



AYSO Executive Board Meeting

May 1, 2025 @ 7:15pm PT

- I. Call to Order – pm PDT
 - Members in attendance: Brandi Lane, Terry Takahashi, Patrick Shopbell, Shanti Rao, Harry Plotkin, Michele Vallisneri, Shant Kamanjian, Taj Chiu, Adam Stieg, and Christina Scott
- II. Discussion Topics
 - Patrick gave an overview of how the field in La Canada were assigned. In November, a letter was sent to the council explaining that there were some
 - Parks and Recs Commission pulled all of the permits in December and not use the sports collation instead.
 - March 12, 2025 – voted to deny AYSO use of the fields citing safety concerns. Baseball claimed soccer had made their outfields unsafe.
 - We were given a permit to use lights at FIS lower, but we would have still needed additional permission and using lights on this field would have been very challenging.
 - Terry submitted a formal appeal to the City Council of La Canada asking for this decision to be reversed.
 - Patrick spoke with Wayne Page last Wednesday and got a better sense of what is going on.
 - There was some discussion of how to allocated field space when two equal sports were requesting space.
 - They suggested how the teams cared for the fields and how timely they were submitting permits.
 - Clearly, the commission has some concern about how to keep baseball and AYSO happy.
 - It appears that the commission wants to have a much stronger control over the fields.
 - CONFIDENTIAL: Dan Jefferies is on the La Canada school board and approached us with a compromise that he thinks the baseball team will accept. AYSO could use the JV baseball fields and JV softball fields, if we agree not to pursue our appeal. This would give baseball sole use of the

varsity fields. This gives us some access to lit fields, but doesn't allow us to go before the City Council

- Baseball has been engineering this for quite a while. There are more baseball people on the Council than soccer supporters. We were never approached that there was a problem.
- Baseball parents are angry about the amount they pay for kids to use the fields, they are upset that we “allegedly aren't concern about safety.” They claim that the fields are NOT multipurpose fields, they are only for baseball.
- La Canada HS may be the ONLY school that allows any sports use their baseball and softball fields.
- Options include:
 - 1) Do nothing and find different fields
 - 2) Go to the City Council Meeting and air our concerns
 - 3) Accept the use of the JV fields
- The risk with the compromise is that we could be back here again next year when they want us off the JV fields.
 - It was suggested that we have a clear statement that AYSO was not responsible for the damage and that we are a good and responsible partner.
 - It is concerning that the JV fields are in bad shape, but they can easily blame us for the poor fields despite the original condition they were in.
- Terry noted that last November we agreed not to put older kids on the fields to reduce any potential for damage. Therefore, it is unclear why the Council has decided to remove AYSO from the fields at this time.
- Terry suggested that the City Council does not want to make this decision for political reasons, which may be why we were offered the JV fields.
- Taj spoke with Don Shepard, who said this whole situation was a long time in coming because baseball has been trying to oust AYSO for many years. He said this is a slippery slope and we should bring our appeal before the City Council.
- Shanti noted that baseball is mostly older kids, who may aging out in the next two years. He suggested we play the long game because the interest in baseball will peter out as the kids graduate.
- Taj recommends that we hire a lawyer and go to the City Council and remind them that we have filed an appeal and it needs to be on the agenda of your next meeting. The lawyer needs to argue that this is discriminatory and has been ongoing for the last 30 years.

- Morgan Tukey is indicating that this loss of fields is happening throughout AYSO. Evidently, AYSO would prefer not to have a legal battle, but it was suggested that we might want to notify the national office that we are intending to hire a lawyer and fight.
 - We could walk away from La Canada and they can find other regions to play with.
 - National said to ask La Canada to set up lights and/or let us use the gym and we can play “indoor soccer.”
 - The messaging was “take your ball and go home!”
 - It was mentioned that the national office of AYSO has not always offered helpful advice in the past.
- It was expressed that we owe it to our La Canada families to try and fight for the fields. If we lose, we have a chance to fight again in six months when permits are renewed. (Sports commission use to issue permits for a year, but now the Parks and Recs Commission issues permits every six months.)
- Harry noted that baseball really wants to practice year round (which soccer does too), so perhaps they are passionate about having a pristine field all to themselves and may be willing to give us the JV fields.
- Patrick suggested that we proceed to the City Council meeting and offer the JV fields as a compromise, so it is on record. We would also want to have a statement issued that we have been good stewards of the fields.
- It is unacceptable for one sports group to monopolize the fields and the City Council needs to address this.
- Adam asked what the numbers (and caps) for registration would be if we lost all of the fields in La Canada. Shanti estimates it could be 30% of our registration that would be lost if we lose these fields. We were offered FIS, but it is unlikely we could use any lights on field.
- It appears that we are in agreement that we should not accept the compromise and we should proceed to the City Council.
 - However, there was a dissenting opinion that perhaps Wayne could figure out way to let us light FIS. However, AYSO is going to be the ones who get the blowback from the neighbors.
 - There was concern that although Wayne might try, he may already know that it will fail. He could have had this conversation with us a year ago.
- There is not consensus about how trustworthy Wayne is at this time.

III. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm PT and the next meeting May 1, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Scott