

Field Study Observations

As a preface to these observations, there should be a knowledge that the Summit Department of Community Programs collaborates with:

- Summit Youth Football*
- Summit Lacrosse Club*
- Summit Baseball Summit Softball*
- Summit Soccer Club*
- Summit YMCA
- Oak Knoll School
- Kent Place School
- Oratory Prep

In facilitating their use and scheduling of the different fields in the City of Summit under the Department of Community Programs purview. All the non-profit organizations with asterisks next to their name exclusively serve Summit youth residents. Summit youth participate in these programs through the non-profit organizations as they organize and execute all the volunteers and needs for programs to run effectively. The DCP also runs an in-house recreation soccer and recreation field hockey league, in addition to TryCAN special needs programming.

Youth athletes participating any of the programs pay a \$30 field user fee per season to offset the cost of general maintenance of the fields. This is placed into the Field User Fee Fund.

The final attached Field Use grid shows the current Monday through Friday usage for all the sports fields in the City of Summit. Much of this scheduling is subject to a variety of different factors. For this study, weekdays were looked at as this is when there is a field shortage in town. What is reflected in the final grid are practice and game times assigned to specific teams. It has been a common practice for the sports leagues to block out additional times to be held for rain outs and make ups.

With the information provided by the sports leagues to the best of the Department of Community Program's ability, the extra practice slots have been filtered out to provide a clear picture of strictly assigned field times by the various leagues. There is some variability from league to league in how schedules were provided and how their field assignments work.

In addition to the attached master field grid, there is also a breakdown of a "typical" week that is attached as well. This typical week will show which sport/age level is assigned and broken down by hour. There were some generalizations made here due to league variability.

A major factor that contributes to variability in the schedule that is not reflected in the master grid is weather. When there is weather that makes practices or games unsafe, they must be rescheduled. This burden is not reflected in this study.

Priority will always go to the High School leagues and there will be shifts in their schedules that will impact the later recreation sports practices. When games are canceled, they must be

rescheduled. When practices are canceled, particularly early in the season, these must be made up to ensure for safe scrimmages and games.

Weather also becomes a burden to practice when we have to let fields dry or snow melt. This can lead to additional lost time at the beginning of any season. Artificial fields will become available after a snow event quicker than natural grass turf.

Another major consideration should be given to sunset times.

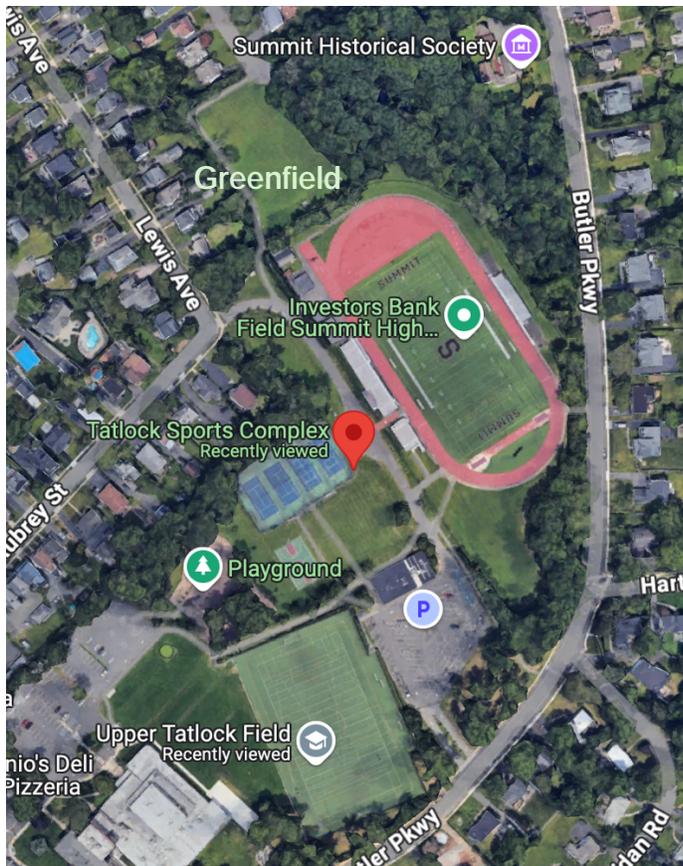
The grid will show the average slots that are available. However, this does not show how there are many changes made early (for the spring) and later in the season (for the fall):

- In the spring, many of the practices and games on the Master Grid are shown to go until 8:00pm. This time does not become possible until May 7. 7:30pm becomes a possibility as of April 8. The spring season begins on or around March 1. Because of these later starts, many of the practices are not able to begin for the younger level teams until mid-April as a result of the earlier sunset times.
- In the fall, many practices are shown going until 7:00pm. After September 27, the end time must be 6:45pm. As of October 6, 7:30pm; October 15, 6:15pm; and October 28, 6:00pm. There are many later practice slots that are also lost here that make the general grid not reflective of practices after 7:00pm.

For softball/baseball, lacrosse, and field hockey at the high school level, when there are weekday games scheduled, it is common for these games to go as late as 7pm. This prohibits the recreation sports from being able to use these field when they are assigned before 7pm. Shifts in schedule need to accommodate the recreation sports from having their games and practices moved due to high school sports.

While times are assigned as a generalization by team with the variability in weather, high school games and sunset times, the schedules will inevitably need to change week by week.

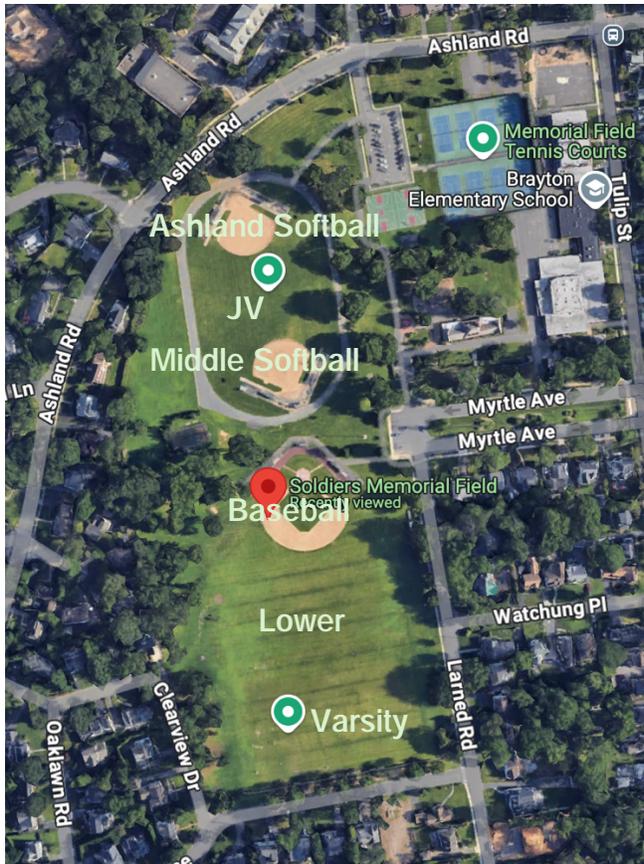
Tatlock Complex:



SPRING – Both the upper and lower fields are used at maximum capacity. The Greenfield is not a field that is scheduled for organized sports as it does not meet requirements. The High School Track and Field team uses this field for the track and field team.

FALL – The Youth Football team, which has games on Sunday does not practice on Mondays as they have games on Sunday and this serves as their rest day. The Greenfield is use as overflow for the growing flag football program that had a waitlist of 40 kids this past year. While not shown on the grid, as no specific team is assigned the slot, Friday is used as a time for extra practices at the discretion of coaches after 6pm.

Soldiers Memorial Field:



Note: For the fall, when the three soccer field are all in use, the baseball diamond and the middle softball field are not able to be used. For the spring, when the three baseball/softball fields are being used, the JV soccer field is not playable.

SPRING: The baseball and softball fields are used at maximum capacity. Soccer is assigned to the two playable field until 6:30pm each evening. When the upper and lower high school fields become unavailable due to games, many times practices will shift to be held for lacrosse at the Memorial Fields. These are the most heavily used non-turf fields. Natural turf field best practices recommend it is to rest fields for at least one season to promote growth. Due to our abundance of use in the community fully resting these fields is not possible.

FALL: Due to sunset times, holding practice following the high school teams is very difficult for the recreation sports. Because of numerous games that pushes start times back, having a consistent practice time before sunset becomes near impossible by October 1.

Long Field:

SPRING: This field is used at maximum capacity.

FALL: This field is used daily from 5pm until dark. For the fall season, Summit Baseball/Softball has difficulty securing coaches before 5pm when the volunteer coaches finish work.

Glenside:

SPRING: Between the soccer and lacrosse program, both fields are used at a maximum capacity except on Friday nights when it is difficult to get volunteer coaches.

FALL: Between the Summit Soccer Club and Recreation Soccer program, both fields are used at a maximum capacity except on Friday nights when it is difficult to get volunteer coaches.

Additionally, during all season, Glenside Field is rented out to adult groups for soccer practices after 9:00pm. These are times students would not be practicing.

It is also important to note that Glenside is a Union County owned field. Scheduling is slated to be taken over by Union County. Should this occur, we anticipate keeping our allotted times, but any flexibility would be lost. Ramifications of the county taking this over remain unknown.

High School:

SPRING: Between the lacrosse program and the high school sports, Monday through Friday the fields are used at capacity.

FALL: Between the growing youth field hockey program and the high school sports, Monday through Friday the fields are used at capacity. On Friday, many night games are held, which is why there are not regularly scheduled practices. It will be regularly used when available by Summit Lacrosse on open nights for clinics.

Middle School:

SPRING: This is well used by the Middle School sports programs and by Summit Junior Baseball/Softball.

FALL: This is well used by the Middle School sports programs. Due to early sunsets and the late finish for Middle School sports, this field is largely unused after 6pm.

Summit Board of Education Fields:

- Wilson – Baseball Field
- Lincoln – Baseball Field
- Franklin – Baseball and Multi Use Field
- Jefferson – Baseball Field

SPRING: With the exception of 3:00-5:00pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday – again due to coaching schedules - all fields are used at capacity.

FALL: Due to early sunsets, Franklin and Wilson are used at the possible capacity. Jefferson and Lincoln start at 5pm due to lack of coaching availability. Jefferson, with lights, is scheduled later in the evening.

Field Usage, In Summary:

	Spring	Fall
Upper Tatlock	At Capacity	At Capacity – Monday use anticipated in Fall 2025
Investors Field	At Capacity	At Capacity – Monday use anticipated in Fall 2025
Upper High School	At Capacity	At Capacity
Lower High School	At Capacity	At Capacity
Ashland Softball	At Capacity	Nearing Capacity – outside of 3-5pm block
Middle Softball	At Capacity	
Baseball	At Capacity	
JV Soccer	Nearing Capacity – consideration for LAX relocations	Nearing Capacity – consideration for field resting
Varsity Soccer	Nearing Capacity – consideration for LAX relocations	Nearing Capacity – consideration for field resting
Lower Field	Nearing Capacity – consideration for LAX relocations	Nearing Capacity – consideration for field resting
Wilson	At Capacity	At Capacity
Jefferson	At Capacity	Nearing Capacity – outside of 3-5pm block
Lincoln	At Capacity	Nearing Capacity – outside of 3-5pm block
Franklin	Nearing Capacity – outside of 3-5pm block	At Capacity
Long	At Capacity	Nearing Capacity – outside of 3-5pm block
Middle School 1 and 2	At Capacity	At Capacity
Glenside Large	At Capacity	At Capacity
Glenside Small	At Capacity	At Capacity

Current Challenges:

- Essentially all fields at capacity
- Expanding numbers for all sports - both girls and boys
- Weather wrecks havoc with schedules
- Domino effect from weather because high school takes precedence
- Safety is paramount so field conditions also come into play, especially evening hours due to daylight
- Current risk management issues exist with multiple teams on a field at a time.

CURRENT NEEDS:

Baseball/Softball: Currently, there is a need for the softball to have a homebase during the fall. Because of the soccer program using Memorial Field daily, the availability of the softball fields becomes scarce. As a result, the girls softball teams cannot host any games.

Field Hockey: Field Hockey numbers grow year over year. This program will need to expand to have a 7th and 8th grade team. Currently, all of the teams practice multiple at a time. Each practice slot should be designated for two teams, not up to six. Additionally, the younger clinic is held on Sunday mornings at the same time as games. This is due to the scarce field availability.

Lacrosse: Due to sunset times, the younger grades are not able to start practicing until mid-April/early May. When they are moved to Memorial Field due to high school games moving practices, this can cause delays due to soccer timing. Consistency when the high school has games is need. Additionally, to have the younger levels start before mid-April/early May. Other grade levels have their practices cut short.

For some of the grade levels due to numbers, there are 3-4 teams. There is currently only one game slot per grade per week. Each team should be playing games each week. Additional field space will allow for this.

Soccer: The number of soccer players continues to rise. The pre-academy numbers have also been increasing – signaling that the increase in soccer numbers will continue. Additionally, the Recreation Soccer program does not run in the spring specifically due to the lack of field space. There is an appetite for a spring Recreation Soccer League.

TryCAN: Offering programs for our youth with special needs is a key mission for the department. Currently, it is near impossible to carve a time out for these programs to use the proper fields for their programs. To offer our athletes with special needs the appropriate offerings on the actual sport fields is a goal to work toward.

Football: Currently, all of the boys flag and elite flag football programs occur at the same time and place. The green field is used when it is not a regulation field. There are over 240 kids registered in this program with over 40 children on the waitlist. This will continue to grow. For risk management purposes, there should not be this many children on the field at the same time. To separate teams is a goal if more field space were to be available to provide for more direct supervision of all players on each team.

As seen in the sunset tables, 50% of youth tackle practice time is in the dark starting in late September. By mid-October it's nearly 100% of practice. The league's last day this year was Nov 17.

For girls flag football, which is now a high school varsity sport, there will be expansion of the program in the coming years. Last year due to lack of field space the 37 registered Summit girls needed to practice under lit fields in New Providence. A middle school and elementary school rec program will be created to serve as a feeder program into the high school varsity program. This will require additional field space.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Oak Knoll – there is currently a reciprocal relationship where we utilize their fields in exchange for their use of our fields during the Lacrosse season.

Kent Place – No Response

Oratory – Per their athletic director, there is no availability for our regular use of their fields. They will be willing to pay for use of our fields in the future.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:

We know that there is a plethora of possibilities for sports expansion:

- New Spring Field Hockey
- New Girls Flag Football – Rec League
- Need of Fall Field Hockey Clinic location
- Need to provide a home base for Girls' softball in the fall
- Need to separate Boys Fall Flag Football into separate day practices for Risk Management reasons.
- Need to separate Fall Field Hockey into separate day practices for Risk Management reasons
- Expansion of Recreation Soccer to the Spring Season
- Need to start youth lacrosse for younger grades earlier in the spring

Please not the scenario provided below is simply a hypothetical possibility should lights only be permitted to stay on until 9pm:

Considering, in the Spring the baseline average would allot us one more hour of Field Space per day should lights be installed there would be ten useful hours gained on an average week. The light installation would allow for the creation of two days a week spring field hockey, two days per week girls youth flag football and potential expansion of the recreation soccer program to the spring if we can fully utilize Memorial Field and Lacrosse make a permanent relocation to the Lower High school pending not being bumped by the High School sports.

This impact would go much further than just the average. Because March and April would give two hours of practice time, the youth lacrosse programs would be able to be expanded.

In the fall, from the baseline, we would gain 2 hours per day Monday through Friday on Lower Tatlock. And, one hour per day on Upper Tatlock.

With the additional hour of time at the Upper Tatlock, without adding any new programming, the flag football program should be split into two squads to mitigate any risk management issues.

With some reshuffling of field space between lacrosse, soccer, and field hockey – schedules will likely need to be adjusted. Memorial can be reallocated to softball, with soccer being moved, it will become possible to give softball the ability to have their own home games during the fall season.

Again, these are high level situations being viewed, but considering all of the current challenges and needs that exist, additional field space at Tatlock could help to mitigate some, if not all, of the current needs existing.