



How to Start A Soccer Field Project

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Introduction

- Your Region is growing and more players want to sign up, but the Region is facing a shortage of fields and cannot sustain the number of players that are interested in the program.
- Help is on the way!



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Most soccer field projects become practical due to one or more of these three reasons:

1. A soccer organization or individual has determined that soccer fields are a significant need and is willing to lead the effort.
2. A school district, municipality or other government entity has decided additional recreational facilities are important and soccer is or may be one of the options.
3. A potential piece of land has been identified that could be used for soccer fields.



Getting Started

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.” – Mark Twain



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It may seem daunting to begin the process of developing new soccer fields, but the hardest part is getting started! Gather volunteers, determine the situation and take a step forward into action.



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There are six elements required to turn the idea of new soccer fields into a reality:

- 1) Committed leadership
- 2) A suitable, affordable site
- 3) Motivated, dedicated volunteers
- 4) Funding or fundraising
- 5) Determination through the political process
- 6) Perseverance over the long haul



I) Committed Leadership

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What makes a great soccer field project leader?

Someone who can:

- Create a vision.
- Communicate that vision.
- Recruit others to help.
- Be energetic and passionate.
- Value collaboration and consensus.



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2) A Suitable, Affordable Site

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A Place To Stand: Getting The Land



“Give me a place to stand and a lever long enough and I can move the world (or at least build a soccer field).”

– Archimedes (sort of)



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The land you find must be large enough for your needs, close enough for your players to drive to, affordable and in a safe area.

- **How much land will I need?**

- Depends on the # of players (Don't forget to include multiple soccer fields, a field house with storage, a concession stand, bathrooms, lighting, parking, a service road, etc.)

- **How much will the land cost?**

- It varies!



Soccer Fields By the Numbers*

- Soccer Field Footprint (U-16/U-19)=1.25 acres
- Soccer Field/Softball Footprint=3 acres
- Distance between fields=10-20 yards
- Soccer Field Width=50 (min) – 100 (max) Yards
- Soccer Field Length=100 (min) – 135 (max) Yards

*There are a wide variety of options for full size soccer field dimensions but minimum and maximums are dictated by the *FIFA Laws of the Game*.



Brainstorm:

How do I find the land?



Brainstorm Answers:

How do I find the land?

- School districts
- City and county
- City, county and regional parks
- Spread the word to the members of your soccer club, league or association to keep an eye out
- Contact your Geographic Information Systems office
- Real estate professionals
- Review the Park & Recreation master plans of the cities in your target area
- Drive around your area
- Contact your local Environmental Protection Agency for the potential of brownfield land locations that could be converted to fields as part of a clean up
- Notice if Industrial parks or suburban hotels seem to have unused space
- Call the softball, baseball, lacrosse and other sports organizers in your area
- Monitor your local city/county planning department for announcements of major projects applications/public hearings and/or review.

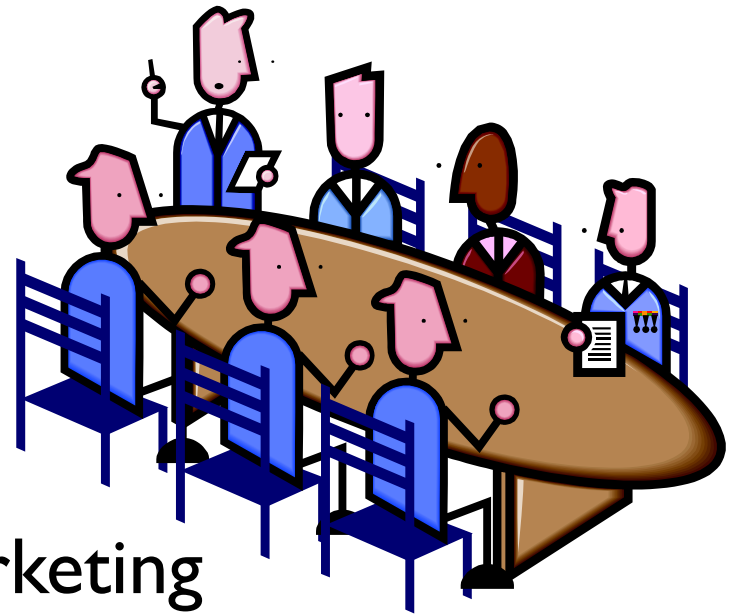
3) Motivated, Dedicated Volunteers

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Field Development Committee

- Chair
- Administrator
- Finance Chair
- Operations Chair
- Communications & Marketing Chair



Chair



Primary responsibility for the committee; lead spokesperson; insures that all deadlines are met and approvals signed off; insures that either he/she or another representative is at every important meeting and event; keeps the process on track; serves as “cheerleader” when the committee gets discouraged or has set backs. Will likely be the “face” of the field project.

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Administrator



Keeps track of all the details; records and distributes meeting minutes; keeps calendar of important events, deadlines and other dates; keeps centralized copies of all contracts, minutes, invoices, correspondence; point person for day to day contact.



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Finance Chair



Handles the following tasks or oversees committee members that handle the tasks of:

- Fundraising (grant writing, sponsorship sales, donor development, fundraising events or projects)
- Finance (budgets, approving invoices, bidding vendors)
- Purchasing

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Operations Chair



- Site location/selection
- Selection of professionals i.e. contractor, landscape designer, architect, irrigation and turf experts
- Permit oversight
- Deadline/scheduling contact with contractor

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Communications & Marketing Chair

- Oversees needs analysis
- Coordinates media and public relations
- Produces all necessary collateral material
- Assists with fundraising projects
- May “track” the political process



4) Funding Or Fundraising

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The 4 Sources Of Cash For Soccer Fields

- **Your members** (via registration fees, capital assessments, field use fees, tournaments, member volunteer time, in-kind donations, individual donors or fundraising activities)
- **Your community** (via business sponsorships, capital assessment or field use fees from other soccer or sports groups, fundraising activities, community volunteers, in-kind and cash donations, or large “angel” donors)
- **Private foundations or other non-profit funders**
- **Public agencies** (municipalities, school district, park district, county, state or federal partnerships or grants)



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Show Me The Money

“With money in your pocket, you are wise and you are handsome and you sing well too.”

– Proverb



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Brainstorm: Fundraising Idea Starters



Brainstorm Answers:

Fundraising Idea Starters

- 100 Club
- Sell a Brick
- Raffle a House
- Sell Grass by the Square Foot
- Babysitting Evening
- Recycling
- Carwashes
- Mega Garage or Yard Sale
- Raffles
- Gift Wrapping during the Holidays
- Pancake Breakfast
- Valentines
- Letters from Santa
- Bingo Night
- Bake Sales
- Cookbooks
- Picnic Basket Auction
- Fun Fair or Carnival
- Live/Silent Auction
- Gold Tournament
- Merchandise
- Haunted House
- Soccerathon, Walkathon
- Battle of the Bands
- Dinner Theatre
- Refreshment Stand
- Calendar Sales
- Craft Sales/Fairs
- Book Fair
- Movie Night
- Soccer Theme Gift Baskets for Sale
- New Year's Eve Party
- White Elephant Sale



Sponsorships: Building Relationships

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” – Henry Ford



Funding Through Sponsorship

A sponsorship will include a group of benefits for the sponsor including:

- Company logo on uniforms and/or practice shirts.
- Advertising space or sponsored editorial in all publications.
- Signs/company logo at the field and events.
- Naming rights of the field, complex or events.
- On-site sampling, sign-up or product sales.
- Distribution of flyers or coupons.
- Ability to use member mailing and e-mail lists.



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Brainstorm:

What types of companies would be good local sponsors?



Brainstorm Answers:

What types of companies would be good local sponsors?

- Banks
- Fast food restaurants
- Sporting good or soccer stores
- Insurance agents
- Real estate agents
- Supermarkets
- Local corporations
- Local manufacturers
- Accountants
- Beauty salons or spas
- Youth and teen clothing stores
- Family restaurants
- Contractors
- Pizza chains
- Car dealerships
- Local newspapers
- Soft drink bottlers
- Hotels



Sponsorship Good News, Bad News

- **Good News** – sponsors dollars can be significant
- **Bad News** – sponsor dollars may not be consistent from year to year, sponsorships are challenging to sell and can be a lot of work to fulfill.

GOOD
NEWS,
BAD
NEWS



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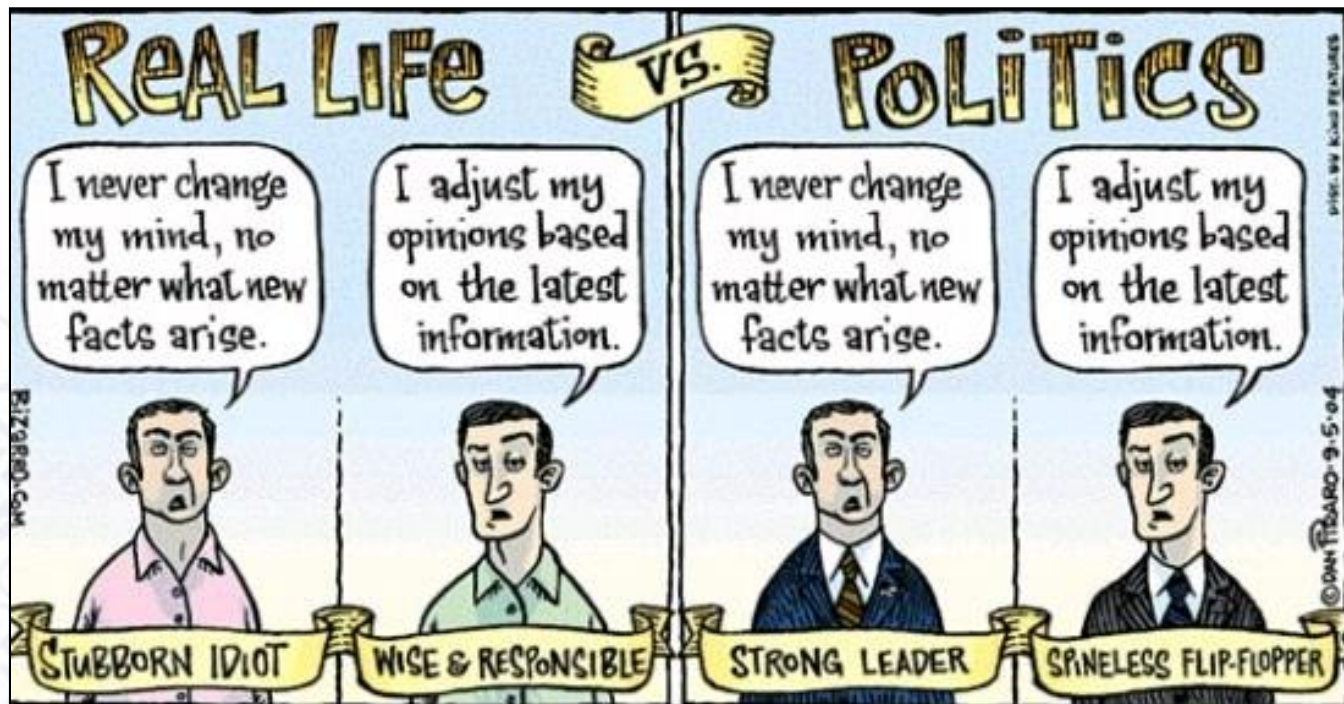
5) Determination Through The Political Process

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Politics, Politics, Politics

“All Politics is local.” – Tip O’ Neill



Understanding and cooperating with others is key to managing this project!

Understanding What You Are Selling

What may surprise you is that you very likely are often NOT selling a soccer field project. Instead you may be selling:

- Increased community green space.
- The fight against childhood obesity.
- Recreational opportunities for minorities.
- Recreational space for skaters, baseball, softball and lacrosse players.
- Reduced juvenile crime & drug use.
- Family together time.
- Keeping kids in school.
- Increased retail traffic to a business area.
- Reducing teen pregnancy. (The majority of teen pregnancies are conceived between 3 and 6 p.m. on weekdays).
- Equity for girls and women. (Female sports participation has increased 40%, but new field development is not keeping up with this added demand).
- Increased community ownership and pride in surroundings.



Always Think Win-Win

Find advantages for as many interest groups as possible.



- If community green space is valuable to constituents in your community, then they **win** when you succeed.
- If parents in your town are concerned about childhood obesity, then they **win** when you succeed.
- If you deliver more playing opportunities for minorities, then they **win** when you succeed.
- If you engage the baseball, softball and lacrosse or skateboard organizations in your community and develop a recreational complex that can serve them in addition to soccer, then they **win** when you succeed.

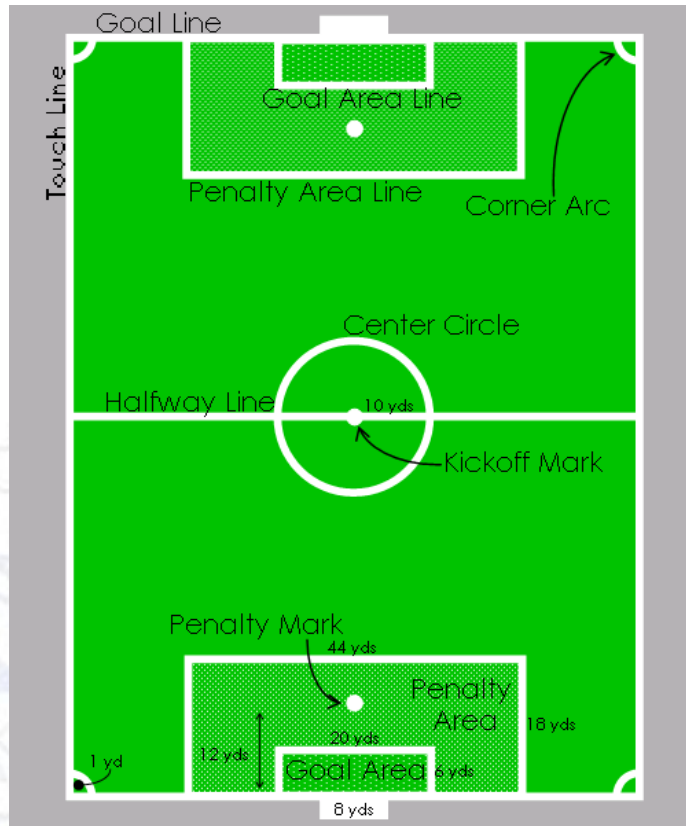


6) Perseverance Over The Long Haul

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Field Design



“There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come.”

– Victor Hugo



Breaking Ground: Construction



"He heard a voice saying:
'If you build it they will come.' "

"If you build it, they
will come."

– Field of Dreams



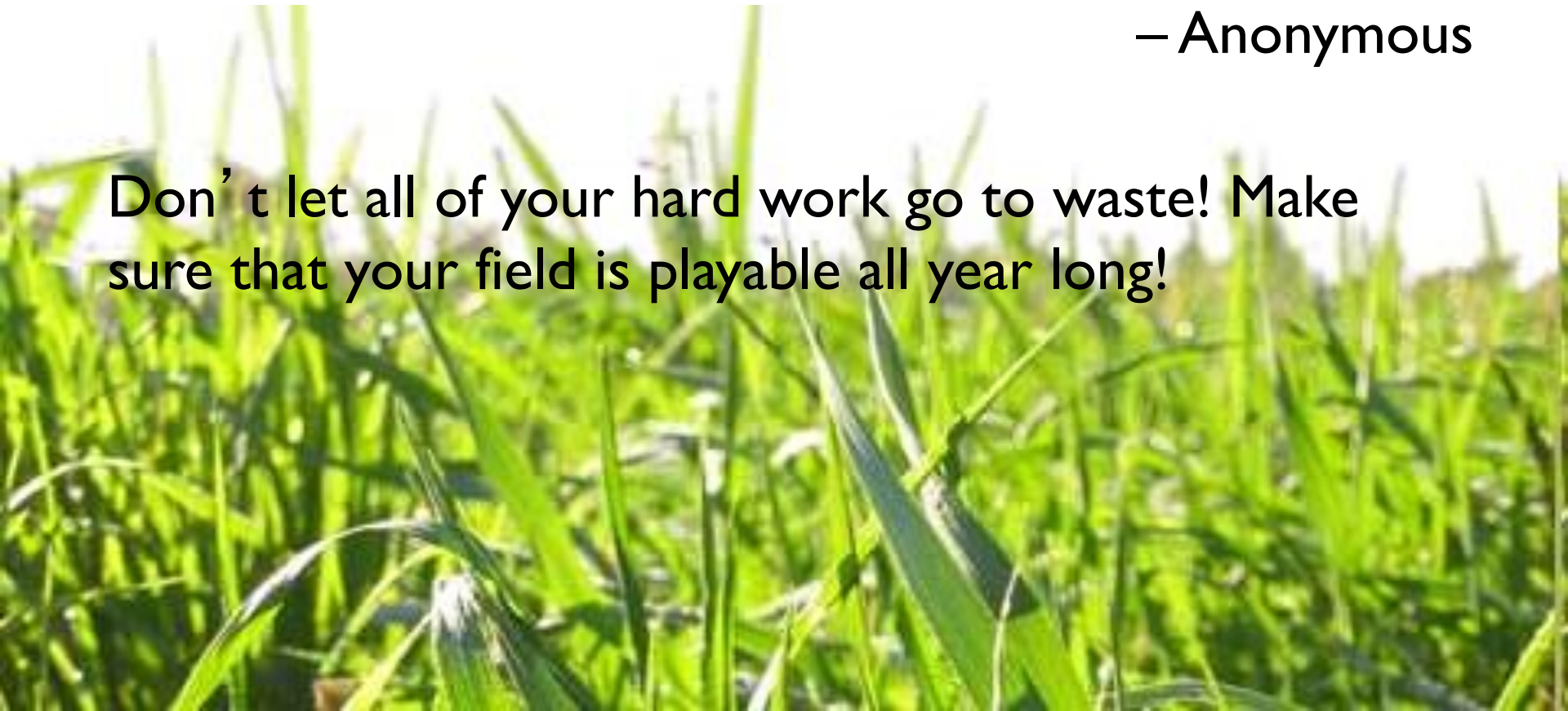
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Smart Maintenance

“Grass grows by the inch and is killed by the foot.”

– Anonymous

Don't let all of your hard work go to waste! Make sure that your field is playable all year long!



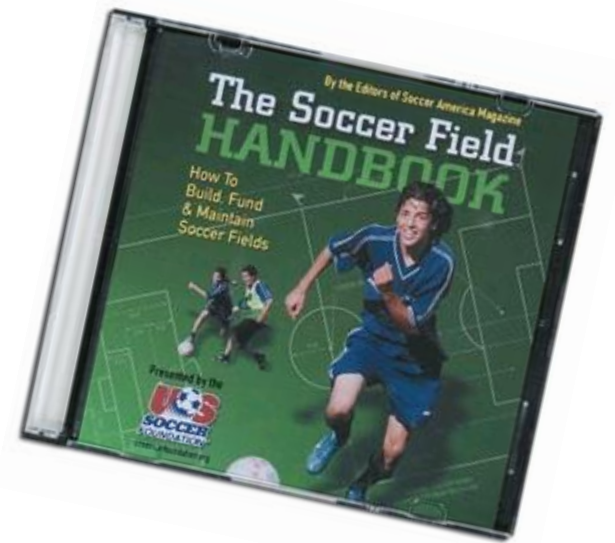
Conclusion

The ultimate goal is for a Region to obtain more soccer fields. This will help the Region share the AYSO experience with more kids in its community.



For More Information

- The Soccer Field Handbook:
How To Build, Fund & Maintain
Soccer Fields (200 pages)
- CD available in limited quantity
- There is a fee
- For information call 1-800-USA-AYSO



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Questions?

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