



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

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C.H. HUCKELBERRY
County Administrator

April 27, 2015

Ted Schmidt, Vice President
Arizona Youth Soccer Association
9034 N. 23rd Avenue, Suite 10
Phoenix, Arizona 85021

Re: Your April 17, 2015 Letter Regarding Kino Fields

Dear Mr. Schmidt:

I appreciate your April 17, 2015 letter.

Reach 11 apparently does not abide by their published rates, and we can certainly determine how they make decisions regarding fees that vary from their published rate schedule.

We look forward to scheduling the Kino facilities for the President's Cup and State Cup competitions and would be happy to work with the sponsors to develop an appropriate rental package for our facility.


The April 10 through 12 CDO Challenge Cup was very successful. Over 11,000 individuals attended this tournament.

Regarding Rillito, there are now 9 fields; and after improvements scheduled for this summer, there will be 11 fields, nine of which will be lit. I believe this is the largest number of soccer fields by a factor of almost two of any park in southern Arizona. Udall Park has 5 fields. My understanding is that all fields are available throughout the year, with exception of the fields within the horseracing track, which are unavailable during the days in which horseracing is scheduled.

Mr. Schmidt
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I would be happy to meet with you in the future after you have gathered more supporting data regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Huckelberry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/anc

Enclosure

c: The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
Hank Atha, Deputy County Administrator for Community and Economic Development
Nanette Slusser, Assistant County Administrator for Public Works Policy
Chris Bartos, Director, Stadium District



April 17, 2015

Mr. Chuck Huckelberry
County Administrator's Office
130 W. Congress Street, 10th Floor
Tucson, AZ 85701

RE: Kino Fields

Dear Mr. Huckelberry:

I very much appreciate your letter of April 8 concerning the Kino Fields. Please let me take this opportunity to point out some incorrect assumptions and explain some aspects of youth soccer operations that bear on this subject. Hopefully by clearing a few things up we can work towards a satisfactory solution.

First you state the \$1,960 Reach 11 cost for a three day tournament must be low because we would be required to pay another \$920 to \$1,200 in a "Maintenance or Recreation Supervision" fee to play there. This is simply not true. While the Reach 11 website may indicate that they have the right to charge such a fee they do NOT charge anything more than the \$1,960 fee I quoted you. They work with us. I would be happy to show you the invoice if you like.

You then state that Reach 11 fields are of lower quality than Kino fields and here we have no argument. With that understood, surely you are not saying that because we have the best fields in Arizona the county is justified in pricing their use beyond the reach of youth soccer.

We certainly have the best fields and Youth Soccer along with FC Tucson does its best to keep it that way. Especially in light of the dire shortage of parks and fields in Pima County, we could easily be lobbying for use of the Kino fields on week nights for practice and every weekend for league games. We do not because we work with FC Tucson and share their desire to maintain the quality of the fields. Accordingly, PCJSL and AYSA, in consultation with FC Tucson, has agreed to only seek to use the Kino Fields for our President's Cup and State Cup competition at the end of the season. Our good stewardship should be rewarded.

You justify high prices because Kino not only has better fields than its competitors but also has bleachers and superior amenities. The bleachers and amenities at Kino while nice are of virtually no benefit to youth soccer and we should not be charged a premium for something we don't need. We don't need or even use the bleachers most the time and only use the snack bar and the like because you make us. Because the niceties which are needed for the pros and their fans and their professional matches, when Kino is used as a park, fees and restrictions should match that use.

Herein, I believe, lays the central problem with the county's approach to the use of Kino. There are two very different and distinct uses required of the soccer fields at Kino. One is the use of the facilities for the professional teams including FC Tucson. For the pros and their fans, the exceptional fields, bleachers, snack bar and other amenities are vital and justified by the gate receipts they generate. In this setting, prohibiting spectators from bringing in lawn chairs, water and food makes sense and is expected.

In contrast, when the Kino fields are made available for their second purpose—Youth Soccer—not only are the bleachers and amenities unnecessary and unexpected, the requirement that families not bring water or food to their kids' games is completely contrary to the "family at the park" atmosphere which is inherent in youth soccer. It would be like prohibiting picnics at Udall. Taxpayers who bring their kids to a soccer game at a county field do not expect to have to put out \$30 or \$40 to give their kids water and food while at Junior's soccer game. They bring a jug of water and maybe some snacks along. Truth is many of our families cannot afford to buy water and food at the snack bar at Kino. These families do not come to Kino and pay admission expecting to see a professional game. They come to watch their kids play just like they do at Rillito, Brandi Fenton and Udall Parks.

The problem is that Kino does not see the distinction between putting on a professional soccer match with paid admission and providing fields for 14 year olds to play on. No venue anywhere else in the state imposes these restrictions and exorbitant prices on youth soccer. I would advocate that Kino needs a totally separate set of rules and fees for youth soccer, distinct from the professional sports model it operates under exclusively at this time.

You next quote from the Reach 11 website regarding a stated requirement that "70 percent of all out-of-state teams" stay in local hotels. Reach 11 does NOT impose this restriction on AYSA for President's Cup or State League. They work with us.

You then say that you are "successfully" hosting a tournament for CDO. I am sure at the prices you are charging the tournament was very successful for the Kino Sports Complex. Not so much for CDO on the revenue side. More importantly, your reference to the CDO tournament when discussing what AYSA is charged for State Cup is another "apples to oranges" comparison that suggests a misunderstanding of how club tournaments versus state league are funded and operate.

Soccer tournaments like the CDO Challenge Cup serve as the primary scholarship fundraiser for soccer clubs across the state. The funds generated by the tournaments are used to provide financial assistance to kids from underprivileged families who otherwise could not afford to play. They are onetime events with a set entry fee separate and apart from fees to join a club and fees required to play in state league games every week. As such, clubs can take into account the cost of fields, even the high cost of Kino, and to some extent roll that into the tournament entry fees for the tournament. At the same time, the fees must be reasonable and comparable to what other tournaments charge.

The larger Tucson Clubs like CDO, Ft. Lowell and TSA are all in a Catch-22 when it comes to Kino. Based on promises made to us, we have in turned promised the Phoenix clubs that it is fair to schedule more games in Tucson and you should come to our tournaments because we now have quality fields-- we can play at Kino. Consequently, if we can't offer Kino fields in our tournaments in Tucson the Phoenix teams will not come. So we have no choice. Pay the higher fees at Kino and take a major haircut to your bottom line. The result? Less scholarship money for kids who can't afford to play without financial assistance; kids are turned away for lack of money.

The AYSA President's Cup and State Cup are totally different. Kids throughout the state pay one set fee to participate in league games and events all year long. The onetime fee covers everything from insurance to nets. AYSA does not charge anything extra for the kids to culminate their season by competing in President's Cup and State Cup for a state championship. Consequently, unlike the setting of an entry fee for a tournament, AYSA could never justify raising the registration fees for all kids state wide to cover Kino field fees three to four times higher than any other available venue in the state.

Next you point to \$12.2 million allocated in bond money from bond elections 15 to 18 years ago that have been spent on improvements for soccer at Rillito Park. Of course we are most appreciative of the six fields. However, as you well know, based upon the stark shortage of parks and fields throughout the county these improvements fall terribly short of meeting the needs of our community.

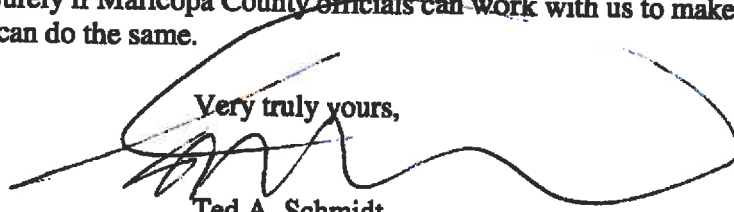
Interestingly, the county and Bond Advisory Committee have been promoting the conversion of all of Rillito into sports fields for years. This proposed improvement even went through the BAC on a consent agenda. Then suddenly, without notice, in a back room somewhere it disappeared. Striking the Rillito conversion from the bond package was a terrible loss for our youth, especially those in lower income families living in the center of our town.

Where does this leave us regarding Rillito? We can't get onto the fields for games during half of February, all of March and through most of April because of horse racing. This essentially eliminates our use of the fields for virtually the entire second half of our season. Then to add insult to injury, when President's Cup and State Cup comes around we are locked out of Rillito for a wedding and a farmer's market event. The addition of soccer fields to Rillito is great, but if like Kino, we have no access to them, especially at the height of the season, their value to the community becomes pretty illusory.

The result? We have the best fields in the state for soccer and six (soon to be 9)suitable fields in the heart of town (Rillito) all ideal for President's Cup and State Cup play. Our kids train hard all season with the dream of competing for a state championship. This year, like last, their parents will drive them by the lush Kino fields and the convenient Rillito fields early Saturday and Sunday mornings for the next several weeks so they can get to Deer Valley North of Phoenix in time for their State Cup games. Tucson kids without enough sleep, cramped up riding in a car for 2 ½ hours before game time can only dream of a home field advantage all while their parents buy gas, food and lodging in Maricopa County.

Hopefully, with these clarifications you can see the Kino fees and rules are simply out of touch with the realities of providing kids a nice field and families a nice environment for youth soccer. I will gather some more supporting data for you in hopes that we can eventually sit down together and formulate a solution. Surely if Maricopa County officials can work with us to make their fields affordable Pima County can do the same.

Very truly yours,



Ted A. Schmidt
AYSA Vice President

TAS/nmt

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