduct will promote fair play, respect for the game and graciousness in losing or winning. The code shall include an implementation plan and enforcement procedures.
 2. Must establish an accountability procedure and disciplinary process to remove anyone who does not abide by the organization or County park policies and procedures.
 3. Shall adopt a positive coaching recruitment policy that encourages the recruitment and selection of qualified women and men as coaches, volunteers, and administrators free of discrimination.
 4. Ensure all coaches and volunteers meet the guidelines listed below and document all training received.

H. Requirements for Coaches and Volunteers

1. Background Screening

All youth sports coaches and staff must be cleared through a background check in accordance with Florida law.

FS 943.0438 mandates athletic associations to, "Conduct a level 1 background screening pursuant to s. 435.03 of each current and prospective athletic coach. The authority may not delegate this responsibility to an individual team and may not authorize any person to act as an athletic coach unless a level 1 background screening is conducted.... Level 1 background screenings shall be conducted annually for each athletic coach. The complete Florida Statute can be online here: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2015/943.0438>.

The organization will select a background screening vendor of their choosing and provide the site supervisor with a list of cleared volunteers no less than ten (10) days prior to tryouts and/or start of season.

The County will periodically audit the list of approved coaches and volunteers and reserves the right to deny any coach/volunteer the opportunity to participate based on the information revealed in a background screen. The area supervisor will periodically engage coaches during activities to verify status.

2. Training

All coaches and volunteers must receive the following training:

- Be trained in safety/injury prevention and first aid; conditioning; hydration and nutrition; teaching proper sport techniques; including all children; child abuse prevention; the emotional needs of children; and drug, alcohol and tobacco prevention.
- Be provided information about recognizing symptoms of child abuse and neglect and understand reporting procedures and requirements.
- Receive training on conflict resolution and additional resources to assist in ensuring positive communication between coaches and parents.
- Be trained on the organization's sportsmanship code of conduct.
- Coaches are to use and apply proper principles of conditioning.
- Coaches must report all accident/injuries using the forms listed above. Hazards on the property must be reported to the organization designee or site supervisor immediately.

- I. Failure to meet these criteria will result in termination of the agreement/revocation of permitted field use and loss of access to the athletic facility.

XI. ATHLETIC FIELD LIGHTS

Lights and their usage are paid for by the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners; therefore the County reserves the right to control light usage in an effort to manage the costs. Requests for lights shall be provided to the area supervisor in writing no later than Friday the week before the lights are needed. Lights are set in 15 minute intervals.

The following should be considered when making a request for lights:

- Carefully consider the time and dates being requested. Ensure that use of the facility will occur during the time requested. Fields not being used with lights on is wasteful spending.
- Include time for patrons to safely enter and depart the facility, including all parking areas.
- When an extension is needed beyond the time requested the site supervisor shall be contacted 30 minutes prior to the scheduled "off-time." Once lights go off they cannot be turned back on for 15 minutes.
- Lights must be turned off when not in use. Each organization can opt to give one or two people the authority to call or text the area supervisor to shut the lights off. Partner associations may designate one person direct access to shut the lights off. This will be arranged with the area supervisor at the start of the season.

XII. SEVERE WEATHER

If a weather event occurs, or is approaching, Recreation and Parks staff will make a determination to close fields. If County staff is not present, it is the responsibility of the association/group representative and officials to decide whether or not conditions will endanger the safety of the participants or if the activity will have an adverse effect on the field/facility. Participant and patron safety is paramount. Once a determination has been made play should cease and participants should be moved to a safe location.

XIII. TOURNAMENTS

- A. Requests for tournament space must be made by submitting a Facility Use Permit Application to the site supervisor no less than 3 months prior to the event. Requests will not be considered until:
1. A signed Hold Harmless Agreement has been submitted and proof of insurance, including additional insured endorsement, is submitted and approved as required in the Facility Use Permit Application.
 2. All stipulated requirements as determined by the County Recreation and Parks Department are met.
 3. Field use has been approved by the area supervisor and Maintenance Supervisor.
 4. All fees are paid, as determined by the Board of County Commissioners annually.
- B. Once approved, the tournament host must provide a tournament schedule to the area supervisor seven (7) days prior to the start of the event.
- C. Tournament Maintenance Staffing
1. Staffing needs for the tournament will be determined by the Maintenance Superintendent, or designee and communicated in advance to the tournament host.
 2. Maintenance staff from the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department will manage trash removal, drag and/or line fields, and address all safety issues as related to the facility and playing area.

3. Park Maintenance employees working afterhours and weekends will be paid overtime. The entity using maintenance staff will be invoiced the hourly overtime rate for the staff person and pay SJC directly. The hourly rate will include preparation time, duration of play and post play clean up time. Hourly rates are based on the current fiscal year pay. Employee rate will be given once a schedule is received and a maintenance staff person(s) is assigned.

D. The Tournament Director:

1. Will coordinate all aspects of the tournament with area supervisor(s) and maintenance staff.
2. Will make arrangements to have a dumpsters delivered and removed from the tournament site and coordinate the delivery, set up, and removal of portable restrooms when requested.
3. The Tournament director will be responsible for player and patron safety as related to activities and facility use for the event.
4. Shall provide assistance to County staff as requested.

E. Facilities cannot be altered in anyway without prior written consent of the St. Johns County Recreation and Parks Maintenance Superintendent, or designee.

F. Failure to comply with all of these requirements will result in forfeiture of future tournaments and usage.

XIV. FIELD CLOSURES

A. Field access may be limited at various times throughout the year. All parks close at dusk unless lighted. The following is a sample of issued that would result in field/facility closure:

1. Fields are too wet or muddy for maintenance and/or safe play.
2. Severe weather conditions (current or forecasted).
3. Electrical or mechanical systems not working properly.
4. Emergency repairs and/or extensive maintenance issues.
5. Regular field maintenance, as scheduled by the Maintenance Supervisor. Field use on renovated fields will be monitored to insure proper growth and to keep fields in safe condition.

B. All repairs to damaged fields/facilities will be the financial responsible of the offending Association/League.